

**THE DEBATE ON
THE FOREIGN POLICY
OF SWEDEN**

1918-1939

BY

HERBERT TINGSTEN

TRANSLATED BY JOAN BULMAN

Oxford University Press

Against the background of a brief account of Swedish foreign policy the author sets a detailed study of the debate on this policy and on international problems in general, which took place in Swedish public life and the Press between the two world wars. The main problems concern Sweden's relations with the League of Nations, the attempts to establish political and military cooperation between the Scandinavian countries, and two particular Swedish actions during the period: the attempt through the agency of the League to secure the return of the Aaland Islands to Sweden in 1918—21, and the proposal for the joint Swedish-Finnish defence of Aaland in 1938—9. The book is unique in its field in being based on an exhaustive first-hand acquaintance with Riksdag reports and all books, newspapers and periodicals, of the period. The praise which the Swedish edition received from newspapers of varied political views in Scandinavia indicates its quality and its impartiality.

The author is Editor of the well-known newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* of Stockholm.

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GEOFFREY CUMBERLEGE

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PREFACE

The object of the present work is to provide an account of the debate on central questions of foreign policy in Sweden during the period between the two World Wars. Some questions of a more special or technical character, e.g. trade policy and international law, have been omitted; so have, as a rule, the less representative contributions which obviously had no effect in shaping public opinion. I have endeavoured as far as possible to trace not only the main outline of the debate but also its influence on public opinion. But here such conclusions as it was possible to draw were necessarily qualified and uncertain.

My purpose has been to define the different views held on Swedish foreign policy, not to give an account of that foreign policy itself, which I have only done to the extent necessary to explain the argument. It is preferable, therefore, that the reader should if possible have some preliminary knowledge of Swedish foreign policy during the inter-war period and of the organisation and activities of the League of Nations. An outline of Swedish foreign policy is to be found in various books, including Rütger Essén, *Sverige upplever världen*, 1935, Paul Mohn, *Sverige i utrikespolitiskt perspektiv*, 1937, and Åke Thulstrup, *Reformer och försvar*, 1938. The most important work on Sweden's policy in the League of Nations is S. S. Jones, *The Scandinavian States and the League of Nations*, 1939. Among the many valuable general accounts of international relations during the period may be mentioned E. H. Carr, *International Relations since the Peace Treaties*, 1937, and G. M. Gathorne-Hardy, *A Short History of International Affairs*, 1938. I should like to recommend also E. H. Carr's analytical work *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, 1939 (published in Sweden in 1941 under the title *Den förlorade freden*) which would appear indispensable for a proper understanding of modern international policy.

The discussion on foreign policy in Sweden during this period was only conducted to a very limited extent in the Riksdag. By far the most important source is the Press. It is extremely difficult to give an all-round picture of the attitude of the Press, and I have

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certainly not always been successful. I have been through a number of leading journals and newspapers—about twenty-five, fifteen of them newspapers—covering the whole period. In connection with all the more important questions, I have also studied the Press cuttings of the Swedish Foreign Office, filling between 600 and 700 volumes, which were kindly placed at my disposal. I have also studied other supplementary Press sources in connection with various longer or shorter periods. On all the more important questions, therefore, the account should be fairly complete. In the preliminary study of the Riksdag publications and the Press I had the help of a number of assistants.

In a work like the present, it is practically impossible to give complete references. When, for example, I state that the Conservatives took up a certain attitude, I could not possibly quote several dozen Conservative newspapers in support. The only possibility was to give examples rather than a complete documentation. In each case I have quoted a few typical contributions. I am fully aware that this method encourages distortion; it is easy to say that a few comments are typical when they are not. The reader can only accept my assurance that every care has been taken to prevent such errors of judgment.

Neither was it possible, in a case such as that just mentioned, to give a quantitative estimate of opinion. I have not said, for example, that 32 Conservative newspapers took one line and 19 another. For one thing, such an estimate would have to be absolutely complete, which would necessitate a disproportionate amount of labour. For another, the result would be uncertain and misleading: the shades of transition from one view to another are difficult to determine, some newspapers are far more important than others, one may conduct a vigorous campaign on a certain question while another will refer to it only in a few minor leading articles. In practice, the figures arrived at would not have the same definite statistical value as an election or vote.

An analysis of the Swedish Press discussion cannot really be complete without particulars as to the attitude of the Swedish Press on various questions, the editors of the various organs, their party affiliation and circulation. But it was out of the question to provide this information here. I refer the reader to various works on the subject, in particular Gunnar Bjurman, *Tredje statsmakten*, 1935, Ragnar Ekman, *Den svenska dagspressen*, 1938, and Edvard Thermanius, *Sveriges politiska partier*, 1933. Valuable information, though often coloured by the political views of the authors, is to be found in two German works: Rud. Fleck, *Die schwedische Provinzpresse der Gegenwart*, 1939, and Gerh. Kuhlmann, *Die Stockholmer Tagespresse*, 1938. In defining the party sympathies of the various newspapers, I was assisted by the party organisations.

To describe the debate in one country, one should really be able

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to make comparisons with other countries. This was hardly possible in the present case. So far as I am aware, no investigation at all comparable with that attempted here has ever been made in any other country. But a number of studies of the Press and of the formation of public opinion have been published, dealing particularly with somewhat earlier periods; cf. the bibliographies in S. B. Fay, *The Origins of the World War*, 1941, and O. J. Hale, *Germany and the Diplomatic Revolution*, 1931. Many of these works are not to be found in Swedish libraries and I have therefore not been able to consult them.

A more comprehensive documentation is to be found in the Swedish edition of this work; here this has been considerably reduced.

In the references I have used a number of abbreviations which ought not to cause any difficulty. When a certain issue of a newspaper is mentioned, the reference is to the leading article or one of the leading articles.

I have frequently been indebted for general information, or more specific information on a number of points, to conversations I have had with a large number of persons, in particular politicians and journalists. I should like now—without mentioning any names—to thank them for the help they have given me. I have also been allowed access to certain unpublished notes by an outstanding politician covering the years 1918—1921; these have thrown valuable light particularly on certain aspects of the Aaland question. As regards Swedish foreign policy, I have not attempted to obtain information other than that available to the general public; an account of a discussion on foreign policy should be given in the light of the facts as known to those taking part in the discussion.

I hope in a later volume to be able to give an account of the discussion on Swedish foreign policy during the Second World War. In view of this fact, I have not dealt fully with certain problems in the present volume; this applies in particular to the question of the part played by the Press in Sweden's relations with other countries.

Finally I should like to thank the librarians at the Royal Library and the Riksdag library, Stockholm for their invariable kindness and helpfulness.

I should also like to express my gratitude to Knut och Alice Wallenbergs Stiftelse for paying the cost of the translation of this book into English and of its publication in this language.

Stockholm, August, 1949.

Herbert Tingsten.

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AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR

SWEDEN, THE WAR AND THE PEACE

During the First World War, Swedish public opinion was sharply divided; there were different interpretations of the meaning of the War, and different hopes as to its outcome. The Conservatives, for many reasons, had predominantly pro-German sympathies. They regarded the War as primarily a trial of strength between Germany and Russia, and many hoped for a German victory to bring liberation to Finland, and put an end to the Eastern threat that was traditionally regarded as the real danger to Swedish independence. Germany, with her strong executive Government independent of the popular representation, her stable judicial system and administration, her highly conservative home policy, seemed to steer a middle course between Eastern Despotism and Western Parliamentary Democracy; she represented a constitutional compromise not unlike that which the Conservatives defended in Sweden. An outcome to the War which would leave the position of the Western Powers essentially unaltered but drive Russia definitely back to the East, seemed to the Right-Wing* to be best for both Sweden and Europe. Another factor, particularly in circles influenced by nationalistic German political science, was admiration for Germany's display of strength and the elements of power-philosophy and racial mysticism which lay behind it.¹

The two Left-Wing parties, which comprised the majority of the electorate (but owing to the system of election to the First Chamber on a census basis, did not predominate in the Riksdag), mostly took a different view. To them, the Western Front was all-important. A German victory, they argued, could strike a blow not only at the democratic principles which it was their common aim to introduce into Sweden, but also at the internationalistic and humanitarian outlook mainly represented by England and France. A Russian defeat, desirable as it was in itself, could not outweigh the dangers of a German victory. From this point of view, the actual result of the War—weakening both Russia and Germany—was ideal, but at that moment the whole complexion of the problem was altered through the changes

* Right and Right-Wing are alternately used for Conservatives.

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of Government in the two countries themselves. The Left-Wing views, however, were probably less uniform than those of the Right. In some sections, fear of Russia predominated; others, like the Left-Wing parties in Germany itself, expected a more democratic German constitution to emerge after a victory. Some Social Democrats, whose ideology was largely derived from Marx and the German Socialists, favoured Germany, but Branting's policy of orientation towards the Western Powers grew steadily more popular.

The varying interpretations of events outside Sweden did not, however, prevent agreement in principle on Swedish foreign policy. All parties supported neutrality. The Left-Wing did indeed accuse the Right, (including Hammarskjöld, the Premier supported by the Right until March 1917), of a pro-German policy, and the Right-Wing replied by charging the Liberal-Socialist Ministry Edén (from October 1917) with subservience to the Western Powers, but that the leading men in all parties strove to keep Sweden out of the War cannot reasonably be questioned. As during the Second World War, the strongest sympathies could be expressed for one or other of the belligerent groups without any question being raised of entering the War on that side.

An exception was the group of "Activists," who wanted Sweden to seize this opportunity for military action against Russia, for the double purpose of securing the liberation of Finland and safeguarding Sweden's Eastern frontier. Even now, nearly thirty years later, there is very little reliable information as to the extent, tactics and objectives of the Activist movement. Several of the best-known Activists were originally Social Democrats who had been expelled from the party on account of their views, but there seems no doubt that the Activist circle was mainly Right-Wing or in any case stood closest to that side; the Left suspected, at least they not infrequently accused, the Right in general of Activist tendencies. The chief instrument of Activist propaganda was a brilliant pamphlet, *Swedish Foreign Policy in the Light of the World War*, published in 1915; this demanded intervention on Germany's side on grounds so strongly flavoured with power-philosophy, geopolitics, racial ideology and nationalistic sentiment that there is no mistaking the influence of current German theories.² By the end of the War, Activism had ceased to have any real importance, although its influence can be detected in the discussion on certain more limited questions of foreign policy, notably the Finland and Aaland questions, 1917—1918.

The close connection between home policy and world events became clearly apparent at the end of the War. The revision of the constitution, aiming at complete democratisation, which was agreed upon in principle in December 1918, was a direct consequence of the Allied victory. The report in which the Third Special Committee of the Extraordinary Riksdag gave its motives for such revision, proclaimed

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that this victory was at the same time a victory for the principle of government by the people. "The World War has resulted in the collapse of the great military monarchies of Europe, with their essentially autocratic method of government. The great mass of the peoples, who longed for peace, have turned against the system of government which they blame for this catastrophe. . . . Now world events . . . have uttered their own warning and emphasised as never before the fact that, in the new era beginning now, a society capable of survival can only be built on a thoroughly democratic basis."

During the final phase of the War, the prospect of the Armistice and peace negotiations evoked a fairly unanimous response from all sections of Swedish public opinion, and one which was to influence future developments considerably. Once the inevitability of German defeat was recognised, the German sympathisers began to hail what they called a "just peace", on the principles drawn up by Woodrow Wilson, as an acceptable compromise between the hoped-for outcome and the hard peace they feared. Allied sympathisers also supported the Wilson programme, particularly after the outbreak of democratic revolutions in Central Europe. Sweden looked for a "peace without victors or vanquished," a settlement characterised by clemency and the application of the principles of national self-determination, such as would form the foundation of a lasting order based on equality and conciliation. For some months Wilson's name became, in Sweden as in other neutral States and in large groups within the belligerent countries, a symbol for the hope that the Great War would end in a conclusive peace, which the vanquished would not only accept but would recognise as just; with such a peace, unique in world history, the sacrifices of the War would not have been made in vain.

The consequent reaction, which set in with the Armistice and became more pronounced during the peace negotiations and the signing of the peace, was deep and universal. France was the most bitterly attacked, often called the bulwark of imperialism and power politics; British and American statesmen were chiefly accused of weakness and lack of skill for allowing the French plans to be carried through. The Peace of Versailles was condemned practically universally in the Press. The economic terms, the transfers of territory without reference to the principle of self-determination, the clauses establishing Germany's war guilt and providing for German disarmament, were all criticised. Unless this peace were rapidly revised, a fresh World War was held to be inevitable. Many predicted that the harsh terms would strengthen German nationalism and that Germany would soon be gathering her forces for a war of revenge on an enormous scale. This attitude prevailed even in circles which blamed Germany unreservedly for the War, and would have regarded a German victory as a catastrophe for humanity. The Social Democrats frequently asserted that a just international order and real

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conciliation between the peoples would only be possible after the universal victory of Socialism. Only in a few articles was an attempt made to explain—hardly to defend—the terms imposed.

It would be outside the scope of the present work to analyse or criticise the views here recorded. Our task is merely to establish that, during much of the inter-war period, they played a large part in shaping Swedish foreign policy. Above all, they decisively influenced Sweden's attitude towards, and policy in, the League of Nations.

SWEDEN, THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND THE RELAXATION OF INTERNATIONAL TENSION

The question of the establishment after the War of a League of Nations first came under general discussion as early as 1917, as a result of Wilson's pronouncements and speeches. Partly in consequence of this popular interest, the Swedish Government in January 1918 set up a Committee to consider how the interests of the neutrals could best be safeguarded at and after the end of the War. In December of the same year, the committee published its report incorporating a draft for a proposed international convention, worked out in co-operation with the corresponding committees set up by the Danish and Norwegian Governments. The most important provision of this proposed convention was that international disputes that could not be settled by diplomatic means should be referred to an international arbitration court or a board of mediation appointed by the parties to the dispute. An international Council of fifteen members, to be appointed by all States equally, was proposed to act as central authority in the new order. No details were given of the means of coercion to be used against treaty-breaking States. The Committee's report is interesting as illustrating the attitude adopted in Sweden from the start towards the establishment of a system of international justice, though it had no influence on actual events.

When the Peace Conference began its work, the three Scandinavian Governments sent the French Government a Note pointing out that it was of the utmost importance that all civilised States should participate in the work of establishing a League of Nations. This recommendation, however, produced no results; this question, like all other problems connected with the peace, was dealt with exclusively by the Allied Powers. Not until a commission, consisting of representatives of the foremost of these Powers, had drawn up a draft League Covenant, were certain Neutrals invited to express their views at an unofficial conference in March 1919. Sweden sent representatives, with instructions to propose certain modifications to the commission's draft. All that need be said here of these proposals is that they were

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of the same type as the modifications in the League's constitution asked for when Sweden's entry into the League was debated by the Riksdag in 1920. Only in a few minor particulars were they accepted.

The commission's draft, revised in certain clauses, was adopted on 28th April 1919 at the plenary session of the Peace Conference, and was later incorporated as the first chapter in the Peace Treaties with Germany, Austria and Bulgaria. After the Treaty of Versailles had been ratified by Germany, Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan and other Powers, it entered into force, together with the agreement on the League of Nations, on 10th January 1920. According to the Covenant, the League was to include the Allied Powers and certain other States which were invited to join at its foundation. Admission could be granted later to other States, but only if agreed to by a two-thirds majority of the existing Assembly. On 10th January, Sweden and other ex-Neutral States were invited to join the League as original members; a declaration of accession had to be deposited within two months.

A detailed account of the Covenant cannot be given here, but it may be useful to recall its main features, following in general outline the summary given in the Bill authorising Sweden's accession.

The chief objects of the League were stated to be the promotion of international co-operation and the achievement of international peace and security. Its main organs were to be (1) the Assembly, consisting of representatives of all States Members, with equal rights, (2) the Council, consisting of representatives of the five Allied Powers (permanent seats) and of four other States to be elected by the Assembly, but, until this could meet, nominated in the Covenant (non-permanent seats), (3) the permanent Secretariat. The mutual functions of Assembly and Council were not always clearly defined in the Covenant. As a rule, unanimous decisions were required of both.

The objects of the League were to be pursued in various ways: by limitation of armaments, a procedure for the peaceful settlement of international disputes, collective action against covenant-breaking States, the prohibition of secret alliances.

In connection with the first, the Covenant stated (Article 8) that the Members of the League recognised that the maintenance of peace required "the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations." The Council was to draw up proposals for the reduction of armaments by each individual State; once these proposals had been accepted by the Government concerned, the limits of armaments thus fixed could not be exceeded without permission from the Council. The Members of the League undertook "to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity . . . of all Members of the League" (Article 10). International disputes

were, according to the Covenant, to be submitted either to judicial settlement, if the parties agreed to this, or to a special arbitration procedure. For judicial settlement, the matter would be brought before either a Conciliation Tribunal agreed on by the parties to the dispute, or a Permanent Court of International Justice, the establishment of which was provided for in the Covenant. Arbitration procedure would normally be effected by the League Council. Its recommendations would be binding provided they were unanimously decided upon by the representatives of all States not parties to the dispute, otherwise not. Members were not allowed to resort to war without first submitting the dispute either to judicial procedure or arbitration by the Council, or while such procedure was in progress, or for three months following conclusion of such procedure. In other cases, wars were not prohibited; in other words, so-called permissible wars might still occur.

The prohibition of immediate resort to war did not apply only to Members of the League. In Article 11, any war or threat of war was declared a matter of concern to the whole League, and its Members undertook to take any action that might be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations. In the event of a dispute between a Member of the League and a State which was not a Member, or between two States not Members of the League, the State or States not Members of the League were to be invited to accept the obligations of membership in the League for the purposes of such dispute. If a State, instead of accepting such invitation, resorted to war, the League would take the same measures as against a State Member which resorted to war in disregard of its covenants.

The sanctions which might be applied against covenant-breaking States were divided into economic and military. They were incurred automatically only in the case of States which resorted to war when this was prohibited by the Covenant. The economic sanctions were intended to be applied without a special decision being taken. "Should any Member of the League resort to war in disregard of its covenants under Articles 12, 13 or 15, it shall *ipso facto* be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other Members of the League, which hereby undertake immediately to subject it to the severance of all trade or financial relations, the prohibition of all intercourse between their nationals and the nationals of the covenant-breaking State, and the prevention of all financial, commercial or personal intercourse between the nationals of the covenant-breaking State and the nationals of any other State, whether a Member of the League or not." This clause was undoubtedly one of the weakest spots in the Covenant. The total boycott envisaged would be extremely difficult to carry out effectively, and above all it was unreasonable to expect the States to do it spontaneously, without mutual agreement and decision. Moreover in the Covenant "resort to war" was spoken of as something

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quite definite, about which there could be no dispute. The natural consequence was that, during the succeeding period, acts of aggression—in common parlance, acts of war—were committed time after time without any formal declaration of war. As regards military sanctions, the same Article 16 stipulated that the League Council should “recommend to the several Governments concerned what effective military, naval or air force the Members of the League shall severally contribute to the armed forces to be used to protect the covenants of the League.” The text of the Covenant—particularly the French text—implied that the obligation to take part in military sanctions was universally binding, and this seems beyond question to have been the original intention; but a contrary interpretation, according to which a State Member could refuse to take part in sanctions of this kind, was not impossible, and was systematically upheld from the start by Sweden and various other States. Rights of passage were to be granted unconditionally to the forces of States taking part in sanctions.

A few pamphlets and articles about the proposed League were published in Sweden in 1918, but public interest was not really aroused until the following years. At first, political party differences were not very marked. Members of all parties joined the League of Nations Association which was founded on 31st January 1919; its committee included not only Leftists like Branting and Nils Alexander-son, but also Conservative politicians and journalists like Ernst Trygger and Verner Söderberg. The Association published its proposals for a League constitution: all civilised States should be eligible for membership, the States should be equal in principle, States which refused to submit disputes to conciliation or arbitration should be liable to sanctions. Examination of the Press shows, however, that the Right-Wing from the outset adopted a more sceptical attitude towards the idea of a League than the two allied Left-Wing parties. By the spring of 1919, this scepticism had deepened into open criticism of the League of Nations as envisaged by the Peace Conference, and soon afterwards the rift of opinion which characterised the debate on Sweden's entry into the League was complete; the Right opposed the idea of joining, the Left supported it. The views expressed prior to the extensive Riksdag debates in March 1920 will not be given here, as they were presented again, often in more systematic form, during these debates. Some account of the attitude of the parties is, however, desirable.

The swing of opinion expressed most forcibly in the determined opposition of the Right, but also reflected in some Left-Wing criticism, was due to various causes. One was general dissatisfaction that Sweden and the other neutrals had not been allowed to take part in shaping the Covenant, but that their opinions had only been asked incidentally, and then mostly disregarded. Criticisms of the Peace of Versailles

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applied also to the Covenant, particularly as this was incorporated in and bound up with the peace treaty. Attacks on the Covenant itself concentrated on certain points: the exclusion of the defeated Powers, the preponderance of the Great Powers in the Council and the strong position of this in general, the inadequate organisation of judicial procedure, the vagueness about sanctions. When the entry of the United States turned out to be uncertain because of the opposition Wilson met with in the Senate, it was felt that Sweden should at least await the American decision before committing herself. All the main parties were agreed that a refusal by the United States to join would most seriously weaken the League; America was felt, particularly in view of Wilson's policy, to occupy the position of intermediary between victors and vanquished.

The Conservative Press, however, held almost unanimously that the reasons against Sweden's joining the League were conclusive. During the autumn of 1919 and the beginning of 1920, its tone became increasingly hostile to the League, which it denounced as an attempt to ensure the future dominion of the victorious Powers under the cloak of idealism. Rudolf Kjellén's characterisation is typical: "A political analysis of the statutes of the Versailles League reveals a Janus figure with two faces, on the left a peace association, the first great step in human history towards the establishment of a universal rule of justice, one-sided perhaps at first, but gradually growing more balanced and with every prospect of favourable development—on the right a power organisation on the old imperialistic basis, to secure the fruits of victory and mask Anglo-Saxon world domination . . . This modern panacea was born into the world of particularly ill-matched parents—Wilson's ideology and Clemenceau's political realism—and with this heredity is expected to rescue humanity from its present uncertainty." The same thought was expressed in countless different forms, generally much more pungent than that quoted above. The League of Nations was described as "a new Holy Alliance", a "temporary power combination disguised as Liberty, Equality and Fraternity," a "slave-owners' association," a "masked military alliance," it meant the division of the nations into "warders and convicts," it was an effort by the Entente to "keep their defeated enemies in servitude." By joining the League, Sweden would constitute herself a guarantor of the Peace of Versailles. The Left-Wing was said to favour the League because it afforded an effective argument in the disarmament agitation. Of the leading Right-Wing newspapers, *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* were particularly violent in their criticism, while *Stockholms Dagblad* adopted a more moderate tone.

The Left-Wing agreed with the Right in most of their criticisms of the League as established and of the way in which it had been formed. But, unlike the Right, they believed that the existing imperfect League

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would rapidly develop into a "real" League of Nations, to which all States would be admitted on terms of equality and which would really work for the aims specified in the Covenant. *Forum*, in an article along these lines, wrote that the League "in spite of all its faults, has every prospect of becoming the lasting element in the peace treaty, and of forming the basis for and means to, changes in the application of the treaty which would remove the main causes of future conflicts and the worst obstacles to agreement between the ex-enemy nations." It was frequently asserted that the United States, if she did not immediately join the League, would in any case do so soon, and that Germany and Russia, originally excluded, would soon be admitted. The Right-Wing objections to joining the League were dismissed as the natural corollary of their pro-German attitude during the War, and it was pointed out that the domination of the League by Great Powers, which the Conservatives feared, would have been far more acute if the Central Powers had won.

No essential difference is apparent between the Liberal and Social Democratic view-points. The Social Democratic Press, however, asserted, as in its comments on the Versailles Treaty, that a satisfactory international order would only become possible with the triumph of Socialism in all countries. The League of Nations would develop into a real organisation of peace and justice in proportion as it came under the sway of Social Democratic ideas. "In all probability, international Social Democracy will take over the development and perfection of the world organisation, and then it will not matter so much that the foundations now laid are faulty and weak," is a representative comment. The strong emphasis laid on this aspect is doubtless connected to some extent with the fact that the Left-Wing Socialist party—formed in 1917 after breaking off from the Social Democrats—attacked the League as an organisation of Capitalist States.

On 14th February 1920, the Government introduced a Bill to authorise Sweden's entry into the League of Nations. After lengthy discussions in the *remiss* debate,* the question was referred to a special committee of twenty-four members: eight Social Democrats, eight Conservatives, six Liberals, one member of the Farmers' League, and one Left-Wing Socialist. The last-named was included to satisfy the wish of the Social Democrats that the radical opposition, who were against entry into the League, should be represented on the committee. In each case, the men elected were the foremost in their party outside the Government; Branting was appointed chairman, and Trygger vice-chairman. The committee presented its report on

* The debate that takes place at the beginning of each parliamentary session and treats of the Government's policy in general.

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1st March. The majority, consisting of the Social Democrats, the Liberals and one Conservative—C. Hederstierna, Provincial Governor and former Cabinet Minister, later to be Governor in Stockholm and Foreign Minister—were in favour of joining. Six Conservatives, among them Trygger and Lindman, were against. C. Swartz, another Conservative, urged the rejection of the Bill on the grounds that the Riksdag could not reach a decision until it knew what the United States was going to do. Wohlin, the representative of the Farmers' League, thought that the Riksdag should reject the Bill but assert Sweden's desire to "co-operate in the establishment of an open League of Nations for the safeguarding of peace. . . ." Vennerström, the Left-Wing Socialist, favoured outright rejection but on special grounds. After further prolonged debates in the Riksdag—in the Second Chamber on 3rd March, in the First Chamber on 3rd and 4th March—the Bill was passed, in the First Chamber by 86 votes to 47, in the Second by 152 votes to 67; in both cases, those who voted against it did so for the reasons given by the Conservative majority on the committee. The party line was strictly adhered to, so far as can be judged by the debate—the vote itself was secret—except that a few Conservatives sided with the majority in the House.

No other question of Swedish foreign policy has ever been so fully and thoroughly discussed both in special committee and in the Riksdag. In the account of the debate given below, questions of more incidental interest, such as the preparation of the business and the possibility of postponing a decision, will be omitted and attention concentrated on those problems which were to have an important bearing on later developments.

On certain general points, all speakers were agreed. They all wanted a "real" League of Nations, an international organisation better adapted, in structure and constitution, to serve the cause of international understanding, peace and justice than was the existing League. Both the text of the Bill and the majority report of the committee asserted explicitly that the League as then constituted had serious shortcomings, and it was largely these same shortcomings that the minority brought forward as reasons for not entering the League. In the view of the committee, with which the Government expressed its full concurrence, it was the duty of Sweden to work with all her strength within the League for the following ends: "The inclusion in the League at the earliest possible moment of the States not yet invited to join; the introduction of more satisfactory arrangements for the representation of the smaller States on the League Council; more definite provisions governing the meetings and business of the Assembly of delegates and the mutual functions of the various organs of the League; the establishment at the earliest possible moment of the Permanent Court of International Justice referred to in

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the Covenant, and the clearer definition and further development of the conciliation procedure therein prescribed; and last, but not least, that the work for the universal and effective limitation of national armaments promised in Article 8 of the Covenant should be set on foot without delay and energetically pursued."

One of the most widely discussed and sharply attacked shortcomings of the League was its lack of universality. The Right-Wing minority report pointed out that the United States had not yet decided to join, and that in Europe, States containing half the population of this continent had not been granted right of membership; consequently the new assembly acquired "rather the character of an alliance under the leadership of the victorious Great Powers than of a League of Nations for the benefit of mankind". A number of speakers asserted that the League was designed primarily to ensure the hegemony of the Allied Powers. Others, mainly Right-Wing, maintained that, if the United States did not join, one of the conditions universally regarded as essential for the favourable development of the League would be unfulfilled. Left-Wing Socialist criticism chiefly concentrated on the fact that Russia had not been invited to join. It was even suggested that the League was directed against Russia, that powerful interests regarded it as "a Holy Alliance of Capitalism against Bolshevism" (Vennerström), that it was "an instrument to serve the financial interests of Wall Street, Paris and London" (Lövgren i Nyborg). The majority view was that, while such criticisms must be admitted in principle to be correct, the League could in no circumstances be regarded as simply a bulwark for the victorious Powers; the victors needed no League of Nations for this purpose. The League would gradually develop into a universal body, and by joining it, Sweden would be helping towards this end. As to the United States, it was expected that the negotiations then in progress would lead to positive results, or at any rate that she would join in the near future. The text of the Bill stated that "United States participation must be regarded as an essential condition if the League of Nations is to carry out the tasks it has set before it," and the Prime Minister expressed the view that "if the United States does not join for a year, this delay will be regrettable, but will not *necessarily* be fatal to the League of Nations." That the United States would remain permanently outside the League was a possibility which never occurred to the Government.

Critics of the Bill recalled that the Covenant formed part of the peace treaty with Germany, and feared that Sweden by joining the League would constitute herself a guarantor of the harsh peace terms. This was denied by the majority, who pointed out that, although the Members of the League promised in general to respect each other's territorial integrity, they undertook no special responsibility for the peace terms. Several members of the Government coalition even sug-

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gested that the League might open the way for the peaceful revision of the peace treaty.

Closely connected with these questions were the questions of the composition of the League Council and the relations between the Council and the Assembly. On both these points the Covenant was severely criticised by its opponents. The Conservative minority of the committee claimed that it set up an "international dictatorship". The five or, if the United States did not join, four permanent seats on the Council were reserved for the victorious Great Powers, while the other four Council seats had been allocated to States nominated in the Covenant until the Assembly could exercise its right of election. There was a danger that the allocation even of the temporary seats would in practice become permanent. "Sweden has little prospect of obtaining a seat on the Council . . . The fact that other smaller Powers such as Denmark, Holland, Norway and Switzerland, which like Sweden can claim to be reckoned among the most highly cultured and peace-loving countries in the world, will also be excluded from the Council, does not augur well for the favourable development of the League." As the Council had become "practically all-powerful", while the Assembly was thrust into the background, joining the League really meant entrusting vital national questions to a certain international group of Powers. The Left-Wing Socialist opponent adopted the same line. "In the League of Nations, all real executive power is vested in the League Government, and the League Parliament is only a decoration. Once again, the spirit of minority dictatorship and despotism . . ."

The majority admitted that these criticisms had some justification. It would be desirable for the smaller States to acquire greater influence, partly by modification of the composition of the Council, partly by increasing the power of the Assembly in relation to the Council. But they felt that the criticisms of the minority groups were exaggerated. "We cannot but admit," the committee's report stated, "that as the Great Powers will have to bear the main burden of any action in which the League may become involved, they are justified in reserving to themselves a particularly strong position on those organs of the League which determine what measures shall be taken." The new system in any case represented an advance, for formerly the Great Powers had settled international disputes single-handed. No international organisation could possibly function without a fairly strong executive body. It was quite unreasonable to assume that the non-permanent seats on the Council would actually become permanent. As to fears that the Allied Powers would entirely dominate the League, there was no reason to suppose that the Allies would always remain closely united. "Fresh points of view emerge, fresh bones of contention too sometimes, in any case possibilities of fresh combinations which break through old alliances," said the Prime Minister. Then the

smaller Powers would have their chance to exercise considerable influence. Neither was it right to regard international politics as simply a battlefield of interests; the idealism which originally inspired the League of Nations would not fail in the future. The opposition (Trygger, Lindman) maintained for their part that a dispute between the Great Powers belonging to the League might render the organisation ineffective and at the same time compel the smaller Powers to take sides.

As regards the power and influence of the League, criticisms were often inconsistent, being directed now against its weakness—e.g., that war would still in certain cases be allowed—and now against its strength, particularly its power to enforce sanctions. This inconsistency was seized upon by the League's supporters: "To demand at the same time increased freedom of action for the individual members and increased effectiveness for the League is to demand the impossible" (C. G. Ekman). The decisive consideration for the League's opponents was, however, without question that the League would have too much power to control the actions of its Members when it came to applying the sanctions procedure envisaged in Article 16. They suggested that these regulations involved at least a moral obligation to contribute towards military sanctions, and above all they felt that the unquestionable duty to take part in economic sanctions and allow right of passage to foreign troops involved too heavy a burden and too great risks. In practically every criticism the statement recurred that economic sanctions were equivalent to a "hunger blockade" of the kind the Allies enforced against Germany during the World War, and that to take part in such a blockade would violate the Swedish people's sense of justice and humanity. Moreover under Article 16, even if military sanctions were not called for, there was a danger that war might break out with the State or States against which sanctions were imposed. If all economic relations with a given State were severed and right of passage through the land allowed to this State's opponents, the State in question would be very likely to reply with military measures. "Against our interests, against our wishes we might become involved in war on our own territory, and this . . . without having any clear and definite claim to assistance from Powers whose own acts might even have caused the breach of treaty against which the military action was directed" (Right-Wing minority report).

These criticisms—probably the most important brought forward in the debate—were rejected in the main by the supporters of the League. There was no obligation to take part in military sanctions; each State retained full independence of action in the event of a request of this nature from the League. The Government attitude towards this form of sanctions did, however, undergo some modification. The Bill stated that the League might be expected in practice to exercise

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strong pressure to induce a State to take part in military sanctions, and that no State ought to refuse to collaborate without good reason. "It would be very undesirable . . . if . . . the smaller nations or some of them showed an inclination to allow the Great Powers to assume sole responsibility for armed intervention against disturbers of the peace." The committee's report contains nothing of this sort, and in the Riksdag debates it seems to have been assumed that there could be neither moral obligation nor political compulsion to take part in military sanctions.

The regulations relating to economic sanctions and right of passage were regarded as reasonable in the main. If the League of Nations were to prevent war, it must have effective powers of some sort, and an economic blockade was in any case more humanitarian than war (Edén, Branting). The value of economic sanctions was precisely that they would frighten a State contemplating a breach of the peace, and thus prevent the outbreak of war. The risk of Sweden becoming involved in war in this way would not be increased by her entering the League, because according to Article 16 of the Covenant even non-member States might be required by the League to take part in sanctions. Besides, it must be remembered that, even if some risks had to be incurred, they were greatly outweighed by the improved prospects of preserving universal peace and of receiving help against aggression, which the League offered. None of the speakers questioned that Sweden, even though she joined the League, could still refuse to take part in economic sanctions or to allow right of passage in the cases envisaged in Article 16.

The question of sanctions was closely connected with the question of the effect an entry into the League would have on Sweden's defence position. According to a statement by the Chief of the General Staff incorporated in the Bill, a Member of the League must under Article 16 take part in military sanctions in certain circumstances, and would therefore have to maintain a special force for this purpose. Membership of the League would thus involve "an added responsibility which, if the general defence position is not to deteriorate as a result of entry into the League, must necessitate an increase in the armed forces . . ." The same view was also expressed by others, who pointed out that according to Article 8, national armaments could be reduced to "the lowest point consistent with . . . the enforcement by common action of international obligations." They also asserted that, apart from the disputed obligation to take part in military sanctions, Sweden would need to increase her armaments because of the added risk of war incurred simply by entering the League. "To me it is self-evident that just this fact that other Powers can force upon us a policy which may involve us in military complications compels us, if we wish to preserve our independence at all, to increase our armaments to a far greater extent than would be necessary if we were not members

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of the League," Trygger declared. Military speakers in the Second Chamber stated that Sweden, if she entered the League, must maintain a strong defence force both to ensure her own security and to fulfil the demands which the League might make (Hammarskjöld supported by Söderhielm).

On this point too the majority, as in its general attitude towards sanctions, refused to meet the critics. There was no obligation to take part in military sanctions, the danger of war was lessened by the existence of the League: therefore it was obvious that the burden of defence would be reduced rather than increased by the League. The provisions of Article 8 quoted by the Chief of the General Staff had nothing to do with it. This article was concerned entirely with a limitation of armaments, and each State Member was free to determine the "lowest point" of armaments to which the article referred; each State could "for its part consider the lowest point which it found necessary for its national safety as sufficient also for any contribution it might be called upon to make towards League action" (Bill and committee report). The Social Democrats in particular expressed high hopes that the League would bring about a limitation of armaments and contribute effectively towards international disarmament (Branting, Engberg, Hansson).

Altogether the League suffered in the view of the minority from such serious constitutional defects that its development into an effective organisation of international justice could hardly be considered likely. The attitude adopted by all the minority groups was clearly defined in the concluding sentences of the Conservative committee members' minority report: "Whenever the opportunity offers of joining a League of Nations which, with due regard to national independence and to the greatest possible measure of equality between civilized peoples, seeks to unite these peoples in a common effort for the maintenance of peace and the establishment of a permanent system of international justice, we shall be happy and grateful to make great sacrifices on behalf of such a demonstration of the will of the peoples for solidarity and brotherhood. But we should be working against this end if we adhered to the Covenant now drawn up." The majority, on the other hand, admitted that many of the criticisms were justified, but still felt that Sweden should join. They pointed out that in any case she would be better off inside the League, than outside. To refuse the invitation would create suspicion and hostility, and Sweden would then run practically the same risks as if she joined the League, but without the advantages. They claimed that Sweden's entry would tend to strengthen the League, for the more peace-loving States it included, the more effective and valuable would its work become. After joining, Sweden would be in a position to work for the universality of the League and the revision of the Covenant, whereas outside she could have no influence. The committee's report concluded

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with the following words: "The view of the committee is that Sweden should not be absent from the ranks of cultured nations who join the League to work together for the maintenance of its principles. In taking this step, Sweden would, of course, to a certain extent be widening her responsibilities. But if the new ideas of justice which inspire the Covenant really become effective, Sweden will be obliged to accept in advance responsibilities which under the old order she could have considered each on its merits. This is a natural development under the new school of political thought, to which the best method of safeguarding national interests is the creation and reinforcement of a system of international justice. To Sweden which, with her tradition of more than hundred years of peace, has thrown herself enthusiastically into the task of promoting justice between the nations, it now appears as a historic duty to contribute, in the spirit of the age and to the limits of her strength, towards the establishment of that instrument of justice which the League of Nations is designed to become."

It only remains to mention a few contributions to the debate which diverged from the main current. Hederstierna made a speech to the Second Chamber defending the majority view on grounds which contrasted sharply with those of all the other speakers. He characterised the League as an alliance, made no reference to its idealistic qualities, and set out to judge the question simply from the point of view of the national interest. The country which traditionally threatened Sweden was Russia. Formerly Germany had constituted a bulwark against Russian expansionist tendencies. Now Germany was broken and could no longer fulfil this function. Sweden should therefore seek to associate herself with the only power which was in a position to replace Germany, namely the League of Nations. Hederstierna held that the only eventuality in which the League would be likely to request military help from Sweden would be for the defence of Finland against Russia. If such a request were made, Sweden ought to accede to it. "So long as Finland remains as a buffer State against Russia, we are safe. Wisdom demands that we should grant Finland military aid if she should need it." Hederstierna's speech attracted considerable attention, but was scarcely referred to in the subsequent debate; evidently both the majority and minority groups felt that this was a delicate point to discuss. Only the Left-Wing Socialists took up Hederstierna's argument, and they quoted it as a proof that the League of Nations was at bottom an alliance directed against Russia.

The question of the reunion of the Aaland Islands with Sweden, which was one of the burning questions of the day (cf. p. 99 ff.), was only referred to in two speeches. The Left-Wing Socialist Vennerström hinted that the Government hoped to win Aaland by conceding to the Allies' demand to join the League. "I will not talk of bribery;

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there can be no question of that, but love thrives on gifts and exchange gifts." K. G. Westman of the Farmer's League suggested on the other hand in the *remiss* debate on the Bill in the First Chamber that it might be as well to find out the attitude of the Great Powers to the Aaland question before deciding whether to enter the League.

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The remainder of this chapter will be principally devoted to an account of the views and opinions expressed on the League of Nations and its policy during the period which may be described as the period of resettlement after the First World War. First, however, it will be necessary to say something about the general attitude of the Swedish public towards international politics during this period, and about the principles of Swedish policy as a member of the League of Nations.

Sweden's attitude towards foreign policy was determined by two basic, to some extent inter-related circumstances: firstly—particularly after the liberation of Finland and the solution of the Aaland question—the complete absence of national aspirations such as might give rise to an aggressive foreign policy or one directed towards the formation of profitable alliances, secondly the steadily progressing relaxation of internal tension, which made her unwilling to take sides in ideological questions relating to other countries. The preservation of the *status quo* for Sweden and of peace for the world became the obvious aim. As regards the world, however, Sweden did not generally identify peace with the *status quo*. She believed the preservation of peace to be only possible with the aid of an international order built on the principles of justice, which in its turn would be guaranteed by an international judicial organisation. Exactly what was meant by the constantly invoked principles of justice cannot be examined here. So much is clear, that the order created by the Peace of Versailles and other agreements and decisions was not regarded as just, and therefore not as lasting. Both the territorial provisions of the peace treaties and the policy of reparations pursued by the victors called forth constant protests from all quarters in Sweden. A certain general sympathy with German resistance and German demands for revision became fairly widespread. This sympathy was strongest in the Right-Wing, as was only natural in view of their attitude before and during the World War; radically-controlled, Democratic Germany came in for something of the good-will which had been bestowed on the German Empire. But it was very marked even in other parties, not least among the Social Democrats; and the International, with the approval of its Swedish delegates, passed a number of resolutions condemning the dictates and demands of the victorious Powers. Only a few radical intellectuals, generally writing in Liberal newspapers, exhibited any

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coolness towards or mistrust of German policy, or spoke of systematic German sabotage of the peace treaties. To understand the strength and scope of the sentiments involved, it is necessary to remember that Swedish culture and not least the great Swedish political parties—Social Democrats as well as Conservatives—had been under strong German influence for decades.

France, which had been the leading Power on the European continent for the past ten years, was heavily censured. France had demanded the hardest peace terms and stood firm for the strict application of the terms imposed, and she was regarded in Sweden as the greatest obstacle to an agreement such as would make the peace a lasting reality. During the earlier 1920's it was usual for the greater part of the Swedish Press to represent French statesmen as either simple-minded or criminal or both. Their policy was believed to be leading to a nationalistic reaction in Germany and so to a new war; "Encircle Germany with zones . . . treat her as the dangerous lunatic of Europe, take every precaution against her, and one day Germany will break out of her cell with the demoniac force of the lunatic" (*Social-Demokraten*, 29th March 1923). The climax was reached under the Premiership of Poincaré with the occupation of the Ruhr. But the same tendencies persisted even after that; the contemptuous or disgusted references of the time to the egoism and intrigues of the Great Powers were in fact generally directed against France. Only a few papers—chiefly *Dagens Nyheter* and *Forum*—made any systematic attempt to show that French policy could be explained and defended on the grounds of France's need for security and her fears of a fresh German invasion. A distinction was frequently drawn—as before the First World War—between French culture and French policy; the former was praised and the latter attacked, not only for its expansionist tendencies and harshness towards Germany, but for its Parliamentary scandals and ministerial instability.

The country which stood highest in Swedish estimation was undoubtedly Great Britain, which was regarded with a combination of sympathy and respect. Britain, whose position in the world appeared unshaken, used her influence on the European continent to smooth out differences and restrain her former ally France. A large body of opinion in all parties was inclined, or at any rate hoped, to see Britain as the impartial conciliator which would be able to realise the ideals of which weak Sweden could only talk. If British policy was criticised, it was generally because it was suspected of being influenced by the French; the criticism sprang from a disappointed faith, very far removed from the bitterness felt against France. Culturally and ideologically British influence grew stronger and stronger; probably in years to come, when things can be seen in clearer perspective, it will be realised that during the 1920's Britain stepped into Germany's old place in the Swedish cultural world. The United States was

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regarded as a more remote but potentially more powerful Britain. Again and again the hope was expressed that America would join the League of Nations and make it more just and powerful, that she would effect a cancellation of war debts, and that a second and more fortunate Wilson would arise to set Europe's affairs in order. As in the case of France, a distinction was often drawn between American culture and policy. The traditional contempt for "Americanism" as a mode of life persisted obstinately in spite of growing appreciation of America's contribution to world peace.

The slackening of internal tension was reflected primarily in the general acceptance of the recently introduced democratic reforms. The Social Democrats, to whom formerly government by the people had meant chiefly a means of introducing Socialism, decided to shelve their socialisation programme and adopt as their immediate aim the strengthening of Parliamentary democratic government, while the Right-Wing, which only a few years previously had regarded democratisation as a danger to culture and the social order, accepted the reforms carried out with an unexpected good grace, and succeeded in preserving considerable influence within the new framework. The general attitude towards the dictatorships which were set up during and after the World War in Russia and Italy was consequently anti-pathetic. But there were varying shades of opinion. Suspicion of Russia was rather more pronounced in the Right-Wing and the non-Socialist Left than among the Social Democrats. The Right-Wing Press in particular expressed strong opposition to Russia both nationally and ideologically. Russia still figured as the traditional enemy of Sweden and Finland, and a threat to world peace in general: at the same time it was frequently predicted that a form of government based on Communistic principles could not last long. This same view seems to have been operative to some extent in the realm of active politics (the question of a trade agreement 1922). With regard to the Fascist dictatorship in Italy—set up progressively in 1922—1925—the position was reversed. Here, antagonism increased in direct proportion to the degree of radicalism. Among the Social Democrats and the greater part of the non-Socialist Left, criticism was sharp and persistent, and frequently combined with prophecies of the rapid fall of the dictatorship. Some of the Right-Wing Press, on the other hand, and occasionally certain Liberal newspapers, treated Fascism sympathetically; they pronounced it necessary for Italy, even if not suitable for Sweden, and occasionally contrasted it favourably with alleged Socialist and Democratic abuses. It is characteristic that these pro-Fascist sympathies mostly came to the fore in gossip columns, news stories and other non-editorial articles, rather than in the leaders themselves.—On the whole, however, democratic principles continued to hold the day. The Communist party never seriously threatened the position of the Social Democrats as

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leaders of the Labour movement, and no party rose to any prominence during this period on a programme of Fascist dictatorship.

The public attitude towards foreign affairs, however, in Sweden as elsewhere, showed two main tendencies which corresponded roughly with the division Right-Wing—Left-Wing. The difference may be defined in broad terms as being that the Right-Wing was pessimistic, the Left-Wing optimistic about the possibility of international reconciliation and enduring peace. The Right-Wing desired peace and an international organisation of justice quite as ardently and certainly as sincerely as the Left, but doubted whether it could ever be attained, at any rate within the foreseeable future. According to the traditional Conservative conception, the nations were divided from each other by personally or ideologically coloured, but all the same natural and fundamental differences, which it was unlikely would be smoothed out or bridged over for a very long time. Hobbes had taken as his starting-point the assumptions that "mankind is a wolf towards mankind" (*homo homini lupus*), that in the state of nature "every man is at war with every man," and that peace and security could only be attained by means of a strong central government; similarly the Right-Wing regarded national States as naturally competitive and militant units, whose rapacity could only be overcome after long and slow development by a supra-national government. For the present, their only guarantee of security must be their own strength. The Left, on the contrary, was inclined to regard wars and conflicts as a temporary condition, due ultimately to lack of insight and understanding. Peaceful and happy relations between the States could be realised, they said, if only common sense and the true human instincts could prevail. To the Right, it was a question of bridling Nature, to the Left, of releasing it—which would appear easier. The inspiration of this attitude is faith in the original goodness of mankind, in the power and value of reason, in a natural harmony of interests — all of them ideas which Liberal and Socialist theory have in common. The Social Democrats differed slightly from the others in their belief that real harmony could only be attained by the universal victory of Socialism.

The attitudes described are based not only on different estimates of human nature and future events. From another point of view, the essential difference lies in the scale of values. The Right-Wing regarded the national unit not only as of decisive importance but—to a greater degree than the Left—as an irreplaceable value; the Left laid the corresponding emphasis on international unity. But to attempt to distinguish between faith and values in this connection involves a schematisation which may lead to misunderstanding; generally they are indissolubly connected.

The differences were intensified by what might be called secondary divergencies. The opposing parties misinterpreted each other's attitude

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by over-concentrating on their own. Whereas the Right called its own attitude realistic, the Left declared that it was based on cynicism or lack of feeling or, still worse, on a not confessed or possibly not conscious nationalism and a consequent aversion to international co-operation. Whereas the Left believed itself activated by a rationalistic faith in human progress, it was accused by the Right of naive idealism and illusions, or still worse, of a lack of patriotism. To this must be added that both sides accused the other of actually working against the end they professed to further. The credulity of the Left-Wing, said the Conservatives, prevented that clear-sighted and critical judgment without which peace could never be preserved or the security of the State ensured. The suspicion and negativism of the Right-Wing, answered the Left, stood in the way of international justice and so also of national security; how could you ever attain a peaceful order if you doubted its possibility and suspected everyone else of evil intentions? This sort of argument, or misinterpretation of the opposite party, turned up in practically every debate on foreign policy.

It should perhaps be emphasised that the above account has necessitated a great deal of generalisation, in the course of which certain features may have been over-stressed; I have endeavoured to characterise as briefly as possible the "typical" attitudes. In the case of many politicians and political journalists—particularly those in leading positions—these attitudes were less pronounced and extreme than the account might seem to suggest. What really matters is that the Swedish attitude to foreign affairs and Swedish foreign policy were based to a fairly large extent on values and conceptions shared by all.

This is clearly shown by a glance at Swedish policy in the League of Nations. This was characterised by great unanimity not only in respect of the proposals brought forward but also of the general tone of contributions to the debate. It is hardly possible to guess from the contents of a speech whether it was made by a Conservative, a Liberal, or a Social Democrat. Their points of view are generally the same; only very rarely does some expression suggest a certain party political affiliation. In any account of Swedish policy in the League of Nations, it may be treated of as an unbroken unity.³

The Swedish representatives on the League of Nations Assembly and (1922—1926, 1936—1939) on the League Council worked in accordance with the principles laid down by the Riksdag and Government on Sweden's entry into the League (cf. p. 20). They sought to increase the League's universality by working for the inclusion of States not originally invited to join or which had remained outside for other reasons. When Trygger declared to the 1922 Assembly that the nations ought not to be divided into "victors, vanquished and neutrals" and that "it is only by becoming universal that the

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League can become powerful and effective," he was giving expression to the Swedish attitude in general. But on this point, dependent as it was on the general relations prevailing between the Great Powers, Sweden could do nothing decisive. Of greater practical importance was her championship of what were often called democratic principles in the organisation of the League. The chief questions at issue here were the composition of the Council and the relationship between the Council and the Assembly. Sweden's aim was to strengthen the position of the Assembly in relation to the Council, which in reality amounted to demanding greater influence for the smaller States. The most important steps towards attaining this end were that the dates of the Assembly meetings should be fixed and its right of control clearly recognised; the number of permanent seats on the Council should only be increased in urgent cases (Germany 1926), and the Council altogether not grow so large that it became in practice the dominating organ of the League; the non-permanent seats on the Council should be allocated on a rota basis, so that the composition of the Council was constantly changed and oligarchical tendencies were prevented. Sweden, in co-operation particularly with the other Scandinavian States, made some valuable contributions to all these questions; but it should be emphasised that she never presented any general programme for the constitution of the Council and its relations with the Assembly. In non-official Swedish comment the curious idea can often be detected that real democracy within the League would require equality between all States, irrespective of their size, power or general importance.

A typical example of Sweden's work at Geneva was her enthusiastic and largely successful contribution towards the task of formulating the regulations relating to judicial procedure to be applied in international disputes. The basic principle was that such disputes should as far as possible be settled by impartial arbitration based on the general principles of international law. The procedure itself was largely modelled on conciliation agreements in force between the Scandinavian States. Sweden again came to the fore in connection with the purpose proclaimed in the Covenant of promoting international disarmament. Time after time Swedish delegates, foremost among them Branting, urged the nations to put into effect the measures described in Article 8 of the Covenant. The great Disarmament Conference did not, however, actually meet until 1932.

Although Sweden worked in these respects for positive reforms, for institutions and measures which represented the fulfilment of the principles of the League, she adopted a decidedly negative attitude towards the development of regulations destined to guarantee help from States Members against aggression and in general, by common action based on force, to turn the League into a kind of international police organisation. In accordance with the views expressed during

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the preliminary discussions by the Riksdag and the Government, Sweden had expressly declared on joining the League that she did not regard co-operation in military sanctions as obligatory; this attitude was accepted by the League, though never officially approved. During the subsequent period Sweden on the one hand worked for the relaxation of those sanctions regulations which, according to the Covenant, were unquestionably obligatory, and on the other set up a determined resistance to all proposals for tightening up the obligations. Even if the Swedish attitude to these questions cannot be said ever to have exercised a decisive influence, she was one of the States which most vigorously and systematically opposed the development of an effective sanctions procedure.

M. Rappard, an outstanding Swiss commentator on the work of the League, has pointed out that the States Members could be divided into three groups according to their conception of the main purpose of the League; to the first group, the great essential was security, to the second, peace, and to the third, justice.⁴ The first group comprised France and other States which had suffered most severely from the war and (or) profited most from the peace; the second, Great Britain and her Dominions; and the third, the ex-Neutral States and others. Sweden was unquestionably one of the most typical representatives of the third group. This was shown not only by her zeal for the development of arbitration machinery and her lack of interest in the solution of the security problem by a system of guarantees. Her whole work on the League bore a judicial, sometimes a technical juridical, stamp. Her interest in the codification of international law and insistence on the letter of the Covenant are less significant in this respect than the fact that the Swedish representatives on Council and Assembly always appeared as champions of the idea of justice, and often—sometimes successfully—tried to set themselves up as the legal conscience of the League. Sweden was perhaps more inclined than any other State to act as critic and overseer. Branting's speech in the general debate of the League Assembly on 8th September 1921 was typical in this respect. The demand for justice came up again and again. The Council, Branting said, must "avoid any appearance . . . of acting in any question as the mouthpiece of one group of Powers or another. The idea of justice must stand out as its one and only guiding principle."

It is hardly surprising that this should have seemed a natural attitude to Swedish statesmen. Sweden threatened no-one and felt herself threatened by no-one; no State could make any legal claim on either Swedish territory or independence. Such elements of dispute as existed or might conceivably arise in Scandinavia—such as the questions of the Aaland Islands or Greenland—would never be likely to lead to war, but on the contrary were particularly suitable for settlement by arbitration. Sweden had had no great difficulty in

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preserving her neutrality during the World War, and even those who felt it advisable to maintain a fairly strong defence expected that she would be able to do the same in any future war. Peace in Sweden had become a tradition and acquired something of the sanctity of justice. The Swedes were inclined to view the international situation from the same angle and by the same standards as were applicable to Scandinavia. All disputes ought to be capable of solution by arbitration or peaceful agreement—on accepted principles, not by power policy or war. A system of guarantees for mutual help appeared at once dangerous, as Sweden had little to gain by it, and superfluous—if the much-discussed principles of justice were recognised and applied. Sweden's interest in the rule of justice and her lack of interest in the problem of security also affected her attitude to the organisation of the League. If the League was to be regarded as a court of law, created to apply a legal code in being, then any domination by the Great Powers was unjustifiable and even dangerous; were not the small States, which could not rely upon force, the obvious champions of the principles of justice?

Sweden's conduct in the League of Nations has often been held up, both at home and abroad, as exemplary. If by this is meant that the success of the League would have been assured if all States had adopted the same policy as Sweden, then that is undeniable. One might even go so far as to say that in that case the League would have been unnecessary, for peace would have been assured without the help of any international organisation. But seen in the light of hard facts, Swedish policy takes on a different complexion. A number of States both inside and outside the League were notoriously dissatisfied with the existing state of affairs and were prepared in certain circumstances to resort to force to obtain their demands; conflicts were therefore to be expected of such a nature that judicial procedure, however perfect, would be ineffective. This was the decisive consideration to those nations primarily interested in security, and they therefore demanded a system of guarantees strong enough to frighten off or bring to heel would-be disturbers of the peace. In the eyes of Sweden and the ex-Neutrals in general, this argument was unacceptable if only because a system of security more or less clearly envisaged the maintenance of a *status quo* of which in certain respects they disapproved. Another consequence of the security system would be that States which could otherwise have remained neutral would in certain circumstances have to assist a State which was the victim of attack, and that the Great Powers in the League, without whose support any collective military action was unthinkable, would acquire decisive influence. But on the other hand could peace be maintained without "security," that is, without the use of armed force by the League?

The dilemma could be expressed in another form. Sweden—or

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rather the group to which Sweden belonged—stood for justice, and conceived a just order more or less clearly as being an order in which national interests would no longer seriously conflict. If such an order were established, Sweden would have nothing against the introduction of security guarantees, under which all States would be obliged to intervene in the event of a breach of the peace. But under such an order, there would be little need for security guarantees. To those States—e.g. France and Poland—to which security was the first consideration, the maintenance of the *status quo* had come to appear as a matter of sacred right; their ideas of justice were therefore quite different from the Swedish. Their object was to obtain guarantees for the existing order, or the immediate introduction of a system of collective security. Promises of future security, after “justice” in the Swedish sense had prevailed, did not interest them.

The above is only intended to illustrate the sort of difficulty one comes up against in attempting to form a general estimate of Swedish policy. No such attempt will, of course, be made here. One obvious weakness in the Swedish position must, however, be pointed out, Sweden constantly insisted, both in general declarations of programme and in defining her attitude to specific questions, that justice must be done. Sometimes it is clear what she meant; for example, when the Swedish member of the Council demanded “justice” in the Corfu affair, he meant chiefly that the Council should declare itself competent to deal with the question under the clear terms of the Covenant. But generally the meaning is far from clear. What did Branting mean by “the idea of justice” in the above-quoted extract from his speech of 1921, and what did the Swedish Government mean when it demanded a plebiscite to determine the nationality of the Aaland Islands in the name of “justice”? Obviously in these and similar cases they had in mind neither the *status quo* nor any accepted principles of international law. Nor does the invocation of “the principles of right and justice” (*ex aequo et bono*) as the standard for arbitration procedure in certain agreements, throw any more light. Probably what was intended was something to the effect that no issue should ever be dominated by the interests of single nations, but should be settled in accordance with the interests of the whole League or the whole world. That more primitive ideas of natural law also played a part in concrete cases, is shown most clearly by the Swedish attitude to the Aaland question (cf. p. 111 ff.). This constant talk about justice tended in any case to create the impression that fixed standards of behaviour did exist, although they obviously did not, and thus gave Sweden a polemic advantage both in her general position already described, and in her attitude on each individual case—for this attitude was identified with justice.

The development of the League itself neither confirmed the fears entertained by the Conservatives in 1920, nor fulfilled the hopes of the

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Left-Wing. The League proved less powerful than had been expected. Ten years after its birth, it would never have occurred to anyone to describe it, as the Conservatives did during the debate on Sweden's entry, as an international dictatorship. Neither could anyone have called it a really effective organisation of international justice. During the whole of this period, the League never on any occasion invoked sanctions against a Covenant-breaking Power, although adequate provocation occurred more than once; its inaction was made easier in each case by the fact that military operations were begun without a formal declaration of war. The international disarmament provided for in the Covenant was never achieved. Neither was the League expanded and developed as had been hoped, although some important progress was made in this respect. In general it was found that the rule requiring unanimous decisions tended to reduce the power of action of the League. However, the League was still there, its humanitarian and idealistic work was recognised everywhere as being of great value, and in some instances it intervened effectively for the furtherance of peace and international harmony. These circumstances form the background to the discussion to be described below. To what extent the work of the League was a factor in the relaxation of tension which became more and more marked during the later 1920's can not be definitely estimated. Some hold that the League caused the relaxation of tension, others that the relaxation of tension was at the root of the partial success of the League.

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Opposition to entering the League had been comparatively strong in Sweden. Altogether 238 votes were cast in the Riksdag in favour of joining, and 114 against. In Denmark, the corresponding motion was carried unanimously (although with a large number of abstentions), and in Norway by 100 votes to 20 (including 16 Socialists of a group corresponding roughly with the Swedish Left-Wing Socialists). What might be called official comment—speeches by leading politicians, Riksdag debates, party programmes—shows, however, that Sweden's entry into the League was quickly accepted by representative opinion. The opposition of the Conservatives and the Farmers' League gave way to approval in principle, even though they never became such warm supporters as the non-Socialist Left and the Social Democrats.

A striking indication of this change was that Trygger, who in the spring of 1920 had been one of the severest critics of the League, in the autumn of the same year agreed to serve with Branting and Marks von Würtemberg on the Swedish delegation to the first session of the League Assembly. Thereafter it became the regular custom for the Swedish delegation to the Assembly to be composed of

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representatives of different parties, generally designated by the parties themselves. The successes scored by the Swedes at the First Assembly seem to have influenced public opinion. In the *remiss* debate in the 1921 Riksdag, Trygger declared that "my own impression of the meeting of the League Assembly was more favourable than I had dared hope, in view of the early history and composition of the Covenant." At the same time, he still entertained the fears he had expressed during the debate on entering the League, which he still felt had not "either the actual or the moral strength to constitute a guarantee for our national existence."

The principle of Swedish support of the League was, however, raised again in the 1921 Riksdag by Left-Wing Socialist motions demanding the setting up of a commission to consider the question of Sweden's secession from the League, which they characterised as an Imperialistic alliance of Great Powers directed against revolutionist Russia. The committee opposed the proposal briefly in general terms, and the motions were defeated in both Chambers after short debates in which only representatives of the extreme Left (which was now splitting up into Communists and Left-Wing Socialists) spoke in favour. League supporters pointed out that it was no use making excessive demands of the League all at once. "The League of Nations is like a little child from which we should not expect too much," said one speaker (Möller); and this simile was widely adopted. The final votes were, in the First Chamber 78 to 11, in the Second Chamber 133 to 26, which shows that a number of Conservatives, possibly also members of the Farmers' League, voted for the motions even though they did not take part in the debate. These votes show that membership of the League had ceased to be a party issue between the main political parties.

The few, generally rather slender debates held during the subsequent decade on the subject of Swedish membership of the League, indicate that opposition in principle was steadily diminishing. In 1922, the Government asked the Riksdag's approval of proposals for modifications in the Covenant adopted by the 1921 League Assembly; most of these were concerned with matters of detail, but one, introduced at the instance of Sweden and other States, provided that the League Council could allow States a certain period of grace for the application of sanctions in accordance with Article 16. The Constitutional Committee, with the support of the majority of its Conservative members, approved the proposal, which was adopted by both Chambers without a division; Trygger spoke in support, and only a few Conservatives urged its rejection, on the same general grounds as those on which the party had originally opposed Sweden's entry into the League. The following year, Trygger published in *Svensk Tidskrift* a definitely favourable article; now that Sweden was a member of the League, it was the duty of every Swedish citizen to "further the development

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of the League of Nations along such lines as would best enable it to realise those great ideals of international solidarity and brotherhood which should inspire it."⁵ Nevertheless, he defended the Conservative opposition to joining. If the majority of Neutrals had refused, he said, the League would the sooner have become universal. It is significant that Trygger, when he became Prime Minister a little later, chose as Foreign Minister first Hederstierna, who in 1920 had worked for Sweden's entry into the League, and on the latter's resignation, Marks von Würtemberg, who had worked both for and in the League. Prominent members of the Right-Wing and the Farmers' League, speaking in *remiss* debates and on other occasions, adopted a favourable attitude. On the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the League, Trygger as Foreign Minister in the Lindman Government sent the following telegram to the League: "On this tenth anniversary of the establishment of the League of Nations I wish to convey the sincerest good wishes of the Swedish Government to this great international institution, to whose principles Sweden is deeply devoted. The League of Nations during its brief existence has already done much to safeguard the peace of the world, and its fruitful labours and beneficent influence will extend over an ever-widening sphere."

Motions urging secession from the League were brought forward on three further occasions during this period, in 1924, 1927, and 1929. They were all moved by Communists. The Constitutional Committee opposed them all, in 1924 with a few words to the effect that the League had not fulfilled all the hopes that had been placed in it but that there was no reason to despair of its future possibilities, in 1927 and 1929 by referring to former decisions. The motions were defeated after brief debates, in 1924 by 106 votes to 10 in the First Chamber and 146 to 15 in the Second, on the other occasions without a division. Only the Communists spoke in the debates on behalf of the motions, except in 1927, when they had the support of one Conservative. The Communists also demonstrated on a few occasions by opposing the annual Bill granting the sum necessary to defray Sweden's share of the League expenses. They always referred to the League as an instrument of Capitalist Imperialism, and frequently declared a collective attack on Russia to be imminent.

The League was generally not referred to at all in party political programmes, or only in connection with the defence question. The new Social Democratic programme adopted in 1920, however, demanded "a democratically organised league of Nations or international police force." The Conservative election programme for 1921 contained some reference implying criticism of the League, but this was not repeated at the following elections; the League of Nations was not mentioned again. The Social Democrats' 1921 election programme also contained criticism of the League; it had not succeeded in asserting the principles of justice in international politics, and a

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foreign policy based on justice, peace and disarmament would only be possible when Labour governments came to power in the leading countries of Europe. This passage which—like the corresponding passage in the Conservative programme for the same year—probably referred to the Aaland Island question, was not repeated again. At some later elections the programmes of the Social Democrats and the non-Socialist Left contained general statements to the effect that the League should be developed and strengthened and that Swedish foreign policy should work towards this end. At the later elections during the period under consideration, references to the League, always very brief, became still slighter or were omitted altogether. In the election campaigns themselves, League questions never figured to any extent worth mentioning.

The first year of the League's work was characterised by energetic but mostly fruitless attempts to strengthen the new international organisation, partly by modifications in the Covenant, partly by supplementary agreements. The chief problems before it were: the method of settling international disputes, the establishment of international security by guarantees of various kinds, and disarmament in accordance with Article 8. Sweden's policy, the guiding principles of which have already been indicated, was to support to the full the cause of arbitration and disarmament, while discouraging or opposing the idea of security by guarantees. The three problems were dealt with during the first few years individually. A success was scored in the judicial sphere by the establishment of the Permanent Court of International Justice envisaged in the Covenant; Sweden and various other small States decided to admit unconditionally the full competence of the Court to deal with certain judicial disputes, while most States reserved the right to consider their attitude in each individual case. No decision was reached with regard to a quasi-judicial procedure (conciliation or arbitration) in disputes involving national interests—instead of submission to the League Council—although a recommendation for such procedure was accepted by the League Assembly in 1922. The efforts made, particularly by the Scandinavian delegates, to induce the League to take some decisive action in the disarmament question, led to no real result. As to the security question, the Scandinavian States brought forward a suggestion in 1920 for a more elastic application of Article 16. Economic sanctions were not to be obligatory; under this proposal, the Council would be given the right, "on the representations of a State to which the application of the said provisions would involve particular danger, to allow that State to maintain relations with the covenant-breaking State to an extent to be determined by the Council". This proposal was successful to the extent that the Assembly adopted the amendment referred

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to above, according to which a certain period of grace could be granted in some cases in the application of sanctions.

The points of difference between different groups of States came out very clearly in the League debates on the above questions. The advocates of "security" rejected—though in polite terms—disarmament and the judicial settlement of conflicts of interest, unless satisfactory guarantees could be given for assistance against aggression. This group of States—chiefly France and Poland and a few others closely associated with France—were inclined to regard the combination of a demand for disarmament and unwillingness to give guarantees as a sign of egotism and a lack of interest in the League on the part of the small ex-Neutrals. These retorted that "a general limitation of armaments would in itself constitute a considerable guarantee of national security," and that "if the majority of States were unwilling to restrict their armaments without obtaining guarantees, there were others which would be highly embarrassed by the responsibilities incurred by a treaty of guarantee" (Undén 1922).⁶

The Assembly meetings of 1922 and 1923 tried to get round the difficulty by running the questions of security and disarmament together, or rather, by proposing security measures which were also intended to prepare the way for disarmament. In 1922 the Assembly adopted a resolution (no. XIV) which emphasised that a plan for the limitation of armaments must be general if it was to have any prospect of being carried through completely, and that "in the present state of the world a large number of Governments would not take the responsibility of any considerable reduction in armaments unless they received in exchange a satisfactory guarantee for their national security". Such guarantee might be provided by "a mutual defence agreement, which would be open to all countries to join, parties to which would be required to render immediate and effective aid in accordance with a previously agreed plan in the event of one of them being the victim of aggression." This resolution was submitted to the various Governments concerned, with a request for their comments. A large number of States raised objections, while several failed to reply. The Swedish Government, in its reply dated 1st June 1923, pointed out that under the Covenant the States were free to decide whether they would take part in military sanctions in any given case, and that Sweden was not willing to give up this right. She considered that she had special reasons for adopting this attitude. "Just as it is natural for States which, in the present state of European affairs, find themselves in a vulnerable position, to regard a guarantee system as an advantage, since it would reduce their risks in the event of war, so it is equally natural for States which, in present circumstances, are more favourably situated in this respect, to view with apprehension the obligation to take part in war, which such a guarantee system would involve... For Sweden, with her comparatively sheltered

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geographical position and her harmonious relations with other Powers, a firm pledge of assistance would mean a far greater added danger of becoming involved in war than it would for various other States". The Government also emphasised that increased security could be obtained by developing the procedure for judicial settlement and conciliation, and that it should be possible to consider the limitation of armaments without becoming involved in the complicated problem of guarantees.

At the 1923 meeting of the Assembly, it was decided to submit to all Members of the League a draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance worked out by the Assembly. The States Members would promise to aid each other in the event of attack; the League Council would determine among other things what forces each State was to contribute, and appoint a supreme commander-in-chief for the combined forces. Regional pacts for mutual assistance could be concluded to supplement the general agreement. Parties to the treaty would also bind themselves to work together for the limitation of armaments; assistance in the event of attack would only be given to States which fulfilled the terms of the treaty on this point.

A large number of States expressed their views on this draft treaty. Most accepted it in principle, such as France, Poland, Belgium, Czechoslovakia and the Baltic States. Against it were Great Britain, most of the ex-Neutrals, and several States not Members of the League which had been consulted, such as the United States, Germany and the Soviet Union. The Swedish reply, dated 25th August 1924, contained a definite rejection. It followed much the same lines as the reply given the previous year, repeating among other things that Sweden did not wish to commit herself to military sanctions, and pointing out that the proposed expansion of the sanctions system would not be accompanied by any corresponding regulation of the method of solving international disputes. "If it is desired that military sanctions should be universally applied to a State which wages aggressive war, then it should be provided that all disputes which cannot be amicably settled must be submitted to a court of justice or other international authority, a procedure which would unquestionably represent a great step forward, but for which the majority of States do not yet appear to be ready." The effectiveness of the proposed guarantee system was also questioned; it was not certain that all States would fulfil their obligations to provide military aid, and the unanimous decision of the Council which was required before action could be taken, might not always be forthcoming. Supplementary regional treaties of assistance were open to objection, as "separate alliances of this kind easily lead to the formation of opposing groups, which are liable to endanger peace . . ."

The negative replies of 1923 and 1924 were sent by the Conservative Trygger Government, without consultation of the Riksdag. But so

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far as can be judged, they commanded the support of all parties. The League Assembly had not committed itself either in 1922 or 1923 to definite acceptance of the respective proposals, but had rather referred them for general discussion. The Swedish representatives were critical, as for example Branting in the 1923 debates. Neither proposal received very close consideration in Sweden. It was typical of the reception given them that both Trygger and Undén wrote highly critical articles. Undén said that the Swedish attitude was "so natural that it might almost be called obvious. The League of Nations is not yet a judicial organisation capable of providing a solution for disputes or smoothing out differences by judicial procedure or impartial mediation. So long as the League remains in its present imperfect stage of development and the state of the world so unstable, a treaty of guarantee would on the one hand involve too great a risk for a number of States of becoming involved in war, and on the other provide inadequate guarantees that aid would only be required against the real aggressors." Only one influential newspaper, *Dagens Nyheter*, seems to have adopted an attitude favourable in principle to this form of guarantee; we will consider its reasons later.

When the League Assembly met again the following year, in September 1924, it was clear that the line hitherto followed—placing the demand for security first, coupled with disarmament—would never lead anywhere. At the same time, conditions were now favourable for a thorough reconstruction of the League. Changes of government, regarded in many quarters as equivalent to changes of system, had taken place in both France and England, where the Conservative Prime Ministers Poincaré and Baldwin had been replaced by Herriot and MacDonald. This was the beginning of the relaxation of international tension which characterised European policy for some years to come. After protracted public and secret debates the Assembly on 2nd October decided unanimously to recommend "for the serious consideration of all Members of the League" a draft "protocol for the pacific settlement of international disputes." This proposal, which came to be generally known as the Geneva Protocol, set out to treat as one indivisible unit the various principles which had been competing with each other ever since the League began: arbitration, security, and the reduction of armaments. This idea was crystallised in the concluding words of the report which served as a basis for the protocol: "There can be no arbitration and security without limitation of armaments, there can be no limitation of armaments without arbitration and security." This draft was rightly described as the most important result so far of the work for the development of the League.

According to the Protocol, all disputes which could not be satisfactorily settled by the League Council were in principle to be referred either to judicial procedure or arbitration. We need not concern ourselves here with the proposed general principles of arbitra-

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tion. It must be emphasised, however, that the principle that *all* disputes should be dealt with in this way was not strictly adhered to. For example, it was stated in the above-mentioned report that compulsory arbitration would not apply to disputes relating to the revision of treaties or the territorial integrity of States; the Protocol stated further that a dispute could not be dealt with either by decision of the Council or by arbitration if one party to the dispute maintained that it arose out of a matter solely within its own domestic jurisdiction, and this claim was upheld. The problem of security was to be solved by supplementing the sanctions regulations of the League Covenant. In the event of aggression by any State — “Every State which resorts to war in violation of the undertakings contained in the Covenant or in the present Protocol is an aggressor” — the League Council would call upon the signatory Powers to apply sanctions. The obligations of the various States would, according to the Protocol, “be interpreted as obliging each of the signatory States to co-operate loyally and effectively in support of the Covenant of the League of Nations, and in resistance to any act of aggression, in the degree which its geographical position and its particular situation as regards armaments allow.” If a State not a signatory to the agreement resorted to war against a signatory State, the sanctions regulations would apply just the same. Finally, the Protocol provided that a Disarmament Conference was to meet on 15th June 1925; all Powers were to be invited to this. The remainder of the Protocol would enter into force only after a disarmament plan had been accepted. Even States which were not members of the League could accede to the Protocol.

The Swedish delegates at this meeting of the Assembly were Marks von Würtemberg, Foreign Minister in the Trygger administration, Branting, and E. Löfgren, the leader of the Liberal Party. Marks von Würtemberg attended only some of the sessions and was not present at the final discussions on the Protocol. The Swedish case was therefore put by Branting, who emphasised that Sweden could not commit herself to take part in military sanctions, but mentioned that, according to various authorities, the Protocol involved no such obligation. The Swedish delegation also supported a proposal made by Denmark and accepted by the Assembly, inserting the words “in the degree which its geographical position and its particular situation as regards armaments allow” in the sentence quoted above. While the representatives of various States—including France, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia and Jugoslavia—ratified the Protocol immediately, Branting and a number of other delegates reserved full freedom of action for their Governments.

Of Branting's personal attitude there can be no doubt. Already on 18th September he sent a telegram from Geneva—obviously to some extent with an eye to the election campaign then in progress, in which the defence question figured largely—in which he described

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the proposed treaty as extraordinarily valuable and called it "this new Magna Carta for world peace"; he expressed himself in similar terms in an interview after the resolution of 2nd October.

In the following months, the Geneva Protocol was widely discussed, and strong party political differences became apparent.

The Conservative Press attacked the Protocol sharply. Their fundamental objection was that, if Sweden joined, she would run the risk of becoming involved in war from which otherwise she could have stood aside; the Right-Wing generally interpreted the Protocol as involving obligations to participate in military sanctions. In particular, they feared conflicts between Great Powers outside the League (Germany, Russia) and Members of the League (France and her Allies), and that, under the Protocol, Sweden would become the ally of the latter Powers. They asserted that the Protocol was designed to guarantee a *status quo* which in many respects could not be maintained. Others held that the Protocol would prove ineffective; the much-talked-of disarmament would never be accomplished, and in the event of a conflict many States would refuse to fulfil their obligations to assist the State or States attacked. It was urged that the Defence Bill, which was expected to be presented to the 1925 Riksdag, should be postponed until the fate of the Protocol was known. The Conservative attitude was developed at length in a speech by Trygger and a pamphlet by the former envoy C. G. Westman, with a postscript by the ex-Foreign Minister E. Trolle. Trygger emphasised that the Protocol was based on the *status quo*. The possibility of changes in the existing order was not considered. It might therefore invoke the use of sanctions even in cases where justice did not lie on the side of the victim of the attack. "In my opinion, the chief merit of the Protocol is that it emphasises more sharply than ever before the world's need for peace... But its great fault is that it does not go to the root of the problem... Laws... are always ineffective unless they are upheld by the legal conscience of the public... If we consider in particular the obligation resting on a nation to hurl itself into war in which no interests of its own are involved, in order to aid another nation at the cost of its own well-being or possibly existence, such an obligation would never be observed if there could be any question that the cause at stake was not merely formally, but materially right and just. World peace can never be built up on a basis of agreements binding nations to go to war to help one another, but must rest principally on a general spirit of understanding and confidence between the nations." Trygger believed that such a spirit could not be expected to emerge so soon after a war. It could only be created as the bonds between the nations, broken by war, grew strong again. When this had happened, the question of collective action against a peace-breaking State might be taken up with some prospect of success. Until then, all that could usefully be done was

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to try to induce as many States as possible to submit their disputes to peaceful settlement. Westman's pamphlet followed in the main the same lines, and in addition examined and discussed the text of the Protocol, pointing out certain passages which were either obscure or contradictory. Similar comments were also made in an article by Professor Eli Heckscher. He reckoned, however, with the possibility that the League might eventually develop into a supra-national organisation. Representation might possibly be organised in the form of two Chambers, one representing national Governments, the other the people irrespective of nationality. The great thing was to create organs which would truly represent the interests of the whole, and the members of which would not feel themselves as national representatives. Once this was achieved, frontier revisions and other alterations in the *status quo* would become possible, and a just and lasting peace could be attained.

The views of the non-Socialist Left were divided, but seem to have been mainly critical or sceptical. *Stockholms-Tidningen* and other influential newspapers took much the same line as the Conservative Press. The Geneva plan, if universally adopted, could be a valuable instrument for the maintenance of peace, but more probably it would not be universally adopted or at any rate not carried out by all, and then those States which remained faithful to their obligations would be in greater danger of war than ever. "One might almost say," wrote *Stockholms-Tidningen* (23rd October) "that the Geneva plan cannot succeed at all unless it succeeds completely. If this happens, war will vanish altogether and force be transformed into a servant of justice. But if the risk of war is not removed altogether, there is a danger that it may on the contrary be enormously increased, particularly for the hitherto neutral States, by the new demand for guarantees of collective action, which an honourable nation, having once accepted, would not wish to back out of by hair-splitting interpretations of the exact wording of the agreement." *Dagens Nyheter*, on the other hand, which had already supported the 1922 proposal for a treaty guarantee, conducted an energetic campaign for the acceptance of the Protocol. Its argument was that the small States, if they wished to have security, could not refuse to accept the obligation to participate actively in an international system of guarantees, even if this involved increased risks in some respects. The Geneva Protocol was really only the logical development of the provisions of the League Covenant. Under the Covenant the League Council could, of course, only "recommend" military sanctions. "But as a State which breaks the pact is regarded *ipso facto* as having committed an act of war against all Members of the League, it seems obvious that the Council's recommendation must necessitate some military action by all Members of the League, even though it is left to them to determine its extent. So long as the

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provisions of the Covenant relating to the peaceful settlement of disputes remain as rudimentary as they still are, it would be difficult to define precisely the obligation to contribute to military sanctions. But with the creation of an independent organisation for the solution of political disputes, such as the Geneva Protocol envisages, it becomes not only possible but necessary to define the obligation on Members of the League to take part in the defence of the new pacific order . . . In principle, therefore, a Swedish policy which is favourable to the League cannot reject the Geneva Protocol" (11th October). The position would, of course, be altered if the Great Powers which were Members of the League did not accede to the Protocol. *Svenska Morgonbladet* was inclined to accept the Protocol and regard it as providing further justification for the disarmament which, after the 1924 election, was generally considered to be imminent. This paper suggested that it rested with Sweden herself to determine whether or not she would take part in military sanctions, and that such participation would not therefore be necessary in all circumstances. In view of the formation in October 1924 of the Social Democratic Government, however, the leading organ of the Progressive party* pointed out that it must not be taken for granted that the Protocol would be accepted; the new Government must arrange for an unprejudiced examination of the question.

The Social Democratic Press during the autumn of 1924 was strongly in favour of acceptance of the Protocol. It considered Conservative opposition unreasonable from a material point of view, and therefore assumed it was based on fear that the Protocol, if it came into effect, would constitute an unanswerable argument in favour of the reduction of Swedish armaments. The general arguments it brought forward in favour of the Protocol were the same as those of, for example, *Dagens Nyheter*, but it asserted even more confidently that the plan would make peace secure, and consequently that national armaments could be reduced. Opinions differed, however, on the subject of the provisions of the Protocol with regard to military sanctions. Various contributors to *Social-Demokraten*—including Branting—pointed out that Sweden was free to decide in every case whether she would take part in sanctions, and concluded that actually she was not bound to co-operate: sanctions were thus not compulsory. This is a curious argument; it could just as well be said that no international treaties are binding, because the State in question is always free to decide whether it will carry them out or not. *Arbetet*, on the other hand, assumed that military obligations were compulsory. The Protocol, it said (14th October) would mean one right and one duty for Sweden. "The former, because it places arbitration

* In 1923 the Liberal party split into a majority group (the Progressives) and a minority group (the Liberals). In 1934, the two parties reunited under the name of the People's party.

machinery at our disposal and allows us, in the event of infringement of our rights by another Power, to call on the League for aid. Our duty is to keep troops in readiness, in case another Power should call on us for aid against a third Covenant-breaking Power." Sweden was not in danger of conflict, and therefore had nothing direct to gain by accession. "But indirectly we have much to gain: the resultant rule of justice would give Europe stability..."—The Socialist International strongly recommended acceptance of the Protocol.

The Branting Government on 5th November appointed a committee of five experts to report on the question of Sweden's adherence to the Geneva Protocol. The Chairman was the former Prime Minister N. Edén, the members the former Prime Minister O. von Sydow, the Liberal leader E. Löfgren, the envoy T. Höjer, and Professor S. Wallengren; the Social Democrats were not represented.

It became evident during the autumn of 1924 that the Geneva Protocol was going to be more difficult to carry through than might have been expected from the enthusiastic atmosphere in the Assembly when the resolution was first carried on 2nd October. Time after time, preparations for the proposed Disarmament Conference had to be postponed. One important factor was that the Conservative British Government, formed in December, could not immediately decide its attitude; at the last Council meeting of the year, it asked for the postponement of all questions connected with the Protocol, as it had to consult the Dominions. In these circumstances, the King of Sweden in the Speech from the Throne to the 1925 Riksdag declared that it was uncertain whether the Protocol could be submitted to the Riksdag. The question was touched upon by several speakers in the *remiss* debate. The Right-Wing (Trygger, Lindman) reiterated briefly the views already expressed. At the same time they emphasised that their attitude to the Geneva Protocol was not dictated by hostility to the League of Nations, but simply by their fear that it would increase the risk of war. Communist speakers attacked both the League of Nations and the Geneva Protocol, which they regarded as further proof that an attack on the Soviet Union was contemplated. The representatives of the two democratic Left-Wing parties who took part in the debate (the Foreign Minister Undén, E. Löfgren, Engberg) defended the Protocol as a step towards a real system of international justice. Undén considered the articles dealing with the arbitration and disarmament questions the most important. As regards sanctions, the difference between the Protocol and the League Covenant was very slight. The Protocol only provided for voluntary, not compulsory military sanctions. Possibly, however, Sweden ought to define her attitude on this point in a special reservation. Löfgren and Engberg went still further. Löfgren declared that the Left-Wing was "determined to try to continue along the path indicated by the Geneva resolution." "The question is simply this: will the responsible Swedish

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Right-Wing . . . co-operate loyally with the Democratic parties in the pursuit of organised peace, or will it join forces with Communism and . . . sabotage or undermine the work for peace, which after all the Geneva Protocol does much to further." Engberg considered that, "if the Protocol is not accepted, we shall slip back into the old system of alliances, and the old game of competitive armaments will begin all over again."

At the meeting of the League Council on 12th March 1925, the British Foreign Secretary, Chamberlain, announced that Great Britain, the Dominions and India could not accept the Geneva Protocol. This really settled the matter, and the Protocol was removed from the League of Nations agenda.

The British decision had the effect of restricting to some extent the terms of reference of the Committee of Swedish experts appointed on 5th November 1924 by the Foreign Minister. On 7th April 1925, however, they presented their report, which contained a thorough analysis of all the problems involved. The report was signed by four of the five experts: Edén, von Sydow, Höjer, and Wallengren; Löfgren, who had only been present at some of the meetings, did not feel himself in a position to sign. Its general tone was sharply critical. Only a few of its main points can be referred to here.

After emphasising their support for the aims of the Protocol, the experts pointed out that there were certain gaps in the guarantee system it proposed. The prohibition of war did not apply to all wars, but only to aggressive wars waged by the signatory Powers against each other or against other Powers which in certain cases accepted the obligations set forth in the Protocol. Even the expression "resort to war" used in the Protocol was not definite enough to prevent all use of armed force. Certain important classes of dispute were not made subject to the principle of arbitration, above all, according to the report which served as a basis for the Protocol, disputes relating to the revision of treaties or the territorial integrity of States—questions which, under existing conditions, were highly inflammatory. The great question was, however, whether the aims set forth in the Protocol could be attained by the methods envisaged. "We have to consider to what extent the new system is 'complete and permanent,' not only in the technical sense which its framers probably had in mind, but in relation to the actual political conditions of the world, with which every international organisation must reckon." By this was meant in particular how far the proposed system could count upon receiving the confidence of the individual States, to what extent they were willing, in practice as opposed to theory, to let justice take the place of armed force in the settlement of even the most serious disputes, and whether complete impartiality and justice in the application of the system could really be guaranteed. The experts were doubtful on these points. They felt that the first thing was to remove the

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causes of the lack of feeling of security in the world. "What is needed, if we are ever to get to the root of the matter, is open and honest discussion between any States which feel that they have any grievance against each other, and in addition 'moral disarmament,' a genuine effort to change the atmosphere which has become charged on both sides with distrust, not to say hatred. Until this is done, no firm foundations can be laid for lasting security."

As regards sanctions, the experts inclined to the interpretation that States which acceded to the Protocol were bound to provide military forces for use against disturbers of the peace. As it was the function of the Council to name the aggressor and instruct States to apply sanctions, this meant that the Council became the supreme authority determining the application of sanctions. In practice, a State might be compelled by decision of the Council to provide armed intervention in a case where it considered this to be quite unjustified. "Under the general system outlined in the Protocol, a signatory Power might become automatically involved in military sanctions for the preservation of conditions which outraged its national sense of justice." This would be "exceeding the bounds of what was possible and advisable at the present stage of development of the League."

Finally the experts discussed the probable effect of the Protocol on the League organisation. If only certain Members of the League accepted the Protocol, the League would be split into two groups. The signatories to the Protocol might form a "kind of inner circle in the League of Nations, tending to dominate first the Council, and from that the whole fabric of the League." The danger would then arise that States which did not wish to sign the Protocol would leave the League. In addition, States which did not belong to the League might be deterred from joining by the increased obligations and the vesting of still greater power in the central organ.

The Geneva Protocol was the only serious attempt ever made by the League to solve its fundamental problems. The opposition raised against it showed that many States were not prepared even to fulfil their obligations under the Covenant; they objected even to provisions in the Protocol which amounted to nothing more than a clearer definition of the terms of the Covenant. It cannot be denied, declared an English writer, that the failure of the Protocol "really meant that a number of States which readily accepted the Covenant in 1919 would have refused to do so in 1924."⁷ From this point of view, its failure was a severe blow to the League.

The set-back was, however, to some extent covered over by the fact that the relaxation of international tension continued for some years and manifested itself in various ways. The Treaty of Locarno of 1925, which guaranteed the frontier between Germany and France-

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Belgium and established conciliation and arbitration procedure between Germany and her neighbours to the West and East, Germany's entry into the League of Nations in 1926, and the evacuation by the Allies of occupied Rhineland in 1929—30, were interpreted in many quarters, not least in Sweden, as signs of the "moral disarmament" so often talked of in the League and at other international conferences. The attitude of Sweden and Swedish public opinion to the organisational and allied work of the League during this period requires only a few brief comments.

Sweden continued her work for the development and wider application of the principle of arbitration, with the full support of Swedish public opinion. She concluded a number of separate arbitration agreements—generally approved by the Riksdag without opposition or debate—and the Swedish delegations at Geneva worked for the acceptance of general rules of arbitration. A considerable success was scored in this respect when the 1928 Assembly approved a General Act worked out under active Swedish co-operation, embodying provisions for the application of conciliation, arbitration and judicial procedure to the settlement of international disputes, and containing various models for conciliation and arbitration agreements. The Swedish Government (Lindman—Trygger) proposed to the 1929 Riksdag that Sweden should accept the arrangement that judicial disputes should always be submitted to the Permanent Court of International Justice or a special arbitration court, whereas disputes on matters of national interests should be submitted to conciliation procedure but not to compulsory arbitration. The Constitutional Committee supported the proposal unanimously, and it was accepted by both Chambers without a division. Individual speakers in the brief debates suggested on the one hand that the principle of arbitration had been carried too far (Hammarskjöld), and on the other that disputes on matters of national interest should also be subject to compulsory arbitration (Vennerström). In 1932 the Riksdag requested the Government to consider accession to Chapter III of the General Act, i.e. to accept arbitration also in questions of national interests; but no decision on this point was ever taken.

The Kellogg Pact, that strange agreement "outlawing war" concluded in Paris in the autumn of 1928, must be considered as another contribution to the cause of collective security. It simply consisted firstly in a declaration that the signatory Powers condemned "resort to war for the settlement of international disputes and renounced war as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another," secondly in an undertaking that the States in question would never attempt to solve disputes arising between them, "of whatever nature or origin," by other than pacific means. No rules were given for the method of settling disputes or for the application of sanctions in the event of the violation of treaties, no provisions were made about the

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reduction of armaments. On the whole the Swedish Press welcomed the Pact, although frequently pointing out that its importance was purely moral and psychological, and sometimes hinting that the policy it pursued was simply one of systematic illusion; the Social Democratic Press in particular regretted that it made no contribution to the disarmament question. When Sweden received an invitation to join, the Government presented a Bill in the 1929 Riksdag. This Bill pointed out that the value of the new Pact must not be over-estimated; the Constitutional Committee, in a unanimous report, stated that "the real importance of the Pact must be considered to be less juridical than moral and psychological." The two Chambers passed the Bill without a division. The fairly comprehensive debate in the Second Chamber revealed a clash of opinion, particularly in the Social Democratic party, between those who considered the Pact of immense importance—"a new light for humanity" (Hansson)—and those who thought a declaration against war without disarmament provisions a meaningless gesture (Vougt, Hallén).—Difficulties arose later when the question came up, at the 1930 Assembly, of adapting the League Covenant to the Kellogg Pact; and it is worth recalling that once again Sweden showed disinclination to agree to any extension of the League's sanctions system. While admitting the necessity of sanctions, she emphasised the complicated situation which would arise if the Members of the League were divided into opposing groups and so could not agree on which was the aggressor.

A better formulated though extremely modest contribution to the solution of the guarantee problem was the Convention for the provision of financial assistance to States victims of aggression, which was approved by the 1930 Assembly and submitted the following year by the Swedish Government to the Riksdag for ratification. This Convention related to the paragraph in Article 16 of the Covenant, according to which Members of the League agreed to give each other financial and economic support in the event of a Member resorting to war in disregard of its covenants. It provided that States Members should subscribe sums in peacetime to be used as loans to States which were the victims of attack. The proposal was accepted by the Riksdag without opposition except from the Communists.

On a number of occasions the Socialist International adopted resolutions recommending a general strike or still more far-reaching measures by the workers of a State which resorted to war in violation of the Covenant. This idea was taken up on one or two occasions by the Swedish Social Democrats. A. Engberg, a member of the Swedish delegation to the League Assembly of 1925, stated in a debate in the Constitutional Committee that a general strike might possibly be called to strengthen sanctions, and that the will to peace of the working classes could be put to good use in this way by the League. This statement was very sharply criticised by the non-Socialist Press, which

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denounced it as an attempt to employ high treason as an instrument of sanctions, and as in any case impossible to realise in view of the strong sense of patriotism shown by the working classes during the War. The Social Democratic Press defended the remark, but obviously without any great faith in the effectiveness of a general strike as an instrument of peace. A few years later, in the 1932 Riksdag, the Social Democrats submitted motions which derived to some extent from the Engberg proposal, requesting the Government to work "for co-operation between the organised Labour movement and the League of Nations to increase the effectiveness of the economic sanctions provided for in the League Covenant . . ." The Constitutional Committee opposed these motions, pointing out that Sweden had always been against any extension of the sanctions system, and that there would be particular difficulties in any development along the lines indicated: "Direct co-operation between individual organisations within the States on the one hand, and the League of Nations on the other, would amount to setting aside the responsible Governments of the States concerned, which in these questions must be assumed to act in unison with the same country's popular representatives, and would shake the foundations on which authority in a modern State rests and is organised, while at the same time involving the thorough re-organisation of the League itself." The debates in the two Chambers, which resulted in the rejection of the motions without a division, showed that opinion in the Social Democratic party was very much divided as to the practical possibility of the measures suggested. Many also doubted the value of the sanctions system provided for in the Covenant, and suggested that it should be abolished rather than extended.

At the end of the period now under consideration, two general debates took place in the Riksdag on Sweden's attitude to the League sanctions system. In the 1931 Riksdag, the Social Democrat Professor Vilhelm Lundstedt proposed that an investigation should be held into the possibility of securing Sweden's release from sanctions obligations.⁶ He based his argument mainly on legal points which cannot be fully detailed or discussed here, but also asserted that the sanctions provisions involved Sweden in the risk of war, while they would in all probability prove ineffective in any conflict in which the interests of the Great Powers were concerned. The Constitutional Committee opposed the motion, practically unanimously, on grounds which largely ignored the arguments on which it was based. The committee referred to the debate on the sanctions question which took place when Sweden entered the League, and asserted that the arguments then brought forward in favour of sanctions still applied. Actually a State which was outside the League would hardly have greater freedom of action than the League Members in cases in which sanctions were applied, for Members were pledged by the Covenant to prevent

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intercourse between the peace-breaking State and all other States. And even if the sanctions system involved certain risks, it must be remembered how much less desirable it would be if the small States, or certain of them, left all responsibility for upholding the Covenant to the Great Powers. "Such an attitude would militate against the natural and just efforts of the smaller States to gain effective influence in League affairs. In the event of a serious clash between the Great Powers, hopes of a peaceful settlement would depend largely on the firm attitude taken by the smaller Powers, the Neutrals of the World War . . . But unless they show willingness, in certain circumstances, to make sacrifices in the cause of world peace, they can never fulfil a real mission as peace-makers in any serious crisis which may develop between the Great Powers." In the Riksdag the motion was only supported by one member, the Social Democrat Elof Lindberg, who favoured isolated Swedish disarmament and consequently considered the sanctions system dangerous: even if only economic sanctions were regarded as obligatory, they would necessitate the maintenance of military forces, since there would always be the danger that a State against which sanctions were applied, might resort to military action. Both the Right and Left-Wing held that the sanctions regulations should be maintained.

The debate on sanctions held the following year had a different background. At the first meeting of the Disarmament Conference in February 1932, the principal French delegate, Tardieu, asserted that real disarmament would not be possible without international security, and that guarantees for peace must therefore be created; the French proposal was that an international force should be formed, with military contingents from the different States, to protect the States Members against attack. In the debate which followed, the Swedish Foreign Minister Ramel stated that the Swedish delegation was prepared to "give most careful consideration to any proposal for strengthening the security system, for example by the creation of an international police force," that the Swedish Government recognised "the necessity of providing any international organisation of justice with suitable instruments of coercion," and that Sweden did not wish to shirk her duties in this respect. The Foreign Minister and the Ekman Government were attacked for this particularly by *Social-Demokraten*, which feared that Ramel's speech indicated an intention to abandon Sweden's traditional opposition to compulsory military sanctions. When questions were asked in the Second Chamber, the Prime Minister Ekman replied, and a general debate arose. Ekman maintained that Ramel's speech involved no departure from the former Swedish standpoint that economic but not military sanctions should be obligatory. A certain extension of existing sanctions obligations on the understanding that international disarmament was to be an accomplished fact, would mean no break in Swedish policy. Ekman

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did not, however, go directly into the question of whether Sweden ought in any circumstances to undertake military obligations. Lindman, the Conservative leader, agreed with the Prime Minister. The speeches of the Social Democrats revealed the strong feeling which existed at the time between supporters and opponents of isolated Swedish disarmament. The party leader agreed with the Prime Minister and added that in his opinion an international police force was necessary. Such a force would not, however, provide any guarantee of security until national armaments had been considerably reduced. The questions of disarmament and security must therefore be dealt with together. Engberg, the chief exponent of the demand for isolated disarmament, maintained that Sweden ought not in any case to place any "military means of coercion" in the hands of the "existing League of Nations." To build up an international police force and at the same time limit national armaments would be absurd. Only after the individual States had disarmed would it be possible to think of an international police force. Other speakers in favour of isolated disarmament (Z. Höglund, E. Lindberg) largely followed Engberg's lead.

Finally as regards the third great organisational problem of the League, disarmament, as already mentioned, the great Disarmament Conference, heralded since the formation of the League, did not actually meet until 1932. This delay—largely caused by the coupling of the disarmament question with other problems—was one of the aspects of the League's work most frequently criticised. Swedish comments on the international disarmament question will be dealt with mainly in a later chapter. In the present connection it should be emphasised first and foremost that all parties in Sweden welcomed in principle the idea of a general limitation of armaments. In other respects there were minor variations. The Right-Wing in particular considered it unjust and—wrongly interpreting the Peace Treaty and Covenant—a violation of the treaty that German armaments should be limited while similar restrictions were not imposed on other States. Occasionally demands were raised for parity between Germany and the victorious Powers, while the groups which favoured Swedish disarmament held up Germany as a pattern for the other Great Powers. More important were the varied opinions on the relation between security and disarmament. Those groups, mainly Social Democrat, which favoured isolated Swedish disarmament, felt that in the international field disarmament should also be given first place. They started from the more or less definite assumption that armaments were the main cause of war, not *vice versa*, and consequently argued that international disarmament would automatically bring greater security. "Disarmament is . . . not the natural final stage in the establishment of justice, it must be one of the first steps. It is not the result of security; it is its first and primary condition . . ." is a typical com-

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ment in *Social Demokraten* (26th July 1929). The argument was that heavily armed States could break existing treaties with impunity; treaties would be respected only so long as the means to force did not exist. Other sections of opinion, while admitting the importance of a reduction of armaments, felt that disarmament or a radical limitation of armaments could never be achieved unless the States were secured against attack by guarantees. Of other States, those whose own armaments were limited by the peace treaties adopted the first line and demanded disarmament for the rest, while France and other States for which disarmament without guarantees would represent a surrender to potential adversaries, insisted on security first.

The directive for the Swedish delegation to the Disarmament Conference was prepared by a committee consisting of representatives of the main political parties, the members of which committee later became the delegates to the conference. The instructions issued to the Swedish delegation were to work for "the greatest possible reduction of armaments in the world"; so Sweden, unlike Denmark, did not consider complete international disarmament possible. Otherwise, the instructions are not of great interest in this connection. It was obvious from the start that a small State like Sweden would not exercise any decisive influence on the work of the Disarmament Conference.

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Swedish discussion on the League of Nations, in the Riksdag and still more in the Press, was mainly concerned not with the question of whether Sweden should remain in the League or the details of its organisation, but with its method of dealing, or failing to deal, with the disputes and conflicts which arose. To complete the picture, therefore, we must now consider some of the more important and most discussed incidents with which the League had to deal.

Swedish criticism of French post-war policy reached its peak during the dispute on the reparations question, which culminated in the French occupation of the Ruhr on 10th January 1923. In every camp, feeling against France rose to a pitch that can only be described as hostile. The attacks in the Right-Wing Press were the bitterest, but the majority of the Liberal and Social Democratic newspapers adopted a similar tone. It was taken for granted that the official object of French policy, namely to enforce the payment of reparations, was only a cloak to cover more ambitious motives: the conquest of part of Germany, the shattering of German attempts at recovery, the reduction of the German population. The present reparations policy, wrote Professor Gustaf Cassel (in *Svenska Dagbladet*), must lead to the reduction of the German population by at least ten millions. "It would be relatively humane to kill these ten million people outright. Actually

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this mass extermination will not proceed so simply. The process is already in operation in the form of slow starvation, the under-nourishment of large classes of the population, increased infant mortality, and the terrible spread of tuberculosis and other diseases. And this process is to continue year after year, until the necessary reduction in population has been achieved. Such is the real meaning of the French extermination policy..." If the German people emerged victorious from the new bloodless war which their passive resistance in the Ruhr represented, they would, wrote *Karlstads-Tidningen* (6th February) "become in reality what in their folly they claimed to be at the beginning of the war; the Chosen People." Protest meetings about the Ruhr question were held under the auspices of leading politicians of all parties, the Swedish Bishops and a large number of University men appealed to the American President to intervene, collections were made to help the German population in the occupied areas. The impression given by the Press is that Swedish indignation was deeper and more widespread than over any other incident during the inter-war period—except for the Italian bombing of the Swedish ambulance during the winter of 1935—1936. Only a very few newspapers, notably *Dagens Nyheter*, showed any understanding of the French action, maintaining that its purpose was purely to induce a refractory Germany to fulfil her obligations under the Peace Treaty and later agreements. Branting suggested, and was violently attacked for it, that it might be well to try to understand France's motives.

Even before the occupation began, the possibility of some form of Swedish intervention had been discussed. One suggestion was that Sweden, as a member of the Council of the League of Nations, should try to persuade the Council to mediate in the Franco-German conflict. The Speech from the Throne, emphasising Sweden's responsibility since her election to the Council and the necessity that the League should stand firm for "peace and international conciliation on a basis of Justice," seemed to indicate some such intention on the part of the Government. A speech by Prime Minister Branting to the Social Democratic members of the Riksdag on 10th January, in which he referred to the possibility of League intervention in the reparations question and emphasised the special responsibility of the ex-Neutrals in the work for international conciliation, ran along the same lines: "Even if we do not succeed in our endeavours, it is always our duty to do what we can."

During the succeeding weeks, leading up to the meeting of the League Council in Paris on 29th January, the question of Swedish action was generally discussed in the Press. The Social Democratic Press in particular demanded energetic measures. The League must act, not only in view of the immediate consequences of the Ruhr crisis, but in order to maintain its own authority. "If the League

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cannot now fulfil its first duty, it will never be equal to the tasks before it" wrote *Social-Demokraten* (25th January). "If the Franco-German conflict in the Ruhr is allowed to proceed unchecked it will develop so rapidly that an international organisation like the League of Nations will have no time to act. The first necessity is that this struggle must cease." The League would stand revealed as an "already moribund organisation," if it failed to intervene (22nd January). If no other State took the initiative for League action, it was Sweden's duty to do so. Other Social Democratic newspapers expressed similar views. "If the organisation which was created expressly to wipe international disputes as painlessly as possible off the face of the earth, to preserve and perpetuate peace, allows the devastating French policy of violence to continue unopposed, that would be equivalent to a declaration of bankruptcy. The people would lose faith in the League of Nations" (*Folket*, 29th January). The views of the other main parties varied. Most of the Right-Wing newspapers considered it extremely unlikely that a small State like Sweden would be able to induce the League to act, and an initiative which failed would lower Sweden's prestige. Moreover, it was uncertain whether an attempt at conciliation by the League would produce any result: France had shown no regard for the opinions of Great Britain and the United States, and would presumably take little notice of the League of Nations. "The League of Nations has never yet succeeded in pleading the cause of justice with any Great Power, and it seems inconceivable that it should succeed in the present instance," wrote *Stockholms Dagblad* (21st January). Some Right-Wing papers, which believed, in view of Great Britain's critical attitude and the passive resistance of the Germans, that the French action in the Ruhr would end in a fiasco, suggested that Branting's policy was inspired by France, to provide France with an easy way out; the principal mouthpiece for this theory was *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*. But some Conservative papers believed that a Swedish initiative might possibly succeed or did not altogether disfavour the idea. The Liberal Press was similarly divided. Some sections considered intervention useless and risky, others felt that Sweden might make a valuable contribution or at any rate clear the air. On the whole, the Liberal Press seems to have been more in favour of intervention than the Conservative; it made no attempt to suggest that the Swedish Foreign Office was acting under French influence. Most papers, both Liberal and Conservative, stressed that if the Ruhr conflict continued unchecked, it would seriously damage the League.—As always in such cases, the differences on foreign policy were combined with violent party polemics. Conservative papers which were opposed to the idea of intervention, accused its advocates of a naive faith in the League. The opposite camp, particularly the Social Democrats, accused the Right

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of indifference or hostility to the League, or even of being afraid that the League might be successful and so increase its prestige.

The League Council met on 29th January. Branting immediately discussed in private with the other members whether the Council ought not to take up the reparations question or at any rate pass a resolution declaring its readiness to assist in finding a settlement. In view of the determined resistance of France and Belgium, however, he felt it best not to insist, and the Council broke up without ever having discussed the matter in public. The full details of these negotiations were not published until long afterwards, but a statement issued on 31st January announced that the Council had decided not to deal with the reparations question.

This failure only intensified the criticism of the League particularly in the Conservative Press. The League was said to be entirely dominated by the Great Powers, particularly France. "France declared that she does not wish the Ruhr matter discussed, and because of this attitude by a single member of the Council, the Council in its entirety finds itself unable to deal with the question. Could subservience to the egoistic and ruthless policy of a Great Power take a more crass and revolting form?" is a comment typical of the moderate rather than the extreme school (*Svenska Morgonbladet*, 7th February). Not even the Conservatives wanted Sweden to leave the League, but they claimed that the treatment of the reparations question, as of the Aaland question before it, showed that the League had little power and little sense of justice. Criticism of the League was combined in some Conservative newspapers with attacks on Branting and the Social Democratic Government: Branting should either not have attempted to get the reparations question discussed by the Council, or else have insisted, in spite of the warnings of the Great Powers, on a public debate. Sweden's prestige, they said, had suffered from the way he had first talked about what he wanted to do, and then abandoned the idea of doing it, as soon as he met with resistance. The Social Democratic Press and a number of Liberal newspapers replied in Branting's defence that he had done all that could reasonably be done. "We consider," one comment ran, "that Branting in this case has spoken for Europe's conscience, and in so doing has deserved the exact opposite of what the Swedish Conservative Press has so long lavished on him." Newspapers which before the Council meeting had considered Council intervention necessary, now dwelt upon the difficulties of such action, and defended the League against Conservative abuse. The discussion of foreign affairs gave way to party polemics about the conduct of the Government and the general attitude to the League.

The controversy reached the Riksdag itself. The Conservative Professor C. Lindskog asked the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister whether the details of Sweden's initiative on the Council were to be

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laid before the Riksdag. Branting stated in a very brief reply on 7th March that the negotiations were of such a nature that a public account could not reasonably be expected, but an account had been given to the Foreign Affairs Committee. He further declared his intention of surveying the whole field of foreign affairs in a secret session of the Riksdag. Several speakers from the Right-Wing and Farmers' League (Lindskog, Lindman, Starbäck, Olsson i Kullenbergstorp) criticised what they considered to be the Government's exaggerated secrecy, and recalled the demands for an open foreign policy previously brought forward by the Left-Wing which led to the changes in the Constitution in 1921. They also suggested that the Government had acted rashly in the Ruhr question, and had not kept sufficiently in touch with public opinion. The Left-Wing (Branting, Edén, Engberg, Rydén) rejected the accusation of excessive secrecy and emphasised the need for discretion in the public discussion of delicate questions of foreign policy. The interpellation and the attitude shown by the Right-Wing were interpreted as an attempt to discredit the Government for party motives. After the debate, *Social-Demokraten* wrote (15th March) that the Swedish Right-Wing was not "ripe" for open discussion of the relevant aspects of foreign policy.—The report to a secret session promised by Branting was never made, possibly because the Government was overthrown only a few weeks after the *interpellation* debate.

On 27th August 1923 three Italian officers, members of an inter-Allied military frontier commission which was marking out the frontier between Greece and Albania, were murdered on Greek territory not far from the then Greek-Albanian frontier.⁹ Without awaiting a full investigation of the murder, the Italian Government the following day demanded heavy compensation from the Greek Government. When these demands were not accepted in full, Italy began military preparations and on 31st August bombarded and occupied the Greek island of Corfu. The following day, the Greek Government appealed to the recently assembled League Council for immediate intervention, under the terms of Articles 12 and 15 of the Covenant, to settle the dispute. Italy declared—under threat of seceding from the League if her point of view were not accepted—that the matter was no concern of the League's; in the first place the occupation of Corfu could not be regarded as an act of war or a threat of war; in the second, the dispute was concerned properly speaking with the peace treaties and should therefore be referred to the Ambassadors' Conference (the French Foreign Minister and the British, Italian and Japanese ambassadors) then meeting in Paris. Opinions in the League Council differed sharply. Branting in particular (still the Swedish delegate), supported by some of the small States and at first also by the British represen-

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tative Lord Robert Cecil, held that the League ought to deal with the matter, as a dispute of this kind fell unquestionably within its competence. The Council's attitude, however, was largely determined by consideration for Italy as a Great Power; Italy received a large measure of support from France, probably because the latter feared the establishment of a precedent which might be quoted in support of League intervention in the Ruhr question. In the end, the Council decided not to discuss the Corfu question, and avoided any express declaration as to its competence to deal with it, but agreed that it should be handed over to the Ambassadors' Conference. The settlement finally reached represented on the whole a victory for Italy, but some concessions were made to Greece, and Corfu was evacuated at the end of September. Branting, who had declared his views firmly to the Council time after time but not absolutely opposed the procedure adopted, made a very well-received speech to the League Assembly, after the crisis was over, in which he emphasised how necessary it was for all the organs of the League actually to fulfil their functions according to the Covenant.—The Corfu incident attracted a great deal of attention, both as an example of the methods adopted by Fascism to gain its ends in foreign policy and as revealing the weakness of the League. Everywhere except in Italy, it was widely felt that the treatment of the affair, and particularly the Council's refusal to determine the competence question, proved that the League did not dare to exercise its authority in the case of a refractory Great Power. On the other hand it was argued that the main purpose of the League was to work for the maintenance of peace, and that from this point of view the co-operation achieved between the Council and the Ambassadors' Conference had provided perhaps the only way out, even though it was not in accordance with the League Covenant.

In Sweden, the Corfu incident aroused a more lively discussion than almost any other incident in the history of the League. All parties were agreed to the extent of recognising the competence of the League to deal with the Greco-Italian dispute, and criticising both Italy's aggressive action and the relative passivity of the League. But they differed in the exact direction and severity of their criticism and in their estimates of the League. On the whole the Right-Wing laid the largest share of blame on the League, while the Left, particularly the Social Democrats, chiefly criticised Italy and in general displayed more tolerance for the League's weakness.

Many of the leading Conservative newspapers, such as *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Stockholms Dagblad*, showed very little antagonism in principle to the League. They sharply attacked Italy's policy and during the earlier stages of the crisis expressed the hope that the League would prove capable of acting forcefully and successfully. When it became evident that the Council was not going to apply the provisions of the Covenant, their tone became more critical. *Svenska*

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Dagbladet stated (9th September) that the only positive feature of the League's conduct was that it had "not completely given way before Italy's aggression. But the Council had not had the courage to denounce this clearly and definitely as contrary to international law and above all a flagrant violation of the Covenant." In consequence, faith in the League was now "reduced to a microscopic minimum." According to *Stockholms Dagblad* (7th September) the incident showed clearly that "the small nations still have nothing to trust to but their own strength, in spite of membership of the League of Nations." Some Conservative papers showed a different, almost hostile attitude to the League. They described Mussolini's aggression so forcefully, and the League's weakness with so much irony, that it is difficult not to read into their expressions of regret a certain malicious satisfaction at the League's failure. At an early stage in the crisis, they were prepared to write the League off as completely powerless and recommend that either it should be dissolved or Sweden give up her membership. A few examples will serve: *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*: All that remained was to "admit the bankruptcy and disintegration of the League" (2nd September). "Let us recover our neutrality. That at least was nothing to be ashamed of. But soon it will doubtless be questionable whether it can be any credit to humanity to retain such an institution for international intrigue as the existing League of Nations" (5th September). *Lunds Dagblad* (3rd September): "The League of Nations is valueless." "As far as Sweden is concerned, we should have said 'goodbye and thank you' the day the League of Nations took Aaland from us to please France." *Helsingborgs Dagblad* (9th September): "It should be evident by now to most thinking and clear-sighted people that the League of Nations as it now stands was built up from the start on injustice, violence and tyranny, and that that is why it has failed in its task. The small nations can have no faith in an organisation inspired and controlled by such a spirit . . ." Most of the Right-Wing papers cited Branting's endeavours chiefly as a proof of how hopeless it was to try to induce the League to act, and some blamed him, though he must have been largely bound by the Government directive, for giving way too easily to the Great Powers. Some, however, expressed their admiration for the Swedish delegate's behaviour. Almost all the Right-Wing papers took the view that the League's failure to assert itself against a Great Power showed that the small States must take care of themselves: Sweden therefore needed a strong defence.

As was often the case in League matters, the views of the Communists coincided in many respects with those of the Conservatives. Above all, they believed the interests of the Great Powers to be decisive in the League. A quotation from *Folkets Dagblad Politiken* (10th September) will suffice to illustrate the party's attitude: "The stab in the back inflicted on the League by Mussolini and the Amba-

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sadors ought to make it clear to all those in the organised working class who believed in the League's will to peace that the Capitalist diplomats have wolves' teeth and wolves' hearts for all their sheep's clothing, and that these wolves are the decisive element in the League."

A little while after the Corfu incident had been disposed of, one of the Swedish delegates to the Assembly, the Liberal Eliel Löfgren, contributed to the periodical *Forum* an account of the recently concluded Assembly meeting under the title *For peace—with or without justice*. After a general defence of the work of the League, he passed on to consider the Corfu incident. It would be useless to deny, he said, that the League had shown serious weakness in its handling of this dispute. It ought to have immediately and automatically declared the matter to lie within its competence, and reacted directly to the occupation of Corfu. Above all, it was remarkable that the League had not dared to "take the decision as to its competence into its own hands..." On the other hand, it had unquestionably been a real factor in the maintenance of peace during the crisis. "No one who knows the details and has followed the affair at close quarters could wish to deny that it was largely thanks to the League that the dispute was settled and Italy's aggressive action was stopped in the end... What we have learnt, then, is that in a real crisis the League is well fitted to fill the rôle of the conciliation conference which was lacking at the outbreak of the Great War, and the lack of which largely made the War possible. The present League organisation has two advantages over the conference which there was no time to call in 1914: it has a settled constitution, and as such is permanent. It also has the further advantage that even small States, which have an over-riding interest in maintaining their independence, are represented both on the Council and in the Assembly."

Löfgren's exposition was typical in the main of the attitude of the non-Socialist Left during the actual crisis. There was no essential difference between the Progressive and the Liberal parties which were in course of formation. Both began by attacking Mussolini and Italy, and demanding action by the League. Later they criticised the League for its relative passivity, but asserted all the same that it had made a considerable contribution towards the maintenance of peace and had proved its worth during the Corfu incident. *Dagens Nyheter* in particular, the foreign editor of which was present at this session of the Assembly, displayed understanding of the League's difficulties and a corresponding appreciation of its work. He described Branting's performance (15th September) as "the first brilliant example of a real League of Nations mentality"; the Swedish member of the Council had "accomplished a historic task when he calmly and wisely asserted the position of the League of Nations in the hardest test which this young peace organisation has yet had to face." The Liberal and Progressive Press frequently pointed out that the League

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could not be expected to do the impossible, but that it would grow in strength and become a more effective champion of justice as the small States gained a larger say in its deliberations and decisions. "The League of Nations is only in its beginning—a little seed which has just begun to shoot, and it is derided on every hand because it is not an overshadowing tree" (*Karlstads-Tidningen*, 11th September). "The world opinion which will gradually gather strength and rise up against the domination of the powerful, must have its origins in the smaller States, particularly the Neutrals of the World War. Not because these States are on a higher moral level, but simply because the interests of the weaker always coincide with those of justice" (*Stockholms-Tidningen*, 2nd October).

Some of the leading papers took a line of their own. *Göteborgs Handelstidning*, as so often during this period, indulged in sarcasm at the expense of the League and the official Swedish attitude towards it. Sweden, it wrote on 3rd September, had long tolerated the League's inability to make any positive contribution, and "boasted of the little that had been done, as though it were very remarkable for such a little fellow to manage all that." There was no need for the Swedes "to enter so whole-heartedly into our part of credulous provincials as to go on mouthing about the increased security which membership of the League gives us. Politeness does not demand that we should always play the part of the country bumpkin in whatever company we happen to be." Later articles, however (7th and 10th September) emphasised that Sweden and the Scandinavian States in general had an important part to play in the League, and that they should try to support the principles of the League as far as possible. The latter article remarked that they must "fall neither into the temptation to condemn the whole institution for its weakness, nor to deny this weakness." The League must be regarded as an outgrowth of diplomacy, and one must expect the same power-politics within the League as in international affairs in general. Even if the League, as had so often happened already, were used as a tool for the victorious Great Powers, the Neutrals must consider seriously before leaving it.—*Svenska Morgonbladet* (13th September) took the Corfu incident as a pretext for pacifist propaganda. The most powerful factor for peace had actually not been the League, but Greece's inability to wage war. This showed that it would be better for the world and the individual nations to rely on peaceful means. For a time, of course, the consequence might be that Right would have to bow before Might. "But to suffer in the cause of Justice — could anything really be more honourable? And in the long run, the justice of the weak is always stronger than the injustice of the strong. There is never any danger in trusting in the inner strength of a just cause. Justice always conquers in the end. It has no need of bayonets . . . So, forward along the path of progressive disarmament and let us place our faith in the

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inevitable victory of justice." In other articles, however, this paper adopted the usual Progressive attitude.

On 9th October Dr. Johannes Wickman published an analysis of Sweden's relations with the League in the light of the Corfu incident. He pointed out that there were two opposing schools of thought in the discussions about the League. According to one, the banner of principle must be held high and no compromise allowed, according to the other the League with its aim to ensure peace must be preserved at all costs, even if its objects could not be entirely realised in each individual case. The latter attitude was natural for the Great Powers. These States, the States with an active foreign policy, would be hardest hit if the League and all its machinery for the furtherance of peace could not be maintained, "and they will therefore always be more concerned with preserving the existence of the League than with the spotless whiteness of its hands"; they would have to bear practically the whole burden of action against a refractory member, "and they will consequently always prefer a feeble conciliation to a bloody decision." Both the ideal standards and the practical compromise were necessary. "One might almost say that a distribution of duties has been effected, under which Mr. Branting with general approval supports the claims of principles and ideals, while those States which would have to foot the bill if trouble arose attend to the practical considerations." Branting contented himself with a sort of compromise because he realised that a State which would not take the consequences of its attitude, or which because of its isolated position was sheltered from the worst consequences of a clash, could not expect to have its own way entirely. Actually the League was obviously a very modest institution, only the beginnings of an international judicial organisation. But this was because all States, small and large, wished to have the League so and refused to form a supra-national organisation.

The attitude of the Social Democrats was much the same as that of the non-Socialist Left, but with a strong tendency to complete alignment with Branting's attitude as shown in the League negotiations and in private interviews. In an article on 3rd September *Social-Demokraten* branded Mussolini as "the universal enemy" and declared the occupation of Corfu to be a worse crime than Germany's invasion of Belgium in 1914. The sanctions provided for under Article 16 ought to have been applied, but this was too much to hope for. On 10th September, the same newspaper stated that it was "essential for the small States that the League should expressly declare the occupation of Corfu to be an act in contravention of international law." After the matter was finally settled, it stated (19th September) that the League had done good work for the preservation of peace. But it had also revealed serious weaknesses. "It has not proved equal to saying that Italy has violated the Covenant and

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broken her pledges. Of course it was more important that peace should be preserved than that the League should express an opinion the truth of which no one outside Italy would venture to dispute. But it is weak, very weak to be afraid to state a fact . . . When a crime has been committed, it should be brought home to the perpetrator. The criminal should not be allowed to escape scot-free just because he is strong." Branting declared in an interview published on 5th October that confidence in the League had been reduced to some extent, but that at the same time the affair had revealed the importance of the League. "For all its weaknesses and imperfections, the League provides a basis for the development of international understanding and recovery, without which the world would be in a much more hopeless position to-day." In its general attitude, the Social Democratic Press was confidently positive. The writer of one article in *Tiden* characterised the Corfu incident as "a process of purification, providing a firmer basis for faith in the great future possibilities of the League than anything we have yet seen of its work . . . Those who would argue that the League only serves the interests of the Great Powers forget the obvious fact that it is the only platform for the small States in their struggle against the great." According to Engberg in *Arbetet* (6th September), it would be unreasonable "to argue that because of the weakness and inadequacy of the League, it ought to be consigned to oblivion. For the choice is not between this League and another and better. It is between this League and the admirable state of affairs which produced the World War." *Social-Demokraten* (5th September) considered that the League "performed a valuable service simply by existing. Even if it has to live a long time before it is able to fulfil its main tasks satisfactorily, each year of its life helps to strengthen the sense of its necessity in the minds of nations." The familiar argument that the weak and fragile League ought not to be overstrained by demands for the strict application of the Covenant was sometimes brought forward in the form of an unconscious parody. "It is quite natural," wrote *Ny Tid* (14th September), "that the League of Nations should be weak and undeveloped, seeing how weak and wavering the idea of peace and justice still is in the world. That should not cause us any uneasiness. But if, on the other hand, one wished artificially to create a *strong League of Nations*, then there would be every reason to cry: Danger, take care! Such strength would rest on some other basis than justice and truth and peace!"

Only a few days after the crisis began, internal political polemics began to play an important and ever-increasing part in the debate. It was mainly a straight issue between Right and Left. Both sides accused the other of pursuing irrelevant party aims, and frequently quoted extreme utterances from the opposite camp. They used the

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same methods that they had so often complained of and denounced in international politics. The Left said that the Right-Wing attitude was dictated by dislike of the principles of the League, that the Right made the most of the League's weakness in order to destroy its prestige: sometimes even that it was inspired by a certain sympathy with Mussolini and Fascism. The Right replied that what it wanted was a real League of Nations which would apply the principles of justice irrespective of considerations of interest and power. It accused the Left in its turn of excusing and praising the League for reasons it would not admit, even when the League acted in flagrant violation of the principles for which it had been established. The Left thought that the exacting standards and severe criticisms of the Right constituted a danger to the League, the Right considered the apologetic attitude of the Left a similar danger. Both parties were thus able to present themselves as champions of the League, or at any rate of a "real" League.

The considerations of home policy which lay behind the differences on this issue were, of course, connected with the defence question. The Right attacked the League, the Left said, in order to prepare the way for their defence measures, in particular for the Army Organisation Bill to be presented to the next Riksdag by the Trygger Government. This view was mainly propounded by the Social Democrats, but was also frequently repeated in the Progressive and Liberal Press. The Swedish Right-Wing, wrote *Social-Demokraten* (5th September) rejoices at the League's dilemma and the possibility of its dissolution. "Why this? Oh, it is very easy to understand. The overwhelming majority of the Swedish people would not support a home policy on general Conservative lines. The only hope the Conservatives have of scoring any success in this direction would be if our defence position became such as to cause popular feeling to swing in favour of military armaments. The existence of the League of Nations has effectively prevented any convincing propaganda in favour of armaments. The Right has stood helpless and discouraged in the face of the Swedish people's so-called lack of will to defend itself." Similar comments appeared in a number of newspapers. The Swedish Right-Wing was also said to represent a form of nationalism closely allied to the views which were causing the difficulties in the League of Nations; it would be really ridiculous for Mussolini's followers outside Italy to decry the League because of its weakness. In *Social-Demokraten* and above all in *Arbetet* this thought was pursued to its logical conclusion. The Right-Wing—or the non-Socialist parties in general—were to blame for all the faults and failures of the League. International nationalism made internationalism powerless. "The weakness of the League is . . . nothing but an expression of the influence exerted by Right-Wing policy," wrote *Arbetet*

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(4th September). *Social-Demokraten* (19th September), following the same line of thought, declared that the majority of representatives to the League had bourgeois attitudes and therefore had not sufficient respect for the League to support the Covenant with the necessary energy. "The League can never gain strength to subdue its more obstinate members or develop into a really reliable instrument of peace, until men of the Branting type dominate it completely... Social Democratic governments or governments predominantly influenced by Social Democracy, can provide perhaps the only lasting guarantee for the development of the League into a power which no Mussolini would dare to defy."

The Conservatives regarded these accusations as an attempt to evade the central issue of the strength and value of the League. The charges were due, wrote *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* (6th September) to the fact that "world politics have recently followed a highly inconvenient course for those who wish to argue that the League has relieved Sweden from the necessity of looking to her own defences." Just as the Left insinuated that the Right-Wing was opposed to the League because of its zeal for armaments, so the Right-Wing Press accused the Left of clinging to the League because it did not want strong defences. This argument—and the main trend of Conservative criticism of the Left-Wing attitude to the League in general—was very clearly set forth in a leader in *Svenska Dagbladet* on 17th September: "Four years ago, those sections of Swedish opinion which were opposed to a defence policy acquired a garment with which to cover their nakedness. It was the League of Nations, the mere foundation of which was regarded as a proof that Right henceforth would rule instead of Might. Now it only remained to tear down with more fervour than ever the Swedish military system, which had always been based more on the militarism and chauvinism of the Right than on national necessity—for we had not even been swept up in the World War in spite of Conservative efforts to involve us... From the moment of the adoption of this new slogan in Left-Wing pronouncements, it became the main purpose of these pronouncements to make every aspect of Sweden's relations with the League appear as fair and lovely as the imagination could paint it! Just as before they had gone on, until the very moment when the catastrophe burst upon us, preaching that the danger of the Great War existed only in the imagination of the Right-Wing militarists and the hopes of extreme chauvinism, so now their cry, raised to counter the demands of defence, was that the League was our rightful shield and far safer than armaments. Soon it turned out that this cry would not pass muster more than every other day, for every other day showed what difficulties they had in placing justice in the high seat. But this did not embarrass them. A supplementary formula for alternate days was immediately prepared: the League was only a delicate plant, an

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embryo, which required protection and tender care and which only the most rabid hatred could pursue with demands that, at its more than tender age, it should show any signs of strength."

The Treaty of Locarno had postulated that Germany should become a member of the League of Nations, and early in February 1926 the German Government formally applied for membership. The Council decided to call an extraordinary meeting of the Assembly on 8th March to consider the matter. All members were agreed in principle that Germany should be received into the League and given a permanent seat on the Council. But a number of other States—Spain, Brazil, Poland and China—also wanted permanent seats on the Council, and insisted that their claims should be considered in connection with Germany's. By the end of February, it was clear that great difficulties were going to be encountered at the extraordinary meeting in March.

In Sweden, feeling was practically unanimous that the Swedish representatives on Council and Assembly should work for Germany's admission to the League with a permanent seat on the Council, and that demands by other States for permanent seats should be rejected. The representative view was clearly expressed in an *interpellation* debate in the First Chamber on 5th March, just before the Foreign Minister's departure for Geneva. Undén, the Foreign Minister, reminded the House that the Swedish attitude was that an increase in the number of permanent seats on the Council beyond those reserved for the Great Powers would be undesirable, as it would weaken the position of the Assembly in relation to the Council. The Government had accordingly "instructed the Swedish delegates to oppose any proposals for the reorganisation of the Council during the March meeting—apart from the provision of a permanent place for Germany—and not to commit themselves yet to any particular solution of this complicated and important question." Spokesmen of the four great political parties agreed with the Foreign Minister's statement—evidently by previous arrangement. Trygger, the Conservative Leader, said that the Council had from the start "enjoyed considerable power in the League. The Assembly on the other hand had been given a more modest rôle. The more States which became members—and in particular permanent members—of the Council, the greater would become the preponderance of power of the Council over the Assembly—a circumstance which might materially injure both the League itself and those members of the League which do not sit on the Council." The Press in general emphasised the importance of the fact that the Swedish Riksdag stood united behind the Government in its decision to oppose demands for any new permanent seat on the Council except that promised to Germany.

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In Geneva, where the Council question was chiefly discussed at informal meetings between leading members of the Council, serious differences of opinion arose. Several Council members, among them Great Britain, France and Italy, were prepared to create two or three new permanent seats on the Council, whereas Germany declared it to be a condition of her entering the League that the constitution of the Council should remain unaltered except for the establishment of a new permanent seat for Germany. In the negotiations between the Council members, Sweden figured as one of the leading opponents of the proposal for extending the Council. The Swedish Foreign Minister's attitude was unquestionably based on the principles set forth in the replies given in the Riksdag on 5th March, but as this involved supporting the German standpoint and opposing demands and proposals from other quarters, Sweden found herself placed more or less in the position of Germany's special ally. The stand made by the Swedish Council member was sharply criticised particularly in the French and Polish Press, and there was even talk of Poland, whose request for a permanent seat on the Council had long occupied a central place in the discussions, taking economic reprisals against Sweden.¹⁰ During the course of the session the dispute, as Undén reported later to the Riksdag, "assumed more and more the character of a diplomatic tug of war. France, with Great Britain's support, committed herself so heavily to her solution of the problem that a purely negative result would appear as a serious reverse in a controversy between France and Germany. The whole problem was fatally distorted by considerations of national prestige. Germany was said to be imposing conditions for her entry into the League which had never come into question before. A problem which could and should have been treated purely from the standpoint of what was best for the League, had become coloured more and more by considerations of political power and prestige. In addition, Germany's admission to the League and Council was seriously threatened..."

After five days' of fruitless negotiations (7th—12th March), the Council passed on to discuss various compromise solutions on the basis that no new permanent seat should be established on the Council (except Germany's), but that Poland should be given a non-permanent seat on the Council. A proposal that a new non-permanent seat should be established for this purpose, was defeated by Germany and Sweden. The Swedish Foreign Minister, who feared that the whole Locarno agreement would be wrecked if a solution acceptable to all parties was not found, then suggested on 14th March, during discussions with the German delegation, that Sweden should give up her seat on the Council—it expired in any case in September—and place it at the disposal of the Assembly, thus enabling a compromise to be reached. Germany supplemented this suggestion by proposing that some other State should resign from the Council as well. On Monday

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the 15th the Council met and a solution along these lines seemed to be imminent: Sweden and Czecho-Slovakia were to resign voluntarily from the Council, and Poland and Holland or some other State of equal status with Sweden to be elected in their place. The same day, the Swedish Foreign Minister received the authorisation he had requested from the Swedish Government to act in accordance with this arrangement, which had been provisional on the Swedish Government's acceptance. The next day, however, all the negotiations proved to be in vain. It had been expected that Brazil, which was a non-permanent member of the Council but, as already stated, wished for a permanent seat, would relinquish this demand. When the Council met on 16th March, it was informed that Brazil's attitude was unchanged and that the Locarno Powers therefore proposed the postponement of the question of Germany's admission and of the Council seats. At this meeting, Undén expressed his disappointment at what had happened: "National demands have been raised in various quarters, private interests have clashed with the general interest: the good of the League." A commission was appointed to consider the question of the Council seats. In accordance with its recommendations, the Assembly decided in September to admit Germany to the League with a permanent seat on the Council and to establish three new non-permanent seats. At the same time, a long-standing wish of Sweden and various other small States was satisfied to a certain extent by the introduction of special regulations providing for the more rapid circulation of the non-permanent seats on the Council. The Swedish Foreign Minister (E. Löfgren) nevertheless expressed serious doubts concerning the increase in the number of Council seats.

The struggle about the Council seats in March 1926 was one of the most dramatic episodes in the history of the League. To the Swedish public, which followed all the developments in the Press, two points seemed to stand out. During the first phase, Sweden's representative stood adamant for the preservation of the League organisation without any other change than that involved by the admission of Germany; with the active support of public opinion in many countries, he resisted the pressure and intrigues of the Great Powers. During the second phase, the same representative was prepared to give up the Swedish seat on the Council to achieve unity—but the offer was useless. Resignation of the Swedish Council seat might appear as a natural sequel to Sweden's policy from the start—probably to the historian it would appear as natural as it did to those taking part—but it might also be interpreted as the relinquishing of an earlier standpoint.

Up to 14th March, when rumours of Sweden's contemplated resignation of her Council seat began to circulate, the Swedish Press was exceptionally united. Since the end of February it had criticised the demands for permanent seats on the Council put forward by

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Poland, Brazil and other States. An expansion of the Council, it said, would increase the influence of the Council and the Great Powers at the cost of the Assembly and the small States, and so weaken the forces in the League working for justice and peace. After the negotiations in Geneva had begun, this attitude became more pronounced. The egoism of the Great Powers and the aspirants for Council seats was contrasted with the unselfish ends of the small States, particularly Sweden. "The struggle is basically between honest disinterested love of peace and self interest," runs a typical comment. Undén's firmness was generally praised, and national pride was gratified by accounts of how he had defied the Great Powers; some of the descriptions seemed more applicable to a battle-field than a meeting. From *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* to *Social-Demokraten* the uniformity of expression was almost complete. The only exception—apart from the Communist Press—was *Göteborgs Handelstidning*. This took the line that it was a very small matter whether the Council was increased or not, and that it was ridiculous for Sweden to mix herself up in the intrigues of the Great Powers. "In our blue-eyed innocence we take it upon ourselves to fight out these battles as though some great legal or moral issue were at stake. Our naivety must seem touching to our big uncles, until the day comes when we get in the way and have to be removed" (20th February). "We are more honest than either party believes and much more stupid than either of them dreams" (2nd March). A few other newspapers, notably *Stockholms Dagblad*, adopted a similar attitude in so far that they emphasised the political side of the problem rather than the moral side which usually predominated.

News of the Swedish offer—published in a French newspaper on 14th March and confirmed in Sweden on 15th March—caused consternation and indignation. The Conservative Press violently attacked both the Swedish Government and the League of Nations. On 15th March, *Svenska Dagbladet* stated, in connection with rumours of the Swedish offer, that a renunciation of Sweden's seat on the Council would mean capitulation to the Great Powers and the aspirants for new Council seats. Two days later, the paper wrote: "What has happened in Geneva? One of the smaller Powers has got in the way of the interests and intrigues of the Great Powers. It has consequently been accused of causing, or being about to cause, some terrible catastrophe—and to avoid this, the scared offender quietly takes itself off! Thus a precedent is formed, which will be quoted by threatening Great Powers the next time Right and Might find themselves opposed . . . The compliments of the Great Powers will shower down upon the creators of such a precedent. The guns which bombarded Corfu will fire a salute in their honour. And the next time a struggle develops between David and Goliath, the Swedish deed will have contributed to make the struggle between Might and Right

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even more uneven than it need have been." Many Conservative papers were equally indignant. *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* (16th March) declared that "Sweden had committed moral suicide instead of fighting on as in duty bound until she was relieved in the natural course of events"; and suggested that the well-known lines about Charles XII could be applied in reverse to the Government: "They could not fall, they could only yield." The recurring theme in the criticism of the Government was the absurdity of the position that Sweden, which had always fought for the cause of justice against the Great Powers, should sacrifice herself for the intrigues of these same Powers and in so doing indirectly further those interests which she had previously successfully opposed. The League was attacked as the centre of the selfish power-politics pursued by the Great Powers and those seeking seats on the Council, to which Sweden had now fallen a victim by her own act. *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* (18th March) rejoiced that the eyes of the Left would now be opened "to what the League of Nations really is, once it is divested of the illusory ideals of peace and conciliation. The Right has always been doubtful and sceptical. But its pessimism has been more than justified." The incident was also turned to account to prove the necessity of a strong defence. Some newspapers demanded the resignation of the Foreign Minister, who they said had been out-witted by Briand and other skilful and unscrupulous statesmen; they also hinted more or less outspokenly that Sweden ought to leave the League of Nations.

Some papers adopted a different attitude from that prevalent in the party as a whole. *Stockholms Dagblad*, in accordance with its general attitude to the Council question referred to above, was sympathetic to Swedish policy. On 15th March, this paper wrote that Sweden's withdrawal from the Council would not be an unreasonable solution. "It is by no means impossible that what would appear to be a national sacrifice would really mean that the League of Nations would be piloted into a safer harbour . . . The important thing for us is that the League of Nations should continue to exist." The following day, praise of the new policy was combined with criticism of the policy previously followed. The Foreign Minister had "with the full approval of the Riksdag pursued a kind of Lindhagen-policy in the League of Nations . . . Striking magisterial gestures in the League may possibly flatter our vanity, but practical politics pay better in the end." Some of the larger provincial Conservative papers took a similar view of the Government's action.

In the Liberal and Progressive Press, criticism of the preponderance given to Great Power interests in League affairs was general, but with regard to Swedish Government policy, opinions were very divided. Some papers attacked the Government and the Foreign Minister almost as sharply as the majority of the Conservative Press. "If Sweden, against all expectations, allows herself to be elbowed

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out of the Council so as to further a secretly-prepared Great Power intrigue, she may be said to have failed the trust which placed her on the Council," wrote *Stockholms-Tidningen* on 16th March, and the same paper repeated this view when the rumours of Sweden's proposed withdrawal were confirmed. *Dagens Nyheter* at first reacted similarly. A certain difference of opinion showed itself, however, between the leader-writer T. Fogelqvist, who worked in Stockholm, and adopted a critical tone, and the foreign editor Wickman, who was in Geneva during the crisis and firmly supported the Foreign Minister's policy. Typical of the attitude of the former is the leader of 18th March, which affirmed that the proper solution of the problem would be "never to sacrifice one iota of the strong, clear principles of justice on the altar of threats and danger," and attacked an argument commonly produced in defence of the League: "There is a limit to the period and extent to which special consideration can be claimed for the League on the grounds that it is only an endeavour, a weak sapling, an edifice founded on hope, which must not be forced beyond reasonable lengths. One cannot eternally argue these extenuating circumstances without in the end condoning certain malpractices." A few days later, this paper adopted a more favourable attitude towards the Swedish Government's policy, and defended both Undén and the League against Right-Wing attacks. A similar development can be traced in many sections of the non-Socialist Left. Many papers, however, took the line from the start that Sweden had acted rightly in view of all the circumstances and of the necessity of preserving the League and securing Germany's admission to it. Sweden had set an example of unselfishness and generosity in offering to give up her seat on the Council. *Karlstads-Tidningen* said that Sweden had acted "with dignity and nobility. What a difference between her method and Brazil's of using her veto! In the latter case, crass selfishness, in the former, pure unselfishness." On his return to Stockholm the Liberal delegate to the Assembly, Löfgren (who two months later became Foreign Minister) defended the Government's policy. *Göteborgs Handelstidning* continued to take its individual line. Undén ought not to be too severely blamed. "We have acted foolishly, but with the best intentions—if that is any excuse . . . It is hardly a sound reason for overthrowing Undén that . . . in the end he came to his senses" (17th March). The League should be maintained, as in spite of its failures it constituted "an advance in international intercourse" (18th March).

The Social Democratic Press supported the Government. Several papers changed their views during the first day or two. *Social-Demokraten* wrote on 15th March, in connection with Sweden's reported offer, that such "heroic self-sacrifice would be of little value, as it would mean the silencing of the only voice on the Council which, in the midst of all the confusion of power-politics, asserted principle

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as against opportunism and self-seeking. A nation which, like ours, entered the League with the fixed determination to serve its ideals, would be untrue to itself if it agreed to the sacrifice here demanded." Next day, the paper said that Sweden ought not to withdraw alone; at the same time, it called her proposed resignation "a great magnanimous offer." The day after that, when the rumour was finally confirmed, it defended Swedish policy as the only way out of the League's dilemma, and attacked Undén's critics. Later on, the paper swung round completely against the Right, which it accused of being inspired by German nationalism, spoke of the Right-Wing organs as "enemies of the League," declared that Right-Wing criticism was actuated by ill-will towards the League and the Swedish Government, and praised the Swedish Foreign Minister as the saviour of the League. *Örebro-Kuriren* expressed different views in one and the same leader. On 16th March it wrote that a renunciation of the Swedish mandate on the Council would be meaningless; it would amount to "nothing more than a demonstration!" After the leader had been written, however, news came in that the Swedish delegation had been empowered if necessary to resign its seat. A post-script was then added in defence of the Government: "It is a bitter thing to have to make terms with evil, but evidently the sense of responsibility to the League and its principles which our land alone has shown, has in the end demanded even that sacrifice." A few days after the crisis ended, the Social Democratic Press was proclaiming with one voice that Swedish policy had been as wise as it was unselfish. Sweden had thwarted the designs of the Great Powers and saved the League from a serious crisis. League policy would benefit from this affair in the future.

Internal political dissensions, with their generally-conceived accusations and apologies, thus quickly over-shadowed the international problem with which they became associated. On 23rd March, *Dagens Nyheter* summarised the discussion in these words: "Treachery, harakiri, dishonour", they shriek from the Right. 'A great achievement, honour and a world peace saved,' they shout from the Left. Have not people the sense to realise that the mere existence of two such different verdicts is a pretty safe guarantee that neither of them is correct? Politics, internal Swedish politics, have distorted judgment of the situation at Geneva, that is the whole miserable story."

Questions were asked about the Council crisis in both Chambers, and answered by the report of the Foreign Minister on 24th March. In the fairly comprehensive debates which followed, party lines were strictly adhered to: the Conservative speakers (including Trygger, Lindman, Hammarskjöld, Ljunglund and Järte) criticised the Government, though with far more moderation than the Conservative Press, while the Left-Wing speakers (among them C. G. Ekman, Röing, Eriksson i Grängsberg and Engberg) defended it. Of the two re-

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representatives of the Farmers' League who took part in the debate, one sided mainly with the Right, the other with the Left (Reuterskiöld and Johansson i Kälkebo); the Communists as usual attacked the League in general terms (Winberg, Herou). The discussion was largely concerned with special points brought into prominence by the Council crisis, which are of no interest in this connection. The Government representatives and followers made the points that Sweden's conduct on the Council had not been in opposition to the declarations of 5th March, for then it had been a question only of changes in respect of the permanent seats, that Sweden had actually succeeded in preventing the expansion of the Council which a number of Powers desired, and that her motive in offering to withdraw had been to pave the way for Germany's admission without abandoning Swedish principles. Undén ended his speech by declaring that the break-up of the Assembly without having effected Germany's admission was "a serious set-back for the League of Nations and . . . a distressing proof of the strength of national interests and false prestige." He hoped, however, that the crisis would eventually prove "beneficial to the League," for the smaller States had succeeded in repulsing attacks on the League constitution. "It has been demonstrated to all the world that secret undertakings and private agreements between the Great Powers on affairs vital to the League cannot be regarded as binding to the League. A growing international opinion, a strong and robust League spirit, is the protection to which we must look for the future. It would be easy to join the company of critics whose interest in the League ever since it began has been concentrated on its failures. It is more difficult, but in my view more useful and courageous, to gird oneself up after every reverse to face the difficulties which still remain to be met." The Conservative argument was that it had been agreed during the earlier *interpellation* debate on the subject that no changes in the Council beyond Germany's admission should be countenanced. If Sweden had kept to her original attitude and not dallied with talk of compromise, the Powers which wanted the Council expanded might have given way; in any case, Sweden ought not to have offered to give up her seat on the Council until it was quite certain that such an offer would bring an end to the crisis. But the main objection to the offer was that it represented a material concession to the demands of the Great Powers. If States which opposed unjustified demands in the League Council were going to be forced to leave the Council, it would be an intolerable state of affairs. "I therefore cannot help thinking," Trygger ended his first speech, "that the Foreign Minister, by acting as he did at Geneva, has sacrificed equality between the League States even within the limits to which equality is recognised and guaranteed by the Covenant. By his high-handed action he has helped to set the League along a course which may have regrettable consequences, particularly for a State like Sweden. But most serious of

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all, it may prove disastrous for the League itself, for every time powerful and clamorous States succeed in asserting their interests as against those of the League, the League loses strength to resist similar encroachments in the future." None of the Conservative speakers suggested, however, that Sweden should leave the League. Many of their opponents declared that Conservative criticism of the League and the Government was mainly inspired by party motives.

It would take us too far afield to consider in detail the discussion about the League's policy in relation to all the different questions which came before it. Occasionally all parties were agreed on the value of League intervention, e.g. in the matter of aid to Austria and Hungary in 1922—1923. On other occasions, criticism ran along much the same lines as in the examples already quoted (e.g. the Vilna question and the Upper Silesian question). During League negotiations on the Greco-Bulgarian dispute of 1925—the settlement of which was later always quoted as one of its most outstanding successes—the Swedish Press revealed the usual divergencies of opinion; the Right-Wing regarded League intervention at first with mistrust and irony, and the Left with expectations which for once were entirely justified. The attitude taken by the Swedish Council member on the Saar question in 1923, which implied some criticism of the provisional French administration of the Saar, was received with general satisfaction, while the part played by Sweden and the League decision on the Mosul dispute in 1924—1925 were considered by the Right to show subservience to Great Britain, and were vigorously defended by the Left.

All these questions occurred before 1926. After that year, and the crisis it brought in League affairs, a period followed during which the League was relegated to a very small place in Swedish public consciousness. This was due to various causes: the world was at peace and no serious conflicts occurred in the League; Sweden was no longer a member of the League Council, no ambitious attempts were being made to reorganise the League. In 1931, however, a dispute arose which may be said in a way to have marked the end of the period of relaxation: Japan's invasion of Manchuria. The Swedish Press demanded that the League should act forcefully; as in previous critical situations, both the Left and Right-Wing Press spoke of a "trial" of the League, and said that it would be "under sentence of death" or "bankrupt," if it had not the strength to react forcefully against Japan. The Great Powers, however, were not prepared to employ sanctions or in general to risk any break with Japan, and the League handling of the question ended in a compromise which really amounted to recognition of the Japanese conquest. The representatives of Sweden and various other small States in the Assembly severely criticised

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Japan's action and asserted the authority of the League, but made no demands for the application of Article 16. The discussion soon died down in Sweden: no suggestion was made that Sweden should leave the League, and the whole question probably appeared too remote to move public opinion deeply. But the Manchurian incident was often brought to mind in following years, particularly during the period of the League's catastrophic decline in power, dating from its defeat on the Italo-Abyssinian conflict.

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The strong opposition which Sweden's entry into the League met with from the Conservatives and the Farmer's League soon gave way, first to chilly acceptance, and gradually to a more positive attitude. Ten years after the formation of the League, hardly anyone outside the Communist party had any objections to Sweden's membership. Nor were there any serious differences of opinion between the parties about the general lines of League development and activity. In regard to the security system the Right was certainly more negative than the Left, as the debate on the Geneva Protocol showed particularly clearly, but the Swedish public was in general so opposed to any increase in international commitments which might involve any risk of war, that this difference was not very significant.

The shades of difference in this generally positive attitude came out most clearly in the discussions about the League's conduct in concrete instances. Even here there was some common ground, particularly suspicion and dislike of the Great Powers, which were accused of egoistic self-seeking if they either behaved over-bearing themselves or failed to use force against others who did the same. But a difference of attitude was apparent in certain important respects. In general, the Right-Wing made the most of the League's mistakes and failures and drew far-reaching conclusions from each individual case, while the Left-Wing, even when it found fault, tried to produce extenuating circumstances and emphasise the value of the League in principle. It is significant that, in critical situations, authoritative Left-Wing organs declared time after time that the League would lose its authority if it did not act in a certain way, but later, when these exhortations had not been followed, proceeded to defend the League against Right-Wing attacks. Debates about international problems tended in these circumstances to deteriorate rapidly into party polemics. Each side accused the other of adopting an attitude injurious to the true interests of the League, from irrelevant party motives; the Left-Wing spoke of the Right-Wing's nationalism, and the Right of the Left-Wing's indifference to the national interest; this soon brought them face to face with the defence question, the

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question which divided them more than anything else. The debate on the Corfu incident (cf. p. 65 ff.) is typical of many in this respect.

It is difficult to distinguish beyond this point between the various groupings and tendencies shown by the Press in its discussion on the League. Circumstances sometimes produce distinct changes of attitude on the part of a single paper, without its ever losing its party tone. Sometimes the same journalist, without necessarily changing his attitude at all, will comment on different incidents from quite different standpoints. In some respects, however, a more detailed characterisation is possible.

Taking the period as a whole, the most thoughtful, penetrating and well-written criticisms of the League's work were undoubtedly those of *Svenska Dagbladet*. Most of the articles concerned were by Gustaf Stridsberg, and he may be said to have set the tone not only for the paper on which he worked but also for large sections of Conservative opinion at its best. Stridsberg was often considered to be in principle against the League, but this is hardly correct. His attitude was rather one of intolerant perfectionism. Any departure from the rules and aims set up for the League called forth his severe criticism. His attitude might be typified by quoting the rules of conduct he laid down on one occasion for the Swedish delegation to Geneva (11th August 1925). Sweden should not take part in the diplomatic game. "The task of our Swedish delegates to Geneva is quite different: to assert with insight and wisdom, but not in a spirit of compliance, the proclaimed and established principles of justice, to work against, and not for, compromise wherever this would mean the open or veiled denial of such values." Sweden was thus to be the conscience of the League. Time after time he pointed out that the League had not developed along the lines intended, that something it had done or left undone would have been declared unthinkable if it had been foreseen when the League was first established. He asserted even more uncompromisingly than the Right-Wing Press in general that a revision of the Versailles treaty was essential to lasting peace. At the same time he not infrequently praised the League quite generously for certain aspects of its work. In general, however, it can hardly be denied that the Swedish newspaper which at that time was best known in other countries occasionally criticised the League so scathingly that the chief impression left was one of doubt as to its value, and that the criticism was made with such an air of dogmatic authority as to appear provocative.

The attitude of *Svenska Dagbladet* can probably be taken as representative of the greater part of the Conservative Press. But there were various shades of opinion. *Stockholms Dagblad* was more understanding and tolerant towards the League. This paper laid the main emphasis on short-term considerations of practical politics, the importance of achieving results acceptable to all, which would ensure

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the continuance of the League even if not absolutely in accordance with its established aims. It described the League on one occasion (9th December 1925) as a "peace exchange," which cannot "pass final judgment in all disputes between States" but which "serves a useful purpose as a forum where the parties can meet and take counsel." Dr Rütger Essén, a journalist of extreme Right-Wing views well-known for his works on foreign affairs, expressed much the same thought towards the end of the 1920's: The League should be regarded and valued as a useful instrument for diplomatic negotiation, and its sphere of activity should be chiefly restricted to Europe. The campaign of systematic, violent, apparently positively hostile criticism of the League and Swedish League policy was led principally by *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* and its editor Leon. Ljunglund. Their policy may be said without exaggeration to have been simply to seize upon every opportunity of finding fault with the League, apparently without plan or discrimination. A number of Conservative papers outside Stockholm showed the same tendency to disparage the League, as for example *Lunds Dagblad*, *Helsingborgs Dagblad* and *Göteborgs Morgonpost*.

The Conservatives, as already shown, accused the Left-Wing of idealising the League to a dangerous extent, treating it as a "fairly godmother" or a "religious cult." Many of their utterances certainly lent support to this accusation. The idea, repeated in countless variations over many years, that the League must be treated gently if it was to grow strong, called forth their particular irony. As one of the few pamphlets published about the League stated, its strength must not be over-taxed. "It is still a delicate plant, which may be trampled to death or killed by the cold; it needs time to grow strong, if it is to give shade and bear fruit . . . May all the forces of good help it, protect it and strengthen it for its first ten years; after that, it will be able to help itself." But this kind of pronouncement was by no means typical of the Left-Wing; most of the Progressive, Liberal, and Social Democratic papers struck a different note.

The policy of *Dagens Nyheter* differed in many respects from that of *Svenska Dagbladet*. It was mainly shaped by the paper's foreign editor, Dr. Johannes Wickman, who—as is clearly apparent now in the light of after-events—showed an unusual understanding of the problems of post-war foreign policy. His point of view cannot perhaps be identified with that of his newspaper to the same extent as in the case of, for example, *Svenska Dagbladet*; sometimes differences or shades of difference can be detected. But this hardly applies in the question of the League. *Dagens Nyheter's* attitude was that the Great Powers must both guide and take responsibility for League policy. The aim of the small States, particularly the ex-Neutrals, must be to encourage development in the direction of more definite standards of conduct and the stricter observation of League rules, but not by

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adopting a "doctrinaire" policy which would place theoretical correctness before practical solution. A little while after the Corfu incident, the paper wrote: "As Swedish policy now appears in practice, it represents on the whole a wise middle course between undue deference to the offending party and a rigidly pacifist policy which might have threatened the League with disaster" (28th December 1923). It was for this middle course that the paper stood. The small States, if they wished to influence the League's work, should be prepared to accept responsibilities and not expect to make the decisions and leave the Great Powers to carry them out.

The Press of the non-Socialist Left included a number of very independent newspapers, so that there can hardly be any question of groups. *Stockholms-Tidningen* was a shade more sceptical and reserved towards the League than *Dagens Nyheter*. In a typical leader (22nd December 1928) it asserted that the League was dominated by the Great Powers, and that its various attempts to champion justice had proved a fiasco (Vilna, Corfu, the Ruhr). But the League had also succeeded in averting conflicts, even though only between second or third rate Powers, and in so doing had proved of value. "It brings together statesmen from all corners of the earth, and provides opportunities for personal contact and interchange of thought, which have undoubtedly helped to remove many misconceptions among responsible statesmen about other governments and countries." *Svenska Morgonbladet*, in common with a large section of the Progressive Press which worked for the reduction of armaments and tended towards pacifism, showed a considerable tendency to over-estimate the value of the League as a peace factor, which did not prevent its sharply criticising it on occasion. *Göteborgs Handelstidning* took a line of its own. It approved of the League in principle, but generally treated it, as so much else in the political world, with irony. "Anyone who wishes to enjoy respect in this country must believe in the League. He must have no doubts in his mind. If he wants to get on, he must achieve a massive faith. He must proclaim with deep conviction that, placing our trust in the League, we can and should disarm. He will find a devout audience . . . A credulity which would be fatal among a people with a better-developed sense of humour, is a key to success among the provincial Swedes" (15th June 1925). The intensity of feeling which lay behind Professor Segerstedt's contempt for many things and people was concentrated during this period on the defence problem.

In the Social Democratic Press, variations were less strong, support of the League more unreserved. It should, however, be recalled once more that the conception of Socialism as a universal cleansing and purifying agent still coloured the discussion on foreign policy. It was often said that only the victory of Socialism could create a "real" League of Nations and a lasting peace. The International was

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described in 1931 by one of the leading men in the party as incomparably the greatest factor for peace of the day; but at the same time he emphasised that "nothing could be further from my mind than to create illusions, which are bound to burst like soap-bubbles." "There is a sure means of preventing war. It is Socialist governments. There is a sure means of attaining international disarmament. It is Socialist governments." Still, this conception cannot be said to have permeated party policy and arguments. It played much the same rôle as the resolutions of the International, i.e. to reinforce general declarations of principle on special occasions. Otherwise the arguments used were much the same as those of the non-Socialist Left.

In October 1925 the Foreign Minister Undén made a speech which may be taken as representative of the views of the leading Social Democrats. Of particular interest is his analysis of the various attitudes to the peace problem. Many, he said—evidently with a section of the Conservative Press in mind—considered that the League should guarantee peace, but not the peace then prevailing, which was based on the Versailles Treaty. This method of argument, he said, was irrelevant to the idea of the League. "Real life does not offer us the choice between different, more or less satisfactory states of peace. Any attempt to stabilise peace must be based on existing conditions . . . If any friend of peace asserts that the work of peace must begin with changing the distribution of power between States or revising frontiers, his love of peace is very Platonic. This point of view comes very close to hoping for the next war as the Providence which will set the world in order for the just and final peace." If we assumed that "this peace" was not worth preserving, it would follow that war was inevitable and should be awaited with resignation, and that the League's work was an attempt to avert the unavoidable and a futile waste of time. Supporters of the League, on the other hand, Undén continued, wished to preserve peace "in the sense of the absence of war." This did not mean that they would not work for changes brought about by agreement. But the work of peace could not be postponed until a more or less ideal state of affairs had been achieved. That would be as unreasonable as if the working classes, before they had the vote, had tried to "adopt the standpoint that they could not co-operate in any system for maintaining law and order until all out-of-date and unjust laws had been revised . . . If we wish to work for peace, we must accept as a starting-point the conditions now prevailing, and trust to the future and the peaceful forces of development to reform the world." Undén thus gave clear, if somewhat exaggerated, expression to an aspect which was not often brought out in the debate. There was always a certain incompatibility between the two aims on which Sweden was united: revision of the peace and preservation of the League; the Right-Wing was inclined to prefer the former course, the Left the latter.

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Finally it should perhaps be emphasised once again that the differences in attitude to the League did not always precisely coincide with the division Right-Left. There were varying degrees of opinion on both sides. Also, as world tension decreased, differences of opinion with regard to the League became less acute. By 1930 it was not unusual for both Right and Left to admit that the ideas they had held about it in 1920 had been quite wrong.

It has often been said that Sweden and the Scandinavian States in general received the League and its principles with unusual enthusiasm. It is difficult to know how such statements should be taken; they are valueless unless based on a comparison with other States, and a reliable comparison would require considerable research. But judging only from a study of conditions in Sweden and from personal experience, mainly confined to Sweden, the statements seem very doubtful. If Sweden can justly be described as enthusiastic, other countries must have been chilly to a degree. The impression obtained is that the general acceptance of the League was due rather to indifference than enthusiasm, that the League's work was considered to have little direct importance for Sweden and did not attract any particular interest. The League and all connected with it was seldom referred to in election programmes and election campaigns; public lectures and debates on the subject were few and poorly attended, political associations took it for granted that League matters would be considered "dull". An indication, if not a very significant one, of the attitude of Swedish public opinion is that the Swedish League of Nations Association was as small as it was inactive. The number of members in 1925 was 335, in 1932, 150; by way of comparison it may be mentioned that the corresponding British Association in the late 1920's had about 800,000 members, and many other similar organisations had a considerable membership. Study of the minutes and publications of the Association conveys the impression that its principal activity consisted in making requests for Government grants—debated in the Riksdag on several occasions with some heat—which it used to send Swedish delegates to annual conferences with representatives of corresponding organisations abroad.¹¹ Societies working for the League were formed at some Universities but were of very small importance. The work of various educational organisations to spread information about the League seems to have been extremely limited.

THE AALAND QUESTION (1917—1921)

By the peace of Fredrikshamn of 1809 Sweden ceded Finland and Aaland to Russia; it later became a matter of dispute whether Aaland was regarded at that time as part of Sweden proper or part of Finland (or the Duchies of Finland). Thereafter the danger which a Russian-controlled Aaland constituted for Sweden loomed large on various occasions in Swedish thought and policy. When a Convention was attached to the Peace of Paris of 1856, stipulating that Russia was not to erect fortifications or military installations on Aaland, this danger seemed to be largely averted. During the preliminary negotiations which resulted in the Baltic Agreement of 23rd April 1908, however, Russia made repeated attempts to have these demilitarisation clauses cancelled. The Russian plans aroused uneasiness in Sweden which found unanimous expression in both Chambers of the Riksdag, Great Britain refused to support Russia, and a treaty was concluded in 1908 which guaranteed the *status quo* without mentioning the question of fortifications. At the outbreak of the World War, Russia was therefore still pledged not to fortify the Aaland Islands. It was not, however, altogether clear whether Sweden was entitled to invoke the Paris Convention, which had been signed only by Great Britain, France and Russia. Sweden had not been a party either to this agreement or to the Peace of Paris, to which the Convention was attached and which had been signed by a number of States in addition to those above mentioned. The Swedish view was that she was entitled to invoke the Convention, in the maintenance of which she had a direct interest, so long as its abrogation had not been agreed by the signatory Powers to the Peace of Paris.

After the outbreak of the World War, however, Russia began to erect fortifications and other installations, chiefly naval, on the Aaland Islands; among other things, the Islands were used, as was established later, as a base for Russian and British submarines. When news of Russia's action reached Sweden, a discussion arose, particularly in the spring of 1916, which merged into the general discussion on Sweden's attitude to the World War. The Conservative Press in particular emphasised the danger of a fortified Aaland, hinted at the possibility that the Russian breach of treaty covered offensive plans against Sweden, and demanded that the Government should take energetic steps to ensure the maintenance of the Aaland Convention. The Left-Wing Press took the same view as far as Sweden's interest in an unfortified Aaland was concerned, but harboured suspicions that the demand for "action" by the Government frequently served as a cloak for Activist agitation the real aim of which was to drag Sweden into the War on Germany's side. For the first time the term "Aaland-Activism" began to be used in connection with the demand

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for Swedish intervention. The question was taken up in the Riksdag in May 1916. After questions had been asked about the Aaland fortifications by Professor Gustaf Steffen, who was known for his Activist sympathies, the Foreign Minister declared on 17th May in both Chambers—during a debate on certain Foreign Office appropriations—firstly that the Government was determined to maintain Swedish neutrality, secondly that it considered the Aaland question of vital importance for Sweden and would do all in its power, in this as in all other matters, “to ensure the preservation of Swedish rights and interests.” Spokesmen of all parties then affirmed their support of Government policy on both issues. The Riksdag debate brought about a relaxation of tension at any rate to the extent that the violent Press campaign about the Aaland question died down. As to what measures the Foreign Minister indicated in his reply that the Government proposed to take, nothing is known. That the question was the subject of diplomatic activity during the ensuing period is shown by a passage in the Speech from the Throne to the ordinary Riksdag of 1917: “The views expressed unanimously in the last Riksdag encourage me in my efforts to bring about a solution of this matter satisfactory to the vital interests of Sweden.”

In the autumn of 1917, the Aaland question entered on a new phase. After the Communist revolution in Russia in the beginning of November, it appeared possible that Finland might shortly recover her independence; a few weeks later, on 4th December, the Finnish Government proclaimed Finland a sovereign State. But the position in Finland remained extremely precarious. For a time, it was uncertain whether Russia would recognise Finnish independence. The large Russian military forces which remained in Finland constituted a threat both to the independence of the country and to its internal order. The cutting of trade relations rendered the supply position difficult. Differences between the non-Socialist parties and the large section of the Social Democrats which showed an inclination to act on the model of the Russian Communists, were already acute. Disturbances and acts of violence were common, White defence forces and Red guards were organised, and it was expected that the Russian troops in Finland, possibly also the Russian Government, would intervene on the side of the Reds.

Even before the second revolution in Russia, on 20th August, Aaland municipal representatives had passed a resolution at a meeting in Finström “to bring to the attention of the Swedish Government and Riksdag the fact that, for various reasons, the people of Aaland earnestly desire the reunion of their islands with the Kingdom of Sweden.” No immediate representation was made, but the resolution of the Aaland islanders soon became known in Sweden. Four months later, at Christmas-tide 1917, a sort of plebiscite was taken in the Islands, when signatures were collected to a petition addressed to

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the King of Sweden expressing "the firm determination of the Aaland Islanders to achieve the incorporation of their islands in the Kingdom of Sweden." The petition was signed by 7,135 adult men and women; certain districts, which had not been able to take part in the original plebiscite, notified their adherence later. I will return later to the presentation of the petition in February 1918.

To understand the Swedish debate on the Aaland question in the autumn of 1917 it is necessary to recall that the Russian Government organ *Pravda* revealed in November that the Russian Imperial Government, in its negotiations with the Allies during the World War, had asked for the withdrawal of the restrictions on fortification of the Aaland Islands. This confirmed the suspicions already felt in Sweden, that the installations built on Aaland during the War were intended to be permanent.

Another important fact which, on the contrary, was not known at this time to the Swedish public—in fact it only became known more than eighteen years later when certain documents were published by the Swedish Foreign Office—was that Germany had offered the Aaland Islands to Sweden.¹² The German Foreign Minister had addressed unofficial communications to the King of Sweden on 11th and 17th December, asking whether, on certain terms and conditions, Sweden would be willing to take over the Aaland Islands. It was proposed that Swedish troops would then occupy the island group. If the Swedish reply were favourable, Germany would sponsor the matter in the peace negotiations with Russia. The Swedish Government did not feel it could accept the offer. Its attitude was expressed by the Prime Minister Edén at a meeting of a secret committee on 18th December 1917. If Sweden acquired the Aaland Islands with German support, he said, she would be taking "a step away from complete neutrality"; the Allies would consider that she had thrown in her lot with Germany, and Sweden would find herself in definite opposition to one group of Powers in the World War. In addition, Sweden's relations with Russia and above all with Finland might be disturbed, and secondly, one of Germany's terms—increased exports of iron ore after the War—was not acceptable to Sweden. The Swedish Government therefore decided only to ask the German Government to use its influence at the peace negotiations with Russia to ensure the demolition of the Aaland Island fortifications, or if possible to render the Islands completely neutral. There can be no doubt that certain Conservative members of the secret committee opposed the Government attitude and expressed themselves in principle in favour of acceptance of the German offer.—Although the above negotiations and decisions were not made public, it seems probable that they were known to an inner circle of politicians and journalists, and so had an indirect influence on public opinion.

Swedish interest in the Aaland question, which had never quite

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died down since 1916, flared up again in the autumn, above all from the end of November. The discussion was heated and lively; the Swedish Foreign Office press cuttings, which are far from complete, include hundreds of articles on the Aaland question for November and December. The main lines of the discussion are clear, and show considerable party bias. The Conservatives, who took the offensive, demanded energetic action and criticised the Government for passivity, subservience to foreign interests, and lack of diplomatic skill. The Left-Wing defended the Government and recommended—though to very varying degrees—caution and foresight; as in 1916, they answered Conservative attacks with accusations of Activism, of wishing to draw Sweden into the War by devious routes. In certain important respects the discussion was nevertheless—until the Government action in the autumn of 1918 produced a certain stabilisation—for easily understandable reasons obscure and confused. Many seemed uncertain whether measures to ensure Sweden's Aaland interests should be directed against Russia or Finland, or whether the first step should be to obtain German co-operation. Some assumed that the Aaland Islands belonged to Russia, others, particularly after the Finnish declaration of independence, that they belonged to Finland, others again that their nationality was uncertain. As to the course which the active policy demanded by the Conservatives was to take, opinions were divided and often confused; the defensive arguments of the Left were similarly confused. Many articles, however, seem deliberately ambiguous.

In broad terms, it may be said that the Conservative Press rejected or did not believe in the possibility of a solution of the Aaland question which would merely provide guarantees for the continued defortification of the islands. The only real security would lie in their reunion with Sweden. This was its main standpoint, which became more clearly developed as the discussion proceeded. Sometimes it was stated quite generally that this goal should be attained by negotiations; there seems no doubt that some quarters knew of the German offer and wished to make use of it. More moderate newspapers, including the leading Conservative daily papers in Stockholm, asserted that the goal could and should be attained with Finland's co-operation. It was suggested not infrequently that Finnish consent could be secured if Sweden rendered Finland services: helped her with imports, assisted her in the maintenance of order, or, after the Finnish declaration of independence, afforded diplomatic recognition to the new State. The constantly-quoted slogan for this policy, coined by the Aaland Islander Sundblom, was "Finland free—Aaland Swedish." *Svenska Dagbladet*, for example, considered that there was "reason to believe that a request for the transfer of the Aaland Islands to Sweden, provided that the population expresses itself in favour, would be supported by the Finnish Government if Sweden supported Finland's

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recognition as an independent State." Sometimes even the Conservatives reacted against such suggestions as savouring too much of diplomatic bargaining. As the point was not always made that any solution of the Aaland question must be reached in agreement with Finland, it may be assumed that some quarters envisaged the acquisition of the Aaland Islands irrespective of Finnish consent.

When the Conservative Press spoke almost unanimously of the necessity of swift "action," it was obviously not thinking exclusively of more or less protracted negotiations. The immediate occupation of the Aaland Islands was even suggested. *Svensk Tidskrift* stated that Swedish foreign policy should follow two lines.¹³ On the one hand Sweden should support Finland diplomatically, militarily (e.g. by sending Swedish officers to help train the Finnish army) and economically; "The second line in Swedish policy should be . . . that Sweden should provisionally occupy and administer the Aaland Islands, both to ensure the safety of their own population and Sweden's own direct interests during and after the War." Evidently it was assumed that the occupation would take place without Finnish opposition. After the War, it could be decided whether the Aaland Islands should belong to Sweden or Finland. Other articles imply a demand for the occupation of Aaland which is not definitely expressed. Dark hints that something must be done immediately are combined with such general and emotional arguments as that the Left-Wing suspicions of Activist plans were readily understandable. Typical in this respect is the much-publicised speech made by Professor K. G. Westman—who was considered to have displayed Activist sympathies when a member of the Hammarskjöld Government—in Uppsala on 7th December. Westman's only outright demand was that Sweden should exert diplomatic pressure to obtain guarantees for the defortification of the Aaland Islands. But he added that all talk of the maintenance of neutrality was "unnecessary and therefore unmanly," and concluded with a high-sounding declaration that the policy he stood for had behind it a majority of past and future generations. Utterances of this sort were naturally assumed to cover ambitious plans which it was not deemed expedient to reveal.

The demand for the incorporation of the Aaland Islands with Sweden was at that time mainly based on strategic reasons. "Sweden needs Aaland for her security's sake—in these days of aircraft and fast warships even more than in 1809, when we still fought to retain Aaland even after Finland was lost beyond hope . . . We grant Finland all the independence she can attain, but the Aaland Islands are Swedish, and Sweden needs them more than Finland." Comments like this abound. An Aaland in the possession of a foreign Power might serve as a base for attack on Sweden, particularly Stockholm, and enable sea communications between southern and northern Sweden to be cut. Aaland, in the old, constantly-quoted phrase, was "a

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pistol pointed at the heart of Sweden." There was a certain inconsistency in emphasising the enormous strategic importance of Aaland to Sweden and at the same time assuming that the islands must still remain defortified, even if they passed into Swedish hands. This inconsistency, which characterised the Swedish attitude all the time the Aaland question was under consideration, has the quite simple explanation that the demand for the defortification of Aaland merged naturally into a demand for Aaland, and that then the first demand was retained as a second line of defence in the event of the failure of the demand for Aaland itself. Besides, it would hardly have been possible to say that Aaland must be unfortified—except in Swedish possession.

In addition to strategic considerations, there was much talk of the principle of national self-determination—although this particular phrase was not yet as popular as it became later. We must think, wrote *Stockholms Dagblad*, "of the security of the Swedish capital, the uncertain position of the Aaland Swedes in a Chauvinist Finnish State, the probable military weakness of the new Finland at any rate as a guarantor that the Aaland Islands will not be used by some other Power for offensive action against Sweden, and not least of the wishes of the Swedish population of Aaland itself." When the Finnish Press proved unfavourable to the Swedish plans, the Swedes replied with an argument which was to be repeated in countless different forms during the next few years. They said that "the Aaland Islanders were acting in accordance with the same national principle as had been the mainspring of the Russian struggle for liberation and of Finland's own declaration of independence," and called it morally indefensible that "the new Finnish State, which itself demands independence and recognition in the name of freedom, should feel justified in binding to itself by force a group of people who ask for freedom to reunite themselves with their old mother country."

The Left-Wing Press, in which no general distinction can be drawn between Liberal and Social Democratic newspapers, defended the Government against Right-Wing criticism and generally took the line that the question both of the defortification and nationality of the Aaland Islands should be taken up at the coming peace negotiations. The Conservative Press campaign was considered to aim at the immediate occupation of the islands or at any rate at measures which might involve Sweden in the World War. The slogan "Aaland Activism" was much employed to underline the fact that Conservative policy was calculated to lead to war, even if this was not deliberately intended by the leading men of the party. "Enthusiasm for the incorporation of the Aaland question in Swedish foreign policy," wrote *Social-Demokraten*, "is inspired by the same spirit as in 1915 demanded courageous intervention on the side of Germany." As regards the principle of Aaland's future *status*, opinions varied.

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Many both Liberal and Social Democratic papers held unreservedly that, under the principle of national self-determination, Aaland ought to return to Sweden. Among these was *Stockholms-Tidningen*, which from the first was one of the most vigorous exponents of the view which later came to be held almost universally. Other newspapers, including *Dagens Nyheter*, *Göteborgs Handelstidning* and *Social-Demokraten*, were doubtful or sceptical, but without definitely rejecting the idea of the incorporation of Aaland with Sweden. They pointed out that the Finns, judging by some of their statements, were not disposed to give up Aaland, that the occupation of Aaland in some circumstances would involve the risk of war and therefore necessitate special defence measures, and that, if Finnish independence were declared and confirmed, the Aaland Islanders might not even be so anxious for a reunion with Sweden.

About the turn of the year, the situation began to change. Sweden recognised Finnish independence on 4th January. She did this without any reservation with regard to Aaland, a circumstance which was later claimed by the Finns to mean that she had recognised Aaland as part of the sovereign State of Finland. On the same day, Russia also recognised Finland. Authoritative statements from Finnish sources, among others by Svinhufvud, the head of the Government, indicated that Finland was not willing to relinquish Aaland. The Aaland Islanders themselves, however, stood firm by their original demands, although presentation of the proposed petition to the King of Sweden was delayed for various reasons. The situation was further complicated by the steadily increasing tension in Finland; it became more and more certain that the differences must culminate in an armed conflict between the "Whites" and the "Reds."

In his Speech from the Throne at the opening of the 1918 ordinary Riksdag, the King expressed the deep satisfaction felt by all parties at the liberation of Finland and Sweden's recognition of her independence. On the question of Aaland he only touched briefly, and without any reference to her desire for reunion with Sweden: "I also hope that Finland's independence will facilitate a solution of the Aaland question which will be satisfactory to Sweden. I have already taken measures towards such a solution." The last sentence presumably referred to the approaches to the German Government on the subject of the fortification of Aaland, to which reference has already been made.

During the *remiss* debate, the question was taken up by the leaders of the Conservative party in both Chambers. Trygger made a particularly penetrating and forceful speech. When Aaland, with its Swedish population, was separated from Sweden in 1809, it had left "a bleeding wound, which a hundred years had not sufficed to heal." The loss of Aaland had been felt all the more keenly because it jeopardised Swedish independence. Aaland "represents almost the

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key to the capital of Sweden and threatens to isolate northern Sweden from the rest of the country." The prohibition of fortifications on Aaland had always been an imperfect means of ensuring Sweden's security, and had been proved during the World War to have no real value. It was therefore clear that "only the occupation of Aaland can give us the necessary security. Aaland in our hands constitutes a threat to no-one, but a real protection to ourselves." Now that the Aaland Islanders had asked for reunion with Sweden, the Swedish people must "regard it as their patriotic duty to the future and to later generations" to bring about the only solution which corresponded with Sweden's vital interests. Trygger did not discuss Finland's attitude to the question beyond pointing out that Finland had obtained her independence by the same principle as that which the Aaland Islanders invoked, and expressing his conviction that later historians, to whom all the circumstances were known, would approve the solution demanded by Sweden. This can hardly be interpreted otherwise than as meaning that, if a friendly agreement with Finland could not be reached, Sweden should seek to acquire the Aaland Islands without Finnish consent. Lindman, without going into the problem in detail, remarked that it should be solved in accordance with the wishes of the Aaland Islanders. The Prime Minister's reply in the First Chamber expressed the views of the opposing parties very clearly. Sweden should not "cling obstinately to one solution as the only one possible." The strategic aspects of the Aaland problem had been largely altered by recent events, particularly the Finnish declaration of independence. In choosing between different solutions, Sweden must not forget that "the attitude which the newly-liberated Finland will adopt towards Sweden and Scandinavia in the future is a consideration of primary importance. In dealing with the Aaland question, the Government now in office regards it as its imperative duty to ensure by all means in its power that the solution reached is one which will not vitiate friendship between Sweden and Finland. That friendship is a more vital factor for Sweden's future security than the considerations which seem of exclusive importance to Mr. Trygger." Trygger replied that a solution of the Aaland question in accordance with Swedish interests ought not to cause any difficulties between Finland and Sweden. Not many speakers took part in this debate. The Left side of the Chamber criticised Aaland Activism, emphasised the importance of Finland's attitude and dissociated itself from any plans of annexation. One Left-Wing Socialist declared, in connection with earlier statements in the party Press, that the principle of self-determination should be decisive and that the happiest solution would probably be an independent and neutralized Aaland Republic.

Press comment continued during this period along much the same lines as before, though perhaps in a rather more restrained tone. The Conservative papers demanded action for the acquisition of Aaland.

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But none of them seemed able to agree about the national *status* of Aaland. As one paper, *Dagens Nyheter*, pointed out, there were several different theories on this point: that Aaland belonged to Finland, or to Russia, or only to the Aaland Islanders themselves, that it was unclaimed property, that it had returned to Sweden, since up to the Peace of Fredrikshamn it was part of Sweden proper. Some, who considered that Finland in any case had special claims on Aaland, felt that compensation ought to be given—financial, military, economic and diplomatic support—and that in any case an agreement with Finland ought to be reached. But many—in common with Trygger—put the acquisition of Aaland first. Finland ought not to have anything against Aaland's returning to Sweden. It is significant that Edén's speech in the *remiss* debate was very sharply criticised, because the emphasis he placed on the importance of Finnish friendship was considered to have weakened Sweden's chances of getting her own way. Edén's declarations on this subject, wrote Gustaf Stridsberg, were "the most irresponsible words of which a Swedish Prime Minister has been guilty for many generations, words spoken directly against and not for Sweden, and they do not even express Swedish feeling." It was even stated outright that the acquisition of Aaland was more important to Sweden than the emergence of the Finnish buffer State. Sharp comments were made on the Finnish attitude, and comparisons drawn between the strong sense of patriotism in Finland and the lack of it in Sweden. To a certain extent this attitude was doubtless inspired by fears that a Socialist and nationalist* group might rise to power in Finland. The motives put forward for the demands were still largely strategic, though reference was also occasionally made to the right of national self-determination. *Svenska Dagbladet* suggested that Sweden, if she succeeded in acquiring the Aaland Islands, ought preferably to be allowed to fortify them.

The Left-Wing Press largely followed the line indicated by the Prime Minister in the *remiss* debate. It spoke of the necessity of friendship with Finland and how Aaland in Finnish hands would be less dangerous to Sweden than it had been. The right of self-determination was approved in principle, but many papers made reservations about its application in this particular case. Some cast doubts on the interest which the Conservatives claimed to take in Finland, as they were now prepared to demand Aaland of the recently liberated Finnish State. There is no need to pause here over more than a few comments of outstanding interest. On 14th January Branting, who had resigned from his position as Minister of Finance a few days previously, wrote an article on the question in *Social-*

* The word "fennomanskt" used in the Swedish edition indicates a movement to give the Finns in Finland a stronger position as against the Swedish minority in the country.

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Demokraten. He criticised Aaland Activism and disagreed in general with the demand for the Aaland Islands. Geographically the existing territorial limit—the Aaland Sea—was far preferable to a possible line between the Aaland Islands and the Finnish Archipelago. The vital Swedish interest—that Aaland should not constitute a military threat to the Swedish coast—would be served just as well by an independent Finland as by a Swedish occupation of Aaland. “For this would be accompanied either by an international guarantee of neutrality such as our nationalists generally ridicule as valueless pieces of paper, or—would involve *obligations for the military defence* of Aaland in the event of fresh conflicts between the Great Powers in the Baltic. It would be interesting to know whether those who talk so glibly now about Swedish Aaland would be willing for their new Swedish province—which the Swedish people would certainly refuse to purchase at the cost of bad feeling between themselves and the free people of the new Finland—to be internationally guaranteed as a neutral zone, or whether they would demand the reorganisation of our defence administration so as to include this new and particularly exposed outpost.” In conclusion, Branting suggested that the occupation of Aaland was merely being sponsored by the Conservatives as part of their general propaganda for increased armaments. Other leading Social Democratic newspapers expressed similar views. *Arbetet* declared that “this whole principle of national self-determination was never meant to apply to relations between peoples so closely akin as the Scandinavians—for the differences in nationality between them should never be such as to divide them—but only to the right of a people to throw off oppression by some other people of quite different nationality, language and religion.” If Sweden invoked the principle of nationality, Finland might lay claim to quite large and rich areas in northernmost Sweden which have a Finnish population. “In these circumstances, it seems best not to say too much about Sweden’s right to the Aaland Islands under the principle of nationality.”

An article in *Dagens Nyheter* by its editor, Captain Sten Dehlgren of the Naval Reserve, on the strategic implications of the Aaland question, although it followed along a line of thought already familiar in the Left-Wing Press, aroused considerable attention and was sharply criticised in the Conservative papers. Dehlgren began by pointing out that the Aaland Islands had never before been regarded as a “Swedish irredenta,” and that actually, in spite of attempts to prove the opposite, they must be considered a part of Finland, as they had been under Finnish administration and Finnish laws for more than a century. Most people in Sweden looked at the Aaland question from a purely egoistic Swedish standpoint; only a very few were actuated by the idea of recovering a piece of Swedish culture, or of increasing the national prestige by territorial gains.

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The kernel of the question was that Sweden feared the military threat which the islands might constitute in the hands of another Power. The extent of this threat, Dehlgren considered, was exaggerated. The Aaland Islands would not be of any great value for the invasion of Sweden, firstly because invasion transports do not nowadays require intermediate bases, secondly because they could be intercepted in modern warfare by submarines. On the other hand, Aaland in the hands of a hostile Power might be dangerous as a base for air attacks on central Sweden and particularly Stockholm. But this did not mean that the islands ought to be Swedish. Such a solution would place a great strain on the Swedish defence system, for an unfortified Aaland would require not only a strong garrison on the islands themselves, but a naval detachment based on the islands, and a general strengthening of the Navy to secure communications over the Aaland Sea. "It does not need a prophet to foretell what a military spiral all this would start, and what bitter internal conflicts would develop round the question of defence. Nor would one probably be very far from the truth if one asserted that the advocates of a Swedish Aaland secretly nourish hopes of stronger armaments. Possession of Aaland would also increase Sweden's risk of becoming involved in any future war between the other Baltic Powers, a circumstance which should not be forgotten." Sweden's aim should therefore be to ensure that the island group remained unfortified and that no Power should be allowed to use it for military purposes. This aim could be achieved if Aaland remained Finnish or received some measure of independence. In any case, the neutrality of the islands should be guaranteed by all Powers with interests in the Baltic. A treaty of this nature, guaranteed by other States besides those which might be involved in any possible conflict, would be of great value.

At the end of January and beginning of February, fresh events occurred which again reacted on the Aaland question. The long-expected civil war in Finland broke out in the last few days of January, and for the next few weeks it was uncertain whether the Whites or the Reds would gain the upper hand. On 2nd February, the petition for the reunion of the Aaland Islands with Sweden, to which reference has already been made, was presented to the King of Sweden, who replied that he hoped the Swedish Government, in co-operation with Finland, would be able to find a way to grant the hopes of the Aaland people. The Finnish Civil war brought about a critical situation on Aaland, where a few thousand Russian troops were still stationed, and where later detachments of both the Red and White armies landed. The behaviour of the demoralised Russian troops towards the civil population was shocking, and violences and excesses were strongly feared; this fact was brought to the notice of the Swedish Government on 8th February by a deputation from Aaland which asked for protection and help. After various negotiations and

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measures which included the sending of a Swedish warship, the Swedish Government succeeded in bringing about some restoration of order; the Finnish and Russian troops were gradually evacuated, and on 20th February a Swedish force was landed on Aaland to ensure order and security.¹⁴ It was expressly stated, both in Sweden itself and in communications to other Powers, that this Aaland expedition served humanitarian purposes only and had no political object, i.e. was not designed to assert any claim to the occupation of Aaland. The Finnish Government, however, criticised the manner in which the Swedish work of pacification had been carried out, and some doubts were expressed in Finland as to whether the Aaland expedition was a first step towards a more permanent occupation. Then Germany, at the request of Finland, intervened in the civil war and landed troops on Aaland, and the Swedish troops were gradually withdrawn, the last leaving in May. At the same time a preliminary agreement was concluded between Sweden, Finland and Germany relating to the demolition of the Aaland fortifications, Russia having already agreed at Brest-Litovsk to this demand by Germany. The work of demolition was begun the following year.

The general political discussion in Sweden in these circumstances concentrated in the spring of 1918 on the Finnish question. The Conservatives wanted to send aid to the Finnish Government, in the form of either troops or war material, the Left-Wing defended the policy of the Liberal Socialist Government, the aim of which was to avoid becoming involved in the conflict. There is no need to linger over the extremely heated arguments in Riksdag and Press, in which the Aaland question proper was thrown into the background. Some effort was made, however, to combine what were called the Finnish and the Aaland questions. To Swedish Conservatives, who on the one hand were very anxious to help White Finland, and on the other were committed to an active Aaland policy, it seemed a natural solution that Sweden should give Finland aid in return for acquiring Aaland. This policy was advocated, among others, by Professor Pontus Fahlbeck in a speech on 6th February, with which many newspapers agreed, in which he declared that Sweden would undoubtedly be able to obtain Aaland by helping Finland with war material and arms. It was also suggested that she might gain the same end by offering Finland a defensive alliance (in a speech by Westman 8th March 1918). This compensation policy was not accepted, however, by the highest circles in the party. On 12th February Lindman and Trygger made a joint declaration dealing mainly with the Finnish question, in which they gave it as their view that Sweden should try to pacify Aaland without seeking any immediate decision as to the future ownership of the islands. This idea of intervention on humanitarian grounds was adopted thereafter by the Conservatives and was actually put into effect by the Government, even though

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the parties disagreed as to the exact methods used. The Conservatives continued to repeat their conviction that the refusal of the Edén Government to assist Finland by influencing Finnish opinion had reduced Sweden's prospects of obtaining Aaland with Finnish consent. As before, strategic arguments were largely quoted.

A more positive attitude towards the Aaland question may possibly during this period be detected in the Left party. The reply given by the King to the petition presented by the Aaland deputation must be assumed to have been framed with Government approval, and received no direct criticism in the editorial comments of the leading Left-Wing papers. But strong exception was taken to any coupling of the Aaland question with the question of help to Finland, and it was constantly emphasised that the aims of the Aaland expedition had been purely humanitarian.¹⁵ After Germany's intervention in the Finnish war of Liberation, Branting stated in an interview with *Le Temps* that the Aaland Islands, if they belonged to a completely independent Finland which gravitated towards Scandinavia, could not be regarded as a threat to Sweden, but that Finland's orientation towards Germany altered the case; he also quoted the principle of nationality as supporting the demands of the Aaland Islanders. Any energetic backing of the Aaland attitude is to be found only in a few Liberal papers.

The spring of 1918 marked the end of the preliminary stage of the discussion on the Aaland question, during which the return of the islands to Sweden was considered in conjunction with Finnish independence. As will be seen from the brief account given above, opinions differed greatly. The demand originally put forward by the Aaland Islanders themselves for reunion with Sweden was supported chiefly by the Right-Wing, but for a long time had a very dubious or luke-warm reception from a large part of the leading Left-Wing Press; the relative unanimity of Swedish public opinion which characterised the later stages of the debate was only arrived at gradually during the years 1918—1920. That the Left-Wing at first advocated what was generally called a "passive policy" can be explained by various incidental factors. First of all, they feared that vigorous action with regard to Aaland might have the result of dragging Sweden into the war on the side of the Central Powers. The more general criticism of "Aaland Activism" must be seen largely in the light of this fact; naturally they tried to produce as forceful and far-reaching arguments as possible against the active policy which they considered dangerous. But this does not fully explain the problem of the violent swing in Swedish public opinion while the Aaland question was under consideration. We will consider this problem later.

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Swedish claims on Aaland were mainly supported by two arguments: the strategic advantages to Sweden resulting from the acquisition of Aaland, and the principle of the right of national self-determination. In the early stages of the debate, the first was unquestionably the more important. The main arguments in favour of the incorporation of Aaland with Sweden were summarised in a pamphlet published in the spring of 1918 by the General Defence Association. They were five in number, namely: "(1) The close bonds between Aaland and Sweden, its Swedish-speaking population, its proximity to Sweden; (2) Aaland in the possession of an Eastern Power would constitute a direct threat to the most important provinces of Sweden, in consequence of which Swedish land and sea forces—which would probably be required elsewhere—would be tied down for the defence of these provinces; (3) invasion forces could be sent by sea from Aaland to any desired point on Sweden's long coast-line, while Swedish naval units operating in the Baltic would be prevented from intervening in the Gulf of Bothnia, and *vice versa*; the Boden position and Swedish land forces could be surrounded or taken in the rear by means of an invasion from across the sea; (4) air attacks could be made on Stockholm from Aaland in a very short time, which would necessitate the organisation of a strong Anti-Aircraft defence in peace-time; (5) Aaland in Swedish hands would not constitute a corresponding threat to any other Power."

That strategic considerations were placed in the foreground during this period more than later, is largely connected with the fact that the Conservatives, whose predominant interest was national security, were the driving force when the question was first taken up. Another factor was the gradual transfer of emphasis from the question of defortification to the larger question of the acquisition of Aaland. In the defortification question military considerations were paramount, so it was natural for the same arguments to be retained when the question of a Swedish occupation of Aaland was first considered. As has already been pointed out, it was generally assumed that the defortification ruling would apply also to a Swedish Aaland; some asserted, however, that the only lasting solution would be a fortified Aaland in Swedish hands.

Finnish opinion was at first almost universally critical of the Swedish plans. Representative newspaper articles took this tone before the end of 1917; early in January 1918 the head of the Finnish State brusquely rejected the Aaland Islanders' demands for separation; time after time, particularly during the Civil War, sharp official warnings were issued to the Aaland population. It was often said in Sweden during the spring of 1918 and later, that Finland would have handed over Aaland to Sweden without hesitation, if she had received the help she desired during the Civil War. This is possible, but hardly probable; everything goes to suggest, as

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Professor Nils Stjernberg pointed out in a much-discussed article in *Stockholms Dagblad* on 9th March, that leading opinion in Finland was unfavourable to Sweden from the start. Whether Sweden would have been able to obtain Aaland by making this a condition of aid to Finland, is another question into which we need not enter here. So far as is known, only one Finlander, Professor Georg von Wendt, during the winter of 1917—1918 expressed a certain sympathy with Aaland's aspirations; but von Wendt only visualised joint Finnish-Swedish control of the islands. There were doubtless some Finns, who did not give public expression to their views, who would have been prepared to give up Aaland for the sake of good relations with Sweden, but they do not seem to have influenced either Government policy or public opinion in general.¹⁶

The Swedish campaign for the incorporation of the Aaland Islands with Sweden, or more correctly, for the Aaland population to be allowed to decide its own nationality by plebiscite, began in the summer of 1918 and continued until midsummer 1921, when the League Council definitely rejected the Swedish claims. The campaign fell into three phases, which to some extent ran concurrently: firstly, direct negotiations with Finland, secondly, attempts to induce the Peace Conference in Paris to take the matter up, and finally representations to the League of Nations, where the question had been brought up by Great Britain. The discussion in Sweden during these three phases did not differ to an extent which would justify separate treatment, and the three phases will therefore be dealt with as one. For a proper understanding of the debate, an outline must first be given of the course of diplomatic events themselves, though as our subject is not the history of the Aaland question itself but the history of the discussion about it, this outline must be very brief. A number of detailed accounts are available for those who wish to go into the question more fully.¹⁷

According to a report on the Aaland question presented by the Swedish Government in July 1920 to the Council of the League of Nations, "informal conversations" were opened in the summer of 1918 with the Finnish Government, in which Sweden offered to support Finnish aspirations for the improvement of her Eastern frontier (Further Karelia) in return for recognition of the Aaland people's demand for national self-determination. The public was told nothing at the time about the negotiations, but the attitude of the Swedish Press suggests that politically informed circles were aware of what was going on. Details as to the course of the negotiations are still not known. On 9th November 1918—two days before the Armistice—the executive committee of the Aaland Landsting

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addressed an appeal to the American, French, British and Italian Governments, requesting that at the coming peace negotiations the Aaland question might be solved in accordance with the will of the population. In view of this appeal, the Swedish Government on 19th November communicated to the Finnish Government its desire that a plebiscite might be held on Aaland to decide the nationality question; the official reply of the Finnish Government was not received until 1st June 1919. On 17th December the Government published this correspondence, stating that it was determined to work for a solution of the Aaland question "in accordance with the wishes of the population and the interests of Sweden." As the negotiations with Finland produced no results, the Swedish Government appealed to the Peace Conference in Paris. This appeal was based on a memorandum addressed to the Conference by a delegation from the Aaland people on 31st January 1919. The Swedish document, presented on 22nd April 1919 and signed by the four Swedish delegates—Branting, Ehrensvärd, Swedish Minister in Paris, Wrangel, Swedish Minister in London, and Marks von Würtemberg, the expert on international law—justified the Swedish claim chiefly by reference to the principle of national self-determination. It further stated that the Swedish Government desired friendly relations with Finland, but that these would only be made possible by a solution of the Aaland question in accordance with the "wishes of the population and the interests of Sweden." The question could conveniently be dealt with by the Conference in connection with the question of the Finnish frontiers. Finally it declared that, even in the event of Aaland being granted to Sweden, the Swedish Government wished measures to be taken "to prevent the islands being used for any military activities or exposed to attack by another Power."

On 5th June 1919, the Finnish Government replied to the Swedish Government's communication of November 1918. The reply stated briefly that the Aaland Islands were geographically part of Finland and had long been administered by Finland. The Aaland population was only part of the Swedish population of Finland, and until recently had never expressed any desire to break away from the rest of Finland. The present mood of the Aaland Islanders was "largely due to the influence of recent abnormal events": their difficult position during the War when Russian troops were stationed on Aaland, the revolt of the Reds, the unfounded allegations of national oppression by the Finnish State. The principle of national self-determination was not applicable in this case, because if certain communities were to be allowed to break away from the national unit of which they formed a part, the consequences would be absurd. The Finnish Government affirmed its intention of respecting the linguistic, cultural and economic interests of the Aaland Islanders, and its desire to meet Sweden's strategic wishes. The separation of Aaland from Fin-

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land against the will of Finland would "seriously impair the good relations between Finland and Sweden, which the Finnish Government sincerely desires." The Swedish Government replied to this Note on 19th June. It set the principle of national self-determination in the forefront. The people of Aaland had "seized the first opportunity which offered to determine their own fate in the same way as the people of Finland . . ." Until 1809, Aaland had been regarded as a separate province, and was ceded at the Peace of Fredrikshamn as an area separate from Finland; to grant Aaland's wishes would therefore not be splitting up the Swedish population of Finland, but reuniting it with Sweden. The principle of natural frontiers could hardly be quoted in support of the Finnish Government's attitude; Aaland was certainly divided from Sweden by the Aaland Sea, but it was also divided from Finland by a wide stretch of waters ("Skiftet") and the so-called Aaland mainland was closer to Sweden than to Finland, and its people had long had their principal commercial connections with Sweden. The Swedish Government declared once more that only the recognition of the right of national self-determination for the Aaland people could ensure the development of favourable relations between Sweden and Finland.

At about the time this interchange of Notes was taking place, representatives of the Aaland municipalities decided to hold another plebiscite on the question of reunion with Sweden. In the result, of 10,196 votes cast, 9,735, or approx. 95 per cent, were in favour of reunion.¹⁸ This was reported to the Peace Conference by the Aaland delegates in Paris. The Swedish Government delegates then submitted the Swedish point of view to the Conference in a memorandum dated 4th August. They repeated and enlarged upon the arguments already quoted in the interchange of Notes with Finland. The principle of national self-determination must come first. They also emphasised that the Aaland question was an international question, as shown by the agreement of 1856, and that it therefore fell within the scope of the Conference. The Baltic Commission of the Peace Conference had suggested in an unpublished report that the Aaland Islands should be neutralised under a League of Nations guarantee, but that a final solution of the question should be postponed until Russia was in a position to express her views. The Swedish delegates stated, in reply to this, that any further delay in settling the question would be very undesirable, particularly in view of the feeling in the Aaland Islands, that Russia could not reasonably object to the desired plebiscite, and that Sweden was not opposed in principle to neutralisation. The delegation emphasised, however, "the particular interest which Sweden has in the Aaland question owing to the proximity of the islands to the Swedish capital . . . No other Baltic Power has so great an interest in the islands from a military point of view as Sweden." It would therefore be natural for the task of supervising the neutralisation of

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the islands—as also sovereignty over the islands—to be entrusted to Sweden.

Various other representations were made to the Peace Conference by both the Aaland and the Swedish delegates. At one time, the result seemed almost certain, and Clemenceau, the chairman of the Peace Conference, referred in a speech on 27th September 1919 in the Chamber of Deputies to the probability of the reunion of the Aaland Islands with Sweden. However, for reasons which are not exactly known, the Conference never definitely considered the Aaland question. That the wishes of the Aaland Islanders themselves remained unchanged was shown in various ways. Among others, the Aaland Landsting refused to accept a law passed by the Finnish Riksdag granting self-government to Aaland.

By the spring of 1920—the Edén Government had then been replaced by the Branting Government—matters seemed to have reached an *impasse*; both the direct negotiations with Finland and the representations to the Peace Conference had proved fruitless. In this situation, the leaders of the Aaland Islanders—doubtless in agreement with the Swedish Government—decided on a fresh line of action. On 31st May, representatives of the Aaland Landsting and municipalities were received in audience by the King of Sweden and called upon members of the Government in order to repeat their demand for reunion with Sweden. These delegates were received in such a manner as aroused, and was doubtless intended to arouse, considerable comment both in Sweden and abroad. The King made a speech to the deputation in which he showed himself completely on their side. He urged them not to despair; on visits to London and Paris, he had found an atmosphere favourable to their request, and he declared himself convinced that their “just cause” would triumph in the end. The Prime Minister, speaking on behalf of the Government, was equally positive. “The negotiations which the Swedish Government has initiated with other Powers are still proceeding . . . and recently there have been many indications of a growing realisation of the justice of the Aaland people’s demand and an increased recognition of the necessity for a speedy solution of the question in accordance with the principles already applied in similar cases, such as Northern Schleswig . . . The people of Aaland can rest assured that the Swedish Government, upheld by a unanimous public opinion, will not cease in its efforts to assert the right of the Aaland people to determine their own fate, and so pave the way for a solution in accordance with their wishes for reunion with Sweden.” The Aaland delegates also waited upon the representatives of the Great Allied Powers in Stockholm, and on the leaders of all parties in the Riksdag, who assured them of their sympathy.

The immediate result was a crisis in the relations between Sweden and Finland, during which the possibility of war was seriously

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discussed. On 4th June the Finnish Government protested against the Swedish Government's action, on 5th June two of the Aaland leaders were arrested on a charge of high treason, and during the next few days Finnish-speaking troops were transferred to Aaland. The Swedish authorities pointed out that the representations made by the Aaland delegation on 31st May merely pursued a line of action begun much earlier. A Government Note on 10th June declared that the arrests were "calculated to produce an atmosphere in Sweden which may have the most far-reaching and unfortunate effects on the relations between our two countries." The Finnish Government replied on 12th June that this was an internal Finnish affair and that Finnish law—presumably Swedish law too—did not recognise "any right for the country's nationals to negotiate with a foreign Power on measures directed against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their own State." After that, the Swedish Minister in Helsingfors was recalled "to report," and normal diplomatic relations between Sweden and Finland were not restored until the Aaland question was finally settled. The Swedish Government called the attention of the Great Powers to the conflict and the desirability of a prompt solution.

The third and last stage of the Aaland proceedings opened when the British Foreign Secretary, in a communication to the League Council on 19th June, drew attention to the question with reference to Article 11 of the League Covenant, the second paragraph of which declares it to be "the friendly right of each Member of the League to bring to the attention of the Assembly or of the Council any circumstance whatever affecting international relations which threatens to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends." This action was doubtless taken at the request of the Swedish Government or in any case with its consent; it was probably intended that the visit of the Aaland delegation should create a situation which would necessitate League intervention.

League deliberations, which were immediately begun, were at first largely concerned with points of international law which, as they had little or no influence on Swedish opinion, will only be dealt with here very briefly. The exact meaning of certain clauses in the Covenant was discussed, together with the applicability of certain unwritten international laws. One question which came up time and again was whether Sweden, by recognising Finland on 4th January 1918, must be considered also to have recognised Aaland as part of Finland; this was maintained by the Finnish Government and disputed by the Swedish. On each point, although the questions were supposed to be purely juridical, each party adopted the point of view politically most favourable to itself.

Finland which, although not at this time a member of the League of Nations, took part in negotiations as a party to the dispute, denied the League's right to consider the Aaland question, and the Council

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therefore took up the question of competence for special consideration. The crux of the matter was the interpretation and application of Article 15, paragraph 8 of the Covenant: "If the dispute between the parties is claimed by one of them, and is found by the Council to arise out of a matter which by international law is solely within the domestic jurisdiction of that party, the Council shall so report, and shall make no recommendations as to its settlement." To decide this question and the regulations in force relating to the demilitarisation of Aaland, an international legal commission was appointed on 12th July 1920, with the approval of Finland and Sweden, which, after consulting the Finnish and Swedish Governments, presented a detailed report on 5th September 1920. Its general conclusion was that the League was competent to deal with the matter. It argued that the situation with regard to Finland and Aaland was still so fluid and legally so obscure that the Aaland question could not be considered to fall exclusively within the sovereign rights of the Finnish State. It should be noted, however, that the commission did not take the view that Aaland did not belong to Finland; this question was left open. It also stated that the provisions of the Peace-Treaty and Convention of 1856 relating to the demilitarisation of the Aaland Islands still held force and, until replaced by new provisions, could be invoked by any interested Power. On 20th September the League Council decided, in view of the commission's report, to take the matter up for consideration, and to appoint three commissioners to draft proposals. The Council's decision, as also the Commission's report, represented a victory for the Swedish point of view on the question of competence; many people in Sweden believed that it also indicated a victory on the main issue. The Finnish Government declared that it stood firm by its attitude that it alone could decide whether there should be a plebiscite on Aaland; this meant that Finland did not undertake to accept any decision which might be made by the League Council.

The commissioners eventually appointed—a Belgian named Beyens, a Swiss named Calonder and an American named Elkus—visited Sweden, Aaland and Finland and gathered information in other ways. The Branting Government had already resigned before they were appointed (27th October 1920), and had been replaced by a Caretaker Government under De Geer, which declared its intention of following the same policy with regard to the Aaland question as its predecessor. The Branting Government had actually remained in office for a time even after the defeat of the Social Democrats at the autumn elections simply on account of the Aaland question, and had gained the support of various parties. But as the appointment of the commissioners took time, it felt it its duty, in view of its weak parliamentary position, to resign.

The commissioners did not present their report, which was

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unanimous, until 16th April 1921. On the main point at issue they supported the Finns. After a detailed and on the whole remarkably skillful and objective presentation of the facts of the case, they passed on to the juridical and political considerations on which they based their conclusions. To begin with, they declared Finnish sovereignty over the Aaland Islands to be incontestable; on this and some other points they expressed views not altogether in agreement with the analysis of the question by the legal commission. They then came to what they called the kernel of the problem, the right of national self-determination and its applicability in the case of Aaland. They recognised that the aspirations of the Aaland Islanders, even if to some extent inspired by incidental circumstances and fanned by agitation, were largely genuine and spontaneous and therefore deserving of the greatest sympathy. Sweden's attitude towards Aaland was criticised in other respects. Aaland's demand for separation could not justifiably be compared with Finland's demand for independence; in the first place, Finland, unlike Aaland, had formed an independent unit, a self-governing State or at any rate a State in the making, long before 1917, in the second, Finland had been oppressed and persecuted by Russia as Aaland had not been by Finland. To grant "linguistic or religious minorities or any other sections of a population the right to break away from the nation to which they belong, just as they please . . .," would lead to anarchy in international affairs. Besides, the Aaland Islanders were only a small section of the Finnish Swedes; the larger group wished the smaller to remain, and feared that the separation of Aaland would leave the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland in a very difficult position. The essential thing was that the language of the Aaland Islanders should be protected; "a nation's language is its soul." As to the historical aspect, the report stated that even before 1809 Aaland had been considered as distinct from Sweden proper, and that since then it had obviously been part of Finland. That incomparably the largest and most populous of the islands was situated closer to Sweden than Finland, was not decisive; it was more important that there was a natural frontier between Aaland and Sweden, whereas a line of delimitation between Aaland and Finland would be extremely unsatisfactory, as the islands here were close to the Finnish coast. Strategically the position of both countries was the same; both had a certain interest in sovereignty over Aaland.

The reasons which attracted most attention were what the commissioners themselves characterised as political. They said they did not believe that the Finns would agree to losing Aaland. By repulsing Communism, Finland had done other countries a great service. To deprive her of Aaland might possibly cut her off from the rest of Scandinavia and even drive her into alliances directed against Sweden; the Finns would hate the Swedes in Finland and Sweden alike. From the European point of view, it was desirable that Finland, within the

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circle of Scandinavian States, should constitute a bulwark for peace in northern Europe. Sweden, of course, held a different view; she regarded a Swedish Aaland as a bridge between Sweden and Finland, and feared that a Finnish Aaland would not be on friendly relations with the rest of Finland and so would cause conflicts in which Sweden might become involved. "Rather than share these fears," the report continued, "we hope that Sweden will accept the glorious rôle now open to her, which would in truth be worthy of her civilising mission, the magnanimous way in which she dissolved the Union with Norway, and the example she has set Europe for a hundred years by standing aside from every war. It would consist in calming her very excited protégés, and exerting her influence to quench the flames rather than to fan them. Sweden has agreed to submit this dispute to the League of Nations Council. Let her readily accept its ruling, even though it is not what she expected, and use her good offices to induce the Aaland Islanders to bow to the decision with a good grace."

The commissioners also made proposals concerning guarantees for the Aaland population with regard to language etc., and discussed the military position of the islands. The guarantee proposal was linked up with the decision on the main question in that it was designed to palliate the difficulties which might follow on a rejection of the Aaland—Swedish demands.

When the League Council met on 1st June 1921, the Aaland question came up for decision; even Finland, which had become a Member of the League the previous autumn, pledged herself in advance to accept the Council's verdict. The memorandum which Branting, on behalf of the Swedish Government, presented to the Council before the final vote, provides the most comprehensive exposition of the Swedish Government's attitude. It criticised the commissioner's report in detail. Only a few points in the criticism, which amplify earlier Swedish statements, will be dealt with here. The objections which the commissioners raised to the application in this case of the principle of self-determination lost their force, wrote the Swedish Government, when it was remembered that, at the time the popular movement started on Aaland, Finland had never owned Aaland as an independent State. When the commissioners emphasised the supreme importance of language from the point of view of nationality, and considered that all that was needed was guarantees for the preservation of the Swedish language as the national language of the islands, they were over-estimating the language factor. That was "not the only, nor even the most important, consideration. The sense of a common origin with the nation with which the population in question strives to be reunited, and the sense of racial difference it feels towards the population of the State to which it belongs, are equally important." Other vital factors were "the common traditions, the firm will to share the same fate as the nation which is inspired

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by the same national ideas . . . Finally, both economic and geographical bonds play their part in the creation of that national feeling which is the foundation of a nation's existence and its real soul." There was a profound difference between the Finnish Swedes, who had "been absorbed by Finland," and the Aaland Islanders, who had remained "real Swedes, not only in their language but in their thoughts and feelings." If Aaland remained under Finland, its population—even if certain guarantees were given—might be exposed to a denationalisation policy.

The Swedish Government felt any other considerations—geographical or strategic—to be of minor importance. The strategic side of the Aaland question would in any case probably fall into the background if the islands were neutralised under international guarantee. As, however, the commissioners had brought the matter up, the Swedish Government felt it should stress the fact that the Aaland Islands were more important to Sweden than to Finland, particularly as "an attack directed against Sweden from Aaland would hit the country in its most vulnerable parts, close to the capital and along a coast which in places has not the protection of an archipelago." Modern artillery emplaced on the Aaland "mainland" would be able to fire direct on Stockholm. Aaland in the hands of another Power would in no circumstances constitute a similar threat to Finland.

The Swedish Government memorandum dealt particularly thoroughly with the political considerations proper. The idea that Finland, from chagrin over a defeat on the Aaland question, would join alliances directed against Sweden, it dismissed as absurd. "A Finnish policy of offensive alliances against Sweden, apart from its incompatibility with Finland's membership of the League of Nations, would involve Finland in such difficulties and dangers that no responsible Finnish statesman could be expected to adopt such a course." The loss of Aaland should not cause the Finns to feel any bitterness against the Swedes in Finland, for these Swedes had supported the Finnish cause; on the other hand, there was reason to fear that, if Aaland remained in Finnish hands, Finland might wreak her revenge upon it. Loss of the Aaland Islands would not affect the position of the Swedes in Finland, for the islanders were too few to have any importance in this respect; besides, the position of the Swedes in Finland was based, not on their number but on their cultural standing. On the other hand, it might be expected that the Aaland Islands, if granted to Finland, would continue their resistance and their efforts for reunion with Sweden, and that this circumstance, combined with the Finnish attempts to subdue the islanders, would damage relations between Sweden and Finland. The two countries were certainly dependent on each other; but the Swedish State, being strong and united, had less need of Finland than Finland had of Sweden. If Aaland were reunited

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with Sweden, Finnish irritation would undoubtedly soon pass over, for Finland had no real interest in retaining Aaland. The dissolution of the Union between Norway and Sweden ought not to be quoted against Sweden, but rather provided an example of the value of recognising the right of national self-determination. As to the suggestion of rewarding Finland for the part she had played in the struggle against Communism, the Aaland question was far too serious for its solution to be influenced by such irrelevant arguments. By complying with the report, they would actually "reward . . . the side which sets its own will above that of the Council, and sets Might above Right." In conclusion, the Swedish Government pointed out that the League of Nations must not lay itself open even to the suspicion of setting opportunist considerations before right and justice. "Such a suspicion would sow the seeds of uneasiness and discontent, particularly in a country like Sweden, which long since enthusiastically adopted the idea of creating an organ of international justice, and which has always supported this idea. Its confidence in the League of Nations would be weakened. And this feeling might well spread even beyond the Swedish frontiers, among those very elements which welcomed the establishment of the League of Nations with the greatest enthusiasm as the dawn of a new age for humanity."

On 24th June, the League Council pronounced its decision. On the main issue, it awarded sovereignty over the Aaland Islands to Finland. It also recommended that measures should be taken firstly to create fresh guarantees for the population of the Aaland Islands, secondly to ensure the neutralisation and non-fortification of the islands. Branting then made a statement on behalf of the Swedish Government. Sweden had taken up the cause of the Aaland islanders not from desire to extend her territories, but to "defend the great ideal of justice, and assert the right of a small homogeneous island population to return to the motherland from which it had been torn by force . . ." She had hoped that the League of Nations, which was created to promote the cause of justice between the nations, would have acted in accordance with the principle of the right of national self-determination. The Council's proposals had seriously prejudiced confidence in the League. The solution decided upon would not, in Sweden's view, produce the desired pacification of the Baltic area. "Sweden is prepared loyally to accept the Council's decision as provided in the Covenant, but she will not cease to hope that the day will dawn when the sense of justice will have so far penetrated the consciousness of nations as to ensure the final triumph of demands based on such noble motives and such a deep national feeling as those of the Aaland Islanders, and that this people will then be able to make itself heard and finally obtain redress."

Following the Council decision, the Finnish Government undertook to provide certain guarantees for the Aaland people, determined by

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the League Council. The language used in Aaland schools was to be Swedish; Finnish could only be used with the consent of the municipal authority concerned. Special conditions were attached to the acquisition of land on Aaland by persons not resident there, immigrant Finnish nationals were to have voting rights only after five years, the Aaland Landsting was to be given a voice in the appointment of the Governor, etc. Complaints as to the application of these guarantees could be made by the Aaland Landsting to the League Council, which was to exercise a supervisory mandate over this area. These guarantees were incorporated in a special Law of Guarantee passed in Finland on 11th August 1922.

In accordance with the Council recommendations, a Convention relating to the international and military position of Aaland was concluded on 20th October 1921 between Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Estonia, France, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Great Britain and Germany; Russia was to be invited to join when a Russian Government was recognised. The agreement provided, in accordance with the usual terminology of international law, for the neutralisation and demilitarisation of Aaland. Neutralisation meant that Aaland must not be attacked or used as a base for military operations. Demilitarisation, which was not clearly distinguished in the Convention from neutralisation, meant that no military installations of any description were to be allowed on the islands, and that Finland might not even hold troops in this area except for purposes of maintaining order; Finnish military aircraft might not land on the islands; Finnish naval forces might only use the Aaland territorial waters to a limited extent, and still stricter rules applied to temporary visits by warships belonging to any other Power. Two exceptions were made to the general rule. In the event of war in the Baltic, Finland was to be permitted to lay mines in Aaland territorial waters and take any other naval measures which were "strictly necessary" for the preservation of the island's neutrality. If this neutrality were endangered by "sudden attack on either the Aaland Islands or the Finnish mainland over the Aaland Islands," Finland might take such measures within the zone as were necessary to delay or repulse the attacking force until the other signatory Powers could intervene in accordance with the Convention. The Convention was guaranteed by the League to the extent that the signatory Powers were to consult the Council on measures to ensure its maintenance or prevent its violation (Article 7). Special regulations governed the decision to intervene; thus the signatory Powers could act even if unanimity were not reached in the Council.—This solution was closely in line with the Swedish attitude maintained throughout the negotiations. Finland had hoped that, in the event of attack by another Power, she would be allowed to "dispose freely of the island group and its territorial waters in the national defence . . ."

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In the Swedish Government and Riksdag—apart from a few speeches by Left-Wing Socialist Riksdag members—there were no differences of opinion whatever on the Aaland question after the summer of 1918, when the negotiations with Finland were begun. It is well known that the King personally was deeply interested in the solution of the question along the lines desired by Sweden, and used his influence in this respect while on visits to foreign countries. The negotiations were begun by Edén's Liberal-Socialist Government, continued by Branting's Social-Democratic Government, and concluded under the Caretaker Government of De Geer—von Sydow. In his speech from the Throne in 1919, the King stated that the Government was working for a settlement of the question by a plebiscite on Aaland; similar expressions occurred in the Speeches from the Throne in 1920 and 1921. The heads of the Government repeated this demand on various occasions, and claimed that it had the support of a unanimous public opinion. But the Government pursued no active public propaganda for its point of view either inside or outside Sweden, beyond issuing certain documents stating the Swedish case. Members of the Government very seldom referred to the subject at any length in their public speeches. Nor was there much propaganda directed towards other countries. A few semi-official pamphlets were, however, published, including Professor Sven Tunberg's *The Position of Aaland in Historic Times* (translated into English and French), which set out to prove that Aaland up to 1809 had been considered a part of Sweden rather than of Finland or the Duchies of Finland, and Press Attaché Erik Sjöstedt's *La Question des îles d'Aaland* (both published in the spring of 1919).^{18a} Branting, the leading Swedish delegate to the Peace Conference and later to the League of Nations Council, also did his best to propagate the Swedish point of view on various journeys abroad. The reason he was called upon so much to act as Swedish spokesman was doubtless that he was believed to have a particularly high standing in the eyes of the victorious Western Powers. To the Swedes themselves, Branting came to personify the struggle for Aaland; his frequently repeated assurances that success was certain must have influenced Swedish public opinion to no small degree. Palmstierna too did much, actually even more than Branting, to commit the Social Democratic party to the Aaland cause. His activity attracted attention at the time of the Aaland expedition in February 1918, and there are many indications that during that period as Minister of Marine he tried to pursue to some extent an independent foreign policy. On 28th July 1918 he made a public speech strongly in favour of the Aaland islanders' demands. When he became Foreign Minister in the Branting Government, Palmstierna was by all accounts the driving force in the Aaland question. In particular, he made determined efforts to influence or direct the Press, which probably accounts for its remarkable unan-

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imity and aggressiveness during the summer of 1920.¹⁹ This led to the ironic position that, after the end of the ordinary Riksdag session in 1920, Sweden's first Social Democratic Government primarily appeared as upholder of the Aaland cause and of the national unity. Under the succeeding Caretaker Government, interest in the Aaland question seems to have fallen off considerably.

During the three years up to the summer of 1921, when the Aaland question became the central feature of Swedish foreign policy, it was little discussed in the Riksdag. Only two secret sessions of the Riksdag were held on the subject, on 17th June 1920 and 6th June 1921.²⁰ According to probably correct Press reports, the Foreign Minister on the first occasion made a statement which was not followed by a debate, a circumstance which was considered to illustrate the unanimity with which the Swedish people stood behind their Government. In 1921, a debate took place in the First Chamber, but not in the Second. The Aaland question may also have been touched upon in the secret session on 23rd April 1920. No public statement on Aaland policy was ever made to the Riksdag. No questions were ever asked on the subject. During the three *remiss* debates of 1919—1921, the question was referred to altogether in eight speeches, seven in 1919 and one in 1920; in the *remiss* debate of 1921, it was not referred to by a single speaker. The comments made in 1919 and 1920 were short (altogether about three pages of print) and generally not very authoritative. The silence of the Swedish Riksdag could hardly have been more complete. Whether this was due to lack of interest, discretion, or blind faith in the Government, cannot be known for certain.

In the *remiss* debate of 1919 Lindman, the Conservative leader in the Second Chamber, argued that the agreement for the demolition of the Aaland fortifications was not sufficient to ensure Swedish security. "Aaland in the hands of a foreign Power would constitute a threat to Sweden, to Swedish ability to defend her independence." The desire of the Aaland population for reunion with Sweden made it "a point of national honour to support their cause earnestly and eagerly." The Government's representations to Finland about a plebiscite on Aaland were a step in the right direction, and they should "energetically" pursue a policy which represented "Swedish interests and the heart-felt desire of the Swedes on Aaland." A Social Democratic representative (P. A. Hansson) declared that "the desire of the Aaland Islanders for reunion with their mother-country has met with sympathy and good-will also in the Social Democratic party." The party assumed that the question would be settled in agreement with Finland, and believed that the caution and wisdom which characterised the Government's policy provided a guarantee that this would be so. The speaker ended by emphasising once more that "Sweden's support of a just aspiration" should not affect her good relations with her neighbours. A certain difference was evident

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between the declarations of the Conservative and Social Democrat, even though in the main they corresponded. The Left-Wing Socialists declared in both Chambers that the right of national self-determination must, of course, be recognised, but that possession of Aaland would involve Sweden in international difficulties and therefore necessitate increased armaments; the best thing would be for Aaland to form an independent, neutralised State. This brought the Prime Minister to his feet with the declaration that Aaland's strategic importance to Sweden would become still greater and graver if the islands were held by another Power. "If Aaland were reunited with Sweden, then, so far as I understand, Sweden's military defence burden would not need to be increased to any appreciable extent, whereas the fact of controlling the islands would be of great military help to Sweden. Besides, we must not overlook . . . both the practical political advantage and the moral value of reuniting with ourselves a people who, for the past hundred years, have so faithfully preserved their Swedish language and customs and ways of thought, and who now wish so warmly to return." Nothing else was said of any interest: no opposition was raised against the Government policy—except, as already indicated, possibly by the Left-Wing Socialists.—The only reference to the Aaland question in the *remiss* debate of 1920 was a very brief declaration of support for the Government policy.

Except in the Press, the Aaland question was not very widely discussed. Only a few pamphlets were published which referred to it more than incidentally. To determine the exact number of meetings held on the subject, and the opinions expressed, would be too complicated, but it may be said for certain that, in all the three years, these meetings did not number more than about ten or twenty. It is remarkable that such incidents as the arrest of the Aaland leaders or the commissioners' report did not give rise to any demonstrative expressions of opinion except in the newspapers. In the University towns of Uppsala and Lund, whose newspapers I have carefully gone through, there are only a few notices of meetings or speeches. In Uppsala, University men attached to various parties arranged a public meeting in March 1919, to be addressed by Professor Gottfrid Carlsson, but the attendance was relatively small and the atmosphere not very enthusiastic. The indifference shown in this respect contrasts sharply with, for example, the keen interest, displayed in the form of speeches and resolutions, in the question of aid to Finland in the spring of 1918 and of sanctions against Italy in the autumn of 1935. If public opinion, as is constantly asserted, was unanimous, it was certainly not passionately concerned. The Aaland question seems to have played no part at all in the election campaigns of 1919 and 1920, and was hardly ever referred to in the election programmes and addresses. The 1919 election address of the Conservative party had a few words of sympathy with the wishes of the Aaland people,

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and the Left-Wing Socialist party's election manifesto of 1920 demanded that Russia should be consulted in the settlement of the Aaland question—that was all.

The Swedish Press, on the other hand, took a great and steadily increasing interest in the Aaland question during these three years, and — until the spring of 1921 — closed up more and more unitedly behind the Government. At first the Conservatives, as during the autumn of 1917 and the spring of 1918, were by far the most vigorous and positive, but after a time a large section of the Left-Wing Press, particularly that of the Social Democrats, became just as enthusiastic. The discussion was liveliest and the tone most aggressive during the summer and autumn of 1920, i.e. in connection with the second appeal of the Aaland islanders to Sweden, the arrest of their leaders, and the submission of the dispute to, and its taking up by, the League of Nations. Anyone studying the Swedish Press for this period without any other clue to the atmosphere in the country, would obtain the impression that the Swedish people passionately desired the reunion of the Aaland Islands with Sweden, and that an armed conflict between Finland and Sweden was not impossible. Only a few Liberal papers of the period remained calm to the point of scepticism. Some signs of weakness in the national front could perhaps always be detected, but they did not appear clearly until the spring of 1921, after the commissioners had made their unfavourable report. Then the differences under the smooth surface came to light: one section of the Press protested violently, but another, though much smaller, section seemed relieved at the expected defeat. When the Council decision became known, the differences became still more acute. Criticism of Finland and the League soon developed into a general controversy about the way the affair had been conducted and the responsibility for its failure.

The Press, like the Government, concentrated its argument more and more upon what it called the principle of justice. The Aaland question, it said, was not a political or strategic question, not a question of expansion or military security, but of the application of certain general principles of justice. The chief of these was the right of national self-determination, but historical and geographical considerations were felt to be almost equally important. As the same basic principles were accepted in Finland, although with a different interpretation, the Aaland discussion came to assume largely the character of a discussion on natural law. What, for example, was meant by the right of national self-determination? Before this can be established, the meaning of the word "nation" must first be defined. Sweden, as Government criticism of the commissioners' report shows, was inclined to regard a sense of unity as the essential thing, and then the Swedish nationality of the Aaland Islanders would be incontestable; the commissioners considered language the essential thing; Finland

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emphasised the traditional cultural bonds with the Finland Swedes and the historical and political unity of Aaland with Finland. Then the question arose, in what cases should the right of national self-determination be applied? here again, views differed. It was the same with the geographical problem. Was the Aaland Sea a natural frontier, on account of its width and depth, or should the straits between Aaland and Finland be the frontier, as the Aaland mainland lay nearer to Sweden than Finland? Furthermore: how were the historic relationships up to 1809 to be interpreted, and what, rightly interpreted, did they mean? A detailed investigation of the many different, not infrequently subtle, arguments produced, would throw an interesting light on modern ideas of natural law in practical application. In any case, the Aaland question was regarded on both sides of the Baltic as a question of justice, and the approach was on the lines indicated above.

Opinion in Finland seems to have been more united when the Aaland question first came up than it was in Sweden, and its attitude towards Swedish demands became more critical as the negotiations proceeded. Sweden seems long to have expected that the two large groups in Finland whose precarious position forced them into opposition—the Social Democrats and the Swedes—would sympathise with the Aaland Islanders. But this was not the case, or only to a very limited extent; how far these groups hoped to improve their position by remaining loyal to the majority cannot be determined. The Social Democratic papers in Sweden quoted during the autumn of 1919 a number of comments in the Finnish Socialist Press which indicated a favourable attitude to the Aaland demands, but at the end of November 1920 the Finnish Social Democratic party leaders and Riksdag group adopted the Finnish point of view, though with some slight differences, and an invitation by the Swedish party leaders to take part in negotiations in Sweden was rejected. The attitude of the Finland Swedes seems, with few exceptions, to have been clear from the start. In October 1919 an appeal was issued by some sixty prominent Finnish Swedes, and even published in a large number of Swedish newspapers, exhorting Sweden to refrain from supporting the Aaland Islanders' demands; it emphasised in particular that the severance of Aaland from Finland would weaken the position of the Swedish minority in Finland.

As has already been shown, Finnish argument was largely based on the same considerations of justice or natural law as the Swedish. But other elements entered in as well, chiefly in newspaper articles and semi-official pamphlets which were often translated into French and English. Sweden's action was described as morally questionable, as it constituted an attempt to mutilate a Finland which had been recognised by Sweden, had appealed in vain to its sister country for help during the war of independence, and had been weakened by

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that very war. Sweden was said to have encouraged the agitation on Aaland, largely through the Swedish troops which were stationed on the islands in the spring of 1918. The Swedish talk of the right of self-determination was said to be a mask covering general nationalistic and in particular strategic motives. Finland also emphasised, particularly to foreign countries, that if she were deprived of Aaland, she might be expected to work for its recovery by methods dangerous to peace. One of Finland's foremost and internationally best known scholars, Edvard Westermarck, wrote in an English periodical that it was inconceivable that Sweden, if Finland were allowed to retain Aaland, should try to conquer it or encourage rebellion there.²¹ "If on the other hand Finland should be forced in any way to cede Aaland to Sweden, there is a danger that Finland might in the future seek assistance from some powerful Baltic alliance to help her regain the lost territory." Both Swedes and Finns asserted that their own victory was essential to good neighbourly relations and Scandinavian co-operation; both held that only an Aaland in their own possession could form a bridge over the Gulf of Bothnia.

The Swedish-Finnish controversy, which cannot be pursued any further here, shows in general much the same characteristic features as other similar international disputes. Each side felt its own point of view so obviously correct, that that of its opponents could only be attributable to hidden and evil motives. Each side spoke of its own moderation and readiness to adapt itself, and was astonished at the unreasonableness and aggressiveness of the other. During the more critical stages, particularly during the summer of 1920, the Swedish Press frequently quoted the more vitriolic comments of the Finnish papers, and *vice versa*; this is an old device which has frequently been used to embitter relations between nations.²²

There is no need to produce chapter and verse, in the shape of a large number of quotations and references, for the above account of the main lines of Swedish argument; almost all the articles written on the subject could be quoted. But to illustrate the Swedish attitude, a clear and concentrated exposition written for *Stockholms Dagblad* by Dr. Verner Söderberg, perhaps the greatest expert on foreign affairs among Swedish journalists of that day, may be quoted in full. Söderberg wrote in the spring of 1920: "Sweden's own foreign policy is dominated at the moment by the Aaland question. The attitude of the various parties to this dispute is so universally known that there is little more to be said. The Aaland Islanders, whom the question chiefly concerns, although the Finns would like to silence or ignore their views, are actuated in this matter by the strong and natural feeling known as home-sickness, a longing to return to their Swedish motherland after an association with Finland which has long exposed them to neglect and which they fear will soon result in their complete Finnification. During the World War they heard

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talk of the right of national self-determination as the guiding principle of the victors, and they saw it invoked when Finland won her own independence of Russia and when the Finnish Government sought to rescue racial elements akin to the Finns from Russian oppression in Karelia. Who then can wonder that they began to invoke the watchword of the day on their own behalf, and appealed to the Swedish Government to help them make their voice heard in the circle of Great Powers which is to determine the colours on the new map of Europe? . . . The Swedish point of view is equally simple and easily understood. We had sought even before this for the removal of the fortifications on Aaland which threatened our capital, Stockholm's archipelago, and communications with the coast of Norrland. We had entertained no plans of annexation, we had organised no agitation on Aaland. When then the Aaland Islanders in their hour of need, during the Civil War in Finland and the final excesses of the Russian garrison on Aaland, came to us with prayers for help and support and the renewed protection of the Swedish Crown, we just could not slam the door in their faces. We were not indifferent to the danger of Finnification which threatened the other Swedes in Finland, but geographical conditions prevented our helping them as we could the Aaland Islanders, and besides the Swedes on the Finnish mainland felt themselves to belong to Finland in a way which the Aaland Islanders did not. Aaland had been torn from Sweden by force, against her will, in 1809, and wanted to return home, just like the Danes of southern Jutland, who had been incorporated by force and against their will in the German Reich. It would have been cowardly and heartless of us if we had refused to do what the Danes did for their brothers in southern Jutland—tried to help our exiles, amid all the changes following on the World War, to choose for themselves by plebiscite to which nation they wished to belong."

Here we have most of the arguments which recur again and again throughout the Swedish discussion: the emphasis on the right of self-determination, on Sweden's position as unselfish advocate for Aaland's just cause, on the parallel between Finland's demand for independence and Aaland's desire for reunion with Sweden, on Aaland's character of a "Swedish southern Jutland." A point constantly made in the Swedish Press was that Finland by her attitude to the Aaland question was actually denying the principles on which her own existence as a Sovereign State rested. Sweden's generosity in dissolving the Union with Norway in 1905 was also frequently compared with Finland's hardness in the present situation. The unselfishness and idealism of Sweden's attitude was occasionally thrown into even higher relief by asserting that the possession of Aaland would actually be a political burden to her. One Conservative paper, *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, which had previously demanded the return of Aaland on strategic grounds, wrote in the autumn of 1920

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that "our policy towards Aaland has never had the slightest taint of nationalist expansionism. We have no interests of our own on Aaland. Rather we are aware that we should be acquiring in this island group an international centre of friction which would greatly increase our responsibilities, but no nation with a sense of its own dignity could stand indifferent, still less could turn its face away, when its kinsmen, close at hand though isolated, appealed to the bonds of blood-relationship . . ."

The Swedish Press also followed the official Government line almost unanimously in the historical and geographical arguments it adduced for Sweden's claim to Aaland. It was typical that, when Tunberg's pamphlet was published, full as it was of not easily accessible historical facts, a number of newspapers of various political camps hastened to affirm the correctness of the author's views. On this question Sweden, like Finland, was entirely swayed by the national point of view.

Considerations of strategy and defence were only brought in occasionally, rather as subsidiary arguments and in an almost apologetic tone. *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, which in the winter of 1917—1918 had emphasised the strategic point of view but later declared time and again that Sweden's action was exclusively "inspired by the spirit of justice and humanity," wrote in the summer of 1920, in connection with the Finnish debate, that Sweden ought to possess Aaland on account of her military position. "Aaland in foreign hands is a constant threat to Sweden, whereas a Swedish Aaland would threaten no-one—simply because Sweden would preserve the neutrality of the island group, whereas Finland, in direct violation of the provisions of the treaty of 1856, would always have to keep a military occupation force on the islands because of the population's aversion to Finnish rule." Later on, this paper wrote that Sweden had throughout been "too eager to push her own interests into the background. These interests are real and quite legitimate." Considerations of justice must, of course, be paramount, but military considerations should not be forgotten. The Aaland Islands were more essential to Sweden's security than to Finland's, for if the Russians attacked Finland it would be by land, and besides Finland could not afford naval armaments. Similar arguments were produced, particularly during the period immediately preceding the final settlement, by various other Conservative newspapers, although they never played a prominent part in the debate. Although by no means representative, one comment by the extreme Right-Wing paper, *Göteborgs Morgonpost*, is interesting. On 7th July 1920, it sharply criticised the Government's policy and regretted that Sweden had never based her claims on strategic arguments. "We have never been allowed to mention the obvious fact that Sweden needs Aaland for defence reasons, and both the Government's own utterances and the Press

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which blindly follows its lead have carefully avoided any suggestion that Sweden had any interests of her own to consider with regard to Aaland. Oh no, we were concerned with pure justice only..." The Aaland question, the newspaper continued, should be solved by concluding an agreement for the mutual Swedish-Finnish defence of the island group. "If Aaland were given guarantees for mutual defence, then Finland should feel no ill-will at its civil reunion with the mother-country." Some papers which were not very enthusiastic about the Aaland negotiations sometimes emphasised that expansionist aspirations and strategic demands undoubtedly played a large part in forming the Swedish attitude, and in particular that of the Conservative party, although this was not often directly admitted. "It is curious to watch," wrote *Upsala Nya Tidning* (29th July 1920), "how the same Swedish Press organs which round about 1914 were preaching the doctrine that Might comes before Right, now appear as the enthusiastic supporters of the Swedish claim to stand for justice only in the Aaland question."

Before attempting to describe more in detail the attitude of the various parties to the Aaland question, it should first be pointed out that newspapers of all the three main parties strongly championed the Swedish standpoint. Among the larger newspapers may be mentioned first *Svenska Dagbladet*, *Stockholms Dagblad* and *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* for the Conservatives, *Stockholms-Tidningen* and, to a lesser degree, *Svenska Morgonbladet* for the Liberals, and *Social-Demokraten* with, during the later phases, *Arbetet* for the Social Democrats. The general impression given by a study of the Press is that the papers published in Stockholm, thus under more immediate Government influence, on the whole showed most interest in the question. It is also noteworthy that the above-mentioned leading Conservative papers, with *Stockholms-Tidningen*, referred to the Aaland question more frequently than the others. The extent to which the newspapers supported the attitude of their party varied considerably. The greatest unity was eventually attained within the Social Democratic party. Here, so far as I have been able to determine, after the formation of the Branting Government there was no opposition whatever to the official view, and many of the papers defended the Government's policy with vigour. After the settlement, however, the comments of many of them seem to indicate that, in large sections of the party, enthusiasm had never really been very great, and that they took the defeat with equanimity. The Conservatives were less united, but probably on the whole felt more strongly on the subject. The atmosphere in the Progressive and Liberal Press was predominantly cool, and the influential papers showed a marked tendency to criticise the Government policy and some scepticism about the Swedish attitude in general. We will now consider first the main aspects of the attitude of each party, and then complete

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our survey of the debate by an account of the contributions made during some of the critical periods, chiefly the period just before and after the League decision.

At what moment and for what reasons the Social Democratic leaders went over to a positive attitude on the Aaland question is not exactly known, but it must have been sometime during 1918. Branting, who in January had still been sceptical, declared on 19th December in *Social-Demokraten* that in defending the right of self-determination the Government had a united people behind it. So far as available information shows, neither the party leaders nor the Riksdag group raised any active opposition. But the Press attitude did not become united until later. On 15th July 1919, Georg Branting could still write in *Arbetet*, over the signature Vox Libera, that Swedish action on the Aaland question was really dictated by strategic considerations and desire for expansion. "The Swedish people—in common with all other peoples—feels an atavistic and idiotic pride in the mere thought of its frontiers being extended." An Activist clique had driven the matter further than most people desired. The best solution would be the internationalisation of Aaland, with Sweden as the mandatory Power. The editor of the paper, Arthur Engberg, agreed in general (26th July), emphasising that the right of self-determination was not an infallible principle and urging that Aaland should be administered under an international guarantee. A year later, the paper changed its tone (6th July 1920): "Aaland's right of self-determination is incontestable. So is Sweden's obligation to support its demand for reunion." *Ny Tid* showed a similar development. On 6th September 1919 it published an article (by Ivar Neuman), recommending a settlement by which Finland would retain the Aaland Islands in return for certain guarantees; good relations with Finland were more important to Sweden than the possession of Aaland. The following year, the paper supported the Government policy without reservation. From these and other examples, it would appear that the Social Democratic Press only began to present a united front on the subject during 1920, or more correctly, after the formation of the Branting Government. Most Social Democratic organs, however, did not show nearly as much interest in the question as the Conservative Press.

This Press supported the Swedish point of view practically unanimously the whole time and backed all the various Governments in their efforts to gain a hearing for it. Some criticism in principle was, however, expressed in certain articles and pamphlets. Many Conservatives undoubtedly experienced a conflict between their traditionally strong sympathies with Finland—Scandinavia's and Europe's "outpost to the East"—and the attraction of an active national policy as represented by the attempt to gain Aaland, and while most, in the final issue, supported the official Swedish policy, some as

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definitely rejected it. The chief spokesman of the latter group, and the most authoritative critic of Swedish Aaland policy in general, was Harald Hjärne, the famous historian, who substantiated his views in a series of detailed and extraordinarily penetrating articles, later collected in book form. Hjärne was not absolutely opposed to a solution of the Aaland problem more or less in accordance with the Swedish demands—in one article he suggested that Sweden should be given a sort of protective mandate over Aaland, in return for granting Finland a similar mandate over Further Karelia—but he disapproved both of Swedish policy in general and of the arguments produced in its support. His central theme was that the preservation of good relations between Sweden and Finland was more important than anything else. The principle of national self-determination he described in an article published in the autumn of 1919 as a beautiful ideal, but it could not always be realised, and must not be expected to take precedence over all other political principles. The dispute about Sweden's or Finland's historical claim to Aaland he dismissed as "quarreling about the Pope's beard"; the essence of the matter was "that the Finland now liberated from Russia, whose independence our Swedish Government recognised less than two years ago, actually included and still includes Aaland, and that therefore the transference of Aaland to modern Sweden, whether as the result of a plebiscite or a decision of the League of Nations or anything else, would mean confiscating part of the territory of the new Finnish State recently recognised by us." The crux of the whole problem was, however, whether, assuming that the principle of national self-determination was deemed applicable to the claims of the Aaland Islanders, Sweden was therefore bound to support them. Hjärne believed not. Sweden must consider her other duties too, and one of these was the preservation of enduring peace by the establishment of stable frontiers. "The principle that no further frontier modifications should be made between the Scandinavian countries deserves the zealous support of all true friends of peace. Nothing which it is in our power to do would be more calculated to establish this principle once and for all than if we refrained from incorporating Aaland with Sweden, and let the Finnish State which we ourselves recognised retain its territory intact." If Sweden succeeded in acquiring Aaland, other frontier disputes might easily arise, both between Sweden and Finland and between Sweden and Norway. Sweden certainly ought to help the Aaland Islanders to win recognition for their minority rights, but not by working to acquire the islands. "It would be," Hjärne declared in a later article, "more honourable and richer in political promise for Sweden to throw all her weight on the side of sound common sense in the internal life of the Scandinavian peoples, rather than to seek to extend her frontiers at the expense of Finland or any other State." In another connection, Hjärne pleaded for Sweden and Fin-

land to undertake arrangements for the common defence of Aaland, or at any rate to work together for the neutralisation of the islands. An agreement for co-operation on some such lines between these two States would form the basis for a general Scandinavian understanding. Swedish policy had worked in an opposite direction. "Finland has recently passed through a war of liberation. Its after-effects show themselves, as has always been the case throughout history, in the flaming up of all possible internal party differences such as seriously endanger the newly-won independence of the State. Then Sweden comes along, as though none of these terrible things had happened or would ever happen, and demands in the name of eternal justice that Finland should either cede part of her territory which has been under Finnish administration for a hundred years, or at least organise a plebiscite to establish the desire of the people to be separated from the rest of the country . . ."

Similar ideas were expressed in a few organs which represented a decidedly national—not to say nationalistic—point of view, but which hardly exercised any great influence on Conservative party policy. The periodical *Det Nya Sverige* (Dr. Adrian Molin) wrote in 1920: "We have never been able to see the Aaland question in the same light as the Swedish Conservatives apparently at bottom do: as an isolated question of Swedish interests, predominantly strategic, with a slight admixture of chauvinism: when Denmark recovered Schleswig and Norway acquired Spitsbergen, etc.; nor in the sentimental manner which the Conservatives have found it opportune to adopt: Sweden in duty bound to receive her scattered children with out-stretched arms, etc. etc." The Aaland question was only one aspect of the more important question of safeguarding Swedish cultural life in Finland. "Any solution of the Aaland question which is not in accordance with the will not only of the Finnish element in the population but also of the Finland Swedes, will mean for Sweden sooner or later blood or shame—blood for the defence of the Aaland group or the shame of giving it up again—and for the *Swedish community in Finland* a most bitter trial which might end in complete annihilation." A number of free-lance contributions to various papers, particularly *Aftonbladet*, struck the same tone. Ernst Linder, who had served as Major-General among the Swedish volunteers in the Finnish Army during the Civil War and probably voiced a wide-spread opinion among these volunteers, criticised (in *Problemet Sverige-Finland*, 1930) a policy which aimed not to help Finland but to profit by her weakness to gain territorial aggrandisement. It is worth mentioning that Rudolf Kjellén, who regularly made vigorous and widely discussed commentaries on foreign affairs, expressed no opinion on the Aaland question, although, as his students are well aware, he was critical of Swedish policy and its ideological basis.

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The Liberal Press was so far united that no newspaper (before the spring of 1921) spoke against the right of self-determination or its applicability to the Aaland question; in principle they approved of Swedish policy. But many papers, particularly *Dagens Nyheter* and *Göteborgs Handelstidning*, expressed themselves throughout with a marked chilliness and reserve, which often amounted to "damning by faint praise." The many articles on the subject in *Dagens Nyheter*, mostly written by the new foreign editor, Dr. Johannes Wickman, heavily underlined the facts that Sweden was only acting as spokesman for the Aaland Islanders, that good relations with Finland were of vital importance to future Swedish policy, and that Sweden must prepare herself to accept an unfavourable decision with a good grace. To quote a few examples, the paper stated on 5th January 1919 that "most people are not really deeply concerned about the reunion of Aaland with Sweden. They are simply touched by the eagerness and loyalty shown by the Aaland Islanders." On 23rd March the same year, it remarked that it was not vitally necessary either to Sweden or Finland to occupy Aaland, and that there was no need "to get excited and exaggerate the importance of the question." After the matter had been referred to the League of Nations, the paper declared (11th, 14th and 18th July 1920) that the decision might go against Sweden and that Sweden ought not to seek to keep the dispute alive after an international settlement had been reached. On 5th November it greeted the appointment of the League commissioners with an assurance that Sweden's attitude was not determined by "expansionist dreams," but that "the desire for reunion on the part of the Aaland Islanders had mostly been met in Sweden by a hesitancy and doubt which had only been dispelled by the insistence of the appeals." The overwhelming body of opinion in Sweden was determined to accept an impartial international decision and, after that, "to try to make the best of their relations with their Finnish neighbour." Similar views were expressed, though in terms of increasing hesitancy, by *Göteborgs Handelstidning*. In the autumn of 1920 this paper asserted among other things that the Press did not reflect the real feeling among the people, which was far cooler than the excited Press campaign would suggest. In a number of other Liberal papers, such as *Upsala Nya Tidning* and *Karlstads-Tidningen*, comments, though positive, were far less downright than in the Conservative and Social Democratic Press. The position of *Aftonbladet* is particularly difficult to determine, as it frequently pleaded for the Swedish cause, but at the same time expressed sympathies with Finland and urged the need for calm. *Aftonbladet*, like *Göteborgs Handelstidning*, proposed that a decision should be postponed until the irritation had subsided.

The former Minister of Finance, Theodor Adelswärd, a prominent Liberal politician and expert on foreign affairs, gave a lecture on the

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proposed League of Nations in the autumn of 1918 in which he expressed grave doubts as to the Government policy on Aaland (*Adelswård: Nationernas förbund*, 1918). He said that "in the theoretical discussion on the nationality question, it was never imagined that the wishes and interests of a small section of a nation, due possibly to more or less temporary moods, would necessarily have to be decisive . . . This would easily result in far too frequent changes and a multitude of small frontier modifications which would not make for stable relations in the League of Nations . . . If the world order at which the League aims is to become a reality, it follows that the rights of the various nationalities within a State must be fully respected, and then a transference from one State to another, such as that contemplated in the case of the Aaland Islands, would no longer be so important and would not be regarded by the population as vital." After that, Adelswård expressed no further opinion on the Aaland question. It appears probable, from information available, that the Government made his appointment on certain international missions conditional upon his not publicly criticising official policy.

As regards the other parties, it is sufficient to state that the Left-Wing Socialist Press demanded the neutralisation of Aaland in agreement with Russia and violently attacked the "White Finnish" policy, while the Farmers' League supported the Government view though without any great interest or enthusiasm.

In reviewing the form the discussion took during certain critical situations, we need not linger over the earlier periods during which Sweden was seeking to gain a hearing for the Aaland demands by negotiations with Finland and appeals to the Peace Conference in Paris. All that need be said is that the greater part of the Press at this time commented on events in a way calculated to support the view of the Swedish Government. When news was received of the Swedish representations to Finland in November 1918, the Press agreed, as it did again when the Government referred the matter to the Peace Conference; when rumours spread of an unfavourable report by the Baltic Commission, it criticised the alleged proposals, and when Clemenceau dropped hints which seemed to suggest a decision in Sweden's favour, it greeted him as the champion of justice.

In June 1920, which brought the second appeal of the Aaland Islanders to Sweden, the arrest of the Aaland leaders, the breaking off of ordinary diplomatic relations with Finland, and the submission of the question to the League of Nations, the discussion became very much more heated. The reaction to the arrests carried out by the Finnish Government was extraordinarily violent. Practically all the Swedish papers came out with indignant attacks on the Finnish Government on 7th and 8th June, when the arrests first became known. The tone of the Conservative and Social Democratic Press

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was particularly bitter. *Svenska Dagbladet* (7th June) gave expression to a general view when it wrote: "Finland is speaking to the people of Aaland in Russian. Not the language, but the thoughts are Russian." A number of Conservative papers, if not the most important ones, urged action on behalf of the Aaland Islanders in terms which seemed to hint at the possibility of an armed conflict. *Social-Demokraten* (7th June) spoke of the Finnish Government's "madness" and "terrorist mentality," *Arbetet* (8th June) described the measures as "an open and arrogant challenge," an exhibition of "recklessness and boorishness." At the same time, it was hoped that the incident would profit the cause of Aaland and Sweden by causing Finland to lose all sympathy among the Great Powers. The Left-Wing Socialist papers agreed and considered the arrests typical of the "White Finnish terror." Some of the Liberal papers were equally violent. *Svenska Morgonbladet* (7th June) head-lined its first leader on the subject "Czarist régime on Aaland," *Göteborgsposten* (8th June) described the Finnish Government's conduct as "high treason against the new ideal of justice, the one good thing which was believed to have emerged from all the years of bloodshed," *Upsala Nya Tidning* (8th June) declared that the measures were "a blow with the Russian knout, which Finland herself has experienced in full but seems now to have adopted." There can be no doubt that the Government, chiefly the Foreign Minister, fanned the flames of feeling in the Press and made every effort to direct it. When the Swedish Minister in Helsingfors was recalled a few days later, most of the papers welcomed this as a much-needed display of force. Several Liberal organs had, however, urged moderation even at the time of the arrests, and felt that, in recalling the head of the Legation, the Government was going too far. They emphasised that the dispute must in no circumstances be allowed to reach the stage of an armed conflict, and that diplomatic measures should be moderated accordingly. "When the lion is reasonable enough not to want to attack, he will perhaps be well advised to bear this in mind from the start, and not roar and crouch and then trot meekly away," wrote *Göteborgs Handelstidning* (8th July). The Government had committed itself too deeply on the Aaland question. "If the result is not what is hoped for, what authority will remain inviolate in our public life? And where will the conciliatory policy come from towards Finland?"

A certain relaxation set in when the matter was referred to the League of Nations. The majority of newspapers greeted this method of solution with gratification; most assumed that the Swedish demands would be met, but even those which were more sceptical emphasised the importance of an authoritative and definite decision. Some of the Conservative papers, however, which a few months previously had been strongly against Sweden's entering the League, expressed doubts as to whether it would be able to deal with the matter justly. If the

League did not accept the Swedish point of view, wrote *Svenska Dagbladet* (19th July), "that would mean the end of more than the Aaland Islanders' hopes and Sweden's faith; Sweden would have been dealt an incurable wound as the first testimony to the fact that promises, in the name of which the blood of millions had been spent, had been betrayed. It would mean a crushing defeat for the League of Nations." A year later this idea had come to be very widely held, but on the present occasion it called forth a reply by *Dagens Nyheter* (26th July) calling for respect for the League and pointing out how serious it was to try to discredit its decisions in advance.

The question of a change of Government was discussed both in June and after the September elections. As already mentioned, a number of non-Social Democratic newspapers, mostly Conservative, urged on these occasions that the Branting Government should remain to deal with the Aaland question. Partly they presumably felt that this Government was best qualified to hold the nation together on this issue and speak authoritatively on it before the League, partly they may have been influenced by tactical speculations. "There may yet be a hitch," wrote *Norrköpings Tidningar* (23rd September), "and then a Government without Branting would have to take the responsibility for it at the next election, however innocent it was." Certain Liberal newspapers, particularly *Göteborgs Handelstidning*, adopted an increasingly critical tone towards the Branting Government, which they accused of pursuing an adventurous foreign policy, particularly with reference to the continued breach in diplomatic relations with Finland. On the other hand, the Social Democratic party executive in both June and October urged the Government to remain in office as a guarantee against a too chauvinistic policy on the Aaland question.

The not very lively Press discussion during the autumn of 1920 and the early spring of 1921 shows hardly any new features. The report of the Commission of Jurists, declaring that the League was competent to deal with the Aaland question, and the League Council's decision to follow their recommendation, were received with great satisfaction by the vast majority of papers, which entirely adopted the official attitude. It was widely expected that the Swedish cause would triumph, and a number of papers which had previously been critical made complimentary comments about the League. Some even began to advise the Finns to take their inevitable defeat with equanimity, and declared how eager Sweden was for friendly relations with a Finland which loyally accepted the League decision. When the League commissioners visited Sweden the Press printed greetings of welcome and expressed its complete confidence in their skill and impartiality. Sections of the Press which were less enthusiastically in favour of the Government's policy expressed some scepticism as to the outcome, but always coupled with assurances of Sweden's willing-

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ness to accept the decision whatever it might be. Some newspapers, such as *Aftonbladet* and *Göteborgs Handelstiding*, began early in 1921 to urge direct negotiations between Sweden and Finland.

The commission of enquiry took so long to consider its report that a certain uneasiness began to be noticeable, but when rumours of its unfavourable attitude spread, and were shortly confirmed, they caused surprise in many quarters. During the period between presentation of this report and the League Council's verdict, Press discussion was particularly lively, reaching its climax after publication of the award. All the phases of this extremely illuminating discussion can be considered together, as the League award was generally considered to be a foregone conclusion after the commission had made its report. Differences of opinion between and within the parties came out in a quite different way from previously, when a sense of loyalty restricted their full expression.

Among the Conservatives, the immediate reaction was disappointment and bitterness, which found expression in violent attacks firstly on the commission of enquiry and the League of Nations in general, secondly, though to a lesser degree, on Finland. *Svenska Dagbladet*, like most papers of all political parties, criticised particularly that passage in the commission's report which cited Sweden's love of peace and sense of justice as reasons for not granting her claims. The commission was said (11th May) to have "brought forward the horrifying doctrine, contrary to all sense of justice, that the fact of having shown respect for the principles of justice under very trying circumstances merely means that one must give way more than ever . . . It will not help but hinder the League in its task of promoting justice if its trusted agents suggest that the respect for justice shown by one party shall be interpreted as a sign that any treatment is good enough for that party." Criticism of the commission's report was developed in a series of articles (e.g. 13th, 15th and 20th May), and culminated in a sharp attack on the Council six weeks after its award was published. The paper reiterated that Sweden had promised to accept the decision, but the decision itself was a proof that power and interest, not justice, were still the dominating factors (26th, cf. 27th June): "The old policy of expediency still sits enthroned, and a troublesome little problem is quietly disposed of according to the secret decisions of the inner conclave." *Stockholms Dagblad* expressed in particularly forceful terms a very widely accepted explanation of why the League had taken the attitude it did (29th June, cf. 11th and 12th May, 22nd and 28th June): "Behind the League we glimpse the hard faces of the avaricious and coldly calculating Allied Powers. Great Britain could never allow her subjugated peoples to see the League actually sanctioning the right of self-determination on Aaland, and France and Poland must have a similar precedent for refusing to allow the severed parts of the German people to return to the

bosom of their motherland." *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* added (22nd April, cf. 26th June) that, if Aaland had been returned to Sweden, Sweden would then have made strenuous efforts to overcome the bad feeling in Finland and support the Swedish community there. "Now Swedish popular opinion will turn a deaf ear to any appeals which may be addressed to it from the East . . . Feeling in Sweden has been poisoned alike by memories of former treachery and the certainty of falsehood now." *Skånska Aftonbladet* (25th June): "A Swedish population is condemned to slavery under a foreign race. Millions of Indians and Irishmen sigh under a foreign yoke, and all the world over there are men who should be free, but who bear heavy chains." *Gefle-Posten* (27th June): "In one respect the sentence is irrevocable: sentence has been passed on the League of Nations as an impartial agent of justice . . . What the League represents is . . . purely and simply power politics." A great many papers, including *Stockholms Dagblad* and *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, urged that Sweden should leave the League. It was often said that Sweden must not abandon her efforts on Aaland's behalf but persist until she won through. Some asserted that the friendship with Finland which Sweden fundamentally desired and which would have been assured by Swedish possession of Aaland, had been rendered impossible for a long time, possibly for ever. Among the reasons which were assumed to have influenced the League's decision were Sweden's inadequate defences and consequent weakness, and her determined policy of neutrality during the World War. Criticism of the League and Finland was sometimes combined with self-criticism in the traditional style, based on the references in the commissioners' report to Swedish magnanimity and love of peace. Comparisons were drawn between "Swedish magnanimity and Finnish revengefulness" (*Stockholms Dagblad*, 11th May), leading to the conclusion that Swedish magnanimity had degenerated into weak good-nature, that the Swedes were compliant to the point of slackness and decadence, and that the real cause of the Swedish reverse was that the commissioners had sensed the lack of national feeling. So the conclusion drawn, as is usual in similar cases, was that the idealism, the understanding for others, the incapacity for egoism and self-assertion, which characterised the Swedish people, made it difficult for them to stand up for themselves in this hard and evil world.

A minority of the Conservative Press, however, took a different tone. A number of papers combined criticism of the commissioners and the League with a rather reserved attitude towards Swedish policy. It must be said that this attitude was noticeable after the defeat even in quarters which had previously energetically supported the official line. *Göteborgs Dagblad* wrote (20th April) that it was natural for the Finns to resent Sweden's attempts to gain Aaland after previously refusing to come to Finland's aid, and that from this

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point of view "a defeat for Swedish nationalism was well deserved." *Lunds Dagblad* (21st April) made sarcastic references to Branting's and Palmstierna's desire to gain a national victory in Aaland, and urged their readers not to take the defeat too much to heart. "Many real patriots in this country have a feeling that our demands, however loyal and firm their foundation, were rather in the nature of asking for something which we had perhaps not done everything we should to deserve." *Härnösands-Posten* (20th April) found it horrifying that "this ancient stronghold of justice should have been so deeply engaged in a cause which exposed it to such an ignominious defeat..." These and similar comments show that, even among the Conservatives, there was an under-current of doubt about the Aaland policy which only became apparent after the defeat.

Before long, however, the Conservative Press struck out on a quite different line on which all were united: they blamed the defeat on the Left-Wing. Many arguments were brought forward in support of this charge, the chief being that the trouble all dated back to the policy of 1918. If Sweden had helped Finland then, she would have gained Aaland and preserved Finland's friendship at the same time. *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, which went furthest in this direction, summarised its attitude with the words (27th June, cf. 16th, 19th and 20th July): "Sentence on this policy has been passed at Geneva. It will be confirmed by the Swedish people, when they begin to realise the predicament into which their misguided leaders have brought the country." Attacks of this nature were so general and were made with such vigour that it was assumed in many quarters that the Right-Wing intended to make the treatment of the Aaland question a main issue in the 1921 election campaign. But this was not the only argument used. Branting and Palmstierna were accused of ineptitude and bluff; they had encouraged an unwarrantable optimism in the nation as to the result, and shown a naive faith in the justice of the Great Powers. Entry into the League of Nations had been a mistake of the Left-Wing, for which the nation would now have to pay. Lastly a certain responsibility was thrown onto that section of the Liberal Press, headed by *Dagens Nyheter* and *Göteborgs Handelstidning*, which by its unenthusiastic attitude to the Aaland policy had given other countries the impression that Sweden was not united, and so had contributed to the unfortunate outcome. "It is this craven and anaemic Liberalism which saps the vital forces of the nation and in the end makes us incapable of any united action," wrote *Stockholms Dagblad* (27th June).

Some comments in the Social Democratic Press were equal in asperity to those of the Conservatives. This applies particularly to *Social-Demokraten* and *Arbetet*. The latter paper wrote, for example, on 12th May in connection with the commissioners' report, that if the decision reached were in accordance with this, "not only the just

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cause of the Aaland Islanders would be trampled under foot, but also the hopes of thousands that the League of Nations would be guided by the principle of *justice* in its ordering of international relations." But the decision was accepted here more loyally than in the Conservative Press, and the idea of leaving the League was definitely rejected. According to *Social-Demokraten* (27th June), the real losers were the Aaland Islanders and the League of Nations, not Sweden, which had only fought disinterestedly to assert the principle of self-determination; as regards the League, the paper declared as usual that this would only begin to fulfil its aim when Labour parties came into power in each of the great States of Europe.

A large part of the Social Democratic Press received the defeat with a calm which seemed almost like relief. *Ny Tid*, which had previously definitely associated itself with the official view-point, now asserted (11th May) that it had never been enthusiastic about the Swedish policy but on the contrary considered that a Swedish Aaland would "cost more than it was worth." It uttered a warning against any heated agitation now that the decision had been passed. Several other papers, while criticising the decision in principle, urged that it should not be taken too hardly, and deprecated any attempt to exploit the matter for chauvinistic purposes. Many even indicated, like *Ny Tid*, that the decision was really the best thing for Sweden. This seems in fact to have been the attitude of most of the papers, which ranged from easy resignation to reserved satisfaction.

Of course the Social Democrats unanimously rejected Right-Wing criticism of the Branting Government and the policy adopted towards Finland in the spring of 1918. They attacked the Conservatives once more for the Activism they were considered to have shown three years previously. On the other hand a few Social Democratic organs, foremost among them *Arbetet*, joined in criticism of the Liberal Press, which had broken the otherwise united national front, and charged Wickman and Segerstedt with having contributed to the defeat.

Certain Liberal papers too attacked the League's decision in very strong terms. *Stockholms-Tidningen* declared on 11th May that if the report were accepted, confidence in the League's "will and ability to stand for justice in this world would receive its death-blow." It was fantastic that Sweden's magnanimity should be rewarded with injustice, while the aggressiveness of the Finns was regarded as a reason for acceding to their demands. *Svenska Morgonbladet* on the same day summarised the ethical principles of the report as follows: "Idealism and a sense of justice are very beautiful and noble qualities in a nation, but a nation which reveals them is predestined in practical politics to see its ideals and its conceptions of justice trampled under foot..." But there was no suggestion of leaving the League, and Liberal papers which adopted the official attitude soon began to publish exhortations to calm. "Perhaps," wrote *Svenska Morgon-*

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bladet on 13th June, "there is no harm in saying for Sweden's part that Sweden must never, never let herself be drawn into any warlike adventure even for the sake of Aaland."

As regards the Liberal party, however, the majority of the Press unquestionably adopted an attitude after the defeat which contrasted strongly with the official statements being made by Branting on the Government's behalf. *Dagens Nyheter* criticised the Aaland report in certain respects (11th, 13th and 17th May, 9th and 17th June), and considered that Sweden ought to support the Aaland Islanders even after the Geneva award, but emphasised at the same time that the report was a compromise which favoured the Swedish point of view in various important points. This paper spoke ironically of the nationalism of the Social Democrats, and suggested that Palmstierna in particular had conducted a rather clumsy policy dictated by personal ambition. It called the decision of the League Council "the judgment of Solomon at Geneva" (26th June), which as it took some account of the interests of all parties should form "a sound basis for really good relations between the two nations on either side of the Gulf of Bothnia." Later on, its comments on the Swedish attitude became more critical. It began to speak of the necessary limitation of the principle of nationality, of the duty of the League to take political considerations into account in making its decisions, of Swedish public opinion as misled by propaganda. Criticism of the League was said on 10th August to be largely due to "nationalistic disappointment that Sweden had not gained any of the spoils in the great readjustment of the map of Europe"; two days later came the open declaration that, until the League decision was pronounced, the Swedish Press had appeared to be united so as not to weaken the position of those responsible for her foreign policy, but that now there was no reason not to speak one's mind. Later in the autumn, Wickman made a speech in which he consistently criticised Swedish policy. Friendship with Finland should have been kept constantly in view. Swedish policy had relied to much on bluff, particularly in its forecasts of the catastrophic results of not granting the wishes of the Aaland Islanders. The Aaland Islands should preferably belong to a Power which was primarily exposed to attack from the East.

The same views were expressed, perhaps in still sharper form, by *Göteborgs Handelstidning* and its scion *Göteborgs-Tidningen*. The former paper laid particular stress on the importance of good relations with Finland, and suggested as early as 11th April that an agreement might possibly be reached with Finland for the common defence of Aaland's neutrality. This paper uttered a warning—with how much reason is not known—against any idea of provoking disturbances on Aaland which might lead to war with Finland. It called the Social Democratic policy on Aaland clumsy and ill-considered, and declared that, if the Social Democrats had remained in power, a

breach with Finland would have been inevitable (20th April, 25th June). The Aaland policy had been "a bastard of nationalism and socialism" (20th September), the attitude of the Swedish Press to the decision was characterised as "a fit of the sulks." "This is the method of parading injured dignity usually resorted to by children, and the normal result of such self-indulgence is that they are left severely alone until they find this so intolerable that they decide to stop sulking" (9th August). *Göteborgs-Tidningen* considered (11th May) that in reading the commissioners' report "one is greatly struck by its impartiality, broad-mindedness and fairness"; of course the Swedes would have preferred it to take a different line, but there were good reasons for its not doing so. After the Council's decision was pronounced, the paper went still further; the decision had "provided for all the interests involved in the most satisfactory way possible."

The Liberal Press in general was perhaps more critical towards the report and the decision than the above-mentioned papers, but the general impression is one of satisfaction that the tension was now over. *Eskilstuna-Kuriren* (20th April and 27th June): The solution offered was perhaps the best. If Aaland had been handed back to Sweden, friendly co-operation with Finland would have been impossible for a long time to come. The Council decision had "served the common interests of Scandinavia." *Karlstads-Tidningen* (21st April): "If the chief purpose was to find a solution which would best preserve peace in Scandinavia, then it must be admitted that this purpose has been achieved." *Mellersta Skåne* (22nd April): Sweden should accept the situation without bitterness, as she did during the Union crisis. "We for our part have felt from the start that Palmstierna's foreign policy on this issue was ill-considered and was the result of giving in too much to nationalistic pressure." *Västernorrlands Allehanda* (20th April): "Perhaps there is no harm now in stating openly that a great many of our people had an instinctive feeling that Mr. Palmstierna as Foreign Minister conducted a policy which, to use a very mild expression, was extremely dubious and inspired rather by the desire for action than by calm deliberation." *Norrbottnens Tidning* (23th June): "The League of Nations has done all that could be done to achieve a great task—the preservation of peace and harmony in Scandinavia." *Upsala Nya Tidning* (11th and 26th May, 23rd and 27th June): The Left-Wing had taken its stand upon a point of justice, while for a large part of the Right-Wing the demand for justice had been a cloak to cover nationalistic interests. Sweden should show self-control as in 1905 and work for friendship with Finland. According to the Liberal periodical *Forum*, the guarantees Sweden had exacted for the self-government and demilitarisation of Aaland represented "the only prize which was to be won and the only one we should have sought."

The Liberal Press took an active part too, as the above quotations

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show, in the settlement of accounts between the political parties. On the one hand they rebutted the Right-Wing charges against the policy of 1918; the most authoritative contribution here was made by Nils Edén. On the other hand they criticised, mostly on quite different grounds from the Right-Wing, Branting and Palmstierna and what they called their policy of bluff and hazard. They also counter-attacked the Right-Wing and accused them of nationalism and expansionist tendencies. So all the main parties were engaged in heated polemics, each criticising the other two.

It only remains to mention a few comments on the Aaland question made later in 1921 and early in 1922. *Svensk Tidskrift*, which had previously discussed the Aaland report with remarkable moderation, in the autumn of 1921 published a critical analysis of the Swedish debate about the Aaland question by Professor Eli Heckscher, entitled *After Aaland*. The Swedish attitude was based, wrote Heckscher, on a curious combination of superficially conflicting elements. "To begin with, our Social Democratic diplomats revealed a long-familiar over-estimation of the magnanimity and sympathy for Sweden felt by certain Great Powers, combined with a similar, engaging but erroneous conception of the League of Nations as an objective world court." In addition, the Social Democrats displayed a certain "dislike of White Finland—possibly due to disappointed hopes of a purely Social Democratic Finnish State." The Conservatives, "zealous and intolerant," were inconsistent in their policy: "It is difficult to understand how they could preach on the one hand, day out and day in, the incompetence of the League, and on the other the absolute duty of supporting the submission of the Aaland question to this same incompetent institution." The tone adopted in the polemics against Finland had poisoned relations between the two countries, and this was all the more indefensible because "the good will and good faith of both parties must have been palpably evident." Heckscher urged in conclusion that the idea of acquiring Aaland should be definitely abandoned, and everything concentrated on the achievement of mutual understanding and co-operation between Finland and Sweden. The same periodical published another article of a directly opposite character. The author was the literary critic Dr. Erik Hedén, who earlier, as a member of the Left-Wing Socialist party, had supported an extremely positive line on the Aaland question and after joining the Social Democrats in 1919 continued to develop the same views in a number of articles. According to Hedén, the real cause of the loss of Aaland was the Swedish lack of patriotic feeling. Sweden had shown herself incapable of a positive foreign policy; this was all the more tragic as "Sweden's national interests in this case obviously correspond with the interests of humanity," for "Sweden has shown a great capacity for exercising justice, when she is allowed." The

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right course would have been for Sweden to seize some suitable opportunity—maybe in the spring of 1918—for taking possession of Aaland; Finland would certainly not have risked a war to recover it, once lost. Naturally the League had allotted the disputed island group to Finland when the Swedes repeatedly asserted that they would not go to war for Aaland. If Aaland had been granted to Sweden, Finland would have refused to give way and Sweden would have refused to conquer Aaland; the result would have been that the League would have had to implement its decision itself. "Can anyone wonder that, in these circumstances, it allowed Finland to retain the island group?"

The debate in Sweden on the regulations relating to the self-rule and demilitarisation of Aaland need not be discussed here. It was not a very animated discussion and there was little disagreement. All that need be recorded here is that the criticism expressed at the beginning very soon died down.

At the opening of the 1922 Riksdag, the King's only reference to the Aaland question was to mention briefly that special rights had been granted to the Aaland Islanders, and that a Convention had been entered into for the neutralisation of the island group. No regrets were expressed in the speech for what had happened. This led to a protest by the Conservative leader in the Second Chamber during the *remiss* debate. Lindman said among other things: "Only two years ago the Speech from the Throne referred boldly to the just demands of the Aaland Islanders to determine their national *status* themselves, and to Sweden's efforts to support them in this. We all remember with what satisfaction and general agreement this speech was received, particularly the forceful assertion of the justice of the Aaland Islanders' demands. The greater was the disappointment when the decision came and it turned out that these demands had not been admitted by the Council of the League of Nations, the same League of Nations which claims to wish to build all international relations on the holy principles of justice and freedom. For the Swedes on Aaland, this decision meant the dashing of their dearest national aspiration, to be reunited with the nation to which they are bound with the bonds of blood, language and heart. To us here in Sweden, it was bitter not to have succeeded better in our efforts to gain a hearing for the Aaland Islanders. The Swedish State was so deeply involved in this affair that it had become a point of national honour to bring it to a successful conclusion. And a decision such as this must have the most serious effects on the conception of the League of Nations as the guardian of the right of nations to live their own free lives." No other speaker referred to the question. The words of the Conservative leader may be said to have brought the Aaland debate to an end.

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The Aaland question was the most remarkable episode in Swedish foreign policy after the First World War. For the first time for more than a century, Sweden launched on a course of action which aimed at the acquisition of territory. This action was directed against, and involved a conflict with, the recently constituted sovereign Finnish State, that is to say with a people whose liberation from Russian domination had been desired by a large section of the Swedish public since 1809. In the conflict between friendship for free Finland and the desire to satisfy the demands of the Aaland Islanders for reunion with Sweden, the latter consideration was allowed to predominate. The two conflicting aims were reconciled to a certain extent by the hope that a Swedish Aaland would in future form a strong link between the two sister-nations now at loggerheads.

The discussion about this policy was bound to be extremely peculiar. During the first phase, opinion was very divided. The Conservatives favoured an active policy, chiefly on strategic grounds though the wishes of the Aaland population itself carried some weight, particularly after the demonstrations in the autumn of 1917. The Left-Wing was mostly frigid or critical; they regarded the policy adopted as a new form of Activism, which aimed at, or at any rate might have the effect of, involving the country in the War. Once Finland's independence was firmly established and the World War over, all united on a course of action which aimed officially at asserting Aaland's right of self-determination, but which must lead, as everyone knew, to the reunion of Aaland with Sweden. The strategic and political reasons for the Swedish attitude, which for a time were almost universally adopted in the public discussion, were largely dropped, and the principle of nationality—the watchword of the victorious Powers—was placed in the forefront. Only when defeat threatened, and still more after it had occurred, was the unity broken, groups in all parties admitted their lack of enthusiasm, and the Press, which before had spoken with a unanimity worthy of a dictatorship, turned more and more from national propaganda to internal polemics. A few months later the discussion died away altogether, the Aaland question, which many had foretold would remain an "open wound," lost all interest, and the discussion on foreign affairs turned into fresh channels.

The reasons for this development cannot be determined with any certainty, least of all as a number of important relevant facts are not available. But certain tentative conclusions may be drawn, which may throw a certain amount of light.

It is natural first to ask two closely-related questions: why did the Left-Wing change over to a definitely active policy, and why were the political and strategic arguments replaced by arguments of principle or natural law? One or two explanations are obvious. Left-Wing resistance to the active policy demanded by the Right

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during the winter of 1917—1918 was largely conditioned by the war situation. Fearing measures which might involve Sweden in the World War, they adopted the familiar tactics of employing arguments which went much further than the actual situation required; they were apt to speak as they did not want Aaland at all, when what they meant was that for the moment they did not want to do anything to gain Aaland. When the danger of being drawn into the war was reduced or passed, and particularly when those Powers emerged victorious which had included the right of self-determination in their programmes, these restraining influences ceased to work, and it seemed natural to bring diplomatic pressure to bear to win a success which—as the Government once expressed it—would satisfy both the wishes of the Aaland population and the interests of Sweden. Nor is the reason why, both in Government declarations and practically speaking in all the public discussion in Sweden, the stress was all laid on the right of self-determination, and the strategic considerations formerly advanced were pushed into the background, any further to seek. The Finns said this showed duplicity: that the Swedes talked about justice but meant interest. This accusation was doubtless justified to the extent that it may safely be assumed that those who talked about expansion and strategy in 1918 had not forgotten these ideas by 1920. But on the one hand there can be no doubt that the wishes of the Aaland Islanders played a very large part in forming the Swedish attitude—no one can seriously believe that Sweden would have wished to have Aaland if Aaland had not wished to belong to Sweden—on the other hand the principle of nationality was the line of compromise, the smallest common denominator, in the discussion in Sweden, and the only principle which could decently be brought up at the Peace Conference and the League of Nations. In these circumstances it was obvious for the Swedish case to be built up on the question of “justice,” which gave it a somewhat unrealistic and hypocritical stamp. It was hardly possible to talk strategy in Sweden and justice in Paris and Geneva; neither could the Conservatives follow a line which large sections of the Left-Wing did not accept, or the united front would have gone by the board. The Swedish parties met one another in an almost unconscious compromise on aims and methods, largely forced on them by circumstances. To try to establish to what extent the responsible individuals were influenced by considerations of justice or interest would be pointless.

All this only partially explains the unity which prevailed so long in Sweden. Probably there were other important factors at work as well. Hesitant groups were probably influenced by those vague ideas which are prevalent and active in all countries about the duty of unity on questions of foreign policy. The authority of the Government, too, is especially strong in international questions, where

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those outside the immediate government circles are, or believe themselves to be, too little informed to form an independent opinion. This factor, together with other more personal considerations, must have weighed particularly among the Social Democrats. This party, whose interest is mainly concentrated on home politics and in which political unity is generally strong, always shows a pronounced tendency, as will be discussed in another connection, to follow its leaders on foreign questions; once Branting and Palmstierna had committed themselves and Sweden's first Social Democratic Government to the Aaland policy, any opposition within the party to the official policy would have been hazardous.

These conventional or tactical reasons would seem to have had a great deal to do with the attitude of the Swedish Press. Otherwise it is difficult to explain the change of face which took place in many quarters at and after the defeat. Two other circumstances must also be borne in mind. One is that a number of papers which had criticised the commissioners' report and demanded that the Swedish point of view be upheld before the League Council, showed such calm resignation after the final decision. The other is that a number of contributions to the final stages of the debate, criticising Swedish policy, contained the suggestion that until then it had not been thought suitable or correct to speak one's mind. The heated controversy which sprang up between the parties as soon as their unity could no longer be of value to the Government, suggests too that there was something forced and artificial, something formal and fictitious, in this unity.

The question then arises, how far the Swedish Press represented Swedish popular opinion during its period of relative unity. In all public speeches and writings it was assumed that this was the case, and that a united people stood behind the unanimous utterances of politicians and journalists. It is difficult to form any definite opinion on this question. There is no reason to suppose that there was any great difference between the Press and public opinion on the main issue. There are no indications that any important groups felt annoyance or indignation at the Press campaign. But neither are there any signs that this campaign won many adherents or aroused enthusiasm. Probably the answer is that there was much unity but little warmth. The general impression one gains is that, apart from the Government, the party leaders and the newspaper editors, everyone accepted the Swedish action with a mild satisfaction not far removed from indifference. Many facts would seem to indicate this: the small number of meetings and resolutions, the absence of positive contributions in the form of articles or pamphlets by persons outside the circle immediately engaged, the small number of references to the question in election programmes and similar documents. In the election campaign conducted in the summer of 1920, i.e. after the second appeal by the Aaland Islanders, the arrest of the Aaland

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leaders and the submission of the question to the League of Nations, the Aaland question was referred to only incidentally or not at all. During this stage, which represents the culmination of the Aaland crisis, the Swedish Minister in Helsingfors was recalled, sharp notes were interchanged between Finland and Sweden, and the Swedish Press was full of indignant and violent comments, but no one who lived in Sweden at the time could maintain that public feeling was equally roused. The Aaland question was throughout, but particularly at that period, the affair of the Government and the—at that time strongly Government-influenced—Press.

No doubt similar situations frequently arise with regard to questions of foreign policy which are too complicated or remote to interest more than a small circle of initiates. But the Aaland question was not like that. On the contrary, the chief issue at stake was extremely easy to grasp and form an opinion about, and the reunion with Sweden of an area not many miles from the capital can hardly have been felt too remote to arouse strong feelings among the public at large. The lack of enthusiasm is probably to be explained by the same reasons as lay behind the passive attitude of the Press during the final stages of the debate: dislike of a conflict which might threaten peace, doubt as to the real applicability of the principle of self-determination, possibly also a feeling that there was something rather questionable about initiating a course of action to acquire part of Finland's territory immediately after her liberation.

The League commissioners realised, as their report shows, that Swedish public opinion was not deeply involved and that there was no danger in any circumstances of a breach of the peace by Sweden. According to reports available, some prominent Swedes who had not taken an active part in the Aaland campaign but had not dissociated themselves from it either, told the commissioners during their visit to Sweden that they believed a solution in favour of Finland would best serve the cause of peace and future co-operation in Scandinavia. Probably such considerations as these weighed heavily with the commissioners and the League.

During the polemics which followed the announcement of the League's award, it was widely stated that the lack of definiteness and aggressiveness in the attitude of the Swedish public had been responsible for the decision going against her. Swedish comment, it was said, had shown that Sweden would not in any circumstances resort to force for the sake of Aaland, and after that, as Finland could not be relied upon to relinquish Aaland without resistance, the Swedish defeat was a foregone conclusion. Even if this view is correct—which it is impossible to judge—there is every reason to believe that the Swedish Press could not have gone farther in its nationalistic propaganda without coming into open conflict with public opinion. The line mostly taken in the discussion, that Sweden

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was acting rather as advocate and champion for the Aaland Islanders than in her own interests, probably represents the limit of what public opinion was prepared to accept without critical reaction. A threat of war in the Press which had no basis in public opinion would have strained loyalty too far. Whether the lack of popular enthusiasm was a sign of national inertia and so forth, as was frequently stated, will not be discussed here.

The account given above of the Swedish discussion and views on the Aaland question is confirmed by the fact that, after Lindman's speech in the *remiss* debate of 1922, no further regrets were expressed or attempts made in authoritative circles to revive the question. The few references to the matter in the Press, in memoirs and historical accounts, have rather taken the view that the solution provided by the League of Nations was satisfactory. The head of the Government formed in the autumn of 1920, which at the time declared its adherence to the original Swedish point of view, has since stated that the League decision was fortunate for Sweden.²³ The only prominent Swedish diplomat who, so far as I am aware, has published memoirs covering this period, is decidedly critical of the Swedish line of action. One of the politicians and journalists who worked most uncompromisingly in defence of the official view, has since admitted that, both from the point of view of foreign policy and of military considerations, the League decision was definitely best for Sweden. In going through the comments made on questions of foreign policy up to the Second World War I did not find a single one which supported the opposite view—except for certain opinions obviously not representative, expressed in connection with the discussion on the fortification of Aaland in 1938—1939.

The fears as to the future consequences of Aaland remaining part of Finland, frequently expressed during the crisis, have not proved justified. As to Sweden's attitude to Finland, the Aaland conflict, so far as can be judged, has been of little importance. Possibly the dispute may have had something to do with Finland's tendency during the early 1920's to orientate towards the Baltic States and Poland, but this tendency had no important consequences and did not last long. The question of self-rule for Aaland and all that is connected with it has not proved the expected seed of dissension between Sweden and Finland; the treatment of the Swedes in Finland proper has, however, caused disharmony. The Aaland Islanders themselves have, so far as can be judged, been quite satisfied with their position; the mass evacuation from Aaland, foretold both in Aaland and Sweden, did not take place. When the question of the fortification of Aaland came up in the late 1930's, the position was the exact opposite of that which had caused uneasiness in 1918—1921; Finland and Sweden were working jointly to obtain concessions from the Aaland Islanders.

SWEDEN AND SCANDINAVIA

Finally, it may be recalled that, in the international discussion, the development of the Aaland conflict is constantly quoted as one of the unquestionably successful results of the League's work.²⁴

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The dissolution of the Union between Norway and Sweden in 1905 was feared by many to have finally crushed the long-cherished hopes of achieving political unity, or at all events firm political co-operation, in Scandinavia. Even before the First World War, however, voices began to be raised in favour of a new Scandinavianism. Thus for example the Danish historian Troels-Lund wrote a pamphlet in 1906 urging a common defence policy for the Scandinavian States; the Press discussed the subject of a Swedish-Norwegian defence alliance in connection with lectures by the Norwegian Sigurd Ibsen (September 1911) and the Swede Erik Palmstierna (August 1913).²⁵ But the rather loosely formulated plans won little support, and no concrete results were achieved. When the First World War broke out, no negotiations had, so far as is known, taken place on the subject of either political or military co-operation.

The War brought about a closer association between the three independent Scandinavian States. The reasons are obvious; their common neutrality, the trade difficulties, the general uneasiness felt while a Great Power conflict raged round their frontiers. A striking expression of the re-orientation, and one of which much was made in the Press and the public discussion in general, was the meetings of the Kings and Ministers which began in the autumn of 1914. The chief concrete result was an increase in the volume of trade, particularly during the latter years of the War, which was further stimulated by trade agreements. No question was raised at the official meetings and discussions of a defence alliance or any similar political or military co-operation. Individual enthusiasts (Läffler, Heerfordt) propogandised for a military alliance or union, but no one paid much attention. No Scandinavian discussion took place then, as it did in Sweden during the Second World War. Still, such co-operation as was established was greeted on the whole with satisfaction in the three countries. Certain circles in Norway, however, revealed an irritation born of memories of the period of Union, and in Sweden, the tendency towards Scandinavian orientation was criticised by Activist circles, which felt that their country should concentrate on the liberation of Finland from Russia and her closer association with Sweden.

With the end of the World War, the resumption of international trade relations and the formation of the League of Nations, the

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question of Scandinavian unity became less pressing and important. Commercial intercourse between the three Scandinavian countries fell off, and attempts to reach special trade agreements produced very little result. The meetings between Scandinavian Ministers (including the Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers), which had become an institution during the War, gradually lapsed. The eighth and last official meeting during this period took place in August 1920; apart from an unofficial conference in March 1922, no further such meetings were held for ten years. It is significant that the Swedish King's Speech from the Throne in 1919 expressed the hope that the work of co-operation would be continued even after the War, while the Speeches from the Throne in 1920—1922 referred briefly to the policy of co-operation between the three Scandinavian countries, and after that no reference was made to the matter at all. It is also significant that the Conservative and Progressive parties included general declarations in favour of Scandinavian co-operation in their programmes for the first few years after the War (1919—1921), but thereafter omitted all such expressions. No reference was made in the Riksdag to questions of political co-operation in Scandinavia. Dr. Verner Söderberg undoubtedly voiced a very wide-spread opinion when he wrote in the first article in *Svensk Tidsskrift* of 1920 that relations with Denmark and Norway had "become very much more cordial" as a result of the experiences of the War years, but uttered a warning against over-estimating the degree of unity. "We must be satisfied that the memories of 1905 were finally buried with the Royal handshake in Christiania castle and the happy solution of the delicate question of grazing-grounds for reindeer. It must be left to the silent influence of time, kinship and common cultural aims to complete the work of furthering good understanding."

The position was complicated by the fact that Finland had gained her independence. From 1918 onwards, the very expression "Scandinavia"—used in political connections—became ambiguous. Sometimes it was used to mean Sweden, Norway and Denmark, sometimes all four Scandinavian States (in certain circumstances also Iceland). Now Finland was spoken of as part of Scandinavia, now as orientating "to" or "from" Scandinavia. It was emphasised from the start in all the three main States, particularly Sweden, that Finland's independence was an advantage to Scandinavia, and it was hoped that she would definitely orientate towards Scandinavia. The Swedish-Finnish conflict on the Aaland question, however, forced this question into the background. Only after the solution of the Aaland dispute in June 1921 did it come to the fore again.

The efforts towards and discussion of Scandinavian co-operation during the ensuing period will only be discussed here in so far as they had a definitely political character. To the vital and important work done in other spheres, we can only refer in passing. The

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Scandinavian Associations (*föreningarna Norden*) formed in Sweden, Denmark and Norway in 1919, and in Finland in 1924, played a useful part as propaganda organisations and in a certain sense as gathering points. These associations worked on common lines laid down at annual meetings of delegates. A number of publications, foremost among them *Nordisk Tidskrift* and the two publications issued by the Scandinavian Associations (*Nordens Arsbok* and *Nordens Kalender*) were wholly or mainly devoted to questions of Scandinavian co-operation. The Swedish attitude towards Scandinavian co-operation of this sort was almost without exception favourable or even enthusiastic. General declarations of sympathy with the other Scandinavian States and of the strength and value of cultural solidarity abound. The kind of attack on the "character" and institutions of the neighbouring States which occasionally occurred during the period of Union and even later, became extremely rare among representative groups after the First World War and the settlement of the Åland dispute. Countless Scandinavian meetings—of members of the Riksdag, lawyers, journalists, students etc.—testified to and exalted the ideal of solidarity. It is hardly too much to talk about a conventional Scandinavian attitude, and its representatives indulged in rhetorical flights about the idea of Scandinavian unity which recall the declarations about peace and disarmament in the League; in both cases there was a disproportion, not to say discrepancy, between the proud and forceful expressions and the actual feelings, intentions and acts. On the other hand, the phraseology in current use doubtless played its part in producing or fostering the sense of solidarity, the firmness and significance of which was so loudly asserted.

Both as regards the more general and the specifically political Scandinavian discussion, a distinction must, however, be drawn between Denmark and Norway on the one hand, and Finland on the other. In the case of the two former—though to a rather lesser degree with Norway, Sweden's ancient partner in union and dissention—the position was extremely simple. The idea of co-operation in general won universal sympathy, but there was rarely any talk during this period of political unity in the form of a definite alliance. This was, of course, connected with the facts firstly that there was no cause for friction in the relations with these two countries, secondly that Denmark and Norway could not at that time be considered a likely object of attack from any quarter. The relationship with Finland was most complicated. The bonds of tradition and sentiment were perhaps stronger, but on the other hand the tension due to concrete differences was greater. Memory of the Åland conflict seems to have quickly faded. But Finland's policy with regard to use of the Swedish language on Åland, which was constantly described in Sweden as a systematic attempt at Finnish domination, was a perpetual source

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of irritation, not least in the Swedish Right-Wing which was in principle extremely friendly to Finland. The repression following the revolt of the Reds, the measures against Communists and Social Democrats suspected of Communism, above all the anti-democratic "Fascist" movements and tendencies in Finland, also roused ill-feeling in Sweden, particularly among the Left-Wing. So we find in the Press of all parties—with the exception of the Communists, who constantly attacked the Finnish "system"—on the one hand general expressions of sympathy for Finland, on the other sharp criticism of particular conditions in or steps taken by Finland. Added to this was the uneasy Finnish-Russian relationship, the possibility of a Russian attack on Finland, and the direct and indirect consequences such an attack might have for Sweden. The question of a defensive alliance between Sweden and Finland was consequently far more real and urgent than that of a general Scandinavian defensive alliance.

For the reasons indicated above, we will consider first the general Scandinavian discussion and then the discussion on relations with Finland. In the former case, little need be added to the account already given.

The question of the formation of a Scandinavian defensive alliance or a Scandinavian federal State—in which Finland was generally included—was talked about on various occasions even before the international crisis in the early 1930's, but was never very seriously discussed; political Scandinavianism was generally regarded as purely Utopian. To take a few examples, the Danish periodical *Det nye Nord* held an enquête in 1925 to ascertain the views of its readers on the question of a Scandinavian defence alliance, but only very few and quite unrepresentative replies were received, mostly evasive or sceptical in tone. Unreserved support came only from Finland, where a Scandinavian alliance was regarded as providing protection against Russia. Such Swedish replies as were received emphasised that the question formed part of the defence problem in general, and pointed to the negative attitude of public opinion. A similar enquête held by a Norwegian periodical was discontinued after the publication of a few replies. Nor was much interest aroused by the lectures and articles of a Danish student, G. Gunnarsson, urging the formation of a Scandinavian union. When the Danish Right-Wing leader Christmas-Møller spoke in the Riksdag in 1929 in favour of inter-Scandinavian defence discussions, he received little support either inside or outside Denmark. There is no need to consider in detail the few and generally vague articles written about these questions, for they were of little importance and the arguments were repeated later—during the discussion before the Second World War—in more clearly defined form. Among leading Swedish newspapers, *Göteborgs Handelstidning* was the most active supporter of the idea of a Scandinavian union. This paper repeatedly criticised the Swedish Government's

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unwillingness to take the initiative in this matter, and its negativism in questions of foreign policy in general. Scandinavianism must take a political form: "All Scandinavianism, if it is to have any importance, must run along political channels. Cultural Scandinavianism means well enough, but its value is limited, for if it is a question of learning from foreign cultures, then Great-Britain, France, Germany and America have infinitely more to offer the Scandinavian countries than they can offer each other. . . . If we were to help when necessary to close the Sound and the Belts and man the barricades at Systerbäck, we should be helping at the same time to defend ourselves." On the whole, a study of the Press of this period leaves one with the impression that, even then, the readiest support for closer Scandinavian co-operation was to be found in the Right-Wing and certain groups of the non-Socialist Left (*Stockholms-Tidningen*, *Göteborgs Handelstidning*). As far as the other Scandinavian countries are concerned, it may be mentioned that the idea of a political Scandinavianism was particularly sharply criticised in Norway.

The conciliation treaties which were concluded between the Scandinavian States (and ratified by the Swedish Riksdag in 1926) aroused general satisfaction in Sweden, but little discussion. A certain tendency to over-estimate the importance of the measures was apparent in this as in other similar cases, and it was pointed out that war between the Scandinavian States should be unthinkable, even apart from any agreements. The protracted dispute between Denmark and Norway on the Greenland question—which inspired some doubts in Norway as to the compulsory conciliation procedure—was often deplored in the Swedish Press, which, while stressing its obligation not to take sides, barely 'concealed its critical attitude towards Norway's acts and arguments. No parallel dispute occurred between Sweden and either of the other two States. It may be recalled that a proposal in a Norwegian newspaper of 1929 that the so-called neutral zone be abolished led to quite a lively discussion; both the Conservative and Social Democratic Press were definitely opposed to the proposal.

In the Finnish discussion on foreign policy, fear of Russia was and remained the leading theme. Support against Russia was generally sought along two mutually competing courses of policy: the Polish-Baltic, and the Swedish-Scandinavian. Advocates of an orientation towards Poland and the Baltic were actuated by varying motives: anti-Swedish nationalism, resentment after the Åland dispute, doubt as to the possibility of obtaining effective support in Sweden and Scandinavia generally. During the winter of 1921—1922 the question of a Finnish-Polish defensive alliance was raised, and a large proportion of Finnish public opinion seemed, judging by the

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Riksdag and the Press, to favour this solution, which also had Government support; criticism was encountered in the Socialist parties and the Swedish People's party. In March 1922 a conference took place in Warsaw between representatives of the Finnish, Estonian, Latvian and Polish Governments, and a Convention was drawn up which—without going so far as an alliance—was designed to ensure friendly relations between the signatory Powers. The Finnish Government responsible was indeed overthrown as a result, and the proposed Convention fell through so far as Finland was concerned, but a southward orientation continued to be discussed and Finland took part in a number of Baltic conferences. The position remained fluid. On the whole, feeling towards Sweden seemed to improve; on the other hand, the language dispute continued, Helsingfors University was reorganised in 1923 along lines unfavourable to Swedish interests, and the papers published in Finnish often spoke violently of Sweden and the Swedes in Finland.

These circumstances form the background to the views on Sweden, Finland and the Baltic States, expressed in the Swedish Press during the years 1922—1923. A number of Conservative papers, foremost among them *Svenska Dagbladet*, came out in favour of a Swedish-Finnish defensive alliance as early as the spring of 1922, emphasising that a Russian Finland would constitute an immediate danger to Sweden; this idea received some support even from a few Liberal organs. Other newspapers, in particular *Dagens Nyheter*, urged support for the Baltic States in general terms, but rejected the idea of a defensive alliance. The Social Democratic Press would have nothing to do with any plans of alliance. The arguments brought forward during these protracted discussions appeared in particularly concentrated form in connection with the Foreign Minister crisis in the autumn of 1923, and we will therefore deal rather more fully with the attitude of the Press on that occasion.

On 29th October 1923 Hederstierna, the Foreign Minister, made a speech at the jubilee dinner of the Newspapers Editors' Association in which he expressed direct and definite support for a defensive alliance between Sweden and Finland—the only occasion during the inter-war period on which any member of the Swedish Government gave unequivocal expression to any such view. Hederstierna, who made it clear that he was not speaking on behalf of the Government, emphasised first the historic and cultural connections between Sweden and Finland and repudiated any idea of interference in Finland's internal affairs. He then pointed out, with reference to his own speeches during the debate on Sweden's entry into the League of Nations, that membership of the League involved the obligation to help Finland if necessary; he declared in this connection that no one any longer wished that Sweden had refused the invitation to join the League. "However I will go further," the Foreign Minister continued.

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"I would wish Sweden to enter into a defensive alliance with Finland, on the terms that if Finland were the victim of an unprovoked attack by her Eastern neighbour—and the absence of provocation would be a definite condition—then Sweden would assist in the defence of Finland." An alliance of this nature would clarify the obligation which already existed under the Covenant. Hederstierna would not, however, take any steps along these lines until it was certain that "the Swedish nation approved." That was so far not the case; no party, not even "the deep ranks" of the Conservatives, backed the idea of an alliance. The Minister concluded by expressing his hope that public opinion would gradually swing over to a positive attitude.

Hederstierna obviously wanted to rouse a discussion, and he succeeded. His speech started up the most open and informative Press debate on the question that has ever taken place in Sweden. During the next few weeks, practically every newspaper carried one or more leading articles on the subject. As the international situation was relatively calm, everyone spoke with remarkable candour. When the same question came up for discussion fifteen years later, the position was extremely tense, and comment had to be cautious, evasive and vague.

The Government, it should first be emphasised, was not solidly behind the Foreign Minister; it was stated that he had not consulted his colleagues and that they were consequently not compromised. A few days later, Hederstierna offered his resignation, and on 11th November, after the King had returned from a visit to London, a new Foreign Minister was appointed—the only occasion during the period under consideration on which a ministerial crisis occurred on a question of foreign policy. The new Foreign Minister, Marks von Würtemberg, notoriously did not share his predecessor's views.

In Sweden, the Conservative Press showed considerable sympathy for Hederstierna's proposal. Hardly a single newspaper rejected it unconditionally and out of hand. But neither did it receive general unreserved support. A number of papers agreed whole-heartedly, others were doubtful or critical in view of the negative attitude of public opinion; others again, while emphasising their respect for the proposal, pointed out definite concrete objections. The positive attitude was represented firstly by *Svenska Dagbladet*, which on 31st October published an uncompromising declaration of principle: "An open recognition of common defensive interests between Sweden and Finland could not fail to produce a healthy clearing of the air. It would provide a restraining and stabilising element where now there is only a vacuum of uncertainty, which attracts the very risks we wish to see dispelled. The present suggestion involves quite simply a measure for the furtherance of peace, giving increased security by increased solidarity, not a policy of provocation and severance, such as might stimulate the opposite side to aggression." Not many papers, however, ex-

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pressed themselves as firmly. A number of representative organs, foremost among them *Stockholms Dagblad*, took the line that a strong Swedish defence could not be attained without co-operation by various parties, and that such co-operation was not possible on the basis of a Swedish-Finnish alliance; the Government's Defence Bill, which was in course of preparation, must therefore not be based on the principles formulated by the Foreign Minister. *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* took a line of its own, obviously dictated by tactical considerations. Like certain other Conservative organs—but unlike the majority of newspapers in all parties—*Allehanda* declared that the duty of defending Finland against attack followed from membership of the League of Nations. But it then proceeded to draw the directly opposite conclusion from that of the Foreign Minister: it asserted that, by remaining in the League of Nations, Sweden was incurring a risk of war which she could and should avoid. That the League of Nations was not really very popular in Sweden was shown, according to *Allehanda*, by the storm of criticism which Hederstierna's speech had aroused. A few months previously this paper had expressed itself in favour of Sweden's helping Finland in the event of an unprovoked attack, but not of pledging herself to give such help, as Finland was not a suitable State with which to form an alliance; it justified this statement by reference to the strong Socialist tendencies in Finland and the strength of the movement to give the Finns in Finland a stronger position against the Swedish minority. Other Conservative papers questioned the suitability of a defensive alliance in view of the fact that such an alliance would require a unity in the foreign policy of the two countries which could not easily be attained; it was also suggested that it would be in Sweden's interests to let Finland take the brunt of a Russian attack alone.

The dissention and uncertainty in the Conservative Press showed that the speech came as a surprise. During the course of the discussion its attitude became more and more reserved, and when Hederstierna finally resigned, this news was received by the majority of newspapers without disapproval or even with satisfaction. Actually this was unquestionably due, as were certain elements in the Press discussion referred to above, to considerations of home policy. The Trygger Ministry hoped to gain a majority in the 1924 Riksdag on a moderate programme in the defence question. Any such solution would, however, be out of the question if the Government proposal were coupled with plans for a defensive alliance with Finland; besides, if a defensive alliance were contemplated, the proposed Army organization would prove inadequate. *Stockholms Dagblad* approved the Government policy on the defence question, and so it was natural for this paper, as indicated above, to criticise the idea of a defensive alliance. *Svenska Dagbladet* on the other hand considered—as it proved, correctly—that the Government plan was doomed to failure, and so had no

hesitation in supporting Hederstierna; it may even have felt that there might be some possibility of driving the Government over to a different line of action. The Conservative Press could not, of course, continue to give energetic support to the Foreign Minister's proposals after the Government had refused to support them; the Government's prestige was at stake.

Outside the Conservative party, the predominant attitude was negative. The only exceptions of any importance were newspapers of, or closely associated with, the Liberal party: *Stockholms-Tidningen*, *Göteborgs Handelstidning* and *Aftonbladet*. These expressed decided sympathy with Hederstierna's proposal, though coupled with doubts as to whether it could be realised in view of the state of public opinion. *Göteborgs Handelstidning* criticised the lack of decision and will-power in Swedish foreign policy with a severity which other newspapers echoed. "A subdued light, felt slippers and water gruel, that is the Swedish nation's milieu. A he-man is too brutal a phenomenon to be tolerated in these surroundings." The Swedish programme was to "let Finland go to the devil. This we do for fear of the disintegrating and rotten Russian Empire." In common with certain Conservative papers, this group of the Liberal Press believed that Finland, unable to obtain guarantees from Sweden, would drift into a Polish-Baltic alliance and finally abandon the idea of a Scandinavian orientation.

Most of the Liberal papers and the entire Press representing the Progressive party, the Farmer's League, the Social Democrats and the Communists, were solidly against the proposal, though for different reasons and some more emphatically than others. Some papers felt that a discussion of the proposal would be valuable, others that it would serve no useful purpose. In general, the severity of the criticism was in direct proportion to the general radicalism of the party or newspaper concerned. Some Social Democratic organs, particularly *Arbetet* (30th October) attacked Hederstierna and the Government in general violently. *Folkets Dagblad Politiken* (30th October) spoke of a militarist and Fascist attack on the workers. The reasons against an alliance advanced by the more representative Press can, however, be summarised in a few sentences. First and foremost: an alliance would either make Sweden dependent on Finland's foreign policy—in which connection the difficulty must be stressed of determining whether an attack is unprovoked or not—or else necessitate Swedish control over Finland's foreign policy, i.e. involve a more intimate association than an alliance. "Mr. Hederstierna proposes, of course, that his alliance should become operative only in the event of an unprovoked attack on Finland, but any such guarantee, if it is to be effective, would require thorough and continuous Swedish control over Finland's foreign policy" (*Dagens Nyheter*, 31st October); "To chain Sweden to the possible consequences of Finnish foreign policy would be deliberately to expose our country

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to risks which we could certainly avoid if we were to follow our traditional policy" (*Social-Demokraten*, 31st October). Every form of Swedish-Finnish alliance would be out of the question in view of Finland's policy of suppression with regard to her Swedish population, her hard policy against some forms of the Labour movement, and the general differences arising from differences of language, character and traditions. An alliance might be expected on the one hand to strengthen the Finnish chauvinism already apparent, and on the other to increase Russian suspicions of both Sweden and Finland; for both these reasons it was calculated to increase the dangers it was designed to remove. The combined Swedish-Finnish military forces would not be strong enough to offer effective resistance against Russia, were she to adopt an aggressive policy. On the other hand, the alliance would necessitate increased armaments and provide a welcome argument in the agitation of the Conservatives and the military authorities for a stronger defence. "A defensive alliance," wrote *Svenska Morgonbladet* (31st October), "would lend colour to the dangerous old nursery tale about Russia being the irreconcilable enemy of Sweden . . . It would give wings to Finnish chauvinism. It would unnecessarily increase Sweden's risk of war, and bring constant grist to the military mills of our armaments enthusiasts." It was also stated that Sweden was of course interested in Finland's independence, but not to the same extent as the Finns themselves.

Left-Wing Press criticism, like the Conservative, frequently showed the influence of tactical or internal political considerations. The Social Democrats in particular, to whom the proposed alliance was in principle unacceptable, were eager to compromise the Government and its policy of conciliation. But there was some difference of opinion as to the best method of doing so. Some wished to use Hederstierna's speech to force the Government out immediately (*Arbetet*); others seem to have contemplated with equanimity both the Government and the Foreign Minister remaining in office, obviously with an eye to the opportunities that would be offered for attacking the Conservative defence programme in the coming conflict (*Social-Demokraten*). To responsible Conservative groups, Hederstierna's resignation must have appeared essential for just that reason.

After the change of Foreign Minister, Professor Nils Stjernberg published an article in *Forum* on *The Plans for a Swedish-Finnish Alliance*, in which he dealt with the question at length. Stjernberg strongly criticised Hederstierna's action. He began by pointing out that it was strange for a proposal for an alliance to be made without any request having been received from the foreign Power concerned which the alliance was primarily intended to protect. The Minister, he continued, had appealed to reasons of sentiment, and his speech must therefore be regarded "rather as propaganda for certain aims of foreign policy than an objective ventilation of its problems," all

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the more so as it omitted to mention important sentimental considerations (Finnish propaganda against Sweden). The Minister's thesis that Sweden ought to protect Finland for her own sake could not, even if accepted, justify an alliance unless Sweden could actually provide an effective protection for Finland if and when required. Possibly what the Foreign Minister really meant was that an alliance would place Sweden in a better position to protect the Swedes in Finland. If so, his view was far from correct; "at present, so far as can be judged, the position is that a certain amount of pressure on Finland's eastern frontier is salutary, not only to ensure proper treatment of the Swedes in Finland, but also to instil due respect for Sweden's own interests among large circles of the Finnish people." Stjernberg also considered it doubtful whether Sweden—without an alliance—would "accept as a guiding principle of her foreign policy the theory that an attack on Finnish territory was an attack on Sweden herself." Such maxims were extremely unusual in political life; the nearest parallel would be Great Britain's relationship with Belgium. The hundred years' peace had shown that "Finland's subjugation under Russian rule did not necessarily mean the loss of Sweden's peace and freedom . . ." Stjernberg also discussed Hederstierna's reference to Sweden's obligations under the Covenant. The Foreign Minister's utterances on this point had been at distinct variance from the statements of responsible authorities in Sweden on various occasions. "For the Foreign Minister of a small State, at such an uncertain juncture of world affairs as the present, to make a speech directly pledging the future services of his country, must . . . give rise to grave misgivings." Stjernberg concluded by saying that Sweden would defend Finland best by looking to her own defence. "If according to her ability and exclusively from the point of view of her own interests, Sweden strengthens in particular her naval defences, she will also be fulfilling the only international mission which at present can be expected of her."

For the next few years, Finland's political orientation remained uncertain. Negotiations with the Baltic States did not lead to any definite political association; the various attempts to reach an agreement between Finland and Russia produced no results until January 1932, when a treaty of non-aggression was signed. Some friendly exchanges with Sweden took place, such as the interchange of visits between the King and President in 1925, but of a definitely Scandinavian policy there was no question. Finland's foreign policy came more and more under the influence of the Finnish national movement, which won considerable support in the Agrarian and Conservative parties, as well as among a good many Social Democrats. A number of measures were passed to increase the Finnish influence in the running of the Universities, schools and administration; the Finns

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proper showed a definite hostility to Sweden and particularly the Swedish language on the occasion of Scandinavian meetings, student visits etc. They sometimes described the areas of Norrbotten inhabited by Finns as a "Finnish irredenta"; their ambitions, as occasionally proclaimed, were chiefly connected with Further Karelia. The Lappo movement, a quasi-Fascist movement inspired by nationalistic, anti-democratic and anti-Communist ideas, seemed in 1930 strong enough to threaten the existing Government, but resulted only in special legislation involving, among other things, the suppression of the Communist party. The Swedes were represented in the movement too, but purely Finnish tendencies predominated more and more.

The question of a Swedish-Finnish defensive alliance was discussed on various occasions, though never so widely or heatedly as in connection with Hederstierna's speech. In November 1925 the former Prime Minister Professor R. Erich wrote an article in *Helsingin Sanomat* proposing "a Scandinavian Locarno"; by this he presumably meant the guaranteeing of the territorial *status quo* round the Baltic on the pattern of the Rhineland pact concluded at Locarno. Other discussions arose round parallel Finnish proposals. On the whole, Swedish Press opinion was far less encouraging than in the autumn of 1923. It was often pointed out that, Swedish public opinion being what it was, the question was not one of practical politics. More than that, even papers which in 1923 had sympathised with Hederstierna now declared that the spread of Finnish nationalism rendered an alliance between Finland and Sweden impossible. Segerstedt's pronouncement in *Göteborgs Handelstidning* on 14th December 1928 is typical: "People in Sweden who maintain that our future survival as a free people depends on our meeting any Russian advances against Northern Europe at Systerbäck, find their whole position given away when unwillingness to look facts in the face and act accordingly is reinforced by the resentment towards the Finnish population of our old daughter country, which its attempts to suppress the Swedish language produce in Sweden." This paper, in common with *Svenska Dagbladet* and other organs which recognised the value in principle of an approach to Finland, pointed out, however, that Sweden's own coolness towards Finland, and particularly her unwillingness to promise support against a Russian attack, had stimulated the Finnish movement and in general produced indifference or hostility in Finland towards Swedish demands that the wishes and interests of the Finnish Swedes should be better respected. They described it as a vicious circle: the Swedish coolness fanned the flames of Finnish nationalism, and this in its turn created unwillingness in Sweden to enter into any closer relationship with Finland. The majority of the Swedish Press, which in any case had been opposed to the idea of an alliance, naturally seized upon the Greater Finland plans as further justification for their negative attitude. In some Social Democratic papers—as in the

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Communist Press—the demands for a Finnish alliance were regarded as paving the way for an aggressive policy towards Russia, possibly supported by the Western Powers.

The Finnish national policy was very strongly criticised in all camps, irrespective of their attitude to a Swedish-Finnish alliance. This criticism was an important feature of the discussion for about ten years; most articles on Finland referred to the language and allied questions. The strength of this criticism in the various papers seems, however, to bear no relation to their lack of warmth or passivity of attitude towards Finland; rather the contrary. One of the papers which most frequently and consistently condemned the Finnish language policy was *Svenska Dagbladet*, which constantly asserted that a tolerant attitude towards the Swedes in Finland was an essential condition of good relations between Sweden and Finland. Some writers even went so far as to suggest that Finland's nationalistic policy might impair the cultural relations which had traditionally existed between Sweden and Finland. These remarks were based on such incidents as that, for example, Helsingfors' University Students' Corps used the French language in certain communications to Swedish students, that the same Corps sent a memorandum to the Uppsala students complaining of Swedish suppression of the Finnish minority in Norrbotten, and that Finnish students showed far more eagerness to visit Hungary than Sweden. *Uppsala Nya Tidning*, which had special cause to follow the many conflicts between the students, was expressing a wide-spread opinion when it stated on one occasion that "We in Sweden do not propose to maintain intimate relations with a people the majority of whom hate and persecute Swedish culture," and on another questioned whether it was worth "rousing the anger of the Finns by trying to force on them a Scandinavia which they loathe and detest." Reaction against these expressions of Finnish nationalism was probably particularly general and violent among the intellectuals, who were most directly concerned.

The Lappo movement, although chiefly affecting different social groups, had similar results. The different political parties viewed it rather differently. The Conservative Press, at first at any rate, was inclined to favour the movement as a means of stamping out Communism, though it withdrew its support later as the movement became more ruthlessly violent and its Finnish nationalist tendencies gradually became apparent. The Left-Wing, particularly the Social Democrats, regarded Lappo primarily as an attack on democracy and the liberty of the subject in general. To them, the success of the movement was a proof of the strength of political reaction in Finland, and so another reason for not entering into any more intimate association with Finland.

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A few works in which Sweden's relations with Finland are discussed from a primarily military point of view, stand rather outside the general discussion. Chief among these are two pamphlets by outstanding military experts: *Sweden's Position (Sveriges läge)* (1923), by the then Captain, now Lt. Gen. Axel Rappe, and *Either—Or (Antingen—Eller)* (1930), by the then Major, now General Helge Jung. These two pamphlets, both of which deal with the Swedish defence problem as a whole but particularly with the Swedish-Finnish question, agree in all essentials: *Either—Or*—which was prepared in co-operation with a number of junior officers, of whom one is now a Major General and two are Colonels—may be regarded as in many ways a modernised and improved version of *Sweden's Position*. We will, however, consider the two works separately, confining ourselves to an analysis of their attitude on the Swedish-Finnish question.

Rappe took as his starting-point the following basic arguments. The League of Nations had little value as a guarantee of peace, was dominated by the Western Powers, and was incapable of intervening effectively against any Great Power. Russia showed strong imperialistic tendencies, and was encroaching nearer to Germany, where a Communist Government was not improbable. Finland could not place an adequate defence force in the field against Russia, but the reinforcement she would need was not great (the Finnish war effective was estimated at 160,000, the force Russia would employ against Finland at 200,000 men). A Baltic alliance would involve risks for Finland but no security against attack. Sweden had no essential interests in common with Denmark and Norway—Danish egoism and Norway's "face to the West" were proverbial—whereas her interests were closely linked with those of Finland. If Finland were overrun, Sweden would be in danger of attack by Russia, and would in any case be in a worse position than in 1914. Russian expansionism might even, if successful, result in Sweden being completely surrounded by hostile Powers. "If Soviet Russia's hopes of a Bolshevist Germany, fostered by M. Poincaré's desperate power politics, are crowned with success, and Finland falls victim to Soviet expansionism, there is reason to fear that Norway would soon follow suit, and—*Sweden would be surrounded*".

There was one possibility of avoiding this danger. Sweden could turn her position to account to "create a firm basis for peaceful development in Scandinavia . . .". Finland must be induced to refrain from the Polish-Baltic alliance policy inspired by France, and instead seek guarantees of Sweden. "A friendly association between Sweden and Finland would mean the re-emergence in Scandinavia of a military Power so strong as to make an attack by Soviet Russia not worth while . . . Sweden has the choice between two alternative defensive positions to the East: either the counterscarp of the Baltic, or the escarp towards a Russia which has penetrated to the Gulf of

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Bothnia. If the former is not seized when it may be, then sooner or later the latter position will inevitably be forced upon us." If Sweden organised her defences in co-operation with Finland, she would not need to arm nearly so heavily as she would if Finland were left to defend herself against a Russian attack alone; in the former case, the army organisation of 1914 would be sufficient, in the latter, it would have to be greatly expanded. And if Sweden showed readiness to help Finland, Russia would probably not attack; if Sweden stood aside, she would probably some day be drawn into war.—In spite of this argument, Rappe did not recommend an immediate Swedish-Finnish alliance—probably for tactical reasons. He doubtless felt that relations between Sweden and Finland must improve before an alliance could be possible.

Jung and his collaborators differed from Rappe in that they considered Sweden bound by her membership of the League of Nations to give military support to Finland. "*Either we set ourselves, with the League of Nations, and in accordance with its aims, to preserve the present favourable position in the Baltic, which means we must be prepared to intervene with sanctions on behalf of Finland, or we can go against the League of Nations and at any rate the moral obligations we assumed on entering the League, leave Finland to her fate, and endeavour to follow a policy of isolated neutrality.*" Otherwise they repeated the points made by Rappe. Russia with her imperialism and her plans of world revolution constituted the real danger to peace. Germany was too weak to be of any importance either as an aggressive Power or as a peace factor. Sweden must co-operate with Finland, not only because of the (legal or moral) obligations incurred by membership of the League, but because the League was quite likely to force her to help Finland, and it was actually in her own interests to do so. If Finland were conquered, Sweden's turn would soon come. "If this attack were successful (a Russian attack on Finland), Sweden's military position would be completely shattered. The situation would be much the same as before the World War, but with the great difference that the arrival of air warfare has made the defence of Sweden, and in particular of Upper Norrland, immeasurably more difficult..." If it were clear that Sweden intended to help Finland, the danger of a Russian attack on Finland, and so also on Sweden, would be diminished. "The mere knowledge that an attack on Finland was likely to be met by the combined forces of Finland and Sweden, should do much to restrain any expansionist plans entertained by Russia." A Swedish policy of isolation might therefore be said to increase the danger of war in Scandinavia. Consequently such a policy would necessitate stronger defence forces than an active policy of support for Finland. Under the policy advocated by the authors, an expansion of the army organisation of 1925 would be sufficient; a policy of neutrality would

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require a return to the army organisation of 1914.—Jung and his collaborators emphasised that they did not desire a defensive alliance with Finland, as sanctions would be applied only at the request of the Council of the League of Nations and only in the event of an attack on Finland.

These two books were obviously written as propaganda for a stronger defence. This explains why the arguments used, particularly in *Either—Or*, are so largely tactical. It is curious that both books based their demand for stronger armaments on the necessity of co-operation with Finland, while maintaining that, if Sweden refused such co-operation, she would require still stronger armaments; according to Rappe, who wrote in 1923, a stronger army than in 1914, and to Jung, writing in 1930, a return to the army organization of 1914. The authors' claim was to reduce the cost of defence by a rational foreign policy.

Judging by the reviews, the books were well received in military circles. They were severely criticised by opponents of the idea of a defensive alliance. The most penetrating critical analysis of *Either—Or* was made by Undén. He declared the alternative postulated to be erroneous. In one set of circumstances Sweden's interests might demand strict neutrality, in another participation in sanctions. In Jung's book, the obligation to take part in sanctions was "simply another name for a defensive alliance with Finland." All this was completely erroneous. He might just as well claim that Sweden was bound to protect Estonia and Latvia against Russia, or Denmark against Germany. Neither was the policy he recommended consistent with Swedish interests. "If we were really to regard Systerbäck as being, from the military point of view, the Swedish frontier towards Russia, we should be voluntarily abandoning the advantages which, as the authors say, lie in not having Russia as our immediate neighbour. A Great Power like Great Britain might consider it wise defence policy to go to war to prevent Germany sweeping on to the Belgian coast and so coming dangerously close to England. But for a small country like Sweden to try to meet an aggressive Russia at the Finnish frontier in self-defence is absurd. This is the policy which has hitherto appeared under its more correct guise of a defensive alliance with Finland, and it has much in common with the idea of committing suicide out of fear of death."

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It only remains to say a few words firstly about the general course of the Scandinavian discussion, secondly about the debate on the subject of a defensive alliance with Finland.

Perusal of a large number of contributions on Scandinavian co-

operation leaves an impression for which it is difficult—at any rate in a brief survey—to give chapter and verse, but which nevertheless deserves mention. Broadly speaking, the impression is one of a not always clearly realised, and very seldom clearly expressed, conflict between the claims on the one hand of Scandinavian co-operation in the more limited meaning (Norway and Denmark), and on the other of co-operation with Finland. Generally it is only vaguely sensed; a strong feeling for Norway and Denmark is apt to go hand in hand with coolness towards Finland, and *vice versa*. The tendency is far from universal—many papers, such as *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Göteborgs Handelstidning*, showed equal sympathies for Scandinavia as a whole—but it is sufficiently widespread to deserve attention. Again speaking very broadly, a certain, though by no means regular, party distinction is apparent in the attitude towards Scandinavia: the Right-Wing gravitated more towards Finland, the Left, in particular the Social Democrats, more towards Denmark and Norway. This may have been partly due to traditional causes. Swedish radicals have long drawn inspiration from the neighbouring lands to the west and south, the Conservatives' view of Denmark and Norway was coloured by the Union crisis, while Finland had long stood to many Conservatives as the symbol of a national policy, something of a "Swedish irredenta." Modern party political sympathies also entered in. In Norway and Denmark the Left-Wing parties predominated, democracy was untrammelled, disarmament was an accepted policy; the Finnish State could be regarded as the victor over Bolshevism and the chief representative of an active defence in Scandinavia, but it had an anti-Labour Government and undemocratic ways. Finally: the situations between Finland and Russia and between Denmark and Germany, combined with Norway's orientation towards Great Britain, helped to mould Swedish public opinion along lines which will already be sufficiently apparent.

The discussion on a defensive alliance with Finland gave rise to a great wealth and variety of argument. At the same time, it provides a good example of how illogical an argument of this sort can be. Few of the writers ever defined their premises, they tried to counter an argument of one sort, e.g. the value of the alliance to Swedish defence, by another of a quite different character, e.g. the consequences the Finnish national policy would have for the Swedes in Finland; they piled up arguments which they felt to be effective, regardless of the fact that many of them had nothing to do with the question at issue. This will be clearer if we briefly consider the principles on which a problem such as this must be judged.

To begin with, it would appear necessary to decide whether the proposed alliance was to be regarded exclusively from the point of view of Swedish interests or not. Even on this point, there was considerable confusion. Most of those in favour of a defensive alliance

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spoke in the same breath of Swedish interests, of feelings for the Finnish people, and of moral duties towards the League of Nations. This was usual even among writers who claimed to adopt a strictly realistic approach; as so often in debate, the mere multiplicity of arguments was considered to lend weight. At the same time, it was presumably generally assumed that Swedish interests were the dominant consideration; no one seems to have suggested that Sweden ought to intervene in Finland's defence on moral grounds, if such intervention were not to her own advantage. But thanks to the accumulation of arguments, or rather to the fact that the relation of the arguments one to the other was not made clear, the whole discussion was confused from the start. It passed indifferently from the question of the Swedish people's feelings for Finland to that of the repercussion on these feelings of the Finnish national policy, of a defensive alliance, of Finnish policy towards various extreme parties, of Sweden's attitude to the League of Nations.

The next stage in the debate also involves a number of questions which were seldom defined and differentiated. How effective would a joint Swedish-Finnish defence be against a Russian attack? Would such co-operation be calculated to encourage help to Finland from other quarters, or not? Would an alliance lessen the danger of war for Finland and increase it for Sweden, or would it lessen, alternatively increase, the risk for both countries (for example, if an alliance had the effect of egging Russia on to attack or of stimulating a more anti-Russian policy in Finland)? These questions link up with the problems of Russia's short-term and long-term political aims and of the consequences of a Russian conquest of Finland. Would a Russian attack on Finland be likely to include Sweden too? Would Russia, if she succeeded in conquering Finland, immediately proceed to attack Sweden? Was such an attack in any case probable at some later date? If so, what prospects had Sweden of receiving support from any other State or States?

A very frequent confusion in the argument was that the advocates of an alliance generally claimed that it would reduce the risk of war. But they seldom made it clear whether they meant risk of war for Finland or for Sweden; they spoke as though it were one and the same thing, i.e. as though the alliance were already an accomplished fact. But it was obviously a major question whether a defensive alliance would not reduce the danger of attack for Finland, but increase it for Sweden. Assuming, by way of illustration, that for a certain period the risk without a defensive alliance was four for Finland and two for Sweden, then with an alliance it would become three for the two allies together, i.e. less for Finland and more for Sweden.

To these questions, which are only given as examples and do not claim to be a complete list, must be added problems of a different

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category. One of these is whether a definite declaration of Sweden's intention to help Finland if attacked could really be anything else than a defensive alliance. Sometimes people spoke as though this were the case, obviously because they knew how unpopular a definite alliance was. There seems little basis for the view, unless it implies that Sweden reserved the right to back out of any such declaration, if in the event she found it inexpedient to implement it. Another problem is, what effect a defensive alliance would have on Sweden's defences. It was generally considered that it would mean larger defence forces. The military publications referred to above took the opposite line, but it is noteworthy that at all events they recommended far stronger defence forces than the majority of the legislature considered necessary. The general confusion of the discussion was further increased by the fact that so many speakers and writers were referring to public opinion rather than expressing their own views. This meant that in many cases the argument turned on the practical possibilities of the proposal, instead of on its meaning and value.

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Up to the First World War, the great party political issue—next to the question of the new constitution—was the defence question. With the outbreak of War, a political truce set in, under which the Liberals supported the 1914 army organisation and the Social Democrats indirectly accepted it. After the War, the question again became a bone of political contention for more than ten years. On the one side stood the Conservatives, whose aim was to preserve as far as possible the relatively strong organisation of 1914, on the other the non-Socialist Left and the Social Democrats, united in their efforts to cut down the defence; the Farmers' League took in some respects an independent line, but on the whole sided with the Conservatives. In some ways, the discussion on defence revealed the differences between the political parties more clearly than any other issue. The main lines of argumentation will be reviewed here from this point of view alone. But it should be remembered that other considerations also entered in. The rival claims of expenditure on military and social projects had to be balanced. Opinions varied as to the value and possibility of defence for a country of the size and position of Sweden. Pacifist tendencies played a certain part, though not a large one. These sides to the discussion can only be briefly indicated. Needless to say, its technical military aspects will be omitted altogether.

During the years immediately following the end of the War, temporary reductions in the period of military training and other cuts in the defence organisation were introduced. The discussions

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in the Riksdag which led up to these decisions are of little interest from the present point of view; not much reference was made to international affairs, and the views expressed were more clearly defined and explained on a later occasion. The first landmark at which we need pause is the disarmament decision of 1925, when a new army organisation was adopted.

In November 1919 the Government set up a Commission to consider the question of defence. This Commission, on which all the main political parties and expert military opinion were represented, published its main report in March 1923. This report was drawn up by the Progressive members, and recommended a considerable degree of disarmament; minority reports were added by the Conservatives, the Social Democrats and others. The Commission of Generals (members of the body of general officers) was invited to comment on the report, and did so in June 1923. In November of the same year, the Chief of the General Staff, acting on Government instructions, drew up a proposal for a defence organisation. When the 1924 Riksdag met, the Trygger Government laid before it a Bill for a new army organisation. Although the Government Bill, which was expressly described as an attempt at a compromise solution, envisaged a less extensive and costly organisation than that recommended by the military experts and Conservatives on the Defence Commission, it encountered decisive opposition from the Progressives and Social Democrats, and no decision could be reached by the 1924 Riksdag. The 1924 elections to the Second Chamber, at which the defence question was the dominant issue, resulted in the formation of the third Social Democratic Government, which could count in the main on Progressive support on the defence question. After prolonged and heated debates, these two parties between them carried through the 1925 Defence Bill.

In analysing the attitude towards foreign affairs revealed in this debate, we will consider one by one the views of the victorious majority (which varied but little), of the Conservatives, in particular the Trygger Government, and of the military experts. Various shades of opinion must be omitted. The most important documents are, for the majority view: the Defence Commission's report, the Social Democratic minority report, the Social Democratic party motion of 1924, and the 1925 Bill; for the Conservative view, the 1924 Bill and certain motions brought forward in 1925; for the military view, the report of the Commission of Generals. The Riksdag debates contained little that was not already to be found in these documents, and will only be mentioned in a few particulars. The international position and allied questions were discussed most fully by the Social Democrats and the military experts.

The Defence Commission—or more correctly, its Progressive members—began by considering the question whether and how

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far Sweden's membership of the League of Nations might be considered to affect her defence position. Their conclusions were mainly negative. They felt that the provisions of the Covenant relating to military sanctions, even if participation was not compulsory, involved the obligation to maintain military defence forces. Besides, as "permissible" wars were still to be allowed, defence forces would continue to be necessary, however successful the work of the League might prove. But in any case the League in its existing form could not be considered to provide a sufficient guarantee. "The League will find it difficult to exert the influence intended on international affairs so long as countries such as the United States of America, Russia and Germany remain outside... Moreover, the situation prevailing in Central and Eastern Europe since the War contains a number of possible seeds of future conflict, the direct or indirect effect of which on Sweden's position must not be overlooked." Still, there was always the possibility that the League might be able to render assistance in the event of attack. Of far greater importance in the eyes of the Commission were the changes in the military position left behind by the World War, which had nothing whatever to do with the setting up of the League. Though causes of conflict were not lacking, nations would be far less likely to go to war now than they would have been before the War. "The generation which has experienced the terrible destruction of the World War and its disastrous consequences to European culture, economy and progress, will doubtless think more than once before committing itself to such horrors again. The knowledge of what war really means and of the consequences it involves for all who take part in it, should act as the most powerful restraining influence." Besides, Sweden's individual position had been greatly strengthened. "The weakening of Russia and the establishment of Finland and the Baltic Provinces as independent States has removed, for the time being at any rate, the threat to our independence resulting from the immediate proximity of an imperialistically governed State... The destruction of Germany as a military Power is, of course, another factor to be taken into account in estimating Sweden's present military position." Admittedly the new international situation was not yet so stabilised that it was safe to judge entirely by present appearances. But on the other hand, it was never possible or desirable to "look further ahead than the more or less foreseeable future." The conclusion could only be that the danger of becoming involved in war during the next few years was less than it had been before the War. The Commission therefore decided that "Sweden's military position had so materially improved since the end of the War that the defence organisation of 1914 could safely be reduced."

The arguments used by the Commission are typical in certain important respects of all the more authoritative statements made between the years 1923 and 1925 in favour of disarmament. Three

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points come up again and again, though with variations and with slightly different emphasis. The League of Nations was not expected to be of any great value in existing circumstances as a guarantor of peace, but it was expected—probably to an increasing degree—to be able to smooth over differences, reduce the risk of war, and assist the victim of attack in accordance with the provisions of the Covenant. The general prospects of peace were considered to be improved by the fact that a great war had just been fought out and, as one speaker in the Riksdag expressed it, the cyclone had passed over; the resultant war-weariness was such that a period of peace must follow, whatever causes there might be for war. Finally, Sweden's position had been directly strengthened by the weakening of Russia and the establishment of the Finnish and Baltic border States.

The Social Democratic minority report—by far the most detailed and penetrating exposition from any civilian source—attempted to define the problems involved. The two keys to the situation were, according to this minority, firstly "Sweden's very sheltered position just now," secondly "the uncertainty as to the future." These two considerations had not really been differentiated by the majority. They had "adopted the attitude they did from a general sense of the uncertainty of all future prospects, and allowed the idea of possible but still uncertain dangers to prevent their taking practical decisions which would otherwise have been natural in the circumstances." This was shown particularly by the fact that the danger which weighed most heavily with the Commission was that of an expansionist Russia penetrating to the frontiers of Sweden: it was with a view to this danger that the Commission had made its recommendations, though they obviously would not provide a strong enough defence if the danger they were designed to meet really materialised. The Social Democratic minority considered, briefly, that the Commission's proposals represented a compromise between the line the Commission would have adopted if it had only had to think of existing conditions, and the line it considered advisable if certain dangers became actual. The minority—and the strict logic of their argument is incontestable—preferred another course. No specific degree of preparedness could be said to be adequate to meet future dangers of quite unknown dimensions. These dangers should not therefore be taken *directly* into account in drafting recommendations, but only indirectly. "This could be done by clearly recognising that each defence organisation must be designed to meet the needs of a definite and limited period, setting it up in accordance with existing circumstances, but allowing for possible future contingencies by preserving adequate scope for rapid adjustment to new and changed conditions." Defence should be *elastic*, that is the kernel of the minority argument. Swedish defence policy should "allow our country to enjoy the benefits of the improved international situation by lightening the

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burden of armaments, but at the same time be always prepared to increase the defence forces if necessary without violent disruption, or of course to reduce them still further."

The minority view was still more clearly expressed in special sections dealing with the League of Nations and the military situation. With regard to the former, they pointed out that membership of the League did not finally remove the danger of war, and so did not justify the demand for immediate disarmament. On the other hand, members of the League, they argued, were not obliged to maintain military forces, for the League was entitled only to fix the upper limit for such forces. They further argued that, before the situation could arise which the majority felt might involve real danger for Sweden, namely the adoption by Russia of an expansionist policy, it should be possible to form a better estimate of the practical value of the League. "Such a situation could only arise following the disappearance of Finland as an independent State; and Finland's fate can hardly be sealed without testing first the reliability of League promises and the effectiveness of sanctions. But this brings us to the change in our military position, which might be described as a long-term improvement, and which, as the period of grace is not months but years or possibly decades, is the real basis of our argument for an elastic defence system." The same idea is developed in the section on the military position. Russia, which rightly or wrongly was regarded as a potential aggressor, required peace and co-operation with other States if she was to effect the necessary work of reconstruction. If Russia, after a period of recovery, were to set her face towards conquest, signs of this would be apparent before the actual onslaught; besides, so long as Finland and the Baltic States were free, Sweden was not in the immediate danger zone. So there would probably be ample opportunity to apply the principles of elastic defence. "We calculate that international relations would be bound to deteriorate for a period before the threat of war could become imminent, and that that period would be sufficient to allow of adequate preparation."

The views already indicated found expression once more in the Riksdag debates of 1924 and 1925. On the whole, the value of the League for the preservation of peace was rated higher in these debates than in the reports by the Progressive and Social Democratic members of the Defence Commission. Particular stress was laid on the hope that the disarmament provided for in the Covenant would soon be put into effect. The report of the Special Commission of 1924 pointed out, as did a number of speakers in both Chambers, that Sweden's independence could not be entirely or principally assured by military means: "Our national freedom can only be considered inviolable to the extent to which force is replaced in international relationships by justice, and peaceful procedure takes the place of war in the settlement

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of international disputes." The reasons for believing in a fairly long period of peace were specified in detail on a number of occasions. One was the general war-weariness, others were of a more permanent nature: the peace treaties had reduced the oppression of minorities, even though the principle of national self-determination had not been universally applied; the acceptance of democracy by the majority of European States provided a certain guarantee of peace, and so, according to the Social Democrats, did the greatly increased influence which the working classes had thereby gained; the horrors of the World War were calculated to instil a permanent desire for peace in all nations. As to Sweden's military position, the Social Democrats in particular claimed that she was in no danger of invasion. "No direct threat to Sweden's independence or territorial integrity can at present be detected," the 1925 Bill declared. "With our relatively sheltered geographical position, our racial unity, and our harmonious relations with foreign Powers, we have no occasion to build up our defences against any possible attempt at invasion." Sometimes a distinction was drawn in this connection between a neutrality defence, which was considered necessary, and a defence of independence, which was considered unnecessary; in other words, the defence forces need only be sufficient for the defence of neutrality, (P. A. Hansson in the Second Chamber.) In addition, it was constantly argued that Finland and the Baltic States would serve as a shield for Sweden, as any Russian expansionist plans would be directed first against them. Branting and others also argued that, if Sweden disarmed, she would encourage other States to do the same.

The Conservative members of the Defence Commission did not refer at all, or only very briefly, to the foreign and military position. One of them, Friherre Fleming, asserted that Sweden's military position had deteriorated rather than improved during the past few years. But the whole matter was discussed more thoroughly in the Bill presented by the Trygger Government to the 1924 Riksdag—the most authoritative Conservative declaration on Sweden's post-war position.

This Bill declared with regard to the League of Nations that it was "not yet established whether a League Member is bound to provide military assistance if one of the other Members is attacked, and consequently it is also uncertain whether such a State, if attacked, can claim military assistance from the other Members of the League on the basis of the Covenant." This is a remarkable statement in view of the fact that the Swedish Government had throughout, unchallenged, asserted the optional character of military sanctions. According to the Bill, the obscurity of the Covenant on this point was particularly serious because "it might actually mean that the smaller Powers were obliged to defend others, but had no assurance of receiving help themselves." In view of this fact, and as the League's attitude towards "the more or less arbitrary acts of its more powerful Members must

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remain uncertain, it was not possible to regard the League as a satisfactory guarantee of Swedish independence." In fact, League membership might from a military point of view be a disadvantage. By co-operation in economic sanctions and other measures unquestionably compulsory under the Covenant, Sweden might run the risk of becoming involved in war without receiving any corresponding safeguard against attack. At some future time, the League might possibly afford real security, but this hope could not serve as a basis for action now.

As regards Sweden's military position in general, the Prime Minister stated in the Bill that there was not sufficient material on which to base an objective opinion. "The only thing certain is that the present position of the world is fraught with possibilities of every sort, and consequently with great dangers. The old balance of power has been swept away by the World War, and this balance of power, with all its imperfections, was a dominating factor which nothing has yet arisen to replace." The whole international system was in a state of ferment, and the position of every State was endangered; the small States in particular ran the risk of having to "pay the account which may ultimately be drawn up between the Great Powers." From this point of view "Sweden's general military position must be regarded at present as very precarious." Discussions as to whether Sweden's position was better or worse than before the war "in respect of a danger arising from any particular quarter" served no useful purpose. The Prime Minister's general attitude seems to have been that nothing would be gained by analysing the existing position, as there was no guarantee of its stability. "Even if our military position to-day were relatively good, there is no guarantee that it would be so to-morrow." He also criticised the suggestion that "warning that war was imminent would be received in time to expand an inadequate organisation..." Even if any such warning were conceivable, it was certain that no attention would be paid to it. "The enemy would probably be at our gates long before we, with our national optimism in such matters, had realised that the situation was serious or that the time had come to expand our inadequate defences. Many people, too, would be afraid to take any decisive measures for fear of irritating the bear which had just begun to stir in his winter sleep." According to the Bill, therefore, a defence force equivalent to a modernisation of the 1914 organisation would be "well justified by the international outlook, which cannot be expected to improve to any extent for a long time to come." That in spite of all this the defence forces were being cut down was due to the fact that "so large an organisation would, in Sweden's present economic and financial circumstances, place a burden on our people which they would probably not be able to maintain." This declaration can only be interpreted as a direct admission that the Government did not consider their proposal adequate,

but were giving way to what they considered to be misinformed public opinion, i.e. to party politics.

The denial in principle of the possibility of assessing the true state of foreign affairs and the likelihood of war, which is the main theme of Trygger's argument, is to be found in various authoritative Conservative statements. Thus the Conservative party motion in the 1925 Riksdag followed much the same lines as the 1924 Bill. It also discussed the Geneva Protocol which was then under consideration (cf. p. 44). If this Protocol were accepted, the Conservatives argued, Sweden would place herself under the obligation to take part in military sanctions and so "the danger of her becoming involved in war would be considerably increased." But at the same time they feared that, if the Protocol were removed from the order of the day, a situation would arise "which would undoubtedly influence our defence position to no less a degree than the more or less complete acceptance of the proposal, and would consequently place demands on our defence system which cannot at present be estimated." Altogether it was impossible to say whether the danger of war would be increased or decreased by the rejection of the Geneva Protocol.

Enough has been said to show that this argument—that it was impossible to assess future dangers—was not consistently maintained. In actual fact it seems to have been little more than a device for disqualifying any statements suggesting that the position had improved; these were all rejected on the general grounds that it was impossible to estimate the position. But for the rest, the most was made of all negative aspects of the international situation. This is illustrated both by the proposals already referred to, and by authoritative Riksdag speeches (e.g. Trygger, Marks von Würtemberg, Lindman). These emphasise Sweden's danger of becoming involved in war because of her membership of the League, whereas the League itself was useless as a guarantor of peace. For various reasons there was a general danger of war. The peace treaties concluded at the end of the World War had created fresh occasions for friction and discontent. "The whole distribution of large areas of European territory brought about under the peace treaties must in itself constitute a danger to peace for many years, until it has either been modified or has gained greater solidarity" (Trygger). Another closely-connected factor was the nationalistic spirit which was considered to exist in many States. Trygger held that the situation in Europe was particularly dangerous because of the prevailing poverty, which chiefly affects "the class which constitutes the backbone of society, the upper class. This means that the force which should resist anarchy and disintegration is itself undermined, and that those in power will be more likely to seek further adventures abroad as a distraction from discontent at home." The leading statesmen had lost their authority, and consequently both internal order and peace were

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in jeopardy. As regards the direct danger of war to Sweden, the Conservatives claimed that Russia might shortly be expected to set out on the path of conquest, and that a strong Germany, such as had previously acted as a deterrent to Russian expansionism, now no longer existed. To regard Finland and the Baltic States as a bulwark for Sweden was unworthy and fundamentally incorrect, for these States were weak in comparison with their Eastern neighbour. It was the Defence Minister in the Trygger Government who particularly stressed the unreasonableness of all the talk of a neutrality defence. To reject such violations of neutrality as might result from efforts by a foreign Power to acquire certain definite advantages, e.g. free passage through Swedish territory, would require as strong forces as to repulse an attempted conquest; no distinction could therefore be drawn between defence of neutrality and defence of independence.

The military experts held much the same views as the Conservatives, but in a more extreme and definite form. They pronounced both the Trygger Government's proposals and other more far-reaching Conservative proposals inadequate, although of course incomparably better than the Left-Wing course which was actually adopted. The most representative expression of military opinion is the report of 8th June of the Commission of Generals, already referred to. It contains in the main the same views as were expressed in the minority report by the military experts on the Defence Commission. The Chief of the General Staff referred in his proposals of December 1923 to the Commission of Generals and left the question at that.

As regards the League of Nations, the Commission of Generals took the line that such military aid against attack as Sweden might possibly receive from the League in certain circumstances, would probably come too late and be of a scrappy and unsatisfactory nature. As to Sweden's duties under the Covenant, the Commission emphasised that "the League of Nations could, of course, only reach full vigour if all its Members were prepared to take part in international action." If Russia attacked Finland, Sweden in view of her geographical position would probably be the first to be asked to intervene. "As we must assume that even in this event Sweden would fulfil her duty under the Covenant, the outcome would obviously be *war with Russia*, a war which, in the opinion of the Commission of Generals, in spite of its international character, would place a heavy strain on our defence forces." Two points in connection with this statement are particularly worthy of note. The Commission obviously assumed that participation in military sanctions was compulsory, even though the Swedish Government and Riksdag had definitely asserted the contrary. They further held that the obligation to aid Finland constituted another argument in favour of Swedish preparedness; this would seem to imply that the Commission, unlike some other military writers (cf. p. 150) did not consider that the demands on the Swedish defence

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organisation would be relatively limited, if the idea of a defence at Systerbäck were put into practice.

The general danger of war had, in the eyes of the Commission, increased rather than diminished as a result of the World War and all the subsequent events. They pointed to "the many difficulties in international policy, which arose after the final peace treaties were concluded and in consequence of various other circumstances connected with the World War." Memories of the World War certainly would not "restrain a nation from making war if its vital interests were at stake, though on the other hand they might act as the most powerful deterrent if it were a question of helping another nation, and moreover a nation which had wilfully neglected to safeguard its own defences."

Neither had Sweden's own military position improved. Russia was certainly not so strong as she had been in 1914, but she had great natural resources and had still the largest population in Europe. The Russian nation would probably not be content with its present obscure position for ever, and so a resumption of the Russian expansionist policy must be considered likely. "If Russia revives her expansionist policy, then in view of the changed political conditions in Europe she is likely to enjoy a far greater freedom of choice than she did before the War in respect of both the time and direction for an attack." Finland and the border States could not be expected to stand up to a Russian attack; their "ability to constitute a shield for the Baltic and so for Sweden" must largely depend on "the efforts which Sweden on her part makes to maintain her position." Germany no longer presented an adequate counterbalance to Russia. "The improvement in our military position implicit in the liberation of Finland and the Baltic States," wrote one of the military experts in the Defence Commission's minority report, "is not enough to compensate for the lost balance of power between Germany and Russia, and the increased probability of the appearance in the Baltic of fleets belonging to other than Baltic Powers." The Commission of Generals also emphasised the difficulties caused by Sweden's protracted shape from north to south, and by her long land and sea frontiers. Their conclusion was that "our position seems . . . to be far more uncertain than it was before, and just as dangerous," so that "our general defence plan, if it is to fulfil its purpose, cannot reckon now with any smaller defence forces and services than were required immediately after the World War."

These views were repeated in the speeches and writings of military experts in the defence debates of 1923—1925. General L. Tingsten, who had resigned in 1922 from his position as Chief of the General Staff, in 1925 published a pamphlet in which he sought to show, on much the same grounds as those brought forward by the Commission of Generals, that Sweden's position had worsened as a result

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of the World War. The chief reason he gave was the danger from Russia. Russia, he said, constituted "a dangerous threat to Finland and the border States and so to Sweden too. Owing to the relatively weak forces possessed by Finland and the other States, even though they do all in their power to set their house in order and ensure their independence, the barrier which they form to the east is none too strong. If this flimsy outer wall is broken through, then Sweden will find herself in a worse position than that of 1809, as it is far easier now than it was then to transport troops north of the Gulf of Bothnia." (Strictly speaking, according to this argument the position must have been better in 1925 than in 1914, as Finland did then present some sort of barrier.) A number of junior officers expressed similar views. A. Rappe, in a much-discussed pamphlet to which reference has already been made, developed the theory that Germany would probably turn Bolshevist and Finland and Norway be conquered by Russia; the threatened encirclement of Sweden could, however, be warded off by a defensive alliance with Finland, for 40,000 Swedish troops at Systerbäck would restrain Russia from attacking. The League of Nations was often referred to in military publications with contempt and hostility. A slight exception was provided by two pamphlets, in the form of debates between soldiers and civilians advocating a strong defence policy, published in 1924, both of which demanded strong defence measures but claimed at the same time that the position had improved in certain respects, particularly by the forcing back of Russia.

The first point that strikes us in considering the above arguments is the extremely black interpretation of the position given by the Conservatives and the military spokesmen. It is easily understandable that the Left-Wing complained of a systematic tendency to interpret everything for the worst. Many of the arguments were mutually contradictory. The League's ability to help Sweden was depicted as slight or non-existent, while great stress was laid on the obligation on Sweden to support League action. The Geneva Protocol was said in the 1925 Conservative motion to increase the danger of war for Sweden, but the same document claimed that it was uncertain whether rejection of the Protocol would increase or decrease this danger. On the question of the value of the League, however, there was little real difference of opinion between the two conflicting parties; even the Left-Wing admitted in their more authoritative statements that the League was of little use as a guarantor of peace. The pessimism of the Conservatives and the military representatives came out chiefly in their estimate of the general danger of war and of Sweden's military position. They considered the danger of war in general to be as great as or greater than before the World War, chiefly on account of the fluid and combustible situation left behind by the War and the peace treaties. The Russian danger, which they placed in the forefront, they

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held to be as great as ever in spite of the weakening of Russia and the establishment of Finland and the border States; these new border States, they pointed out, could not serve as a barrier against Russian expansionism to the same extent as Germany did before the World War.

The sharp criticism which the Left-Wing levelled against this line of argument seems to have been in the main well founded. Before the World-War, the Right-Wing had maintained the view that Russia's domination over Finland and the Baltic territories and the rivalry between Russia and Germany involved serious dangers for Sweden. It was strange, therefore, that they held the danger of war to be equally great after changes had occurred which, according to their previous argument, must be beneficial. It must also be pointed out that the opponents of disarmament employed the most divergent arguments with regard to the importance of Finland: now they said that Finland was a protection, though a weak one, for Sweden (Tingsten), now that the obligation under the Covenant to help Finland placed a strain on the Swedish defence system (Commission of Generals), now that an alliance with Finland would be calculated to lighten the Swedish defence burden (Rappe). Actually the arguments quoted before, showing that both the general danger of war and the particular danger to Sweden had decreased since the years preceding the World War, would seem to have been the most reasonable. To a certain extent, the very arguments used by the opponents of disarmament show that they indirectly recognised this fact. Their insistence on the general uncertainty would have been meaningless from their own point of view if they had been able to point to any more definite and immediate dangers of war. As they constantly spoke of the dangers the future might bring, they obviously did not consider the risks of the existing situation very great. Certain individual comments by Conservatives even conveyed a suggestion that some improvement had taken place.

It seems probable, therefore, that the Conservatives and the military experts, perhaps often unconsciously, adopted for tactical reasons a line which did not necessarily correspond with their own views, exaggerated all the dangers of the situation, and piled up every possible argument which could reasonably be adduced to support their point of view. The kernel of their argument for a relatively strong defence—this is further suggested by the large body of discussion which it has not been possible to review here—had nothing to do with military policy in a limited sense. They feared, and on this point the Trygger Bill would appear to be representative, that the position would deteriorate in the future, and that if the existing defence organisation were broken up, there might be insuperable difficulties in the way of expanding it when necessary. They did not believe it would be possible to apply the principle of elastic defence which figured so largely in the discussion. This principle was, of course,

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incontestible: defence should be adapted to the danger of war. But that did not prove that it was applicable. From a purely technical point of view, could the necessary expansion be carried out within the time available? Could the change in public opinion which must precede any such expansion, be expected to take place with the necessary speed? The Conservatives doubted it, and with some reason. The deterioration in the situation during the 1930's was indeed to bring a certain measure of rearmament. But the extent of this was determined not merely by the requirements of the situation, but also by the size of the existing defence organisation; as in all such cases, the forces already in existence served as a basis, and there is every reason to suppose that the increase would have been relatively as great, even if the original force had been greater. It also seems beyond question that the 1936 army organisation was very much weaker, in relation to the generally recognised dangers of the period, than the 1925 organisation. This again shows the limitations in the principle of elastic defence.

It must be emphasised, however, that the groups which insisted upon a reduction of armaments undoubtedly believed that the general international position would steadily improve. This is shown by scattered references in the more authoritative presentations of policy, and still more by the speeches and writings of individual politicians. The League of Nations would gradually evolve into a satisfactory guarantor of peace, an international disarmament policy would be inaugurated and successfully carried through, the Swedish measures would to a certain extent influence developments in other countries. Ideas such as these may be assumed to have largely influenced the decision as to defence policy, even though this claimed to be based on military considerations. And these ideas and hopes proved very soon to be quite unfounded.

The above analysis is not intended to imply any criticism or otherwise of the 1925 defence plan, but merely to illustrate the, in many respects, irrational character of the debate. This, however, is very understandable. The question really was: how is the defence organisation to be shaped so as to ensure that it will always be adequate to meet the quite uncertain dangers the future may bring?

During the Riksdag debates of 1924 and 1925, hopes were expressed of international disarmament, but the idea of isolated Swedish disarmament was only entertained at that time by a small number of Social Democrats, who had little influence on the policy of their party. A few years later, the situation changed. The idea that Sweden should disarm independently of other States gained ground rapidly among the Social Democrats, and by the time of the Party Congresses of 1928 and 1932 had secured such a following that it was probably

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only the determined opposition of a few leading members—such as Hansson and Sandler—which prevented a resolution being passed in favour of unilateral disarmament. The demand for a policy of absolute disarmament also made itself felt, though not so violently, in the Progressive party. In the 1929 Riksdag, the Social Democrats proposed the setting up of a fresh commission to investigate the defence question, in conjunction with the question of isolated disarmament, but the proposal was rejected in both Chambers. The proposals were repeated in the 1930 Riksdag, this time with the support of the majority of the Progressive party; and the Riksdag,—under opposition by the Right-Wing, the Farmers' League and the Liberals—ordered an investigation, to “consider the arguments in favour firstly of strong military defence establishments, secondly of the reduction of existing defences on the basis of international agreements, and thirdly of isolated Swedish disarmament.” That the majority within the majority which demanded this investigation aimed either at the reduction of expenditure on armaments or at total disarmament, is beyond doubt. In accordance with the wishes of the Riksdag the Ekman Government in October 1930 appointed a committee (the 1930 Defence Commission), including representatives of the main political parties and military experts, to consider the question of defence in all its aspects. The Commission's report, to which we will return, was not made until 1935.

In all the motions and committee reports prior to that of the 1930 Commission, little or no attempt was made to justify the line adopted. Questions of foreign or military policy were simply not mentioned. An idea of how the various parties regarded Sweden's international position from the point of view of defence can therefore best be gained by studying the speeches in the Riksdag debates and at the Social Democratic Congresses. These are not, of course, necessarily as typical of current public opinion as collective reports drawn up by groups. In addition, the questions which are of interest in the present connection did not come up for very much discussion. The debate dealt mainly with the idea of disarmament only, not with the question of defence in its entirety. The following summary must therefore be very brief, and its conclusions to some extent uncertain.

The general impression is that the debate reflected the optimistic sentiments which prevailed during the last few years of the period of international relaxation. By the spring of 1930 the economic crisis had not yet gained serious dimensions, and in Sweden had hardly been felt at all; the National Socialist victories at the German Reichstag elections, which introduced a new phase in Germany's development and to a certain extent in international affairs, did not take place until some months after the Riksdag decision to appoint a Commission. The opponents of disarmament—whether they opposed the demand for an investigation or not—certainly emphasised the un-

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certainties and dangers of the political situation, but not nearly as forcefully as five years previously. The Conservatives criticised some aspects of the 1925 army organisation, but of rearmament on a large scale there was no question. The parties which had been responsible for the 1925 decision and were now united in demanding a fresh investigation, took the main part in the discussion; the Riksdag debates consisted largely in a veiled contest between the supporters and opponents of unilateral disarmament within the Social Democrat party.

Those who demanded isolated disarmament, or at any rate were sympathetic to such demands, often relied on arguments which had nothing to do with politics or military considerations. Sometimes they even expressly stated that their attitude was not based on the international position. "Our views do not fluctuate in accordance with the external military position," Z. Höglund, one of the foremost representatives of the disarmament policy, proclaimed in the Second Chamber in 1930. "To us, who are enemies of the armament system itself, it is immaterial whether at the moment the international position of the world is lighter or darker. If it is light . . . well, that is a good thing, and may help our cause considerably. But if it is dark, that is from our point of view only a further reason to intensify the struggle against militarism and war. We work on the theory that peace without disarmament means a constant danger of fresh wars, and that the system of armaments itself constitutes the greatest danger." The last sentence contains the argument which was perhaps most frequently employed. The mere existence of defences involved the danger of war; armaments made war, not *vice versa*. Another argument, brought forward in connection with the accounts given by the then Major K. A. Bratt—though Bratt was not a supporter of disarmament—was the destructive effects of modern instruments of war and the impossibility of a small State defending itself effectively against attack; therefore it was no use having any defences. They also pointed out how much the social services could be developed if the money now spent on armaments were devoted to them, and championed pacifist principles in general.

Political or military arguments were also brought forward, but only in a secondary or subsidiary rôle. Sweden was said to be in little or no danger of war, there was no reason for any foreign Power to wish to conquer Sweden, and temporary infringements of neutrality mattered little. That small States were not attacked, even though they had no effective defence, was shown by the examples of Denmark and Norway (Möller in the First Chamber, Hallén in the Second Chamber 1929). There was no reason to fear a warlike policy on the part of the dictators, for the outbreak of war in these countries would mean revolution. The capitalist system in its existing form must avoid war (Engberg, Second Chamber, 1930). Help could be

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expected, in the event of attack or violations of neutrality, from the League of Nations. "The League of Nations says itself in its preamble that it aims at disarmament, so it is quite inconceivable that it could leave an independent nation which takes the League's own statutes seriously, at the mercy of a Great Power, when this nation is only trying to carry out the League's own programme. It is all the more inconceivable as the League of Nations itself... laid down the principle that a State whose existence is threatened, should refrain from military action and appeal instead to the League" (Z. Höglund, Second Chamber, 1930). In general they seem to have taken the line that Sweden ought not to co-operate even in the establishment of an international police organisation, and occasionally said as much in plain terms (E. Lindberg, Second Chamber, 1930). By disarming, Sweden would contribute to the extent of her ability to the growth of international confidence, and set an example to other States. "It would be strange", wrote Lindberg in *Tiden*, 1930, "if a Scandinavian disarmament, a voluntary testimony to the fact that safety and security are not dependent on either national military organisations, defensive alliances or an international armed force, did not help to break down the hypnosis under which the military Great Powers are now labouring."

Those who were critical or sceptical of the idea of disarmament—among whom were numbered many Progressives and Social Democrats—asserted that Sweden might become the victim of attack in a general war, even apart from direct plans of conquest. The best proof that a general danger of war existed lay in the fact that the efforts at disarmament by the League had not led to any positive results. A country which refused to defend itself could not in any circumstances count upon effective support from the League. It would be inconsistent to rely upon the League and at the same time refuse to collaborate in general defensive measures which might make the League an effective peace organisation. "According to our Social Democratic doctrines, even a country like Sweden has duties to fulfil in securing the establishment of peace . . .," said the Social Democratic leader (Second Chamber, 1930). "I mean that even a small nation like Sweden ought to consider how far it can contribute towards the maintenance of the international armed force which even the most out-and-out pacifist still considers necessary to make the world safe against aggression." The idea that Sweden would set the world an example by disarming was ridiculed particularly by Sandler in a speech in the First Chamber in 1929. "I think we can all agree about the impression Swedish disarmament would make on Mussolini's Italy or Stalin's Russia. It would be in the democratic countries that we might look for a response, but if that happened, what would it mean? It would mean that Democracy in Europe stood defenceless while all military power was gathered in the hands of the dictators."

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Perhaps someone will say that this could in any case be described as a state of peace. That may be so—it always takes two sides to make a war—but what would be the fate of European liberty under such a *pax Romana*?"

An analysis of the defence debates of 1929—1930 seems hardly necessary. They reveal no attempt, such as was made in 1923—1925, to develop clear-cut arguments. They are hardly comprehensible without an account of the tactical considerations at work in and between the parties, and that is out of the question here. After the outbreak of the Second World War, if not before, it must have become apparent to all that many of the—often mutually conflicting—arguments for unilateral disarmament produced during the last few years of the period of international relaxation represented the low-water mark in the Swedish inter-war debate on foreign affairs and defence.

In addition to the Riksdag discussion, mention may also be made of a commission with more limited terms of reference, set up by the Lindman Government in December 1928, whose conclusions were embodied in a report of 13th March 1929 (the Åkerman Commission). The Chairman was Lt. Gen. Åkerman; all the members were either serving officers or experts on commerce or foreign affairs. Considerable space was devoted in their report to questions connected with Sweden's military position and foreign relations. The main points in the argument may be briefly summarised here, even though the investigation led to no immediate results.

After a detailed exposition of the principles governing League action for the furtherance of peace, the experts passed on to consider the question of "the League of Nations as a guarantor of peace." If an international system of justice was to be stable, the experts declared, there must be a peaceful procedure for the settlement of all disputes (including internal disputes, which according to existing agreements did not have to be submitted to arbitration), security that the results of the peaceful procedure would be put into practice, i.e. an international executive procedure, and effective measures against any State which offended against the international order by waging war. Obviously the League of Nations did not fulfil these conditions. But it had nevertheless been of considerable service in the cause of peace. Independently of the League a strong will to peace had emerged after the World War, but "the establishment of the League had provided this will to peace with its natural sphere of activity and a more rational direction than it would otherwise have had." The experts believed it was not advisable either to extend or limit the sanctions system. "An intensification of the sanctions system appears neither possible nor appropriate, until the League has grown stronger and, by its ability to settle any disputes which may arise by peaceful means, gives grounds for confidence that sanctions will only need

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to be applied in exceptional cases. A limitation of sanctions, apart from the fact that it would certainly meet with determined opposition on the part of a considerable number of States, would on the other hand be likely to compromise the League's prospects of developing into a stronger peace organisation." It was therefore best not to seek any change in the existing order, even though this must be regarded as unsatisfactory from the security point of view.

As regards defence, the experts pointed out that the Covenant stated as its aim the reduction of the armaments of States Members to "the lowest point consistent with international security and the enforcement by common action of international obligations, without essentially disturbing the balance of military power between the different countries." Unilateral disarmament by one country, on the other hand, would be contrary to the Covenant and to any system of international justice, as any such system must be maintained by means of force. The League provisions assumed that no State would reduce its defences so radically as to add to the responsibilities of the other members. A State which disarmed or reduced its armaments below a certain limit could not take part either in the optional military or the obligatory economic sanctions, for co-operation in an economic blockade might easily lead to a state of open war. Sweden's military position, the experts declared, had improved since the World War; this remark is of interest in view of the fact that the military representatives in the defence debate a few years previously, had expressed a totally different opinion.

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The international relaxation which followed the First World War only lasted a few years. The economic crisis began with the 1930's and the internal and external stresses which it largely brought in its train reacted upon world politics. More and more countries adopted a policy of economic isolation and aggressive nationalism. When the essentially military and nationalistic National Socialist party came to power in Germany in 1933, Europe entered upon a period of constantly heightening tension. Germany's secession from the League in 1933, her open rearmament in 1935, Italy's invasion of Abyssinia in the same year, the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, are only some of the more outstanding incidents in the development of the world crisis as it moved towards its climax.

At first, the tendency was to continue to regard the position with the same eyes as during the period of relative calm: to see the difficulties and setbacks as something temporary and incidental, not as the prelude to a fresh catastrophe. Not until 1936—1937 did a sense of uneasiness and tension, a belief that a Second World War was inevitable, begin to colour political life.

This time-lag was very pronounced in Sweden, as in many other countries not situated in the immediate storm-centre. The economic crisis reached Sweden late, and was relatively mild and brief. Sweden was little affected by the major international conflict of the early 1930's—Japan's steadily widening operations against China—and by various other international crises. Even after a tense situation had developed in Europe, it seemed unlikely that Sweden could be seriously involved for some time to come.

The ideological conflict, the conflict over political means and ends in general, which all the time was waxing stronger abroad in both internal and international affairs, did, however, influence the Swedish discus-

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sion considerably. Not, or at any case not primarily, by intensifying the dividing lines in Swedish home politics. But the adoption by the Swedish parties of different attitudes towards movements and régimes outside Sweden, to a certain extent influenced their attitude towards Swedish foreign policy. Incomparably the most important example was the discussion about National Socialism in Germany during and after the establishment of the Hitler dictatorship in the spring of 1933.

There can be no question here of entering into a detailed account of the development of public opinion in Sweden with regard to National Socialism, and a brief outline must suffice. At first it looked as though the Swedish Conservatives might be inclined to adopt some of the successful Nazi methods, or even to some extent the Nazi aims. But this did not prove to be the case to any extent. The Conservative leaders Lindman and Trygger—from 1935 Gösta Bagge—and the overwhelming majority of Conservative members of the Riksdag, not only remained faithful to democratic methods and the moderate programme, but on various occasions signified their essential repudiation of Nazism. The same may be said of most of the Conservative Press. All the same, there was an obvious streak of sympathy in the Conservative attitude towards Nazism. Looking back through the Press, particularly for those periods when the German régime was most intensively under discussion—the spring of 1933, the days following 30th June 1934, the crises of Germany's rearmament in the spring of 1935 and the remilitarisation of the Rhineland in the spring of 1936—one gains the impression that the Conservatives adopted a far more sympathetic attitude towards the new order than the other great parties. The Conservatives had been louder than any of the others in denouncing the injustices of the Versailles Treaty and demanding equal rights for Germany; so they tended to regard Nazism as a reaction against Versailles, and to applaud its successful struggle for equality, marred though it was by gross breaches of treaty. More than this, they hailed Nazism as the power which had overthrown German Socialism and Communism, and many believed that the new régime, after a short period of regrettable excesses, would settle down to peaceful and law-abiding ways. Its tyranny, regimentation and high-handedness met with strong criticism, but not with the same bitterness as in the Left-Wing. This applies, to take a few examples, to such important Conservative newspapers as *Svenska Dagbladet*, *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, *Norrköpings Tidningar* and *Östergötlands Dagblad*. But even in such moderate and essentially democratic papers as these, we find traces of the influence of Nazi doctrine. *Svenska Dagbladet* on one or two occasions carried articles proposing the transplantation of Nazism—with appropriate modifications—to Swedish soil, and, like *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* and other papers, published letters and articles more or less openly in favour of Nazism.²⁶ A number of pamphlets were produced by well-known Conservative

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authors in the same strain: a characteristic feature is that obvious sympathies for the nationalistic, "superman" Nazi mentality were combined with assurances that the German régime would become a bulwark of peace if only its just demands were recognised.²⁷ In yet another group of Conservative papers, pro-Nazi sympathies predominated, though hedged around with reservations against the direct adoption of Nazism in Sweden. To this group belonged, for a longer or shorter phase during the period under consideration, *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, *Östgöta Correspondenten*, *Norrbottnens-Kuriren* and *Helsingborgs Dagblad* (this last may be regarded from 1934 onwards as practically an organ of the Nationalists). The same tendencies appear more sporadically in other papers such as *Göteborgs Morgonpost* and *Lunds Dagblad*.

National Socialist influence was very apparent in the new party formed in the spring of 1934 by what had up till then been the Conservative youth organisation, Sweden's National League of Youth, which was represented in the Riksdag in 1935—1936 by three dissenting Conservatives, the National group. But neither the National League nor the National Socialist parties—such as the National Socialist Labour party or the Swedish National Socialist party—which followed the German pattern more closely, succeeded in winning independent representation in the Riksdag.

Nazi sympathies were probably not entirely lacking in the Farmers' League, but in the main this party, in common with its most authoritative organ, *Svenska Landsbygden*, was against the movement. Sharp, often bitter criticism of the German régime characterised practically the whole of the Left-Wing Press. The Progressive and Liberal parties—reunited in 1934 to form the People's party—reacted chiefly against the dictatorship, the persecution of certain groups of the population or schools of thought, and the nationalistic and military ideology which inspired the Nazi movement. A number of papers—for example *Dagens Nyheter*—soon began to predict that the methods of violence which had been applied so successfully inside Germany, would be applied to her external policy too to gain hegemony in Europe or the world, and that consequently Hitler's protestations of peaceful intentions were mere bluff, designed to induce his opponents to make concessions. *Göteborgs Handelstidning* was distinguished by the fact that its attacks on Nazism were sharper, more contemptuous, more systematic and more steeped in moral indignation, than those of any other paper. The campaign conducted by this paper was unquestionably very important, partly because it influenced public opinion directly and indirectly, partly because, by its very violence and intensity, it so to speak widened the scope of criticism in other papers; Professor Segerstedt came to personify more and more the horror of Nazi methods which gradually permeated the Swedish public mind. Exceptions among the papers generally

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reckoned as belonging to the People's party were formed by *Aftonbladet*, which at certain periods went further even than *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* in Nazi sympathies, and to a certain extent *Stockholms-Tidningen*; it should, however, be emphasised that *Aftonbladet* was not an official party organ. The special hatred of the Social Democrats for Nazism was due to the fact that they regarded it as both socially and politically a reactionary movement, which really amounted to an attack on Socialism and all it stood for. At first they kept predicting, as in the case of Fascism in the 1920's, that the new régime would soon break down, but later they began to feel that the growing strength of Nazism constituted a danger to Sweden and Scandinavia, and their readiness to accept rearmament must be seen largely in the light of this fact.

Other ideological changes and conflicts during these years also affected the discussion in Sweden. Among these were the orientation to the "Right" in 1934 of the Soviet Union and Comintern, chiefly brought about by the victory of National Socialism in Germany, and signified among other things by Russia's entry into the League of Nations, her alliance with France, the assumption of a new, superficially more democratic Russian constitution, and attempts to form a "popular front" of Communists, Social Democrats and other radically inclined parties. In Sweden, propaganda for a popular front received little support outside the Communist party, and the Swedish Social Democrats during this crisis stood firmly by their democratic and reformist principles, though they evidently felt a certain sympathy towards Russia as the opponent of National Socialism and international Fascism, which helped to make the Swedish discussion about foreign policy more acute. Just as the Social Democrats accused the Conservatives of Nazi tendencies, so the Conservatives accused the Social Democrats of a leaning towards Communism. It may be mentioned in this connection that the Communist party split into two in 1934, one section remaining in the Comintern while the other, the Socialist party, after losing several of its foremost members one after the other, adopted a policy hostile to the Soviet and the League of Nations and gradually drew nearer to Nazism.

During the Spanish Civil War, ideological divergencies of outlook with regard to foreign policy and conditions in other countries took more definite form. The Social Democrats—with the support in principle of a large section of the non-Socialist Left—came out strongly on the side of the Spanish Government, and collected considerable funds for its support, and in some cases severely criticised the non-intervention policy which was intended to prevent interference by foreign Powers, but proved extremely ineffective in preventing Italian and German support for the rebels in the form of volunteers and arms. The Right-Wing insisted constantly on the need for neutrality, and strongly criticised the assistance given by

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the Social Democrats; their sympathies were obviously with the Nationalists as opponents of Communism and upholders of the social order.

All the same, these various conflicting views had little influence on Swedish internal policy. The Government of Social Democrats, or from the autumn of 1936 onwards of Social Democrats and the Farmers' League, which—except for the Farmers' League Government formed in the summer of 1936—was in power for the whole of the period in question, met with no systematic opposition from the main parties outside the Government. An internal solidarity, a repudiation of differences stimulated by foreign influences, set the tone of Swedish parliamentarism. Even internal problems directly connected with the ideological differences, were solved without great difficulty and often without party conflict. A number of such problems arose, some to do with the treatment of extremist associations or associations run on particular lines (prohibition of uniforms 1933, regulations against activities directed against the State 1936), some to do with measures to prevent activities which might involve infringements of neutrality (the question of the prohibition of the boycotting of foreign goods, prohibition of voluntary participation in the Spanish Civil War), some to do with various other problems, (e.g. the question of refugees). A curious rift, though one which had no serious consequences, occurred in the Social Democratic party in connection with its neutrality policy. Whereas the Social Democrats in the Government observed the strict rules of neutrality in their public utterances and in some cases supported decisions intended to strengthen and confirm that neutrality, the Social Democratic Press conducted a lively propaganda against certain movements and régimes, and Swedish delegates to the Socialist International concurred in the passing of resolutions which, if put into practice, would have meant a complete reversal of the policy of the Swedish Government. Thus, to take one example, the Swedish Government with the support of the Riksdag and the Social Democratic party accepted the policy of nonintervention in Spain, while the International, with the approval of leading Swedish Social Democrats, passed resolution after resolution condemning the same policy in the strongest terms.

The question of the propriety and suitability of the violent criticism directed by the Press against persons and conditions in other countries was taken up on several occasions. Government circles sometimes suggested, though in cautious terms, that the violent Press reaction might hold dangers for Sweden. Similar representations were made by the Conservative Press, addressed in particular to those newspapers which were most outspoken in their attacks on the National Socialist leaders and the new German régime. There was a danger, they said, that remarks by private individuals might injure the State

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or even involve it in danger of war; Bismarck's dictum that the State had to pay for the windows which the journalists broke, was often quoted. A prominent scholar, Professor Eli Heckscher, even suggested that it might be desirable to revise the regulations governing the freedom of the Press; "Even the sincerest supporter of the freedom of the Press in Sweden must admit that it would be better to have a temporary suspension than to be strangled for ever by a victorious Dictator State." Against this was set the idea of an absolutely free Press. It was the duty of journalists to describe events in their true colours and speak their mind about them without restraint, whereas responsible statesmen must be to a certain extent bound by considerations of regard for the Governments with which Sweden maintained correct relations. The function of the Press in providing information and propagating opinions ensured a healthy reaction of the Swedish public to revolting events in the world at large; from the political point of view, this reaction was a necessary element in defensive preparedness. The ruthless criticism previously passed, for example, on French post-war policy, was also recalled, and it was suggested that there were incomparably stronger reasons for taking a definite stand now.

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The heightening international tension and steadily increasing weakness of the League were only too apparent during 1933. In February an extraordinary meeting of the League Assembly passed a resolution which simply amounted to recording the fact that Japan had violated the Covenant, but contained no suggestion of applying sanctions, and the Japanese puppet State of Manchukuo was set up without any effective intervention on the part of the League. Japan, however, left the League. At the Disarmament Conference, the Great Powers disagreed so fundamentally that it was impossible to reach any worth-while decision; least reconcilable of all were Germany's demand for equality and France's demand for security. In October, Germany left the Conference and notified her intention of seceding from the League. The Italian dictator made a startling speech expressing his contempt for the League, and so the sympathy between the "dissatisfied" Great Powers, which was to lead them a few years later into alliance, already found expression in their joint withdrawal from international co-operation. When Russia entered the League in September 1934, and a few months later allied herself with France, the League began—so far as the Great Powers were concerned—to assume the character of an instrument for one particular group.

The League was not very much discussed in Sweden during these years. Such comments as were made suggest a slackening of interest and fading hopes (e.g. Lundstedt and Undén in the Second Chamber).

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They took note of the League's failure on the disarmament question and the East Asiatic question, and of its loss of prestige through the secession of Japan and Germany. But there seems to have been little suggestion that Sweden herself should secede. Communist motions to this effect were rejected in the 1933 Riksdag by the practically unanimous vote of all the other parties; a similar Socialist motion in 1935 had equally negative results (Constitutional Committee, 1933 and 1935). To judge by the Press and to a certain extent by the Riksdag debates, it would seem that the National League, the National Socialists, and that section of the Conservatives which showed Nazi sympathies, adopted a hostile attitude towards the League; the Socialist party followed the traditional Communist line, while the Communists, after Russia's entry into the League, gradually became its energetic supporters.

With the Italo-Abyssinian conflict of 1935—1936, the position changed. The League became the centre of discussion in Sweden as it never was before or after. Great hopes were placed in the sanctions procedure which the League adopted—for the first and last time—but when these hopes were disappointed, the League finally lost all authority in Sweden.

First a brief outline of the course of external events. Abyssinia entered the League in 1923. Five years later, a treaty was concluded between Italy and Abyssinia, under which the two Governments agreed to submit all unsettled disputes to conciliation and arbitration procedure. In 1934, signs of Italy's aggressive plans began to be apparent, and from February 1935 onwards she sent large troop consignments to East Africa and it became obvious that war was imminent. Bombastic speeches by Mussolini accompanied the warlike preparations. On a number of occasions—the first being in January 1935—Abyssinia appealed to the League under the terms of Articles 11 and 15 of the Covenant (relating to the Council's competence to deal with disputes calculated to disturb the peace). First, however, the Italo-Abyssinian treaty providing for conciliation procedure was invoked, but without success. After Italy had rejected an offer of mediation by Great Britain and France, and a conciliation proposal drawn up by the League Council, the Council, which was obviously unwilling to take the matter up under the terms of the Covenant, proceeded to prepare a report on the possibility of dealing with it according to Article 15. At the same time, on 2nd October, Italy attacked Abyssinia without first declaring war. On 7th October all members of the Council except Italy declared that Italy, by opening hostilities, had violated Article 12 of the Covenant. In the League Assembly, which considered the question on 9th October, all States except three—Albania, Austria and Hungary—agreed with this view; the representatives of the dissenting States emphasised that for various reasons they did not wish to apply sanctions against Italy.

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Although according to the Covenant sanctions should have been immediately and automatically applied by all Members of the League, the Assembly decided to appoint a special committee to consider sanctions procedure; this action was based on a resolution adopted on 4th October 1921, relating to the application of Article 16. On the basis of proposals worked out by this committee, the States Members which had joined in the Council's declaration of 7th October set in operation, as from 18th November, a number of sanctions measures comprising: prohibition of import of Italian goods, blocking of credit, prohibition of export of armaments and various other war supplies. On the other hand, although this was repeatedly proposed and although American support could have been counted on, the export prohibition did not include certain types of material of the utmost importance to the Italian campaign, in particular oil. Probably Great Britain and France gave way on this point to Mussolini's war threats; an Italian attack on the British and French Mediterranean fleets was considered possible.

The British Baldwin Government had played a leading part in the preparations for the enforcement of sanctions, while the French Government under Laval showed hesitation and obviously wished to avoid a breach with Italy. At the general election in England in the middle of November, which resulted in a victory for the Government, the main issue was the amount of backing to be given to the League. Considerable surprise and suspicion were therefore aroused by the publication in various instalments, about 9th—13th December, of negotiations between Laval and the British Foreign Secretary Hoare, the object of which was to reach an agreement between Italy and Abyssinia on terms considerably more favourable to Italy than the conciliation terms previously proposed by the League Council. The violent reaction of the British public resulted in the replacement of Hoare by Eden, the proposed agreement was abandoned, and sanctions went on.

But it gradually became evident during the spring of 1936 that sanctions would not deter Italy, and that, contrary to earlier expectations, she was likely to win a decisive military victory before the rains came to hamper operations. Proposals to extend sanctions were sabotaged by discussions and investigations. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the German Government on 7th March took the opportunity offered by this crisis to repudiate the Treaty of Locarno, and at the same time remilitarised the Rhineland in violation of the peace treaty; in face of this threat from Germany, the French dislike of sanctions, which might cause a breach with Italy, became still more marked. On 20th April, the League Council announced that a fresh attempt at conciliation had failed, but made no further proposal for collective action. The Emperor of Abyssinia fled, the King of Italy proclaimed himself Emperor of Ethiopia, and the

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League was confronted with a *fait accompli*. When the League Assembly, which in October 1935 had only adjourned its meeting, reassembled at the end of June 1936, the consequences of all this had to be met. Proposals by the Abyssinian representative—among others that annexation of territory by force of arms should not be recognised—were rejected, and the Assembly expressed itself in favour of the lifting of sanctions. For Sweden's part, this was done on 8th July 1936.

Sweden had acted throughout the Abyssinian crisis in close co-operation with the other Scandinavian States. Before the Assembly met in September, the Foreign Ministers of Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway met in Oslo and published a statement to the effect that they proposed to support any measures that aimed at the preservation of peace and the maintenance of the legal principles of the League. The Swedish delegate to the Assembly, although his activities did not attract much public attention, worked throughout for the application of the Covenant. In the general debate which opened the Assembly meeting in September 1935, the Foreign Minister Sandler deplored the repeated delays in dealing with the Abyssinian question by the Council, asserted the importance of "firmly maintaining the principles of the League," and emphasised that the Covenant should apply equally to great and small States. Sweden adopted the same line in the Committee of Eighteen which was appointed to consider certain questions connected with sanctions. The statements made by the Swedish Government in connection with the lifting of sanctions will be dealt with in a later connection.

From early in 1935, Italy's expected attack on Abyssinia was the subject of lively discussion in the Swedish Press. The great majority of newspapers of all parties declared that the League must act forcefully on this occasion or it would lose all vestige of authority. They recalled the Corfu incident and the Manchurian dispute, and emphasised the danger to the League of the weakness and failure to insist on the provisions of the Covenant which it had shown on these occasions. "The injustice done to Greece in 1923 was a hard blow for the League of Nations," wrote *Svenska Dagbladet* on 12th February. "If anything of the same sort should happen again, by force of arms or by bargaining between the Great Powers behind the scenes at Geneva, the consequences would be inconceivably grave. That is the worst danger that threatens from Abyssinia." The demand for League intervention was combined with sharp criticism of Fascist foreign policy. The anticipated invasion was denounced as a marauding expedition, dictated by Mussolini's ambition or his need to distract attention from the discontent at home; there can be no doubt that, in many quarters, the intensity of the demand for League action was largely due to indignation at the ruthless Italian methods.

During the months preceding the outbreak of war, while it was still

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uncertain whether the League would adopt measures against Italy or exert her influence to bring about an agreement favourable to her, indignation rose rapidly. Swedish public opinion was probably more deeply concerned over this than over any other world incident during the inter-war period, with the possible exception of the occupation of the Ruhr in 1923. Members of the Government, the Foreign Minister Sandler and the Cabinet Minister Undén, all made public speeches more or less directly in favour of sanctions against Italy. The same demand was put forward at a number of demonstrations and well-attended public meetings; the speakers included not only leading Social Democrats, but such persons as the former Foreign Minister, Marks von Würtemberg, and other prominent representatives of various political and religious bodies. They pointed out that, if Italy were not stopped, no small State could ever feel itself safe against aggression, and that Sweden ought to take her share of responsibility for collective action, if only to ensure her own security. Newspapers of all camps expressed themselves with equal vigour; the tone of *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Svenska Morgonbladet* was as determined and bitter as that of *Social-Demokraten*.

Hand in hand with the demand for action went an ever-deepening criticism of the League's failure to act and of the Great Powers as the driving forces in the League. By July or August, many papers were prepared to state that the League had again shown itself incapable of concerted action, and that this was due to the short-sighted and selfish policy of the Great Powers, in this case France and Great Britain, and their fear of translating words into deeds; some said that the League had now definitely proved its uselessness and that Sweden ought to leave it rather than share responsibility for its failure. "We ought not to have any part in responsibility for decisions which turn the League into an instrument of the grossest power politics," ran a comment in *Göteborgs Handelstidning* (4th September) which found an echo in a large number of papers of various political faiths. Some used the failure of collective security as an argument for increased armaments. Others urged the need for a sympathetic understanding of the difficult position of the Great Powers, particularly Great Britain, and pointed out that the small States must bear their share of responsibility if the League collapsed. *Dagens Nyheter* considered it strange that those who had protested most vehemently against Sweden undertaking any guarantee commitments, now pointed scorn at the League for its weakness. "If the nations of Europe discover now that the League is a very imperfect instrument for the ideals of peace and justice, they are only passing judgment on themselves, their own apathy, their own cowardice, their own unwillingness to pay the necessary price" (27th July); the League was split into two camps, the ex-Neutral States, which demanded the application of the principles of the League, and the Great Powers, which would have

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to pay the price of such application (3rd August.) *Eskilstuna-Kuriren* declared in the same spirit (5th August) that the small nations "are generally very zealous in pointing out the holy duties of the League, and always most deeply indignant when these are not fulfilled, but they immediately disclaim any responsibility as soon as there is any question of backing up words with deeds . . . Great Britain cannot be expected to enforce all the provisions and regulations of the League single-handed." So a debate in the traditional style began to flare up in the Press which was in principle friendly to the League.

But on the main issue itself, there was no complete agreement. In the Conservative Press *Svenska Dagbladet*, with its determined stand for the strict observance of the Covenant, took a strong but not completely dominating line. Two other main currents can be traced. Some were doubtful about the demand for sanctions, though not absolutely opposed to it. Sanctions might lead to war, possibly to a general war between the Great Powers, and by co-operating Sweden might run considerable risks. "We have every reason to be careful not to endanger our peace and independence for nothing. We should therefore act with all possible restraint, and try to avoid entanglement in broils where the issue at stake is not so much justice as the interests of the Great Powers," was the reason given for this reserved attitude by *Kristianstads Läns Tidning* (18th September). A second, more clearly defined group of Right-Wing papers—like the organs associated with the National group—abused the League roundly for its weakness and inactivity, but, whenever it appeared likely to take any action, expressed themselves strongly against Sweden's participating in sanctions. This group included the papers which systematically attacked the League, foremost among them *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*. Early articles declared that the League had done for itself when it permitted Mussolini's piracy campaign. Later the same papers declared that Sweden could refuse to take part in sanctions, as every State was free to decide for itself on this matter; they denounced everyone who spoke in favour of sanctions as "warmongers", and said it was easy and safe enough to clamour for a war of justice when other people would have to bear the consequences. These papers generally attacked both the League and Mussolini, but the attacks on the League were by far the more vehement, and were often formulated as though it were the League, and not Mussolini, which threatened Abyssinia's independence. The Abyssinian question was frequently described as a "colonial question", which really concerned the imperialistic Great Powers. The chief organ of the Socialist party reacted in much the same way. In July they declared that it was the duty of Social Democrats to take the lead in demanding justice in the League, but a few weeks later they characterised the demand for sanctions as an attempt to force Sweden into rearmament and war. The Syndicalist paper *Arbetaren* took a more logical line, warning against co-opera-

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tion with the Capitalist and Imperialist Western Powers and forecasting that the reaction of the working classes inside and outside Italy would bring Fascism down. The Communist Press at this stage, before Russia had signified her attitude towards sanctions, was vague and undecided.

After the outbreak of war, when it became clear that sanctions would have to be applied, feeling in Sweden in favour of such action became stronger. The Conservative leader Bagge stated in a speech at the beginning of October that Sweden must fulfil her obligations under the Covenant by taking part in economic sanctions, but of military action there could be no question. It was not considered necessary to summon the Riksdag to consider the sanctions question, but the Foreign Affairs Committee was, of course, consulted, and the Prime Minister stated in a speech on 20th October that the main political parties were agreed. A number of newspapers belonging to the Right-Wing and the Farmers' League, which had been doubtful at first, gradually swung over to a positive attitude. The People's party and the Social Democratic Press was completely united as before. Even the Communists, once Russia had expressed her agreement with sanctions, adopted the majority view. The only dissentients were a few Right-Wing papers, the National, National Socialist and Left-Socialist parties and the Syndicalists.

As to the majority view, the news that the League was at last making a stand was received with joy and renewed hope. The League of Nations was now going to show for the first time that it could restrain an aggressor State; the foundations were about to be laid for the rule of justice in the world. The Foreign Minister declared in a speech in November that the mobilisation of the majority of States for "collective action to ensure respect for international law and order, marks a step forward which cannot be measured by the petty yardsticks of the day"; it had saved the world from "drifting helplessly into a state of general insecurity." At the same time, he asserted that the League had no quarrel with Italy; "sanctions are directed, not against Italy but against war." *Svenska Dagbladet* declared that Italy's aggression had "produced the sudden general mobilisation of humanity's moral and material resources for the maintenance of the elementary principles of international justice which we now witness" (16th October); the decision to impose sanctions "means that, for the first time in the history of humanity, the greater part of the whole civilised world has joined in concerted action to force an aggressor Power to abide by the terms of international law" (26th October). "The path of humanity is now clear", wrote *Svenska Morgonbladet* (11th October), "Only by holding together at critical moments and showing a united front to any covenant-breaking or aggressor State have we any prospect of little by little abolishing war." Mussolini "is involving himself in a trial of strength not only with Abyssinia

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but with the League of Nations, primarily represented by Great Britain. He stands for international anarchy and jungle law, against the League's collective championship of peace and justice. In this struggle, Italy is the weaker" (*Dagens Nyheter*, 3rd October). "The iron ring of isolation which now closes about Italy will be felt by her cowed and misled people not merely as an irresistible economic strangulation but as a moral pressure, which in the long run cannot fail of its effect on those of the Dictator's subjects who still have any power of thought or decency of feeling left" (*Social-Demokraten*, 11th October). "The Madman in Rome has challenged armies and empires... If his advance is checked now by the collective action of the world, his power will be broken and his system crumble in dust and ashes. When that happens, the multitudes which now chant his praise will come out into the same Piazza Venezia and demand his head" (*Ny Tid*, 4th October).

The above quotations suffice to illustrate a certain divergence in the views held on sanctions. The official and prevalent view was that their function was exclusively to maintain the League's authority and to force the aggressor State to observe international law by the means laid down in the Covenant. This attitude is clearly expressed in the Foreign Minister's speech referred to above, and is also reflected in the Speech from the Throne to the 1936 Riksdag, which stated that "Sweden's relations with foreign Powers are friendly," and that "the object of the collective action is to restore peace and confidence in international justice" (but no declaration of neutrality was made). On the whole, the Press adopted the same tone. But some papers of the People's party and still more of the Social Democrats believed that sanctions would bring about revolution in Italy, lead to the overthrow of the Fascist dictatorship, and indirectly strengthen democracy and weaken the tendency to nationalistic dictatorships; it was even frequently suggested that collective action would be a warning to the National Socialist Government in Germany. So the attacks on Italy frequently aimed much further than the Italian war of aggression itself, and were really directed against the Fascist policy and system of dictatorship in general. Time after time Social Democratic papers addressed more or less explicit exhortations to the Italian working class to rebel, pointing out that not merely peace or war was at stake, but democracy or dictatorship. Both the Socialist International and the World Federation of Trade Unions had urged League intervention even before the war, in terms which left no doubt that they expected collective action to have internal political consequences in Italy.

Another factor in Swedish public opinion was sympathy for Abyssinia and her people. The nation was swept by a feeling of indignation, which had nothing to do with practical or political considerations, at this unprovoked attack on a small State without modern means of defence. At first this feeling was combined with a

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belief, fairly unanimously supported by the military experts, that Abyssinia would be able to defend herself, a belief which soon proved to be quite unfounded. There was also a general tendency to romanticise the Abyssinians, particularly the Emperor Haile Selassie, reminiscent of a similar though much stronger tendency during the Boer War.

The groups already referred to as opposing the demand for sanctions even before the war, maintained their former attitude, about which there is not much to add. *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* and the group of Right-Wing papers which followed the same line asserted that by acting in accordance with the League directive, Sweden was merely making herself a pawn in the political game, which held serious dangers for the smaller States. Organs of the National League described the decision to exercise sanctions as "the greatest piece of hypocrisy in the world's history," and declared that the "Marxists" wanted to engineer a war, even though it was a question of "a conflict between Italian lust for expansion and British imperialism." It was also asserted in the same quarter that Italy had a legitimate claim on fresh territory, a claim which the old, "satisfied" colonial Powers tried to suppress simply to prevent her becoming too powerful. The Socialists and Syndicalists talked of a settlement between the Capitalistic Great Powers, in which Sweden had no occasion to become involved.

It was typical of the prevailing atmosphere that the Hoare-Laval conciliation plan of December was received with violent indignation, directed primarily against Great Britain which was regarded as the chief champion of justice and the League, as a more powerful Sweden. *Svenska Dagbladet* declared, adapting Disraeli's famous phrase, that acceptance of the plan would mean "peace with dishonour", "bending the knee to the morals of the condottiere"; the whole of the Press which favoured sanctions spoke of treachery and perfidy. The papers which were against sanctions, on the other hand, showed ill-concealed satisfaction at the expected fiasco for the League; many Right-Wing organs which had first been doubtful and then thrown in their lot with the majority, began to express fresh doubts as to the wisdom of the policy followed. The few days during which the plan was under discussion saw a repetition in miniature of the whole familiar discussion on the League of Nations, including attacks on the Great Powers and suggestions that Sweden should cease membership on the one hand, and reminders of the essential value of the League, the inevitable practical difficulties in the application of the Covenant, and the responsibilities of the small States, on the other. When Hoare had to resign and the conciliation plan was abandoned, the papers in favour of sanctions were jubilant and expressed great hopes of the ultimate victory of the League, while the others were manifestly displeased. Similar discussions took place at other stages of the crisis,

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particularly on the various occasions when the question arose of extending the blockade to include oil and other important war material.

The anti-Italian feeling in Sweden reached its climax at New Year 1936, when a Swedish Red Cross ambulance was bombed in Abyssinia by Italian aircraft. It is significant that it was frequently stated or hinted that the bombing was done on orders from higher quarters, with the deliberate intention of protesting against Sweden and Swedish opinion. Some of the headlines and phrases employed in newspapers of various political camps during the first few days of January are illuminating: "A State which has consciously and deliberately violated the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Kellogg Pact is not likely to trouble much about the purely humanitarian Geneva Convention!" (*Svenska Dagbladet*), "Mass murder" (*Skånska Dagbladet*), "A crime against humanity" (*Stockholms-Tidningen*), "The blot will remain until the Italian people themselves wash it away by throwing off the crazy government which rules them now" (*Eskilstuna-Kuriren*), "Mussolini's vengeance for Swedish humanity" (*Social-Demokraten*), "The bomb against compassion" (*Ny Tid*). The brutal defence of the bombing by the Italian Press aroused further horror and indignation. On no other occasion during the inter-war period did the Press indulge in such a violent, almost unreflecting outburst. Only *Folkets Dagblad* still tried to find extenuating circumstances.

During the spring of 1936, as it gradually became clear that sanctions would not be intensified and that Italy would complete her conquest, public opinion swung round against the League with acute bitterness. The reaction was all the stronger, coming as it did after a period of such unprecedented confidence in the League. Criticism concentrated primarily on Great Britain, whose policy was identified more than that of any Great Power with the League's, and whose leading statesmen now declared that the object of the League, the preservation of peace, was more important than strict observation of the letter of the Covenant. Suggestions for the reorganisation of the League were greeted with general suspicion. A few quotations from the Press which was essentially favourable to the League, covering the period of the failure of the last attempt at conciliation and the decision to lift sanctions, will give some idea of the state of feeling. "When the history of our time comes to be written, it will probably be said that sentence of death on the League of Nations, created with the Peace of Versailles, was passed on 20th April 1936," wrote *Östergötlands Dagblad* (25th April) after the League Council had announced for the last time that conciliation was impossible. According to *Dagens Nyheter* (21st April) the resolution "amounted actually . . . to a recognition of the fact that the system of collective security cannot fulfil its purpose." *Social-Demokraten* (18th April) declared that "international efforts to establish a system of international justice

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have been shattered." Similar comments were made on the lifting of sanctions. *Kristianstads Läns Tidning* (26th June): "Collective security has been revealed as an empty and worthless phrase." *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* (6th July): "No more crushing blow could have been struck at international justice and the general political morality of the world. The triumph of force has been clearly recognised." *Social-Demokraten* (6th July) said that "something else was shattered besides confidence in the League of Nations—the position in the world of the British Empire." Generally the Great Powers were blamed for what had happened; occasionally some reference was made to the unwillingness of the small States to accept responsibility by undertaking military sanctions.

No clear principles for future Swedish action were laid down during the debate. There was a general uncertainty, not seldom exemplified by the same paper making divergent and contradictory statements within a short period. All the main parties observed that membership of the League had now become meaningless, but Sweden's secession was only systematically demanded in quarters whose attitude had previously been negative. The general view was that the League still had certain advantages to offer, and that in any case Sweden should not place herself outside it immediately. *Svenska Dagbladet* and other leading Right-Wing organs declared that Sweden's chief concern must now be with her own security; she must strengthen her defences and bring about closer co-operation with the other Scandinavian States. That there was agreement in principle on the need for rearmament was shown by the passing of the Defence Bill by the 1936 Riksdag. A number of papers asserted that the sanctions provisions of the Covenant could now be considered to have lapsed, and that Sweden should act accordingly and renounce her obligations. *Dagens Nyheter* in particular, which developed this line strongly during the next few years, began to assert in the summer of 1936 that Sweden must not only claim freedom of action with regard to the application of sanctions, but reject the idea of sanctions in general: events had shown that an economic blockade might have the same consequences as military action, because it was regarded by the State against which it was directed as being equivalent to military action. On the whole, as always, the relative value of the League was more stressed by the Left-Wing, especially the Social Democrats, than the Conservatives, but party differences were not very marked in the debate. The failure of the League was so complete that there was simply no room for the usual disputes about how its behaviour should be interpreted.

The question of the League and sanctions was referred to in various connections by the 1936 Riksdag, but there was no formal debate on the subject. The *remiss* debate showed the main parties almost completely agreed. Leading members (Sandler, Bagge, Hamrin, Westman)

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emphasised that Sweden must fulfil her commitments with regard to economic sanctions, and that the policy pursued by the Government was therefore the only one possible. Of course there were varying shades of opinion. For example, Bagge urged that Sweden need not "play a particularly prominent or leading part in the framing of sanctions," and Westman expressed the hope that "the course would not be set further from the old, well-known landmarks of neutrality than is absolutely necessary," while the Social Democrats in particular took a more positive line. But there was no real disagreement, and the Foreign Minister was able to state with perfect truth that all parties represented on the Foreign Affairs Committee had "agreed unanimously that no other path was open." There was also complete agreement on the fact that, as the result of the attempt to impose sanctions must have the greatest influence on their future attitude towards the League, it was desirable for the present as far as possible to reserve judgment. Criticism of Sweden's participation in sanctions was expressed by representatives of the National group and the Socialist party, also by the Social Democrat Lundstedt, who emphasised the risk of a general war as a result of collective action, and pointed out the short-comings in the existing collective system.

In the middle of February, when the ineffectiveness of sanctions had begun to be clearly apparent, the Constitutional Committee considered a Socialist motion that Sweden should secede from the League of Nations. Its report was unanimously against such a step, but the reasons on which it was based, obviously the result of a compromise, suggested that opinion was now much more critical towards the League than it had been. The only reason given for remaining in the League was that "for States which are not Great Powers, non-membership would mean in practice an isolation which could never be beneficial," and that "to remain inside the organisation would not appear in existing circumstances to involve any greater risks than to leave and follow a policy of isolated neutrality..." The Riksdag debates, in which the leading politicians took no part, were of little interest. The Social Democrats protested at the hesitant tone of the Committee. The motion was supported by the Nationalists, Left-Socialists and at least one Conservative, who was closely associated with the Nationalist group. Similar arguments took place on the subject of the League and sanctions when a Bill, closely connected with sanctions, to enable the Crown in certain circumstances to block credits, came up for discussion (in the Second Chamber).

On 24th April, when there could no longer be any doubt about the failure of sanctions, Bagge questioned the Foreign Minister on the Government's attitude towards the question of Sweden and the League. (First Chamber.) He briefly summarised recent events, and referred to the uneasiness which was generally felt about Sweden's position. He then asked whether it would not be possible for the League to be

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reorganised along lines which would "correspond more closely with the demands of the actual situation, even if this involved some limitation of its functions and authority. A reform along these lines would be likely to strengthen rather than weaken the forces of peace and justice in the world, as experience has always shown that the discrepancy between pious proclamations and formal obligations on the one hand, and naked reality on the other, often creates an atmosphere or situation in which quite other interests than those of peace and justice prevail." In his reply, which he did not make until 26th May, the Foreign Minister Sandler agreed unreservedly that the League had failed. As to Sweden's policy, two possibilities should be eliminated, namely "to quit the League in desperation" and "to continue unconcernedly as though nothing had happened." Reform of the League could either take the form of increasing the obligations of Members, among other things making even military sanctions compulsory, or lightening them, possibly to the extent of abolishing all sanctions. There were various other problems to be considered: the method of voting in the League—the unanimity rule often led to absurd consequences—the disarmament question, the problem of the peaceful revision of treaties. The Swedish Government's attitude might be summarised by saying that it did not wish to throw over the League, and hoped to co-operate actively in investigating the implications of the present crisis and the possibilities of overcoming it.

The subsequent debate, in which leading representatives of all the main parties took part, though friendly in tone, showed considerable differences of opinion. The Conservative leader pointed out that on the one hand the lack of universality of the League was one cause of the ineffectiveness of sanctions, but on the other, agreement on sanctions would be the more difficult to attain, the greater the membership of the League. "The logical conclusion, if we are to think in terms of logic, is, of course, clear." Experience of the crisis just witnessed showed that sanctions were hardly effective against a Great Power, and therefore contributed little to collective security; the system was fraught with dangers to peace in general and to the smaller States in particular, as a blockaded State might consider the blockade a cause for war. Bagge said he was consequently convinced that any reform of the League must "aim first at the abolition of the sanctions system." The League would then become "the accepted framework for conferences between States in critical times," and as such might be of great value. It would also provide machinery for the regulation of secondary questions, for mediation and conciliation and for various types of international co-operation. Sweden must be free, in view of the new combinations of Great Powers, to fall back upon her traditional policy of neutrality. Bagge's main contention seems to have been that Sweden should retain freedom of action during the coming conflicts, not that she should refuse in general to take part

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in sanctions. The former Prime Minister Hj. Hammarskjöld took much the same line. The ex-Neutral States should make the reform of the League along the lines indicated a condition of their continued membership. Trygger, the former Conservative leader, declared on the other hand, without going into arguments for and against, that Sweden should remain in the League and fulfil her duties according to the Covenant. Westman, the spokesman of the Farmers' League, who a few weeks later became Foreign Minister, did not take up any definite attitude to the problem raised by Bagge. He pointed out that the whole question of Sweden's remaining in the League would be thrown into a different perspective if the League were converted into "an instrument for a unilateral Great Power alliance"; the tragic thing was that, if Sweden and other States left the League for fear of such a development, they would only be hastening it on. "So long, however, as Sweden remains in the League, she should regard a policy of neutrality in its old sense as the basis of her foreign policy, and her relations with the League of Nations as, shall we say, a functionalistic superstructure on this basis." Hamrin, the leader of the People's party, expressed himself in similar terms; with reference to the alternatives posed by the Foreign Minister, he suggested that Sweden was not prepared for a reform of the League under which military sanctions would become compulsory. The Social Democratic speakers (Sandler, Undén, Åkerberg, Pauli) took a more positive attitude towards sanctions; they pointed out among other things that the weapon might prove more effective on another occasion if applied more energetically, and that Sweden, if she would not assume responsibilities, could not either look for the protection which the League might in certain cases offer. The only speaker who directly took up Bagge's proposal was Undén. He questioned whether the League, if not equipped with some means of compulsion, would be able to be of much use to the cause of peace, or even to survive at all. It would "lose its prestige in the world, and one country after another would ask what was the use of belonging to a League which tolerated breach of treaty, tolerated war in contravention of its conciliation and arbitration rules." Besides, even if there were no sanctions provisions, it would probably be forced to use some sort of compulsion against warring States. Bagge's suggestion that States should be free to take part in sanctions or not, involved considerable risks. "In any case it would be much more dangerous for the smaller States, with no definite rules laid down from the start, to take part in sanctions in one case and not in another. The most powerful States might do that, and reserve the right to intervene according to circumstances, but for the smaller States a rigid system would obviously give far greater security."

During the summer of 1936, however, a change showed itself on several occasions in the Swedish Government's attitude towards sanctions; it adopted a hesitating, non-committal tone which might be

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interpreted as a compromise between the various views expressed in the debate. On 1st July a statement was published by the Foreign Ministers of Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Spain, pointing out that the events of the last few years had inspired doubts as to whether the conditions under which the States concerned had assumed the obligations laid down in the Covenant still held to a satisfactory degree. They mentioned in particular that the disarmament provisions had become a dead letter. The said States declared themselves willing to co-operate in the reform of the League. The pith of their statement lies, however, in the sentence: "With reference to the fact that a directive for the application of Article 16 was adopted in 1921, we declare that, so long as the Covenant in its entirety is only applied in an incomplete and inconsequent manner, we reserve the right to bear this consideration in mind in the application of the said article." The Swedish Foreign Minister Westman expressed himself in a similar vein in the general debate held in the League Assembly just after publication of the above statement; he also pointed out that the League's lack of universality had prevented its fulfilling some of its more important functions. After the Assembly's decision on 4th July to ask the Council to ascertain the views of members on the application of the principles of the Covenant, the Swedish Government on 29th August, after consultation with the Governments of the other Scandinavian States, published a memorandum developing the Swedish view in further detail. This memorandum referred to the lack of universality of the League, the weaknesses of the sanctions procedure and the machinery for the maintenance of peace in general, and to the fact that disarmament in accordance with Article 8 had not been achieved. Sweden still could not accept compulsory military sanctions. "It is sufficient to recall that, in such conflicts as have arisen during the past few years, League Members have not even been prepared to apply fully the economic and financial sanctions which at present are obligatory. "With reference to the proposals made in some quarters for regional agreements, the Government stated that in any case it would not be willing to assume responsibilities under such agreements over and above the obligations already incurred under the Covenant. On the matter of the application of economic sanctions, it referred to its declaration of 1st July. It further pointed out that "in practice," the provisions relating to economic sanctions have never been fully applied. In some cases, sanctions have not been applied at all against an aggressor. On the only occasion on which Article 16 was invoked, sanctions were only enforced partially and little by little. Various factors contributed to force this line of action on the League, such as the general political tension, the League's lack of universality, and the unwarranted increase in armaments by certain States."—In September, the League Assembly appointed a Committee of Twenty-

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Eight to prepare the reform of the League. Sweden, which had been elected to the Council for the period of 1936—1939 —actually as representative for the group of Scandinavian States—was a member of this Committee. Though it sat for some years, it was unable to reach agreement on any proposal of real practical importance.

The Abyssinian crisis of 1935—1936 had the most far-reaching influence on the attitude of Sweden and Swedish public opinion towards the League. Its most direct and concrete result was that Sweden declared, even though in hesitating terms, that she was not unconditionally bound by the provisions relating to economic sanctions, which until then had been recognised without question as absolutely binding. Furthermore the three main currents of opinion with regard to the sanctions system, which dominated the discussion for the next few years, were clearly outlined, particularly during the Riksdag debate of 26th May 1936: recognition in principle of sanctions obligations, freedom of action to apply sanctions or not, refusal in principle to co-operate in sanctions. Finally, the crisis exercised a great and lasting influence on Swedish public opinion. The admittedly vague ideology of solidarity, which had been on the whole gaining ground ever since 1920, was replaced more and more by the doctrine of neutrality. The League of Nations was attacked more sharply than before, and defended with less energy; the usual line of defence was roughly that it could do no harm to remain in the League. This development was, of course, not entirely due to the Abyssinian crisis; other events which weakened the League and showed up its weakness occurred during the remaining years of peace in rapid succession. But the complete collapse of the sanctions system in 1936 remained the most unanswerable proof of the League's inability to achieve its ends. Besides that, there was a psychological reaction: on the only occasion on which Swedish public opinion had embraced League action with an interest bordering on enthusiasm, the result was not even a heroic failure, but a complete fiasco.

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The three years which remained before the outbreak of the second World War were characterised by a rapid deterioration of the international situation and a corresponding decline in the League's remaining authority. In 1936 the Spanish Civil War broke out, during which intervention by Italy and Germany on the one hand, and—though to a far lesser degree—by the Soviet Union on the other, was obscured and to some extent restricted by the non-intervention policy led by Great Britain and France. The same year the *rapprochement* between Germany, Japan and Italy—the so-called anti-Communist States—became so marked that the Great Powers (except the United

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States) might be said to have been divided into two *blocs*, representing what could be described according to outlook as the hungry or aggressive, and the satisfied or peaceful States. In 1937 Japan attacked China again, this time obviously with the intention of over-running the whole country; Italy withdrew from the League, in which only three Great Powers now remained: Great Britain, France and Russia. In 1938 came Germany's annexation of Austria and parts of Czecho-Slovakia, in 1939 the over-running of Czecho-Slovakia and Albania and the series of negotiations and treaties which immediately preceded the outbreak of the Second World War. On none of these occasions did the League take any action of the slightest importance: the great political decisions were reached, whether by peaceful or forceful means, in complete disregard of it; at most it adopted resolutions which can best be described as prayers for peace. During the Czech crisis in September 1938, the League Assembly confined itself to issuing a statement which, after a few words about the misfortunes of war, continued as follows: "The League Assembly, acting as mouthpiece for the prayers of all nations, therefore expresses the ardent hope that no Government will seek to obtain a solution by force." The negotiations at Geneva for the limitation of armaments and reform of the Covenant began to appear more and more unrealistic; people tired even of discussing the League's failures.

The reaction of Swedish public opinion to these events has already been indicated. Differences of opinion with regard to events and circumstances abroad had less and less influence on home policy or, as will be shown below, on the attitude to foreign policy either. It should be added that a large proportion of the Swedish Press, particularly that associated with the Right-Wing, believed for a long time that the German policy of aggression aimed only at re-uniting the German-speaking peoples and throwing off the Versailles Treaty, and hoped that Europe would be allowed to settle down once these goals had been attained. The different attitudes in Sweden were clearly shown during the Czech crisis of 1938. Some regarded the Munich agreement as proof of the strength of the powers working for peace and the prelude to an age of harmony; they acclaimed Neville Chamberlain as the great architect of peace. The majority of Left-Wing papers, on the other hand, believed that German aggression would continue and that the Western Powers had only bought themselves a short interval of grace by their concessions; British policy they attacked with all the bitterness of disappointed faith. Not until the German action of March 1939 did a pessimistic view of the nature of National Socialist policy become general, and the Second World War began to be regarded everywhere as inevitable.

The discussion on Swedish foreign policy during these years was more lively and many-sided than it had been before. The chief subjects were relations with the League and closer co-operation between the

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Scandinavian States. These questions are, of course, closely interconnected; Scandinavian solidarity was viewed as an alternative to the international solidarity that had been looked for originally. But the discussion on Scandinavia has such a limited and special character that it will be dealt with in a chapter by itself. A feature of it which assumed increasing importance from the spring of 1938 onwards was the question of Swedish co-operation for the revision of the 1921 Åland Convention. This aroused such intensive argument during the last year before the outbreak of war that it almost obscured the more general questions of the League and Scandinavia.

The main focus of interest in Sweden's relations with the League of Nations was the question of sanctions, which for some time past had faded into the background. Sweden seemed hardly to realise until after the Abyssinian crisis that the sanctions regulations really concerned her, and that the question of their application might be decisive for the country's future, perhaps for its survival. Should Sweden consider herself bound by Article 16? Or should the sanctions regulations, or some of them, be regarded as optional? Or should Sweden refuse in general to co-operate in sanctions? If these questions were answered in the affirmative, the further question arose whether a change in the Covenant, or at any rate the consent of the other Members, was necessary to release Sweden from the obligations she had assumed under the Covenant. These and other questions were not, as they had been some years before, more or less academic; on the answer to them depended to a large extent Sweden's behaviour in a coming World War, and also the beliefs held by other Powers about Sweden's intentions, and consequently their attitude towards her.

Considering the complicated nature of the questions and the increasing delicacy of the situation, it is understandable that the discussion was often obscure, and dealt in innuendoes and circumlocutions. Even the declaration on the sanctions problem issued by the Scandinavian States in Geneva on 1st July 1936, was vague to a degree; what was meant by "bearing in mind" the faults and failures of the League with reference to future sanctions problems? Similar expressions occur frequently in speeches and articles, and careful analysis reveals many ambiguities and contradictions. As Undén pointed out in a speech in the First Chamber of the Riksdag, even key words were used in quite different senses. The expression "freedom of judgment in relation to sanctions" was sometimes used in the obvious sense that the decision to apply sanctions must be taken by the State concerned and could not come direct from the League, but reasonably this expression could only be used for such freedom as established by practice or legal recognition according to international law; otherwise a similar freedom might be claimed with regard to the fulfilment of all international treaties. People spoke of "automatic and obligatory" sanctions, as though sanc-

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tions could not be obligatory without being automatic. The word "neutrality" was used in some cases to imply a position of complete independence from political obligations to other States, and a policy of neutrality was then incompatible with membership of the League, or at any rate with the obligation to take part in sanctions. In other cases again, the word was used as meaning non-participation in purely military measures, so that co-operation in sanctions could be regarded as consistent with neutrality. The increasingly popular expression "freedom of alliance" was used with a similar lack of precision; generally, however, it meant the absence of any treaty obligations apart from the League. This looseness of expression obviously often covered a similar looseness of thought and ideas.

The Foreign Minister came to the fore during these years more than in any previous period. It would be possible, though far too circumstantial, to present the greater part of the debate on sanctions in the form of a dialogue between the Press and the Minister. Sandler generally made his pronouncements on policy in speeches outside the Riksdag, either on the radio or to a limited audience; time after time important changes in policy were first made known in this way. The frequent ministerial speeches did not always throw much light on the questions they dealt with. They were full of vague and ambiguous statements, which could be variously interpreted and sometimes found approval in the most different quarters. This vagueness was probably to a certain extent deliberate or "diplomatic". But the Minister's rhetorical mode of expression undoubtedly had a great deal to do with it; his turns of phrase, at once witty and emotional, suggested more than they directly said, and so gave an impression of deep and hidden meanings. In addition, the Minister belonged to that class of speakers who tend to give a subjective meaning to everything they say; he spoke of "absolute" neutrality when he wanted to convey a derogatory meaning, and of "clear" neutrality when he wanted to imply praise.

Not until the late spring of 1938 can the policy of neutrality be said to have been accepted in Sweden to the extent that all the main parties were agreed that Sweden should not apply sanctions in accordance with the Covenant, and should endeavour in all circumstances to remain outside a war between the Great Powers in which Scandinavia was not involved. We will therefore consider the discussion up to this point by itself.

In the 1937 Riksdag, relations with the League were referred to in some of the speeches during the *remiss* debate. But the references often did little to clarify the situation. The Foreign Minister was in Geneva. The Conservatives and People's party in particular emphasised the risks which the sanctions regulations might involve, but no one questioned the reality of sanctions obligations. "If all vestiges of the sanctions system cannot at present be formally removed from the Covenant, it is important that Sweden should not be bound by these

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in any way which might prove fatal in future situations, and I do not think that this has happened," said Bagge, the Conservative leader. The sanctions question came up later in the session in connection with a Socialist motion for leaving the League. The Foreign Affairs Committee, which unanimously rejected the proposal, referred to the declaration by the ex-Neutral States of 1st July 1936, and to the Swedish Government's memorandum of 29th August the same year. "The Committee considers it desirable that the Swedish Government, in consultation with other Governments closely associated with it, should endeavour to work within the framework of the League for such relaxation of the provisions of Article 16 as appears necessary from the point of view of the smaller States, as set forth in the documents referred to above." There was no reason to leave the League. "Such a step taken now by Sweden alone might place our country in an unenviable isolation, and might be interpreted as a change in our foreign policy. If a number of other small States followed suit, their defection might transform the League into an out-and-out alliance. Such a development would only tend to divide the opposing groups of nations still further and increase the tension in Europe, thus possibly lowering the security even of the seceding States. The Committee consider it to be in the general interest to seek to preserve the League and enable it to continue the valuable international work it is accomplishing in some spheres." Not many speakers took part in the Riksdag debate of 19th May, which resulted in acceptance of the Committee's report without a division. Undén, the chairman of the Committee, pointed out that the modification of the sanctions paragraph recommended by the Committee could be effected in various ways: by revision of the Covenant, by clarifying resolutions, or by the States Members accepting declarations made in other forms by individual States regarding their attitude to sanctions. Undén believed that on one point in particular there were good prospects of obtaining the consent of the other League Members to a modification of the sanctions rules, namely with regard to the right of passage provided for in the third paragraph of Article 16. The Foreign Minister agreed, and also mentioned the general provisions relating to mutual assistance in the same paragraph. These two points should be governed by the same conditions as military sanctions, and Sweden should therefore "for her part make it her aim to obtain recognition in some form or another of the view that neither military assistance nor the right of free passage for foreign troops could be demanded without the express consent of the State concerned." The Conservatives seemed inclined to go further in their demands for the relaxation of the sanctions regulations, but their statements were not always in complete agreement. Hammarskjöld assumed that the object of Swedish policy was "a certain freedom of choice in the application of Article 16 of the

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Covenant," for which "some kind of recognition or acceptance was necessary." Bagge declared, with reference to the statements by Undén and Sandler, that the relaxation ought to apply to all the provisions of Article 16. The Government made no comment on this suggestion.

The impression made by the debate is that there was great confusion—rather than a difference of opinion—on the subject of sanctions. On the one hand there was quite general talk of a relaxation of the sanctions regulations and right of free choice. On the other hand both the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Foreign Minister, without rejecting the first position, declared that the primary aim was to obtain recognition of the right of free choice on certain special points—in particular the right of free passage of troops. The obvious interpretation of the latter declarations is, of course, that Sweden was still bound by Article 16 and did not demand release from all its obligations, thus in the first place not from the obligations of economic sanctions; a special request that the right of free passage be made optional would seem to imply that economic sanctions remained obligatory. It is possible however, in view of the references to the declarations of 1st July and 29th August 1936, that some groups at any rate were in favour of a general freedom of action, but did not believe any practical results could be obtained except on the points specified. The Foreign Minister's statement that he wished for recognition of the view that military assistance and right of free passage should not be demanded "without the express consent of the State concerned" is particularly curious; it is surely obvious that troops could not pass through a country, and still less could this country give military assistance to others, unless it had itself decided so. This utterly absurd idea that sanctions ought to enter into force automatically and that consequently no "real" decision on the part of the States themselves was necessary, was current at the time the League Covenant was accepted. The vagueness and briefness of the debate may possibly have been due to the fact that the parties had gradually agreed on certain principles, which it was not considered expedient to divulge.

The speeches by the Foreign Minister during the autumn of 1936 and throughout 1937 threw no further light on the course which it was intended to follow, and which was constantly said to have the approval of all the main parties. It was, however, frequently emphasised that Sweden intended to remain outside the Great Power groupings, and to pursue a free and independent policy. The principle of Scandinavian unity was also asserted in more and more forceful terms. But all this said nothing. In a broadcast speech in March 1937, i.e. before the Riksdag debate referred to above, Sandler defined the Government policy as follows: "Swedish foreign policy at present aims at combining active membership of the League of Nations with a neutral attitude to the conflicting interests of the Great Powers

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and a definite disinclination to enter into commitments which might prejudice this attitude, always reserving to ourselves the right, as is sufficiently justified by the uncertain functioning of the machinery of the League in future conflicts, to choose the path of neutrality." This declaration, which is typical of a great many ministerial utterances, is so obscure as to be almost meaningless. Let us try to analyse it.

1. Sweden is an active member of the League of Nations. This must imply, at any rate in principle, a recognition of her obligations under the Covenant, i.e. among other things the duty of collaborating in economic sanctions.
2. Sweden adopts a neutral attitude towards the conflicting interests of the Great Powers. As conflicts existed or were to be anticipated chiefly between Great Powers inside or outside the League, this sentence would seem incompatible with the first statement about Sweden's active membership of the League, unless it was simply intended to say that Sweden would refrain from taking sides until called upon to act under the Covenant (c.f. in particular Article 17, paragraph 3).
3. Sweden is disinclined to enter into commitments which might prejudice her declared neutral attitude. This means that Sweden would not refuse to undertake such commitments in all circumstances; the natural interpretation is that the principle might be waived in favour of the duty of solidarity to the League or of unity with the Scandinavian States.
4. Sweden reserves the right to choose the path of neutrality. As the justification given for this claim is the ineffectiveness of the League, it must be assumed to mean that Sweden would have freedom of action with regard to sanctions obligations under the Covenant. Sweden would be free to refuse to co-operate in sanctions, but in certain circumstances she might also find it expedient to fulfil her duties under the Covenant (cf. sentences 1 and 2). The Foreign Minister then condemned the demand for "unconditional Swedish neutrality." Such an attitude would mean that Sweden could not help one of her neighbours if they were attacked. If Sweden chose neutrality, was the paradoxical conclusion, then the question of a defensive alliance in Scandinavia would arise. According to this passage in the speech, Sweden would wish to support other Scandinavian countries if attacked, and her chief reason for remaining in the League was that this would provide a sort of legal basis for such action. Immediately after, he stated that the position made it necessary that "we both reckon with the possibility that the League will continue to function at a critical moment in accordance with its statutes, and are prepared for it to split up into warring coalitions. We must reserve our freedom of action in this respect." The meaning here can hardly be other than that, if the League held together, Sweden would fulfil her duties under the Covenant; no reservation with regard to Scandinavia was made in this connection. Finally the Foreign Minister touched upon the question of a reform of the Covenant. Here he produced the same arguments as in the Riksdag debate on 11th May.

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"The smaller States should, in my opinion, insist that neither military assistance nor free passage can come into question without the express consent of the State concerned. In this way we should make quite clear the importance of the reservation as to Article 16, which was made in Geneva by the seven Foreign Ministers on 1st July last year." As already pointed out, this statement cannot reasonably mean anything but that in any case economic sanctions should still be recognised as obligatory; it is expressly stated that the declaration of 1st July 1936 would be implemented in this way, and no suggestion is made that any further implementation would be necessary. (This is certainly strange, particularly in view of the fact that the 1936 declaration was inspired by experience of economic sanctions). The statement also seems to imply recognition of the compulsory right of free passage, unless its optional nature were established by reform of the League or some other means.—In summarising a speech or writing, one should try as far as possible to present a connected case, even if certain expressions appear vague or contradictory; in the present instance, however, this seems impossible.

During the spring and summer of 1937 the Foreign Minister paid a number of visits to foreign capitals (London, Paris, Berlin, Kaunas, Riga, Tallinn, Moscow, Warsaw). These journeys met with a certain amount of criticism in the Press, as they were considered to indicate an activity in foreign affairs the objects of which were not known. According to statements made later by Sandler, the chief aim was to explain the Swedish Government's attitude in connection with the declaration of the summer of 1936 and the report of the Foreign Affairs Committee in May 1937. Full details have never been made known of the objects and results of these journeys.²⁸ Sweden addressed no request to the League for relaxation of the sanctions regulations during 1937.

In November 1937 the Foreign Minister made a speech which was chiefly concerned with refuting the view urged in the Press that Sweden's attitude to the League should be more clearly defined. Largely it was a repetition of the arguments of the speech just quoted. There was a danger that the League of Nations might develop into "a group of allies, directly opposed to the Powers outside the League." The only effective guarantee against this would be "that Sweden, in common with other Powers not bound by alliances, should pursue an independent policy and not allow her interests to become identified with those of any group of Great Powers." As regards sanctions procedure, the Minister let fall a few comments which indicated that in his opinion sanctions were no longer obligatory, and that participation by Sweden could hardly come into question. "The whole idea is fantastic that Members might be called to account for not applying Article 16 at a time when the whole article is regarded as non-existent in face of the grossest infringements of the provisions of the Covenant. Those States which issued the Geneva declaration of 1936, might

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reasonably reply: A law which does not apply to all and in all circumstances, has ceased until further notice to be a law . . . For the present, the whole application of Article 16 may be considered to be in question." Later he stated, however, that Sweden ought not to be neutral in the sense that "States which violate international law and those which respect it are equals." Sweden ought certainly to "resume her work for the Scandinavian and neutral principles for a League of Nations, which it was not possible fully to assert at the time Sweden entered the League," but this referred, as Sandler expressly emphasised, in particular to the right of passage: "the sovereign right of States to allow or not to allow passage" in accordance with Article 16, must be recognised. He exhorted those who talked of "absolute" neutrality to explain just what they meant. "Is it a Swedish or a Scandinavian neutrality . . .? Is it modern American cash-and-carry neutrality, or the pre-war assertion of neutral commercial rights?" In this way the Minister evaded the real issue, which was whether and to what extent Sweden was to be considered bound by the sanctions regulations.—The speech did, however, in general imply a certain change in policy: a tendency, far more pronounced than in the speech of March 1937, to regard the sanctions regulations as actually modified by practice.

The *remiss* debate of 1938 clarified the position still further. Bagge, the Conservative leader—and other Conservative members—declared in pursuance of earlier statements that Sweden, while remaining in the League, ought "so far as possible to follow a policy of neutrality." He considered that the declaration of 1st May 1937 by the Riksdag—or more correctly the Foreign Affairs Committee—amounted to saying that "Sweden, as things have turned out . . . does not feel herself bound to fulfil the obligations of the Covenant with regard to sanctions, right of passage and similar measures." Swedish policy should concentrate on effecting the removal of these provisions from the League statutes. "The definite abolition of sanctions would strengthen the League in existing circumstances, not least by restoring its prestige and its influence, which in the long run rests on its prestige." The representatives of the People's party (Andersson i Rasjön, Sam Larsson) made similar, though not quite such definite, statements, and expressed the hope that the Government would soon declare its policy of preserving neutrality irrespective of the sanctions regulations. The Foreign Minister accepted these views without any serious reservations. He seemed now, contrary to his attitude a few months previously, to take the line that sanctions regulations in general should be considered optional and that Sweden should work for a recognition of this view; no distinction was suggested between right of passage and economic sanctions in this respect. But a certain caution should be observed in presenting the Swedish point of view to the League. Only the Communists and—more vaguely—some of the Social Democrats

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expressed any real interest in the preservation of the system of collective security.

A few weeks after the *remiss* debate and possibly under the influence of the speeches made on that occasion, Undén made a statement on behalf of the Swedish Government on Sweden's attitude to the sanctions problem before the Committee of Twenty-Eight which was considering the reform of the League. Undén stated that the sanctions system, as prescribed in Article 16, had only been employed once, and then in an incomplete and hesitating manner. In a number of cases in which, according to the Covenant, sanctions should have been applied, no action at all had been taken. The small States were not responsible for the League's weakness; it was rather the States which in theory were the strongest supporters of Article 16 which in the last few years had raised objections to undertaking or carrying through economic sanctions. In all the circumstances, the sanctions system must now be regarded as actually in suspense. In practice, the Members of the League no longer considered themselves bound to use force against an aggressor State. "The Swedish Riksdag considered that loyalty to the League demanded that its attitude, as I have just propounded it, should be explained to an organ of the League. My Government has therefore instructed me to declare openly how it interprets its obligations to the League. It is essential, in the name of loyalty and justice, that we now admit that changed circumstances have made it impossible for the League at present to fulfil every letter of the provisions of the Covenant." In the debate which followed, representatives of a number of smaller States agreed with Undén's declaration, but others (Russia, France) opposed it. The Swedish view was accordingly not accepted. At the end of the meeting, however, Undén declared on behalf of the Swedish Government that Sweden considered herself justified, if the situation arose, in acting in accordance with the declaration he had made.

By this move the Swedish Government had claimed general freedom of action with regard to the application of Article 16. Whether this really meant that Sweden in existing circumstances intended to refuse to take part in sanctions, was still not clear. A number of statements by members of the Government during the next few weeks failed to elucidate this point. The Prime Minister stated in a speech on 11th February that Sweden might possibly co-operate in sanctions if the movement had such general support that it might be considered sure of success. The Defence Minister stated on 13th and 20th March that Sweden wished to remain neutral, but that one could not bind oneself to a "dogmatic neutrality" in all circumstances. Westman, the Minister of Justice, said on 13th March without any such reservations that Scandinavia should be recognised as a peaceful area; at the same time he stated that the declarations in Geneva meant "that Sweden, if the question arises of applying sanctions, reserves to herself the

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right to judge whether such a measure is justified, and if Sweden decides to apply sanctions, she reserves to herself the right to decide how far she will apply them." On 4th April the Foreign Minister broadcast a speech which developed into almost a declaration of Scandinavian neutrality (cf. p. 227 ff.) The Scandinavian States must endeavour to keep Scandinavia out of war. "No Power must reckon to have us—or any of us—with it. No Power must reckon to have us—or any of us—against it. Scandinavia must be struck out of the preliminary calculations of the General Staffs *pro et contra*." Sandler did not on this occasion enter into the question of sanctions. But he made a quite general declaration about subscribing to the principle of collective security: "It is as true to-day as it has always been, that the danger of war can only be removed by the collective action of all nations which desire peace. We must never allow this goal to pass out of sight, even though in present circumstances it appears obscure and remote."

The background to the above speeches was provided by a lively and copious Press discussion. This will show more clearly than anything else what the conflicting views on the sanctions question really were.

The Press debate on the question of whether to remain in the League or not need not detain us long. It may be recalled, however, that certain politically unimportant groups—the National Socialist and National groups, some Conservative papers previously mentioned (but after Ljunglund left its staff in 1936, not *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*)—and the Left-Socialist party, more or less definitely demanded that Sweden should leave the League. As before, the chief reason given was that the League had developed into an organ for a certain Great Powergroup, and that Sweden, by remaining in the League, ran the risk of being drawn into a future war on the side of Russia and the Western Powers. According to the 1936 election manifesto of Sweden's National League, the League had "not succeeded in guaranteeing the independence and integrity of the small States, but had increased the danger of their being drawn into conflicts between the Great Powers . . . Sweden and the other Scandinavian States should leave the League . . ." The National Socialist Labour party demanded "immediate secession from that imperialistic alliance of Great Powers, the League of Nations," the Swedish National Socialist party urged the nation to "throw off the League humbug, before we find ourselves engulfed in the international intrigues of power politics." Supporters of the League were systematically accused of "war-mongering," of wanting to involve Sweden in the anticipated war. The National and National Socialist parties were accused in their turn of wanting Sweden to leave the League so as to be free to join the *bloc* of Powers led by Germany.

The four main parties, with the exceptions indicated above, on the

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whole in principle accepted Sweden's League policy. The sanctions question, however, aroused heated debate, in the course of which a sceptical attitude gradually developed in some quarters towards the League organisation in general. At first, no clear party lines emerged, but the lead was taken by individual papers and journalists.

The most outstanding were *Dagens Nyheter* and its foreign affairs editor, Johannes Wickman. From the spring of 1937 onwards, this paper published a large number of articles—some leaders, some contributions signed by Wickman—criticising Swedish League policy and demanding a clear statement on the sanctions question. To what extent this exceptionally energetic campaign influenced the attitude of other newspapers and other political parties cannot be determined; but the line adopted by *Dagens Nyheter* certainly won ground more and more, and was taken up later by a large section of the Press.

The gist of the argument was that the smaller States ought to have worked harder in the earlier stages for the collective security at which the League aimed. Now, however, there was nothing for it but to admit that the attempts to build up an organisation to safeguard peace had completely collapsed, and accept the consequences. The sanctions regulations had not been applied in the majority of cases in which, according to the Covenant, they should; on the only occasion on which they had been applied, they had failed, and it had also been shown that even a purely economic blockade involved considerable risk of war. The relaxation of the sanctions regulations for which the Swedish Government appealed could not, therefore, be limited to certain ones, such as the right of free passage referred to by the Foreign Minister, but must include them all. It was even more important that the modification should go further than the mere granting of freedom of action. This would really mean the absence of any programme on foreign policy. If sanctions were called for in a certain case under the terms of the Covenant and the leading Powers in the League agreed to impose them, Sweden could expect to be exposed to strong and, in view of her commitments, justified pressure from the other States Members; the sanctions regulations would provide a good pretext for attempting to force on her a certain line of action. If on the other hand, in spite of her declared freedom of action, Sweden collaborated in sanctions, the Power against which they were imposed must regard this as a more or less unfriendly act; it would really mean that Sweden had voluntarily taken action designed to aid one of the parties to the conflict. To suggest, as the Prime Minister had done on one occasion, taking part in sanctions only if they promised to be effective, was ridiculous; "A Government trying to steer a course under those conditions would . . . find itself relying on a compass without a needle" (16th February 1938). In the existing circumstances, freedom of action could only be interpreted in one way: "Plainly and bluntly, it would mean that Sweden was the

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potential ally of the leading League Powers and the potential enemy of Germany" (19th March 1938). Sweden must therefore refuse in principle to take part in sanctions so long as the League remained in its present state of weakness. And finally: this attitude of Sweden's must be recognised at any rate by the leading League Powers, otherwise if war broke out complications of the nature indicated might arise. Such recognition could be gained, at the worst, under threat of leaving the League, for it was very important to the Great Powers still on the League, that the League should continue to exist and should include as many States outside the opposing *blocs* as possible; military action could then be made to appear as a defence of the League and international justice.—Demands for a foreign policy along these lines were combined with sharp criticism of the Foreign Minister, who was frequently accused of vagueness and ambiguity.

Throughout 1937, however, the Government's policy enjoyed fairly general support. The Foreign Minister's speeches were usually favourably received by the greater part of the Press representing the main political parties. The Conservatives concentrated their attention mainly on the declarations about Scandinavian solidarity and relaxation of the sanctions regulations, while the Social Democrats applauded the allusions to preserving collective security. Possibly the idea thrown out by the Foreign Minister in April 1937, that a continuance of the sanctions system (in a less stringent form) would in a sense take the place of a Scandinavian defence alliance, carried some weight with the pro-Scandinavian Press. Towards the end of 1937 and beginning of 1938, a change began to be noticeable in the non-Socialist Press, in the form of demands for a definite declaration to the effect that Sweden was no longer bound by sanctions commitments; not infrequently it was urged that she should demand freedom of action under threat of leaving the League. Of the leading Conservative newspapers, *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* agreed whole-heartedly with Wickman, while *Svenska Dagbladet*, which generally supported Sandler, for some time avoided making any pronouncement. Undén's declaration of 31st January was greeted, however, with general satisfaction, but was considered in many quarters inadequate to make Sweden's attitude clear and ensure that it was accepted. Evidently the demand for freedom of action was bound up here with the principle of neutrality: Sweden was in no circumstances to apply sanctions or otherwise depart from a strictly neutral attitude, except possibly in favour of the Scandinavian States.

This insistence on neutrality as a basis was probably largely conditioned by the very equivocal attitude of the Social Democratic Press. This continued for some time to protest against any general rejection of the principle of sanctions. At the same time it declared every now and then, in common with a good many other Left-Wing

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organs, that there was no danger of the League trying to compel Sweden to take part in sanctions. But in addition—and this is the important point—it stated or indicated that in any case Sweden ought in certain circumstances to take part in sanctions, and this view was expressed in such contexts that it was evidently meant to refer to the possibility of sanctions against Germany in the event of a war between her and the Western Powers. *Social-Demokraten*, whose articles on these questions were generally written by Z. Höglund, agreed with the Foreign Minister's demands for a certain right of discrimination on sanctions questions, but seemed for some time to feel that general freedom of action could not be expected. "We can hardly put forward demands for complete freedom of action without undermining the whole basis of the League," it wrote on 1st November 1937. "There can be no question of demanding special exclusive rights for Sweden. What we must aim at is not to manoeuvre ourselves out of the League, either directly or by more round-about means, but to do our best, in accordance with our responsibilities towards our own and other peoples, to restore strength and authority to this indispensable international organisation." There was constant vague talk about the necessity of collective security and solidarity, about the democratic and peace-loving Powers holding together, about the distinction that must be drawn between aggressor and victim; as Germany was always represented as a danger to peace and the Nazi régime as the enemy of humanity, all this must have been meant to imply that sanctions might conceivably be employed against Germany with Swedish co-operation. On 22nd March 1938 *Social-Demokraten* agreed enthusiastically with the denunciation by the Minister of Defence of "dogmatic neutrality in all weathers." An "absolute neutrality" would be equivalent to leaving the League. So evasive was the language habitually employed by this paper that it was able to claim that its views were accepted by all the main parties, simply because they had not suggested "that Sweden should break away from the community of nations which the League, for all its shortcomings, still symbolises, or that we should disclaim the duties of membership, which would be the same as seceding." It was unquestionably true that "a situation might arise in which neutrality, in spite of all possible good-will from our side, would be neither possible nor defensible (!) for an independent and highly-cultured nation like the Swedes."

In *Arbetet*, the editor A. Vougt agreed with the Foreign Minister that Sweden ought to obtain greater freedom of action on the sanctions question, but at the same time he made other pronouncements which could only be taken as meaning that he was in favour of a blockade of Germany in the event of a general war between the Great Powers. The Great Powers belonging to the League of Nations, this paper considered, did not, like the anti-Communist States, form an

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ideological *bloc*, but were held together by their desire to preserve peace. Russia's close association with the Western Powers was of vital importance to Sweden, for only with Russia's co-operation could an effective barrier be raised against German aggression; "However we twist and turn, we cannot get away from the fact that the small nations at present live under the protection of Soviet bayonets" (11th December 1937). It would probably be impossible for Sweden to conduct an absolutely neutral policy in the event of a war between the Great Powers, for a section of the Swedish nation would give in to German pressure and set up a pro-German régime in Sweden. Then Swedish democracy would be lost. Sweden should therefore do all she could in good time to bring the three great League Powers closer together. "From our point of view, a conflict about principles now is to be preferred to a conflict at a time when national freedom is fore-doomed to failure. That is why we hope that those in charge of our foreign policy can be persuaded to make a resolute attempt to bridge the gap between those States to east and west which desire to preserve peace and order" (22nd December 1937). The same line was still maintained even after the Swedish declaration of 31st January 1938. Sweden, it was argued in an article of 2nd February, could not expect to be neutral in all circumstances. "There must not be a shadow of doubt about Sweden's willingness as a Member of the League of Nations to take part in measures in which she feels that, in the general interest and her own interest, she should co-operate, and in which her co-operation can count for something." On 18th February appeared the statement that it was a complete misinterpretation of Undén's declaration to say that it advocated unconditional neutrality. On 22nd March, Vougt declared that "real Swedish neutrality would be out of the question in any conflict in which Germany was involved." Germany needed the Swedish ores, and her opponents must prevent her getting them. One possibility, which Sandler was believed to have hinted at in an obscure passage in his November speech, would be not to supply goods to the State which the League named as aggressor. This course would mean in practice "that Sweden was taking sides in the dispute and must organise her defences principally against the State which had thus been placed under economic blockade and might feel it necessary to break the blockade. . . This is the only neutrality policy which Swedish public opinion would support, assuming that the Social Democrats are to be included." That it was not a policy of neutrality at all in the ordinary sense was made clear by the statement soon afterwards that Sweden's economic participation in the war would lead to military co-operation too. A number of Social Democratic papers agreed in the main with these views. In common with those who favoured a neutral policy in the event of a war between the Great Powers, they

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even claimed official support for these views, which merely meant selecting suitable passages from Sandler's speeches. Even the Foreign Minister's broadcast of 4th April was considered by *Arbetet* to support its own views (6th April).

Particular attention was attracted by a resolution which was adopted on 16th March 1938 at a Conference of the World Federation of Trades Unions and the Socialist International Labour Organisation in Paris. In this the affiliated organisations were exhorted among other things "to be prepared to support the French and British Governments in any moral, political, financial, economic or military measures which they may find it necessary to adopt in order to end aggression by Italy and Germany, and in which all States, great or small, should share according to their strength . . . They should also continue their efforts to induce all the nations of Europe which are determined to defend their freedom by means of collective security to give each other mutual guarantees promising aid in every available form, even military, in the event of attack. These guarantees would be based on a voluntary agreement resting on the Covenant, and no distinction would be drawn between the Great Powers and the smaller States." Two of the foremost members of the Swedish Social Democratic party outside the Government, Vougt and Harald Åkerberg, voted in favour of this resolution. Of course it was a not infrequent occurrence for the International to adopt far-reaching resolutions which were not in accordance with the practice of Social Democracy, but in this case the contrast between the Swedish Government's policy and the attitude of the two members of the party taking part in the conference was particularly flagrant. This contrast could not be glossed over by Vougt and Åkerberg asserting in their newspapers that the Swedish Foreign Office took the same line, and at the same time making desperate efforts to explain away the resolution as absolutely harmless.

The attitude adopted by the Paris conference coincided with that of the Communists. The Swedish Communist Press at this time was unreservedly in favour of "loyalty" to the League and the principle of collective security, and evidently had in mind some sort of Swedish association with Russia and the Western Powers in the event of a conflict between these States and Germany.

The tendencies apparent in the Social Democratic Press, and particularly the action of Swedish Social Democrats in supporting the Paris resolution, aroused considerable criticism in the other main parties. It is said that the Foreign Minister, who called special meetings of the Riksdag parties early in April, tried hard to influence the extreme Social Democrats to adopt a more neutral attitude. Probably the Foreign Minister's speech of 4th April was intended among other things to repudiate such statements as might be taken to suggest that

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the Swedish Social Democrats were prepared in certain circumstances to co-operate with the League Powers against Germany. At any rate the party Press adopted a distinctly more neutral tone after that.

The policy of neutrality — meaning in this connection the determination to remain outside any Great Power conflict, and rejection in principle of the sanctions system—was generally accepted by the spring of 1938 both officially and by authoritative opinion. Two days after Sandler's broadcast referred to above, the four Scandinavian Foreign Ministers at a meeting in Oslo declared that the Scandinavian countries would in future, as in the past, remain outside any groups of Powers which might form in Europe, and do everything in their power to avoid becoming involved in war between these groups. The next few months brought further authoritative statements emphasising the determination of Sweden and the other Scandinavian States to remain neutral.

Before pursuing this subject, we might pause to consider the debate about Swiss foreign policy in the League of Nations and the Swedish Foreign Minister's contributions to it. The Swiss Government had sent a memorandum to the League on 20th April 1938 requesting, in view of the state of the League and the experience of the past few years and her own special position, that her traditional neutrality should be declared compatible with the Covenant, i.e. that sanctions regulations should be declared not to apply to Switzerland. The question was taken up at the League meeting in May 1938. Sandler was appointed special commissioner to investigate the question, and proposed in his report of 14th May that the Swiss attitude should be accepted. The report emphasised that this decision in no way affected the position of the other Members of the League, and in the debate, which resulted in the granting of the Swiss application, the Russian and French Foreign Ministers in particular made it clear that exemption from the sanctions system did not apply to any other States than Switzerland. The Swedish Foreign Minister was severely criticised in the Press and later in the Riksdag for the way he had conducted this affair. It was considered extraordinary that he should argue in favour of acceptance of the Swiss request without ever mentioning that the Swedish Government reserved to itself essentially the same right as the Swiss (although in the case of Switzerland it was a question not of freedom of action but of a general "exemption from sanctions"). When the Foreign Minister replied that as commissioner he had had no occasion to concern himself with anything but the subject of the report, he was told that in that case he should not have allowed himself to be appointed to the position. His failure to press the Swedish case recalled an observation he had made in a speech in April, to the effect that it would be unwise to urge the Swedish

view beyond the Undén declaration of January. *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* wrote that the Minister's action showed that "freedom from the sanctions obligations is still only a Swedish *aspiration*, voiced at Geneva timidly when the situation is not too dangerous, but with the air of a grandiloquent international statesman towards uneasy public opinion at home..." The defence of the Foreign Minister by the Social Democratic newspapers seemed to show that they still did not exclude the possibility of Swedish participation in some future application of sanctions.

The 1938 Riksdag had to deal with a number of motions relating to the League, including a Left-Socialist proposal that Sweden should give notice of secession, and one by a Social Democrat that she should take the initiative in demanding the removal of the sanctions regulations from the Covenant or a declaration that they were to be purely optional and voluntary. The Foreign Affairs Committee recalled in its report that the Swedish representative, when the latter motion came up for consideration by the Committee of Twenty-Eight, had argued that "after the events of the last few years, a Member of the League can no longer be held to be under any obligation to take part in economic or financial sanctions," and that the representatives of a number of States had agreed with this view. The Committee "assumed that in future discussions in the League of Nations on the sanctions problem... the Swedish Government will continue to support this attitude." It was desirable that the freedom of action Sweden claimed should be generally recognised by the other Members of the League, but "it should be left to the Government, in consultation with the Foreign Affairs Committee—and in co-operation with other Governments with which Sweden is normally closely associated on the League—to judge when and in what form such recognition can best be achieved." The committee moved rejection of the motions on these grounds. The four Conservative members dissociated themselves on one point. They emphasised that the Swedish attitude, with which they entirely agreed, had met with determined opposition on the part of certain leading Great Powers and other States Members. It was therefore essential that the matter should be settled soon, either by means of a modification of the Covenant or, as this might prove difficult in existing circumstances, by "such recognition by the other League Members of Sweden's right not to take part in sanctions as would ensure that she would not be exposed to any demands or pressure on this account." The dissentients suggested that Sweden ought to leave the League if the desired recognition were not granted shortly, and urged the Government, in view of the considerations brought forward, to "clarify Sweden's attitude to the League of Nations." One Conservative, the former Prime Minister Hammarskjöld, added a special report in which he pointed out that the mere fact that sanctions had not been

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applied in certain cases did not prove that they could not be applied. "Because, when the leading Powers in the League decide not to undertake or at any rate not to prescribe sanctions, the smaller States are not compelled to take part in them, this does not mean that any precedent has been established for refusing to impose sanctions when they are decided upon and demanded by the Great Powers." Neither could it be claimed as a reason for not demanding the right to abstain from sanctions that Sweden, as a member of the Council, could under the unanimity rule prevent the decision being taken. For an attack might be of such a manifestly impermissible character that it would be impossible for the Swedish representative alone to deny the fact, and Sweden's membership of the Council would certainly come to an end before the expiry of the two years which had to elapse before she could secede even if she gave notice forthwith. The conclusion which he drew was that "if we wish for the goal—Sweden's release from the danger, at present indissociable from membership of the League of Nations, of becoming involved, through no act of her own and in the interests of other Powers, in war—then we must be prepared, even if only as a last resort, to consider the course which may soon prove inescapable" (i.e. secession from the League).

The debates in the Riksdag on 1st June were fairly comprehensive, but produced few arguments not already brought forward by the Committee. The Conservative leader emphasised that the party leaders were now all agreed on a policy of neutrality; none of the main parties took any exception to this statement, and Sandler did not attempt to assert, as he had done a few months earlier, that the word neutrality had no definite meaning. The Conservative members (Bagge, Domö) stated more emphatically than they had done in their minority committee report that Sweden should leave the League if it failed to accept her point of view. As the representatives of a number of States had taken the view, the latest occasion being during consideration of the Swiss representations, that the sanctions regulations were in principle binding, the Swedish action of 31st January could not reasonably be considered adequate. The spokesmen of the People's party (Andersson i Rasjön, Sam Larsson) urged as vehemently as the Conservative leaders that the desired exemption must be obtained quickly—before the next Riksdag—either from some organ of the League or from its principle members. They too considered that Sweden should leave the League if her request were not granted. In the Second Chamber, the statements by the Conservative and People's party leaders received overwhelming support from their respective parties. The Social Democrats too joined in the demand for renewed Swedish action; the Foreign Minister had nothing against it, though persisting in his view that Sweden had made her point sufficiently clear and that nothing which was said

at the time of Switzerland's release from her obligations could prejudice the Swedish claim. Undén, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, emphasised that Sweden's declaration to the League was not "a one-sided declaration that we intend to renounce our commitments, but... a recognition of the fact that sanctions have been found in practice not to work." Undén considered the fears that Sweden would be pressed to take part in sanctions because the other States Members considered that she was under an obligation so to do, rather exaggerated. Pressure might, of course, be exerted, but this would be so even if Sweden were not a member of the League. Undén recalled that "Article 16 of the Covenant requires the severance of connections not only between States Members and the aggressor State, but also between non-members and the aggressor State." Both Undén and Sandler rejected the idea of leaving the League. If a number of States ceased membership, the League might break up altogether, and it was going to be very much needed in the days to come; in addition, if Sweden seceded, she might be suspected of orientation towards the Axis Powers. Of the other Social Democrats who took part in the debate, some (Åkerberg, Pauli) spoke of the value of the League and the importance of Sweden's continued membership, while others (Olof Olsson, Hallén) urged the necessity of Sweden's formal release from sanctions duties. Only the Communists continued to defend the principles of collective security.

Authoritative declarations by the other Scandinavian States followed the same lines as those of the Swedish Riksdag.²⁹ The Foreign Ministers of the so-called Oslo States (the Scandinavian States, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg), after a meeting in Copenhagen on 23rd—24th July, issued a joint statement which said among other things: "The Foreign Ministers, while satisfied that their countries should continue to co-operate in the work of the League of Nations, give notice that their Governments are determined to abide by the point of view outlined in their declarations, namely that the sanctions system has, through present circumstances and the practice of the past few years, acquired a non-obligatory character. They further consider that this non-obligatory character of sanctions does not apply only to some special group of States but to all the Members of the League. They are convinced that it would be in the interests of the League itself openly to admit this freedom of action." Sandler made a speech in August underlining the importance of this statement and declaring that the other members of the League must recognise the Scandinavian point of view. Otherwise "fears that the League and its Covenant are merely destined to be used as the instruments of one combination of Great Powers against another would receive confirmation such as might prove fatal to the League's authority in States which do not intend to let themselves be used as instruments for such a policy."

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In the general debate which opened the September meeting of the League Assembly, the Swedish Foreign Minister was first speaker and elaborated the points already made by the Oslo States in their declaration. The application of sanctions had in practice become optional, and left full freedom of choice to all Members. "It follows that a neutral policy, such as certain States, including the one I have the honour to represent, reserve the right to follow, must be considered fully compatible with a loyal interpretation of the duties of League Members." The wisest course for the League would be to accept this view. "But if the attitude of individual influential Members showed that, for one reason or another, a definite declaration was not to be allowed, then I would emphasise—not to mention the danger of further secessions from the League—that it would be impossible to avoid a further weakening of the League's authority in the eyes of the people of Sweden, whom I represent here . . ." Sandler spoke in a similar strain, though perhaps more vehemently, before the Sixth Commission of the League to which the question was referred. The Swedish attitude was supported by the Oslo States and various other small States. Some encouragement was also given by a declaration by Great Britain to the effect that Article 16 should not be regarded as unconditionally binding, but that States were under the obligation to confer together, if need arose, as to the possible application of the provisions. The representatives of a number of States, principally Russia and France, refused definitely, however, to accept this point of view; according to the French Government, the obligations devolving on League members under Article 16 should, with certain unimportant exceptions, "be understood to mean that every Member of the League is bound to co-operate loyally and effectively to ensure respect for the Covenant and oppose aggression." The Assembly's decision was actually quite negative: the minutes of the debate were handed to the League members without any precise recommendation. Sweden's attitude, that the legal position with regard to sanctions had been altered by practice, had thus not received the desired recognition. The Swedish Government, however, let the matter rest.

In November, Sandler made a speech in which he declared—entirely at variance with the view he had so emphatically sponsored a few weeks earlier—that recognition was hardly necessary. "Any further Swedish discussion of the sanctions question is likely to be completely sterile, if it aims only at a 'recognition' resolution." It would be more profitable to discuss whether Sweden was entitled to take part in a discussion by the Council of a dispute in which the question of sanctions was likely to arise. In Sandler's opinion a State which had decided to remain neutral in such an event should abstain altogether from taking any part in the discussion of sanctions questions.

There is little to add about the League debates during the summer

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and autumn of 1938. The Social Democratic newspapers accepted the neutrality policy more and more whole-heartedly. Time after time they emphasised, without any reference to their earlier attitude, that Sweden was under no obligation whatever to take part in sanctions; her continued membership of the League they justified on the grounds already given. After the Riksdag debate of 1st June, however, they began to urge that recognition of the Swedish point of view should be obtained. The declaration by the Oslo Powers and Sandler's stand in the League Assembly in September were both approved. The paper *Arbetet* did suggest that Sweden might agree to impose sanctions in aid of a Scandinavian State, but otherwise, in common with the rest of the Press, rejected the whole principle of sanctions. After that, only the Communist Press and a small number of Social Democratic papers with Communist sympathies spoke definitely in favour of an active League policy—on the grounds of defence against German plans of aggression.

The Press representing the other main parties apart from the Social Democrats of course unanimously supported the policy set forth in the Riksdag debates of 1st June, the Copenhagen declaration, and Sandler's speeches to the League Assembly in September. It is more remarkable that the manifest failure of the Swedish representations in Geneva did not give rise to any general discussion. Several newspapers expressed regrets that the Swedish attitude had not been accepted, and some said that the Swedish Government ought to have pressed its case more energetically, but there was no widespread condemnation. Criticism of the conduct of foreign affairs came mostly from certain People's party newspapers, particularly *Dagens Nyheter*, where Wickman pointed out the discrepancy between the promises which had been given before the Geneva meeting and the complete absence of positive results; this paper suggested on one occasion that Sweden and various other States should break away from the League and only co-operate in its non-political work. The Conservative Press showed on the whole remarkable forbearance towards the Government's foreign policy.

The explanation of all these circumstances is probably simply that, in the autumn of 1938, attention was principally concentrated on other international problems which did not directly concern Sweden, above all Germany's activities culminating in the Munich Agreement and all the associated problems. Besides this, the question of the revision of the Aaland Convention began to loom very large about this time in Swedish policy and discussion. Probably also the Conservatives, whose views on the Aaland question had been accepted by the Government, refrained in consideration of this fact from insisting on their general policy being adopted towards the League. Study of the Press gives the impression of a kind of unconscious compromise: Swedish policy towards Aaland and Finland com-

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pensated for the failure to enforce acceptance of Swedish neutrality from the League of Nations.

Relations with the League played little part in the election campaign for the provincial assemblies in the autumn of 1938, although some parties did refer to the question in their manifestos. The Conservative election programme contained the passage: "Determined, unambiguous policy of neutrality. Confirmation of Sweden's exemption from sanctions obligations by the League of Nations, otherwise secession from the League." The Social Democratic manifesto declared that "peace and freedom for the nations can only be lastingly secured by means of a system of international justice, built up and backed by all nations. We will co-operate to preserve the basis on which such an organisation could be built, and will endeavour to thwart attempts to exploit the weakness of the League so as to drive Sweden away from international collaboration. But in view of our conviction that this collaboration must be open to all, we stand wholeheartedly for a policy which rejects alliances. The essential task in present circumstances is to keep Sweden clear of international conflicts." The People's party declared that "Sweden should maintain complete neutrality, and steer clear of all open or concealed alliances. Membership of the League of Nations must not involve the danger of being drawn into conflicts between groups of Powers in Europe. The great thing now for Sweden is to gain recognition of her freedom from the obligations to take part in sanctions against other Powers." The Farmers' League made no definite declaration of policy.

It is typical of the loss of interest in the League that the subject was mentioned at length in the 1939 *remiss* debate by the representative of only one of the main parties, the Conservative leader in the First Chamber, Domö. He maintained that the uncertainty which still persisted after the September debate in Geneva about Sweden's obligations in the event of an outbreak of war might "place Sweden in the most serious position, while the impotent League of Nations would not be able to give any corresponding security." During the next few months, the Åland discussion occupied the centre of the stage. Possibly it was felt that this question, which required League co-operation, should be solved before Sweden took any further steps to obtain recognition of her attitude with regard to Article 16. The general support for a neutral attitude towards political disputes between the Great Powers was clearly manifested on several occasions during the spring, among other things by the fact that practically the entire Press urged the rejection of a German proposal early in May for a non-aggression pact; regret was expressed in many quarters that Denmark, alone of the Scandinavian States, saw fit to sign such an agreement.

Later in the spring the discussion about the League flared up again,

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partly on account of statements suggesting that the Great Powers in the League, including Great Britain, were considering the possibility of employing sanctions in certain circumstances against Germany. Wickman criticised Sweden's vacillating foreign policy and urged that fresh steps be taken to secure recognition of her attitude. On 22nd May, Bagge published an article in *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* in which he stated that Sweden ought to "wind up her membership of the existing League of Nations"; he drew a distinction between the political and the technical work of the League, and considered that Sweden should co-operate only in the latter. This proposal received the unanimous approval of the Conservative Press, and even a certain amount of support from the People's party. Sandler, however, declared in a speech on 1st May that Sweden's relations with the League gave no serious cause for concern: "We have really no occasion to drag the sanctions provisions of the Covenant forth from their present well-merited obscurity."

At the beginning of June, the question of the League came before the Riksdag. This had to consider firstly a Bill to approve changes in the Covenant which had been worked out by the Committee of Twenty-Eight and accepted by the 1938 League Assembly. The changes were of a formal nature and were designed to remove from the Covenant expressions which derived from its historical connection with the Peace Treaties. In addition, the Socialists had tabled a motion proposing termination of Sweden's membership of the League, and alleging that the Great Powers only preserved the League organisation in order "to be able, on the outbreak of war, to mobilise the League apparatus and induce the smaller States Members to render passive or active assistance under the name of sanctions." The Foreign Affairs Committee agreed to approve the Bill and consequently reject the motion. As to the grounds on which the Bill should be approved, however, opinions differed. The majority, comprising all members except the Conservatives, felt that the sanctions system could no longer be considered binding; this had been shown firstly by various declarations, secondly by the League's passivity in the face of violations of the territorial integrity of States Members. A revision of the Covenant was therefore called for, but could not be expected to take place until the international situation had improved. The report concluded with the hope that "the Government will follow closely the development of the international situation, bearing in mind how important it is—not least for States which, like the Scandinavian, are determined to remain outside European groups of alliances—that the principles on which the League is in future to be guided should be reconsidered without prejudice as soon as opportunity offers." The Conservative minority considered that political activity on the part of the League might involve serious complications. "Even if the sanctions regulations are not in practice

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regarded as binding, it has never been formally recognised that they are not." This state of affairs meant that also the economic, social and humanitarian work of the League, which it was in the general interest to maintain, was jeopardised. Steps should therefore be taken to initiate a reform of the League under which the political tasks which were incompatible with its present composition should be abolished, and its activities restricted to other fields. A demand for the reform of the League along these lines should be presented by the interested States, principally Sweden. "The matter should be brought before the League in such terms as to make it clear that these States cannot remain in the League of Nations if it retains its present composition and forms of activity." The Conservatives thus adopted Bagge's proposals for League reform.

Both Chambers approved the committee's proposals both as regards the Bill and the motion. The majority Committee report represented the views, to judge by the debate, of the Farmers' League, the People's party, the Social Democrats and the Communists, while the Conservatives and the Left-Socialist party supported the Conservative minority report. The majority spokesmen, primarily Undén, Sandler and Andersson i Rasjön, asserted that there was little danger of any attempt being made to apply the sanctions regulations. The League's passivity, its "shadow existence," made it possible, Undén declared, even for States which did not wish to assume responsibility for the handling of international problems to remain in the League. "They are not obliged to leave the League of Nations in order to pursue a policy of neutrality, such as our position and resources and our political circumstances force upon us in the present international situation." By remaining in the League they would not only enable it to continue such of its work as even the dissentients wished to preserve, but would also keep alive the possibilities of future improvement and development of the League as a peace-furthering factor. It was far from certain whether the League could continue to exist if its work were restricted to humanitarian and non-political spheres (Sandler). According to the minority, whose spokesmen were Bagge and K. Wistrand, there was still, in spite of everything, a certain danger that an attempt might be made to revive sanctions. Membership of a non-universal League with political functions exposed a State in any case to the suspicion of being associated with a definite group of Great Powers. Besides this, the League was in danger of gradual disintegration. The important thing was to free the vital part of its work from "connections with the sinking ship" (Bagge), and reorganise the League in time on a fresh basis. No hope could reasonably be entertained that the existing League, after all its mistakes and failures, could still develop into a universal peace organisation. At the same time the Conservative speakers emphasised that they did not desire any immediate action on Sweden's part; thorough pre-

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parations were necessary, and a suitable opportunity should be awaited.

During the summer of 1939 little was said about the sanctions question. Probably it was assumed that Sweden would initiate fresh action when the League Assembly met in September. On 29th—30th August a meeting took place of Scandinavian Ministers, and the usual assurances were given of their determination to remain neutral in any future war.

It only remains in this connection to mention some of the more important features of the policy actually adopted, the policy under which Sweden was to remain in the League but at the same time adopt a strictly neutral attitude, at any rate in relation to the States outside the Scandinavian circle. Why did Sweden wish to remain in the League, even while admitting without reservation that this was powerless to preserve peace? The answer to this question can be largely deduced from material to which reference has already been made, e.g. the report on the subject by the Foreign Affairs Committee to the 1937 Riksdag. The Press always made the point that the League could still be of some use: it constituted at all events a form of international organisation, enabled leading politicians to hold consultations in already accepted forms, and did considerable humanitarian work. If the League did not demand fulfilment of political obligations, there would be no danger in remaining in it. "Let the League continue," ran a typical comment, "it does no political good but it can do a great deal of practical good, and as far as can be seen it does no harm . . . The League should go into a winter sleep—perhaps like the bear it will wake up when spring comes." Secession from the League might in existing circumstances be interpreted as an orientation towards its enemies; Sweden would be more likely to be suspected of un-neutral tendencies if she acted so than if she remained and emphasised her desire for neutrality. The Great Powers might be expected to exert pressure to much the same extent whichever course she took. If Sweden broke away and a number of other small States followed suit, that would eventually prove fatal to the whole League organisation, and so would destroy or weaken any hopes of reviving the League or a similar system of international justice. The idea that the League, after a period of crisis and eclipse, would not only recover its former authority but acquire greater influence than ever, would seem to have been at the root of almost every attempt to defend Sweden's attitude to the League on principle. Sometimes it was said too that withdrawal from the League would take two years to become effective, and so would be of little use in relation to the present crisis.

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Why should not Sweden take part in sanctions, why should she try to preserve her neutrality in the anticipated war between the Great Powers? This question is more difficult to answer. To those groups—particularly strong in the Right-Wing and the Farmers' League—which saw the conflict between the various groups of Powers as an ordinary conflict of interests, the answer presented no difficulty. Sweden, like other States, should place her own interests first, and that meant the preservation of peace in Sweden and if possible in Scandinavia; no gain, but only incalculable loss, could result from intervention in the coming war. This idea—a principle which was taken for granted rather than a conscious opinion—lies behind a number of arguments in favour of neutrality. But to the other groups—predominant in the Left-Wing, but represented in other parties too—which saw in the policy of the aggressive States, particularly Germany, a threat to democracy, humanity, progress, all the values in the service of which they believed themselves to be engaged, the position must have been more problematic. The tendency, chiefly apparent among the Social Democrats, to try to keep a way open for possible future Swedish intervention, must be regarded as a consequence,—though generally not clearly traced to its source—of this “ideological” attitude. It is the non-Socialist Left, the Liberals, who should be best able to provide the answer, for they represented the middle course which ultimately triumphed in Swedish policy: horror of Nazism combined with insistence on neutrality in a war which admittedly was to decide whether Nazism or democratic humanism was to dominate in Europe, perhaps in the world.

The question was seldom discussed, however, even by this party. Papers such as *Dagens Nyheter*, *Göteborgs Handelstidning* and *Svenska Morgonbladet* proclaimed with equal energy and passion that when war came, the whole future of humanity would be at stake, and that Sweden must at all costs keep out of it. But they rarely gave any reasons for this point of view, or only hinted at them. They continued to insist that Sweden's primary interest was to keep out of the war, even while they admitted at the same time that, if Nazism were victorious, it would mean the end of Sweden or at any rate of Swedish democracy. This outlook was combined with a tendency, indicated rather than clearly expressed, to differentiate in the matter of responsibility for the future of humanity between Great Powers and small States. The “good” Great Powers—the Western Powers and the United States—had betrayed their trust of maintaining peace and order in the world; the small States were therefore released from their obligations. Logically this ought to mean that, if these same Great Powers withstood the aggressive Powers, the small democratic and humanitarian States were in duty bound to help them. To reject the sanctions system in principle simply because sanctions had not been ordered when they should have been, is from this point

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of view unreasonable; why not co-operate in sanctions in the future, whenever they were justified? But they clung to their attitude that the Great Powers had forfeited their claim to support from the smaller States. Another closely-allied conception which probably counted for still more was that the contribution of Sweden and the smaller States to a war could not be decisive. Why sacrifice yourself, when it would make no difference to the result? Here we have an example of what might be called small-State mentality: as the determining factor must be the resources of men and material available, States with a small war potential had no hope of intervening effectively, and therefore no responsibility.

Another, more subtle but at the same time more positive argument can be discerned in the debate. Sweden ought to keep out of the war in order to preserve intact the values which were at stake. *Svenska Morgonbladet*, which with its moral and religious bias was naturally interested in this problem, argued on these lines on more than one occasion. It published one leader in favour of neutrality which stated that people need not imagine that neutrality was "in itself anything particularly noble or meritorious. It is essentially an act of self-preservation, of taking thought for the future." But it continued: "Actually we are in a serious moral dilemma. Either we intervene, with the theoretical *possibility* of striking a blow for what shadow of a system of international justice still remains—or we stay neutral, and renounce that possibility. What tips the balance, even with this choice before our eyes, in favour of the latter alternative, is firstly the knowledge that war *cannot* 'save' any ideal values at all, for such a conflagration only produces fresh convulsions, fresh hatreds, fresh conflicts. Secondly there is the hope that if we here in Scandinavia succeed in preserving our neutrality, we shall in any case have kept alive the ideals of peace, co-operation, democracy *right through* the chaos. Otherwise war might destroy them even here." On another occasion the paper pointed out that Sweden did not desire "victory for the aggressive Powers which despise gentleness and human dignity. But the trouble is that it is extremely uncertain whether such qualities ever survive a war, even if one of the parties considers itself to be fighting precisely for them. In any case not among the belligerents themselves. If they survive, it will probably chiefly be among countries which have succeeded in keeping out of total war and all its senseless destruction . . . Amid the general convulsion there should be some asylum where people have not forgotten what it is to lead their daily lives in peace, where all the traditions of patient, dogged effort have not been forgotten, where the outward conditions necessary for the life of the spirit are still preserved." Similar ideas were sometimes to be found in other papers too. In a leader entitled "Sweden's Mission," *Dagens Nyheter* wrote that "it is not our task—let us say,

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not Scandinavia's in general—to take part in the battle of power politics with war as the ultimate weapon . . . Our faith, our ideal, lies in another direction. Our great dream of the future is that Sweden and Scandinavia should give concrete proof in this confused age of the fine practical results to be obtained by way of democratic collaboration . . . It is not just a vague hypothesis, still less an excuse, it is our firm conviction that this task can be infinitely more valuable to humanity than any small contributions we might make in a struggle between the immense military resources of the great Powers." Here, however, the idea that the contribution of the smaller States can never be decisive is the corner-stone of the argument.

This moral argumentation may look like a combination of sophistry and cynicism. Sophistry in its contention that war cannot "save" any values; the point is surely that some values cannot in some circumstances be saved except by war. Cynicism in that it so simply reconciles duty with pleasure, neutrality with the preservation of the values for which war is waged. War, it assumes, is inevitable. It wishes one group, which represents the highest aims of humanity, to be victorious. But it regards these States as becoming contaminated during the struggle with the evil which arises from the struggle: the restriction of freedom, violence, hatred. If they are victorious, a great day will dawn for the neutrals: humanity will have been saved without the need for them to sacrifice themselves, and they will theoretically come out best of all, for they will be spotless and the victors contaminated. And if the right side loses? Well, there will always be some way out for those who were not directly involved in the war!— But this view, which was so widespread in Sweden during both World Wars, was certainly sincerely held by many; it was the yeast of idealism in the ideology of neutrality.

We have been considering the pre-war argumentation in favour of neutrality in its purest form. But mostly, for journalists and politicians alike, the problem was not so simple. They were not even always perfectly convinced that the States belonging to the League did represent the ideals for which they claimed to stand; the Russian dictatorship cast its shadow across the brotherhood of free democracies. Probably they were not entirely certain either, though they said they were, that the victory of Nazi Germany would really be completely disastrous. Altogether, as always in such cases, there was more hesitation and doubt about the results of the anticipated conflict than the often dogmatic statements would suggest. And in addition, all parties were probably vividly aware of how difficult or impossible it would be to induce a small nation, which was not directly threatened by anyone, to resort to arms to avert dangers which, after all, were vague and remote, in other words to wage a sort of idealistic preventive war.

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The discussion on Scandinavia during the years immediately preceding the Second World War was largely just another aspect of the discussion on Sweden's relations towards the League of Nations and world politics in general. Since everyone realised, as soon as a fresh conflict between the Great Powers began to be regarded as necessary or inevitable, that even the slender assurance of peace which the League had formerly provided had now ceased to have any value, Sweden turned her eyes towards the neighbouring States which, like her, wished to remain outside the conflict; the failure of internationalism brought the problem of Scandinavianism nearer. One feature of this development was a heightening of interest in Scandinavian defence. The effectiveness of Swedish rearmament was dependent on the strength of the bastions provided by Denmark and Finland about the less exposed Sweden, and her neighbours' defences thus became a matter of the first importance to Sweden. As regards the other aspect of the problem, the prospect of Scandinavian political co-operation, two main questions arose. One was the question of a united Scandinavian defence policy, possibly in the form of a defensive alliance, the other the question of the revision of the Aaland Convention and of a joint Finnish-Swedish defence of Aaland. This latter proposal—the most concrete and important expression of the Scandinavian trend in Swedish politics during these years—will, however, be dealt with in a later chapter.

During the 1920's, the possibility of a concerted foreign policy for all the Scandinavian States had been only vaguely and occasionally discussed, while the question of a Swedish-Finnish defensive alliance aroused much greater interest. This was largely connected with the fact that the only threat of war which appeared to hang over Scandinavia then was that of a Russian attack on Finland. By the period we are now considering, the situation had changed. The danger now was of a general war between the Great Powers, in the course of which the Scandinavian States would very likely be exposed to violations of neutrality or attacks dictated by strategic considerations. Besides this, after Hitler's seizure of power, German operations against Denmark with the object of conquering Southern Jutland appeared almost as probable as Russian operations against Finland. For these reasons—apart from the special question of the defence of Aaland—the idea of a united Scandinavia assumed an importance it had not had before. When Swedes spoke about a united defence policy, it was generally, though not invariably, the Scandinavian States they meant.

To fill in the background to the debate and the attempts made at establishing closer relations between the Scandinavian States, only a few points need be briefly recalled.

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In December 1931, a Convention providing for closer economic relations was concluded in Oslo between Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg; after being duly ratified, it entered into force early in 1932. The essence of the agreement was that the States concerned should endeavour, in relation both to each other and to other States, to bring about an improvement in trade conditions. In November 1933, Finland also subscribed to the Convention. During the succeeding period, while international trade was being more and more ham-strung by isolationist tendencies, a number of negotiations on general and special questions took place between the Scandinavian States within the framework of this Convention. Towards the end of 1934, on Swedish initiative, the Governments of Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway interchanged special delegations for the purpose of furthering economic co-operation in Scandinavia. These delegations were to maintain direct contact with each other, and were authorised to deal with questions of interest to all the Scandinavian countries or questions which concerned only some of them. The chief result of their work and of the trade negotiations in general was a series of special agreements relating to trade in certain essential commodities. The proposals made by private individuals on various occasions for a real Customs Union do not seem to have received official consideration. From 1937 onwards, representatives of the Scandinavian States began to consider the problem of maintaining imports if trading conditions became more difficult, and held a number of meetings to discuss the question. But when war broke out, their investigations had not progressed beyond the preliminary stage.

In connection with the trade negotiations, a meeting was held in Copenhagen of the Swedish, Danish and Norwegian Foreign Ministers in January 1932—the first meeting of the kind since 1922. Less than three years later, in September 1934, a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of all four Scandinavian countries was held in Stockholm on Swedish initiative—this too chiefly for the discussion of trade questions. After this, meetings of the Scandinavian Foreign Ministers became a fixed institution; during the succeeding period, one or (1937—1938) two such meetings were held every year. The agenda for discussion was gradually enlarged: it included not only trade questions but matters to be brought up at coming meetings of the League of Nations, the preparation of common neutrality regulations, and other political questions of the day. As regards the neutrality regulations, positive results were achieved in 1938, when each State separately published a jointly-prepared code. In 1938 discussions were also held between special experts on the subject of limited military co-operation; but it seems to have been chiefly a question of plans for a joint air defence organisation. The possibility of any more general military co-operation was not suggested, so far as

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available information shows, either at the meetings of Foreign Ministers or at any other official negotiations. In addition to the meetings already mentioned, a number of other meetings were held between the heads of States and Prime Ministers, at which the importance of Scandinavian co-operation was emphasised in general terms. From 1938 onwards, an official journal was published on Scandinavian questions, designed to reach an international public (*Le Nord*).

The language question in Finland continued to cause friction, particularly during the first few years of this period. It arose mainly in connection with the organisation of Helsingfors University. The Finns proper demanded that the University should be organised on entirely Finnish lines, while the various coalition Governments which held office tried to find a compromise solution. In the autumn of 1934 the majority of professors at the Universities and University Colleges of Sweden, Denmark and Norway addressed memoranda to the Finnish Government pointing out that any weakening of the position of the Swedish language at the Finnish State University would involve a serious loss to their common Scandinavian culture. These memoranda were rejected as an attempt at interference in Finland's internal affairs, and aroused great bitterness among the Finns. From the end of 1935, however, feeling became rather less tense. On 5th December that year the Finnish Prime Minister Kivimäki in a speech to the Finnish Riksdag declared that Finland should make friendship with Sweden, which had the same interest as Finland in preserving her neutrality, her primary aim. The common neutrality and independence of Scandinavia must be the real object of co-operation between Finland and Scandinavia. Representatives of all parties in the Riksdag agreed. This declaration of Finland's Scandinavian orientation was frequently called to mind in later years. In 1937 a decision was reached in the University question, which was criticised by the Swedes in Finland but fell far short of the demands of the Finns proper. A joint visit paid in the same year by the Swedish and Finnish Foreign Ministers and Ministers of Education to the Swedish—Finnish frontier district of Tornedalen, and certain measures taken in connection with it, testified to and fostered the improved feeling on the language question.

Briefly the Scandinavian discussion of 1933—1939 may be summed up by saying that the general declarations in favour of agreement and co-operation—both in official and unofficial quarters—grew more and more numerous and vehement, while more concrete proposals for organised political co-operation (defensive alliances etc.) were certainly eagerly discussed in the Press and in pamphlets, but were only rarely referred to by responsible politicians. The positive attitude towards co-operation of this sort seems to have been strongest in Finland to the extent that she saw in Sweden, now as formerly, her

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only hope of protection against the ever-present threat from Russia. It is obvious, however, that Finland's Scandinavian orientation was essentially an orientation towards Sweden, and that hardly anyone imagined that Denmark or Norway could be of any help in the defence of Finland. It should be emphasised too that the Scandinavian orientation in Finland had to compete in certain circles with a more nationalistic and activist tendency the aim of which was alliance with Germany. In Denmark the question of a Scandinavian alliance was raised sporadically, and the Conservatives on several occasions expressed themselves in favour of a joint investigation of the defence question, but the leaders of the ruling parties definitely rejected the idea of any close co-operation. Stauning, the Prime Minister, told the Folketing on 17th October 1933 that Denmark's southern frontier was the southern frontier of Scandinavia and that an attack on this frontier would be the concern of Scandinavia as a whole; but shortly afterwards, and in a number of later speeches, he declared nevertheless that discussion of a defensive alliance would be meaningless. His speech in Lund on 8th March 1937 caused a considerable sensation; he declared then that the interests of the Scandinavian States were too divergent for any alliance between them to be possible. "A Scandinavian defensive alliance is in my opinion a Utopian idea. Any serious attempt to put it into practice would only create a fresh danger zone, and awaken suspicions which are at present almost non-existent and in any case unfounded." A closer association with Scandinavia was evidently calculated in Stauning's eyes to increase the danger of a German attack, which Danish policy aimed at averting. The proposals of Christmas-Møller and other Conservative leaders for the joint consideration of defence questions were regarded by the Radicals and Social Democrats as a party political feint, designed to win support in other Scandinavian countries for the rearmament programme supported by the Danish Conservatives. Interest in a closer political association was probably weakest of all in Norway. She, unlike Finland and Denmark, did not appear to be exposed to any outside danger. Memories of the Union of Norway and Sweden and differences with Denmark on the Greenland question probably also helped to keep her aloof.

Sweden became the centre of the Scandinavian discussion proper. Both Finland and Denmark might possibly obtain support from Sweden, but not from each other; Norway felt safe behind the other Scandinavian States, for aggression was not anticipated from the west. As on earlier and later occasions, there could be no possibility of bringing the Scandinavian States together except with Sweden as initiator, intermediary and uniting force.

The general trend of development in the Swedish discussion can probably best be illustrated by quoting comments made on various occasions by Sandler, the Foreign Minister, and outlining the treat-

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ment of the Scandinavian question in the Riksdag and in the party political programmes. The Foreign Minister's statements doubtless expressed the views not only of the Government—which from September 1936 onwards had a majority in both Chambers—but also of a wide section of the general public supporting all the main parties. They were generally received with approval by the majority of the Press, irrespective of political colour.

In his earlier speeches on Swedish foreign policy, Sandler did not refer to the Scandinavian question at all, or only incidentally. On one or two special occasions, however, he found it necessary to touch upon it in some detail. Such occasions were the meetings of the Swedish and Finnish Foreign Ministers in February and May 1934, a Scandinavian Festival on 9th March and the first meeting of the Scandinavian Foreign Ministers in September of the same year. On the whole, however, he only used the same general phraseology as has been customary for generations at Scandinavian meetings of all kinds. In his speech of 9th March, he concerned himself chiefly with the importance of economic co-operation. "How much this Scandinavia means to us . . . will be shown by how much real use we can be to one another. We shall need something more satisfying than fine phrases, if we are all to draw strength from it." The strength to which he referred was purely material, it was a question of encouraging trade. Political co-operation he did not mention. His speech on the occasion of the first meeting of the Scandinavian Foreign Ministers was on the same lines, and indirectly criticised the idea of political co-operation. "Our own fatherland—we must never lose sight of that in any amorphous, romantic Scandinavianism." In December 1935, while the Abyssinian crisis was at its height and after Finland had declared her Scandinavian orientation, he devoted a few passages in a speech on "Sweden's Foreign Affairs" to the Scandinavian question. He emphasised first the importance of the Finnish Prime Minister's declaration. "Our elementary interest of security, which overshadows everything else in importance, means having about us a *Scandinavian security zone*, about which nothing more can be said or need be said than the phrase which normally occurs in the Swedish Speech from the Throne: Our relations with foreign Powers are friendly." The term "neutral Scandinavian policy of agreement" expressed not only "a political instinct" but also "a common interpretation of values." The connection between the international and the Scandinavian policy was clearly shown in the Foreign Minister's speech on Scandinavian Day in Oslo on 27th October 1936. After surveying trade policy, Sandler passed on to discuss the political and cultural unity of Scandinavia. "Our unity gives added force to the contributions we feel called upon to make in the League of Nations. If the League fails—and we are living through a period of uncertainty just now—we know instinctively that our unity will be all the more

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important." He spoke also of "a spontaneous and pactless association between the free States of Scandinavia," which was older than the League of Nations and could continue to exist independently of it, and of the sense of security that came from "standing back to back in a divided world."

From 1937 onwards, the Scandinavian question figured pretty constantly in the Foreign Minister's frequent speeches on foreign affairs. In a broadcast in March 1937, he rejected the demand for an unconditional neutrality policy independent of sanctions regulations, on the grounds of the position in Scandinavia. "I would ask you first to think what an unconditional Swedish neutrality in all circumstances would mean for Scandinavian solidarity. Have those who clamour for absolute neutrality ever considered what our relations with our neighbouring States would be, if one of them found itself in difficulties? The natural sequence of ideas leads us inevitably on to consider the question of a defensive alliance." Here, then, the League of Nations sanctions regulations were presented as a sort of formal basis for supporting another Scandinavian State if it were the victim of attack, and it was suggested that the question of a defensive alliance must inevitably arise if Sweden refused in principle and in general to take part in sanctions. If this argument was anything more than a pretext for refusing to decide the sanctions question along the lines indicated, it reveals a willingness on Sweden's part to work for some form of Scandinavian defensive alliance. Sandler referred also in this talk—as on a number of later occasions—to the work being done on Scandinavian neutrality rules and common preparations for maintaining supplies of vital imports and war materials.

When a year later, once more in a broadcast (4th April 1938) Sandler proclaimed neutrality as a general principle, he went into the Scandinavian question in greater detail. Faced with the possibility of a European conflict between the Great Powers, one must, he said, in the first place ask the question: "Is there not some political guiding principle for each of the Scandinavian States which corresponds so conclusively with its interests that it must devote all its energies to maintaining it, and all of which principles converge in some clearly definable point of union?" The answer was "that there can only be one course for a united Scandinavian policy. It is, if a conflict arises between the Great Powers, to assert our right to pursue a policy which will keep all the States of Scandinavia out of the war." What Sandler called the "Scandinavian preparations now in progress" must be seen from this view-point alone. "The strengthening of Scandinavia has one significance only: do not disturb the peace of Scandinavia!" He then raised the question of whether co-operation could be extended to the military field. There was much vague talk, the Minister said, of a Scandinavian defensive alliance. But the critical reaction against this form of co-operation was only

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too well justified. "A defensive alliance, is that not the same thing as a military alliance? But alliances are generally—either openly or secretly—directed against someone. Has Scandinavia a common 'enemy?' The answer, unquestionably, is 'No.' So an alliance would be meaningless, or more than that, probably positively harmful. For could it be wise to act as though we had an enemy? . . . It is more than likely that all that has been written about a 'Scandinavian defensive alliance' has done more harm than good to its own cause, simply because it has encouraged this very suspicion." But if the foundation of Scandinavian policy were clearly recognised, the reaction would be different. "If it is realised beyond any question that the real point on which Scandinavia is united is simply its common resolve not to become involved in war, then it will be seen to be no longer a question of a defensive alliance valid for all possibilities, but of an armed neutrality prepared if necessary to defend itself by force." Sandler suggested also, obviously with the Aaland question in mind, whether there were not some limited areas or questions in which the co-ordination of the defence forces of all the Scandinavian countries might increase their prospects of avoiding war. He concluded with the words: "Hamlet's rôle is not for Scandinavia—if the world is out of joint, it is not for her to put it right. If we realise that 'peace on earth' is a task beyond our powers, let us concentrate on '*peace in Scandinavia*.'"—The Foreign Minister seems to have continued to hold the views expressed in the above speech for some time afterwards. He dealt with the Scandinavian question, though not in such great detail, on a number of later occasions, but always along essentially the same lines as those of his broadcast of April 1938.

This speech, which is typical in some important respects of a great many speeches made in Sweden during the years immediately preceding the Second World War, calls for certain comments. The obscurity, or rather the ambiguity of the central statements is so glaringly obvious that it can hardly have been altogether unconscious. Sandler stated first that "a united Scandinavian policy" must be directed towards "asserting our right to pursue a policy which will keep all the States of Scandinavia out of the war . . ." He may either have meant that each Scandinavian State should try to keep out of the war itself, that they should follow the same policy in this respect, or that the Scandinavian States should adopt a common policy to keep the whole of Scandinavia out of the war, i.e. that they should mutually pledge themselves to help each other to preserve their neutrality. The central question, whether these States should assist one another if one or more of them were the victim of attack, was not directly mentioned. That both a positive and a negative attitude can be read into the speech, is shown still more clearly by the argument about a defensive alliance. Sandler rejected the idea of such an alliance,

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not on the grounds that mutual help in the event of war could not or should not be given, but because the term "defensive alliance" was unsuitable, as it seemed to indicate the existence of a common enemy. Later on, he went a step further: it was not a question of "a defensive alliance valid for all possibilities," but of "an armed neutrality prepared if necessary to defend itself by force." The Scandinavian States should help each other to maintain neutrality, but not conclude a defensive alliance. But the question arises: How could such assistance be of any value unless there was an explicit or implied undertaking to help if the neutrality of the State in question were violated?³⁰ It is obviously meaningless to talk about a defence of neutrality, if this is not to mean military defence in the event of attack. At bottom, you cannot defend your neutrality, you can only defend your frontiers or your independence, for neutrality vanishes when you are attacked. But Sandler's declarations, like a great many other similar contributions to the discussion, hinged entirely on this play on the word neutrality.

The explanation of the Foreign Minister's speech may be that he himself vacillated between various points of view. It is also conceivable that he believed it might improve the prospects of Scandinavian security to suggest the possibility that the different States might come to each other's aid in the event of war; a hint of this sort might possibly impress the Great Powers from which attack was feared, and if war came need not be regarded as a binding promise. Possibly even Sweden proposed to assist other Scandinavian States if they were attacked in certain circumstances, but not in others. It is even conceivable that the Minister wished to prepare Swedish public opinion for a real defensive alliance (or similar arrangement) later. Finally: in this as in many similar cases it seems probable that a multiplicity of motives entered in, which cannot be disentangled or closely analysed.

All the Foreign Minister's speeches which we have just been considering were made outside the Riksdag. Inside the Riksdag, the Scandinavian question was never discussed as a political problem. The matter was only brought up in the form of a few occasional references in debates on other subjects, for example, in the *remiss* debates of 1936—1939. Authoritative Conservative speakers (Bagge, Domö, Ivar Anderson) stressed the very great value of the co-operation which had been achieved. But they did not suggest a defensive alliance or any similar agreement; on the contrary, Bagge in the *remiss* debate of 1937 indicated that an alliance of this sort was out of the question. It is perhaps significant that the spokesmen of the People's party (Andersson i Rasjön, Sam Larsson) chiefly emphasised the importance of purely economic co-operation. In the 1938 Riksdag, a not very representative Social Democrat, Fredrik Ström, expressed himself in favour of a Scandinavian defensive alliance within the

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framework of the League of Nations, Sandler made a general Scandinavian pronouncement on the lines more clearly laid down in his April broadcast. In the 1939 *remiss* debate the Prime Minister, without encountering opposition from any quarter, stated in carefully chosen terms that he did not favour the idea of a defensive alliance. He said that he could not regard the matter as one of immediate urgency, "for the simple reason that our peoples are not ready for it, not even the Swedish people and still less those of some other Scandinavian nations. I do not think that one should toy with such serious matters. If any such assertion of Scandinavian unity is to come, it must spring from the people themselves and not be artificially induced along lines which are not in keeping with the ideas of the broad masses of the people." The Communists declared on various occasions that Scandinavia must in all circumstances work within the framework of the League and to further its authority: if this were done, a Scandinavian alliance might be desirable.

The Scandinavian question had been mentioned in many of the party programmes during the years immediately following the First World War. Then it faded out, to crop up again in the years just preceding the Second World War, though as far as the main parties were concerned in a very vague form. The National Socialist groups were the first to attack the problem. As early as 1934 the National Socialist Labour party programme spoke of "gathering the Scandinavian and Baltic peoples together into a federation of Scandinavian States," and the Swedish National Socialist party emphasised "Sweden's cultural and political responsibilities towards the Scandinavian and Baltic peoples"; what they had in mind was obviously an organisation directed against Russia. In 1936, Sweden's National League demanded the organisation of "a Scandinavian *bloc* of peaceful and neutral States"; in its 1938 declaration of policy, it spoke instead of "an armed *bloc* of peaceful and neutral Scandinavian States, which are ready to defend themselves." This year, the election programmes of the three main parties contained passages on the Scandinavian question. But they were non-committal in the extreme. The Conservatives demanded "Scandinavian co-operation on a realistic basis"; the Farmers' League and the Social Democrats merely referred to such co-operation incidentally though favourably. The People's party election programme did not mention the question.

The discussion about Scandinavia was conducted chiefly in newspapers and periodicals; only a small number of books or pamphlets were published on the subject. On several occasions lively arguments arose in connection with special incidents, as for example Stauning's speeches of 1933 and 1937 referred to above, the Finnish declaration of December 1935, Sandler's various speeches on the matter, the activities of the Scandinavian States at Geneva, and particularly threatening international situations. It is out of the question to give

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a detailed chronological account of the course of the debate here. I can only try to point out its more important elements, particularly such as they emerged during the later stages of the discussion.

Political co-operation between the Scandinavian States was only really seriously discussed as it affected the defence question. The proposals occasionally put forward by idealists for a Scandinavian union or federal state may be left aside. As regards co-operation for defence, various possibilities gradually took shape. One suggestion was for a real defensive alliance, under which the Scandinavian States would promise to send their combined forces to the aid of any one of their number which was attacked. Another suggestion was that two or more States should join forces for the defence of certain limited areas, the areas in question being, apart from Aaland, the "calotte"—the most northerly parts of Sweden, Norway and Finland approximately down to the Polar Circle—and Öresund; in the latter case it would probably be a question of building coastal fortifications so as to enable the entrance to the Sound to be closed. Finally there was the question of co-operation on certain forms of military preparation. Here the proposals ranged from such extreme demands as those for a combined air force or navy, to very modest measures such as help and co-operation in obtaining essential supplies, possibly even war materials proper, air raid precautions, etc.

The trouble was that the various alternatives could not be kept altogether distinct. Obviously the common defence of a certain area, or common action with regard to some particular defence measure or measures, could come in practice to the same thing as a defensive alliance. Besides this, it was not always diplomatic to try to maintain the distinction. These considerations made for obscurity in the discussion. The expression "joint Scandinavian defence" was frequently used as a generic term covering all the various possibilities of co-operation; it might mean a defensive alliance, or it might merely mean co-ordination of the production of war material. It was typical that the most active supporters of Scandinavian co-operation frequently said that they did not want a defensive alliance but only limited co-operation, but they supported their demands with such general and far-reaching arguments as would properly apply to a common defence policy. On the other hand the critics concentrated on the idea of a defensive alliance, and ignored the more limited forms of co-operation. Often the two sides seemed to be arguing at cross purposes, even where there was a genuine difference of opinion, because the real point at issue was obscured by the vague terminology.

On the whole the debate revealed a generally positive attitude, favourable in principle to the plans for closer co-operation. Even those who were fundamentally doubtful or sceptical about the more far-reaching proposals seldom offered any determined opposition,

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and generally contented themselves with mild reservations or unfavourable oblique references. This is partly to be explained by the fact that everyone desired closer Scandinavian co-operation, or at any rate better relations between the Scandinavian States, and feared that a violent reaction against proposals which went further than might be considered possible or desirable, might be injurious to the idea of co-operation in general. Probably, too, it was felt in many quarters that it might be quite a good thing if the impression were created abroad that Scandinavian unity was greater than it actually was. If potential aggressors believed that the Scandinavian States would assist each other in the event of war, it might act as a deterrent even though in actual fact such assistance would not be possible or might not be considered desirable.

The idea of a formal defence alliance found only few and not very representative supporters. That it appeared in some of the more extremist party programmes during the period immediately preceding the Second World War has already been mentioned. Occasional articles or series of articles were published arguing more or less definitely in favour of a defensive alliance, e.g. by Colonel W. Kleen in *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* in 1936 and by Colonel S. Bergelin in *Göteborgs Handelstidning* on various occasions. Military publications such as *Ny Svensk Militär Tidskrift* and *Tidskrift i Sjöväsendet* spoke of concerted Scandinavian defence measures in a tone which indicated that they regarded a defensive alliance as at any rate a desirable ultimate goal. Probably military circles would have particularly welcomed a defensive alliance with Finland; but they did not press the idea at all systematically or energetically during this period, perhaps because they had learnt by experience that military agitation on such a matter was more than likely to defeat its own ends.

Demands for the preparation of a—locally or otherwise—limited military co-operation were put forward, chiefly by military and Conservative writers, long before the Government took any steps in the matter or the Foreign Minister expressed his concurrence. Suggestions for the combined defence of certain strategically important areas (Åland, Östersund) and for co-operation in the production of war material and other preparatory measures, had been made in a number of articles during the period 1934—1936. Among the more important contributions to these questions at a later stage may be mentioned Colonel K. A. Bratt's *Perhaps We Shall Not Have War* (1937), which without going so far as a defensive alliance proposed the establishment of a combined Scandinavian Air Force, and Captain N. Björk's *Three Scandinavian Defence Problems* (1938), which recommended the official inter-Scandinavian investigation of the problems of the defence of Northern Scandinavia, Öresund and Åland.

The difficulty referred to above of differentiating between the

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more important courses of proposed action confronts us again as soon as we attempt to analyse the attitude of the main parties to the Scandinavian question. The Conservatives, it may be said at once, unquestionably showed the most vigorous and positive attitude. They, more than any other party, regarded Scandinavian co-operation as a sort of compensation for the League of Nations; the line on which they concentrated more and more was that the "Scandinavian *bloc*," whether the States belonging to it remained in the League of Nations or not, should be a body quite separate from and independent of the League. But it is difficult to establish exactly what leading Conservative circles meant by a "Scandinavian *bloc*," "mutual Scandinavian defence," "indivisible Scandinavian peace," and similar expressions.

Svenska Dagbladet during this period constantly emphasised the value of co-operation between the Scandinavian States. At the same time it criticised Finnish national aspirations and the Danish defence policy; these were the most serious obstacles to co-operation. On 21st April 1935 this paper wrote that "the Scandinavian peoples instinctively and in their own interests form a neutrality *bloc*, for which the maintenance of peace and the *status quo* in this part of Europe is such an obvious common goal that it should result automatically in a common policy." Immediately the Finnish Prime Minister made his Scandinavian declaration the same year, it urged that the Scandinavian defence problem should be taken up for mutual discussion. There was too much passivity about the Scandinavian policy now being followed; it was like "the bond of union which arises between people who gather in the same room because they are frightened of the thunderstorm crashing outside." Later, the paper supported various demands for co-operation and urged among other things the establishment of a common Scandinavian armaments reserve and a Scandinavian aircraft industry. If war broke out, the Scandinavian States should stand "united *and* prepared to defend themselves" (22nd May 1937). The first essential towards this end was that Denmark must arm: "So long as Jutland lies open and . . . could be occupied by mechanised forces in 48 hours, her abject helplessness will obviously increase the danger of war for the whole of Scandinavia" (16th December 1936). The paper approved Sandler's speech of April 1938 but urged more speed in the preparations (5th April). For all its frequent comment, it is difficult to tell how far this leading Conservative organ was willing to carry the idea of concerted action. For example, it took exception to the idea of "a regular treaty of alliance to be submitted to the representatives of the people for ratification," saying that "such naive and foolish suggestions only aroused hostility towards a Scandinavian defensive alliance," while at the same time it criticised newspapers which attacked plans for a defensive alliance and bitterly denounced Stauning's speech in Lund.

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A similar attitude was adopted by a great many representative Conservative papers. *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* began agitating at an early stage for "armed Scandinavian neutrality," though it did not want a "military alliance." Some of the articles published in this paper in the spring of 1938 offer a striking example of the difference in meaning which can be conveyed by an apparently insignificant change of phraseology. The leader on 23rd March contained the following statement: "If we in Scandinavia—sixteen million that we are—declare with one voice that we are determined to defend our freedom and our independence to the uttermost, that we regard the integrity of Scandinavia as the common affair of us all to east and south and west . . . then we have a foundation on which we, as democratic States, can confidently take our stand." When this statement met with criticism, the paper replied on 1st April: "No reasonable person can imagine that the problem of Scandinavian relations can be solved by merely pressing a button. But we are all agreed about the fundamental principle we have to follow. We should proclaim to all the world that a violation of Scandinavian independence is not the private affair of the State directly involved, but most deeply concerns Scandinavia as a whole . . . It is not one country, but four, which would feel threatened and violated, if an attack were made." The article first quoted can hardly be interpreted otherwise than as meaning that the Scandinavian States are prepared to help each other in the event of any attack from outside; the second article says nothing more committal than that an attack on one Scandinavian State also concerns the others.

Svensk Tidskrift, in an article in 1936 which attracted a good deal of attention, urged that there should be consultation between the military authorities to consider the possibility of attack on Scandinavia. But there should be no treaty obligations or defensive alliance. "The discussions could be limited to the subject of defence plans in the event of the Governments in question finding themselves in need of mutual assistance, and without binding Sweden to help any State which allowed itself to be drawn into a conflict between the Great Powers." The elementary conditions for a defensive alliance were lacking, "namely a real will in all the Scandinavian States, in this case Norway and Denmark, to organise such a strong defence as would ensure that obligations and advantages were equally shared." Two years later, the paper returned to the question and propounded on the whole the same points. A Scandinavian military alliance would require mutual control of foreign policy, but no one was prepared for such a step. It would be unreasonable, for example, to expect Sweden to guarantee the Danish frontier. An article by Professor Eli Heckscher of the same year expressed much the same opinions. The idea of a defensive alliance was not practicable in existing circumstances. "To pledge our aid to Powers which place their trust

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in unarmed security would probably, with our limited resources, be little better than suicide"; to form an alliance with one State which was in danger of coming into conflict with an aggressive Great Power but not with its opponent—he obviously meant Finland—would place a severe strain on Sweden's neutrality. Heckscher suggested, as had been done in this paper before, that the defence position would be greatly improved if all the Scandinavian States placed their defences in a satisfactory state.

Bagge, the Conservative leader, spoke frequently in favour of more intimate Scandinavian co-operation. At a meeting in Copenhagen of the leaders of the Conservative parties of the Scandinavian States in November 1936 he stated that the "Scandinavian peace bloc" could only become a reality on one condition: "That each of the Scandinavian States, individually and severally, creates for itself a satisfactory and effective defence, and that they then co-ordinate these forces with an eye to their functions in their immediate sphere of interest, the preservation of Scandinavian peace" (*Svenska Dagbladet*). In 1st March 1937 he discussed the Scandinavian question in a speech one passage of which, the most interesting in the present connection, deserves in view of its detailed and authoritative character to be quoted in full. After describing the international situation and its consequences for Scandinavia, he continued: "Scandinavia thus has a common destiny. It is certainly true—to take an extreme case—that, for example, Finland could not be expected to send troops to defend the southern frontier of Jutland, but it is also true that even Finland would be affected if Jutland were occupied in a conflict, say between Germany and Russia. Scandinavia's strength must lie in the combined resistance of States each individually armed. Unless the problem is looked at in this way, a dangerous vacuum will arise in our latitudes, which will increase our risk of becoming involved in war. A direct defensive alliance between the Scandinavian States is not necessary and in present circumstances not practicable, but it is to be hoped that there may be consultation and agreement on certain specific questions. A beginning has already been made with the official discussions on the questions of the maintenance of supplies in wartime, provision of war materials etc. More should certainly be done along these lines."

Finally may be mentioned a comment by the chairman of the Conservative Youth Organisation, T. von Seth, early in 1939 (*Kristianstads Läns Tidning*, 6th February). Von Seth considered a Scandinavian defensive alliance undesirable; among other things, it would undermine the sense of responsibility which the Great Powers ought, in their own interests, to feel for the inviolability of Scandinavia. On the other hand, there should be joint discussions for the defence of certain exposed areas of Scandinavia, armaments production, and general plans for concerted action. "Further than this no Scandinavian

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State should at present be prepared to go. But is not this a great step and a real advance? And must not the knowledge that a violation of the sovereignty of one Scandinavian State would release concerted military action in Scandinavia give pause even to States irrevocably set on expansion and power? . . . In this way Scandinavia, even without a defensive alliance, would become a military factor of importance."

We have dealt at some length with the Conservative party views, partly because they were more sympathetic towards Scandinavianism than those of any of the other main parties, partly because, in the years immediately preceding the Second World War, they spread more and more among the other parties and eventually influenced Government policy and Government declarations. Sandler's speech of April 1938 was really only a restatement of views which had been promulgated for years by authoritative Conservative spokesmen. What was said earlier about this speech really applies in all essentials to the speeches just quoted. These all, with few exceptions, denounced or in any case did not favour the idea of a defensive alliance, but at the same time assumed that a combined Scandinavian defence in the event of an attack on one State could and should be organised. It is hardly necessary to point out in detail the extraordinary verbal acrobatics to which this dilemma led. When they were denouncing the idea of a defensive alliance, all the speakers used qualifying phrases such as "a regular treaty of alliance," "military alliance," "direct defensive treaty"; when it was a matter of emphasising the strength of Scandinavian unity they spoke of a "neutrality *bloc*," a "peace *bloc*," "indivisible Scandinavian peace." In Bagge's speech of 1st March 1937—as in Sandler's of about a year later—this obscurity became a fine art. "Scandinavia's strength must lie in the combined resistance of States each individually armed . . . A direct defensive alliance is not necessary and in present circumstances not practicable . . ."; did this mean that military aid was to be given to a Scandinavian State which was the victim of attack, or not? It is strange that the Conservatives, who had sharply criticised the Social Democrats for their proposal for a "neutrality defence," were guilty of exactly the same confusion of ideas when it was a question of Scandinavia; they spoke of the defence of neutrality and peace, as though such defence were not in plain terms the same as war. The question arises again: did they hope, by emphasising that the defence of Scandinavia was indivisible, to frighten off prospective aggressors from attack without demanding—or at any rate without counting upon—such concerted action, if an attack really occurred?

The Conservatives did not speak absolutely with one voice. Some comments revealed a scepticism about the possibility of Scandinavian co-operation and a critical attitude towards the neighbour States which contrasted strongly with the predominant positive tone. This applies

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particularly to *Östgöta Correspondenten*, which in many respects took a line of its own. This paper criticised the obscurity of official policy, described the "pan-Scandinavian defence idea" as Utopian, pointed out the divergency of interest in certain respects between the Scandinavian States in the matter of foreign policy, and denied the existence of a strong sense of Scandinavian unity.

The groups of the non-Socialist Left, which in 1934 merged into the People's party, approved of Scandinavian co-operation in general and refrained from criticising Government policy in this respect, but on the whole they were more cautious and luke-warm than the Conservatives about its practical possibilities, and many of their representative organs criticised sharply all plans for anything in the nature of a defensive alliance. There was no question of a split in the party, but it is possible to distinguish a more positive and a more negative group among its leading papers. The former included *Göteborgs Handelstidning* and *Stockholms-Tidningen*, and to a lesser degree *Svenska Morgonbladet*. The main papers in the latter group were *Dagens Nyheter* and *Upsala Nya Tidning*.

Göteborgs Handelstidning published articles urging the formation of a Scandinavian defence league, and the comments of its leading articles showed that it considered such a league desirable. But at the same time it pointed out that various circumstances—the Finnish nationalist movement, Danish defence policy, Stauning's attitude—made such a development impossible at present. It had bitter things to say about the lack of real unity between the Scandinavian States: "Scandinavia is a geographical, perhaps a poetical, but not a political entity" (18th August 1937). On various occasions it proposed defensive co-operation with one of the Scandinavian States alone; in 1936 it was Norway, in 1938 Finland. From the tone of the leading articles, temperamental and highly individual as they are, one seems, however, to detect a great deal of sympathy for the principle of Scandinavian orientation but deep pessimism as to the possibility of its practical application. *Stockholms-Tidningen* frequently expressed general approval of a Scandinavian policy, but seldom went into details; this paper may be regarded as a good exponent of the official policy. The same applies with some reservation to *Svenska Morgonbladet*, as to a number of provincial People's party organs. There was no question here of a generally co-ordinated defence policy, but they lent their support to a common Scandinavian policy of neutrality: "Scandinavia as a whole will remain neutral and independent, and will defend its attitude with concerted forces," is a typical declaration (21st January 1938). They also stated that a neutral policy was necessary if only because it was the only one on which the Scandinavian countries could unite (21st March 1939).

The papers specified above as taking a more negative line all reveal general scepticism as to the possibility of Scandinavian co-

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operation, and criticise plans for a defensive alliance with a severity not to be found in the rest of the Press. *Dagens Nyheter* not only asserted that a defensive alliance was unthinkable in view of Denmark's unwillingness to defend herself, but wondered whether there was any sense in theorising about Swedish aid for the defence of Jutland, Danish help for Finland, and similar inter-Scandinavian operations. Whereas the Conservative Press and many of the People's party organs condemned Stauning's speech of March 1937, *Dagens Nyheter* treated it sympathetically: "If a man in his position disapproves so emphatically of attempts to bring about a military understanding, describes them as Utopian or positively dangerous, that should convince even the most ardent supporters of the idea of pan-Scandinavian unity that they might be more profitably occupied than in trying to force such an idea through" (9th March). This paper asserted later in the same year that, in the other Scandinavian States, the agitation for closer Scandinavian solidarity was a very superficial movement, and that even in Sweden it did not go very deep; "Let us above all not brag more than our neighbours" (15th November). *Upsala Nya Tidning* took the same line. A common defence of Scandinavia would be extremely difficult to carry out because of the great distances. The foreign policies of the different States must, in spite of everything, pursue such divergent aims that co-ordination was hardly possible. The most important question was, however, "Have we really, if it came to the point, any desire to fight for each other? Would the Norwegians fight at Systerbäck to defend Finland against Russia? Is there any prospect of seeing Finnish troops at the southern frontier of Denmark, if Germany tries to take southern Jutland, or can one imagine Danish artillerymen behind the guns of Boden fortress? . . . We entered the League of Nations in order to safeguard our security, the dangers inseparable from its obligations were firmly ignored and are probably not even now fully realised by the broad masses of the people, it has always been quietly assumed, to put it bluntly, that we should be able to back out of trouble when it came. Let us not go through all this again in the sphere of Scandinavian co-operation!" (21st January 1938). *Karlstads-Tidningen* wrote in the same spirit shortly before the outbreak of war (15th August 1939) that perhaps some day Scandinavianism might develop to such a pitch that "we are ready to sacrifice even our lives for each other . . . But to talk as though it were so already is either . . . irresponsible chatter or—at best—unconscious self-deception."

The Social Democratic Press backed the Government in its new course and supported the Foreign Minister's statements on foreign policy in his speeches of 1937 and 1938 which we have already discussed. The Social Democrats, unlike the Conservatives, insisted that Scandinavian policy must be conducted within the framework

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of the League of Nations. For the rest, they showed—as in the question of foreign policy in general—a certain hesitancy and certain not very clearly defined differences of opinion. In *Social-Demokraten*, Z. Höglund occasionally expressed sympathy with the idea of a defensive alliance without taking up a definite position. He suggested, for example, that there was already an unconditioned Scandinavian unity, irrespective of a defensive alliance. This should, said the leader of 28th March, “instil in us all a clear realisation of our mutual obligations.” Co-operation could be set on foot if war broke out; “Does anyone really doubt that in that case we should resist to a man any attack on ourselves or any of our peoples?” But on another occasion the paper commented that a Scandinavian defensive alliance would increase the risk of war for Sweden while reducing it for the other Scandinavian States, and disagreed with the view that Sweden should consider herself in duty bound to help her neighbour States. After Sandler’s broadcast of April 1938, Höglund expressed approval without pursuing the ideas contained in the speech any further. *Arbetet*’s leaders revealed frequent changes of opinion. They criticised the whole conception of a defensive alliance time after time. The real unity of Scandinavia did not lie in that direction. “The decisive factor for Scandinavian unity is, in the last resort, not the strength of her armaments or the solidarity of her military defences, but her grim determination to hold together on the basis of the principle that the nations of Scandinavia, by their contributions to European culture and their centuries of history, have established their right to live a free life” (6th February 1937). Later on this paper suggested, in accordance with its general attitude towards foreign policy, that if war came between Finland and Russia, a situation might arise in which the joint Scandinavian defence of Denmark against Germany would be necessary; “From a military point of view the only solution to the Scandinavian defence problem would be . . . if the eastern frontier could be made so secure that all the Scandinavian defence resources could be concentrated along the line of resistance to the south” (9th October, cf. 17th March 1937). Sandler’s broadcast of 1938 met with unreserved approval. Sandler was quite right to urge caution in the discussion of a defensive alliance, “but when he so strongly emphasised Scandinavia’s common interest in keeping all its members out of war, he gave a warning to the world which should not be misunderstood” (6th April). But at the same time the paper declared that, in the event of war, Scandinavia would most likely be split along three different lines, and only Denmark would be able to keep out (22nd March). Their efforts to reconcile loyalty to the Government with traditional or personal views produced equally curious results in other Social Democratic papers. On the whole, it may be said that the party Press rejected the idea of an alliance and showed less enthusiasm and

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energy than the Conservatives in championing the general demand for closer Scandinavian co-operation.

The most thorough-going criticism of the plans for a defensive alliance came, however, from Undén in *Dagens Nyheter* (31st March 1937). The discussion, said Undén, had no basis in reality. Those who were most enthusiastic in its favour would find themselves divided among themselves when the situation actually arose. Some would not have war in any circumstances with Russia, others not with Germany; others again were prepared to assist their neighbour States no matter who was the aggressor. The actual result of an alliance would be that chance or the policy of some other country would decide whether Sweden, in the event of a general war, would intervene on the one side or the other, "possibly on the side whose victory, in the view of a large section of the Swedish public, would spell the downfall of democracy in the world." Besides, an alliance would greatly increase the sanctions obligations already incurred under the Covenant of the League of Nations. "It is a curious anomaly that the idea of such an alliance seems to have been particularly well received by the very circles which would have Sweden discard her sanctions obligations . . . The system of collective security rests upon the assumption that the Members of the League are able by collective action to deter or check an aggressor. A League of Scandinavian States would not be able to offer its members a system of collective security. If we give each other ill-considered promises of mutual military assistance, the awakening will be as bitter as it was the last time when the sentiments of Scandinavianism came to be translated into action. The plans for a Scandinavian defensive alliance are one expression of a romanticism which, in spite of exorcism in public speeches and so forth, is beginning to appear again in forms highly reminiscent of the older Scandinavianism."

Of the attitude of the other parties little need be said. The Farmer's League, which during the period of the actual debate was represented on the Government, seems, so far as can be judged by its few comments, to have backed the official policy but without much enthusiasm. The Left-Socialist party organs expressed themselves on a few occasions as favouring a neutral Scandinavian policy, independent of the Great Powers and the League of Nations. The Communists could only accept a Scandinavian orientation if it were combined with the principle of collective security. The Syndicalists regarded Scandinavianism as an attempt to make the Scandinavian States the henchmen of British Imperialism.

During the year preceding the outbreak of the Second World War, the Scandinavian question was not so much discussed as it had been for the two preceding years. This may have been due to a certain extent to a general feeling that no immediate practical result—beyond the official military discussions—was likely to be gained. An im-

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portant contributory factor was undoubtedly that the interest previously devoted to the Scandinavian question as a whole was now concentrated on one particular and concrete aspect of it—the question of Swedish-Finnish co-operation for the defence of Aaland.

The comments made in a previous chapter about the discussion on a Swedish-Finnish defensive alliance (cf. p. 153 ff.) are also applicable in the main to the present discussion on a general Scandinavian defensive alliance or similar defensive organisation. The difference is that the latter case is far more complicated, the factors to be taken into consideration, far more numerous, and the mental processes involved in forming a considered opinion, far more difficult. There is no need, however, to repeat the analysis; all that matters has already been said. But some special points require further comment.

The ambiguity of some of the expressions in general use about the Scandinavian family of nations has already been pointed out. Such phrases as "common neutrality," "common defence," "peace bloc," "indivisible peace," were calculated to create an impression of an extremely close association, but were regularly used even where such an association was not recognised or desired. The whole debate bristled with formulae and declarations which it was possible and reasonable to interpret as promises of or demands for military assistance for any Scandinavian State the victim of attack, but which did not necessarily have to be interpreted in this way, and frequently, judging by the context, were not intended to be. In general it is impossible to say whether the obscurity was deliberate and served a definite purpose, or whether it was the result of muddled thinking. Often in such cases it is safe to assume that the lack of clarity is the result of an inner conflict of ideas, the components of which the author or speaker either could not or would not make clear; but to speak of deliberate confusion or dishonesty would be driving logic too far.

Even the expression "Scandinavia," already in current use, tended to add to the confusion, for it made it possible to argue as though the Scandinavian States already formed a united group, even though the subject of the argument was how far they formed or ought to form such a group. What, for example, was meant by the frequent statement that the peace and neutrality of Scandinavia must be protected? Was every State in Scandinavia to try to preserve peace, or were they all to work to this end by adopting certain joint aims in foreign policy, or were they all to join in the defence of any Scandinavian country that was attacked? In discussing the possibility of attack on Scandinavia, it was assumed fundamentally that an attack on one Scandinavian State would involve the others too, but the gist of the question was precisely whether that would be the case or not. This ambiguity

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comes out in countless statements, of which only a few have been quoted here; in one sentence Scandinavia is a collective term, a single unit, in the next it means four free and mutually independent States.

A similar difficulty arose, as has already been pointed out, over the word "neutrality." It was constantly said that Scandinavian neutrality must be defended, as though a defence of neutrality were anything other than war. In this way the actual fact, that a common defence in its real sense might lead to military co-operation, was concealed. But this expression was not a mere juggling with words. It reflected the idea that a potential aggressor might think better of attacking if he ran the risk of meeting, not one State, but four. The theoretical unity on which the speakers or writers counted would never need to be put to the ultimate test, because its, so to speak, theoretical existence would render its practical realisation unnecessary. But this amounted almost to assuming that eventual enemies would believe in the reality of a unity in which its own exponents did not believe, or of which they were at all events not convinced. Here again—and we must emphasise this point—it was not a question of a reasoned argument; the ambiguity was only one factor of a badly-thought-out general thesis.

The advocates of Scandinavian unity—in whatever form—diverged in their views on some points. The Conservatives, and still more the National and National Socialist parties, regarded Scandinavia as a sort of compensation for the League of Nations, and among certain circles propaganda for Scandinavia developed into a positive propaganda against the League. Large sections of the Left-Wing, on the other hand, held that Scandinavian unity should be supplementary to the League of Nations. This brings to mind Undén's remark, that some circles regarded Russia, others Germany, as being the State against whose aggression the Scandinavian co-operation was really directed. It is possible, however, that the majority in the main parties visualised a strict, all-round neutrality. In Scandinavia as a whole, the position was even more complicated: Finland feared attack by Russia, Denmark by Germany. Both the Russian and—to a lesser extent—the German Press revealed corresponding fears that the Scandinavian collaboration was directed against them.

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The Aaland Convention of 1921, prohibiting military installations or garrisons on Aaland, had been regarded from the first with suspicion in Finland. During the preliminary negotiations, Finland had urged that at any rate in the event of attack on the islands, she should be

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allowed a completely free hand there. The Swedish Government on the other hand, supported by an almost unanimous Press, insisted that Aaland must be demilitarised, whether it fell to Sweden or Finland. As already pointed out in the chapter on the Aaland crisis of 1917—1921, this was partly due to an inheritance from an earlier political attitude; Sweden had striven continuously for the defortification of Aaland when the islands belonged to Russia, and could not very well demand that they should be fortified if they passed into her own hands. A remilitarised Finnish Aaland would have been felt as a threat against Sweden, not least in view of the possibility that, in the event of a war, the islands might be occupied by some Great Power or even taken over with Finland's approval. Only very rarely was the opinion expressed in Sweden that, if she obtained sovereignty over Aaland, she should be released from the obligations of the 1856 treaty; the reason advanced was that an unfortified Aaland could easily be occupied by a Great Power and used as a base for military operations.

In Finland, criticism of the Convention continued, and there were frequent suggestions that it ought to be revised. To mention only one typical example, Field Marshal Mannerheim stated in July 1934 that the Convention undermined Scandinavian security, as it left the sea passage between Sweden and Finland undefended. Direct proposals for the fortification of the islands were made by Finnish military experts and politicians. The Aaland Islanders energetically opposed these plans, which they held would threaten their independence. Germany, after the victory of National Socialism and her own rearmament, took a positive interest in the matter, which was believed to be largely due to the fact that, in the event of a war with Russia, she wanted Aaland fortified as a protection for her Baltic iron ore transports; she apparently assumed that in this event Finland would observe a friendly neutrality towards her or even become her ally.

In Sweden too, the matter was referred to in various connections before it became the subject of a more general discussion. The pamphlet *Either—Or* (1930), to which reference was made above, took the line that the Convention created a situation far more dangerous to peace than if Finland—or Sweden—were in possession of a strongly fortified Aaland, because neither of these Powers could be suspected of wishing to exploit the islands for offensive purposes. *Svensk Tidskrift* expressed the same view in 1932. A naval expert, Helge Strömbäck, suggested in a work on the Baltic problem in 1936 that the combined fleets of Finland and Sweden should be able to protect the Aaland islands by mining operations etc. without the need of any actual military installations. Members of the National group tabled a motion in connection with the 1936 Defence Bill, demanding that steps should be taken for the abolition of the demilitarisation regulations and that Sweden and Finland should under-

take the defence of the islands jointly. Occasional newspaper articles suggested similarly that the principles on which Sweden had hitherto based her Aaland policy should be reconsidered. But there can be no doubt that, up to 1938, authoritative opinion was generally against such plans. Its attitude was clearly expressed by Sandler, the Foreign Minister, in a speech at Uppsala in December 1934: "As regards Aaland, a question which concerns the nine other signatories to the Aaland Convention besides Sweden, I say that the existing *status* is not a matter for discussion by the Swedish Government. This question is regulated by the treaty in force. The great Baltic Power which, being then opposed to the League of Nations, did not sign the agreement, is now, as a Member of the League Council, sharing its task of ensuring that the existing *status* is maintained, and cannot be supposed to desire any alteration." None of the big parties at this time or during the next few years expressed any desire for a revision of the Aaland Convention, even though occasional hints to this effect appeared in the Conservative Press.

About the end of 1937 and the beginning of 1938, discussion on the Aaland question suddenly flared up, and a few months later secret negotiations were opened between the Swedish and Finnish Governments. The general combination of circumstances which brought the question into sudden prominence is obvious: the bankruptcy of the system of collective security, the danger of a war between the Great Powers, Finland's Scandinavian orientation, the strengthening of the Swedish defence forces, placing her in a position to undertake military commitments. From the beginning, however, opinions differed sharply, and the differences only increased as the discussion proceeded.

The first contributions came from the more extremist groups. The Communist paper *Ny Dag*, starting on 30th December 1937, published a series of alarmist articles revealing alleged Finnish and German plans to fortify Aaland. On 3rd January 1938, *Aftonbladet's* military correspondent "Sir V.," well known for his German sympathies, declared in connection with German statements on the subject that a remilitarisation of Aaland would be in the interests of both Sweden and Finland. It should be added that, in a leader a few days later, the paper repudiated its correspondent's views, and later in the month published several articles which were decidedly sceptical towards the proposed plans. In the next few weeks, a number of papers took up their positions. *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* (26th and 28th January) demanded the revision of the Aaland Convention and joint Swedish-Finnish plans for the defence of Aaland. *Morgontidningen* (24th January) raised the question of whether an undefended Aaland were not "rather a magnet to the opposing parties if war came than an area banned for military operations," and expressed itself in favour of the idea of revision. The Communist and Left-Socialist papers violently

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attacked such plans, while *Nationell Tidning* supported them. But the great majority of newspapers, including the leading organs of the main parties, refrained from expressing any definite opinion at this stage. *Ny Tid* seems to have been the only Social Democratic paper to do so; it declared (21st January) that the remilitarisation of Aaland would be in the interests of Germany, that no one could tell which Power would benefit from a Finnish fortification of Aaland, and that it was therefore "definitely to Sweden's advantage that the Aaland Islands should remain unfortified and demilitarised."

The subject was also eagerly discussed in Finland about this time. Demands for a revision of the Aaland Convention and for some kind of Swedish-Finnish co-operation were raised in various quarters, among others by R. Erich, the former Prime Minister (Unity party) and by R. Sventorzetski, the Social Democratic chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Finnish Riksdag. In Finland the predominant attitude from the start was favourable towards revision. The Finnish Government certainly declared its intention of respecting the Convention, but this did not prevent its entertaining plans for a modification. Its statements on the subject caused considerable uneasiness in Aaland, and this was voiced at the meeting of the Aaland Landsting on 17th February by the Aaland Provincial Governor and the Speaker of the Landsting. A few weeks later it became known that negotiations were in progress between representatives of the Finnish General Staff and Aaland representatives. It was rumoured that there was a question among other things of introducing conscription on Aaland; under the Law of Home Rule, which could not be altered without the consent of the Aaland Landsting, the Aaland Islanders were not liable to compulsory military service, although they could be called upon instead to serve in the lighthouse and pilot service.

The Finnish and Aaland contributions, possibly also secret information received from the Swedish Government, stimulated the discussion in Sweden. On 27th February the chief Conservative organ, *Svenska Dagbladet*, entered the fray; its military correspondent, Lt. Col. C. A. Ehrenswärd, was one of the most energetic advocates of remilitarisation, and later took an active part in preparation of the military plans. This paper stated that the guarantee provisions of the Aaland Convention were no longer satisfactory, now that the weakness of the League stood revealed and many of the guaranteeing Powers no longer belonged to it. Added to this was the increased danger of lightning attacks owing to the development of air warfare and of modern weapons in general. It was therefore necessary for Sweden to "consider what could be done to protect the Aaland Islands from foreign occupation and so ensure both Sweden and Finland against political or military pressure, which might jeopardise the freedom of action and independence of us both." Aaland's co-operation would

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be necessary, and it was to be hoped that the Aaland Islanders would overcome their objections to conscription, provided guarantees to respect the rights of the Swedish population were given by Finland and honourably respected. *Svenska Dagbladet* became during the ensuing period perhaps the most energetic advocate of revision and of the Government's policy on the Aaland question in general. *Dagens Nyheter*, which later went over to the other side, at this stage expressed itself in general terms in favour of a reconsideration of the Convention (27th March). This no longer provided the necessary guarantees. "The procedure is too slow for this age of rapid decisions and modern air forces, and during the seventeen years which have elapsed since the Convention was drawn up, the League of Nations has, to say the least, lost much of its authority and power. We must try to evolve something more in accordance with the age in which we live." The first detailed military exposition of the case for Swedish-Finnish co-operation for the defence of Aaland was given by Capt. N. Björk in a lecture on 16th February. A number of articles, particularly in the Conservative Press, expressed more or less vague agreement with the proposals put forward in Finland; *Dagens Nyheter*, in a sceptical and ironical article on 4th April which contrasted strangely with the paper's earlier views referred to above, said that the uniformity of the Press comment "reminds us of community singing under a conductor who has his choir marvellously in hand." (The two leaders were written by different editors).

There is no need to consider in detail the Press discussion which took place during the spring and summer of 1938, as both the line of argument and the grouping of political parties became clearer after the Government had declared its official attitude in the early autumn of the same year. But it should be recorded that positive interest during the early stages of the debate was strongest among the Conservatives, while the People's party was divided, *Dagens Nyheter* representing the more hesitant side, *Stockholms-Tidningen* and *Göteborgs Handels-tidning* the side more in favour of revision; the Farmers' League and the Social Democratic Press, with the possible exception of small provincial papers which may have passed unnoticed, did not express any opinion on the matter until the Government had declared its position.

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In April 1938, negotiations on the Aaland question began between Sweden and Finland on Finnish initiative. In May and again in July, discussions took place in Stockholm between the Foreign Ministers of the two countries accompanied by special experts; on the latter occasion, agreement was reached on the most important points, and the proposals were worked out which served as a basis for the Bill presented to the Riksdag in the spring of 1939. The subjects and

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progress of the discussions were kept secret throughout. No statements were made on the matter to the Swedish Riksdag. But the Government frequently consulted the Foreign Affairs Committee and in general, according to later accounts by the Foreign Minister, worked in full agreement with that body. On 3rd May the Foreign Minister held a Press conference, attended by twenty-four journalists, at which he urged them to exercise restraint in discussing the problem in their newspapers, in order to prevent prejudgment by the public before the Government had fully considered the matter—a warning to which they obviously attended. Sandler's only public references to the subject occurred in two speeches he made in April, in which he suggested that it might be possible for the Scandinavian States to co-operate for the defence of certain limited areas, and surveyed the causes which had brought the Aaland problem into prominence. During the five months from 8th April to 8th September, when the proposal for Swedish-Finnish co-operation was drawn up, neither the Foreign Minister nor any other member of the Government ever referred to the question in public in any connection.

Towards the end of August, the Aaland plans began to come to light. Members of the Aaland Landsting visited Stockholm and Helsingfors to carry out certain enquiries, after which a secret session of the Landsting was held in Mariehamn to discuss the matter, and the Swedish Foreign Office made a statement to the effect that the Swedish and Finnish Governments were considering questions connected with the security of the Aaland Islands. A few days later, on 8th September, Sandler made a speech at Finspång in which for the first time he gave a detailed account of the attitude of the two Governments; a similar statement was made simultaneously by the Finnish Foreign Minister. Sandler began by saying that the silence which had been observed must now be broken. "I have always realised that the patience of the Press must reach its limits sometime, and the time has now come when it will do good rather than harm to open the floodgates, at any rate so far as the general aspects of the question are concerned." After recalling the terms of the Aaland Convention, Sandler stated that the Swedish and Finnish Governments considered certain modifications necessary and hoped that it would be possible to effect these by negotiation. There was no question of renouncing the treaty. "The internationally recognised special position of the Aaland region as a permanently neutralised zone, which accordingly could not be used for military operations, has never been in doubt. The whole of the limited programme now under consideration is based on the Aaland Convention itself and is designed to further the same object, the peace of Aaland. It is a question, in a word, of setting a padlock on the neutralised zone and preventing surprise attacks, against which existing provisions do not give sufficient security." Fortifications were not necessary for this purpose. All that

was needed could be attained by two modifications in the Convention. The southern boundary of the demilitarised zone—Sandler used the word “neutralised” apparently in error—would have to be redefined. This change—although Sandler did not mention the fact and it conflicted with his statement about the general maintenance of the prohibition of fortifications—must mean that military installations of some kind would be permitted on the islands south of the new boundary. Secondly, the demilitarisation regulations for the remainder of the Aaland region must be relaxed, so as to enable, for example, anti-aircraft guns and coastal artillery to be emplaced. These arrangements would not “enable Aaland to be used for military operations and so would not infringe the international inviolability of the region. They could have unpleasant consequences only for anyone approaching the islands for unlawful purposes. And for such a contingency they should be sufficiently unpleasant to reduce the probable risk to a minimum.” Sandler repeatedly emphasised how vital it was that the Aaland Islands, in the event of war, should not fall into the hands of a Great Power. “Aaland to-day is a vacuum which might be dangerous to our two Scandinavian States. It can, without losing its own privileged special position, be converted into a corner-stone in the neutrality preparations of us both.” At the same time Aaland, which had long been a “bone of contention between two neighbouring States,” would become “a bridge to increased understanding.” As regards the attitude of the Aaland Islanders, Sandler hoped that they would be willing to co-operate in the defence of their homeland.

At this stage, the Swedish Press as a whole began to interest itself in the Aaland question. But before considering this discussion, which continued with increasing intensity throughout the winter and the following spring, it would be well to give a brief survey of the external incidents up to the presentation of the Aaland Bill to the 1939 Riksdag. It should be noted that certain features of the proceedings are not yet clear; but sufficient is known to enable us to block in the general background to the debate.

On 27th October the Aaland Landsting was summoned by the Finnish Government to an extraordinary meeting. The Government then laid before it proposals for an amendment to the Law of Home Rule enabling conscription to be introduced in Aaland, and for a Conscription Law. Under the latter proposal military exercises were to be limited to purposes of home defence only, and the language used in training was to be Swedish. As the Conscription Law was not to be included in the Law of Home Rule, its provisions could, however, be altered without consulting the Aaland Landsting. The views of the members of the Landsting varied. But all were agreed that any regulations relating to conscription should be included in, or be subject to the same conditions as, the Law of Home Rule. The

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majority expressed themselves in favour of retaining the Aaland Convention unaltered. A "procession of peasants", in which thousands took part, was also organised and demonstrated in favour of retaining the Law of Home Rule and the neutrality Convention unaltered. The spokesman of the demonstrators, who later visited Sweden, declared that the reopening of the Aaland question might possibly also mean the opening of wider perspectives, or in other words, hinted at the possibility of a movement for the reunion of Aaland with Sweden.

Early in November, fresh discussions began between the Government delegations in Helsingfors. Just before this, the Swedish Foreign Minister had made another speech, in which among other things he revealed that the Swedish Government had been prepared during the September crisis to consider co-operation with Finland for the defence of Aaland in the event of war, and uttered a warning against any attempts to revive the old dispute about sovereignty over Aaland. During the discussions which followed, the Aaland Islanders were invited to lay their own views before the Finnish and Swedish delegations. When the discussions ended on 7th November, a statement was issued announcing that the agreement previously reached on measures to be taken to assure Aaland's neutrality had been confirmed. Aaland's special position would not be weakened by the steps under consideration. A joint technical committee, including a representative for Aaland, was to investigate measures to ensure a proper state of military preparedness on Aaland and the introduction of military training there.

On the following day, 8th November, Boheman, Swedish Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, broadcast the first at all detailed account of the Swedish-Finnish plans. The Convention, he said, as Sandler had suggested in his speech of 8th September, required modification in two different respects. Certain islands and skerries in the southern part of the group should be entirely excluded from the demilitarised zone and Finland should be free to erect there defensive installations, including fortifications, of whatever kind she pleased; the meaning of Sandler's declaration of 8th September thus became clear. On the remainder of Aaland, military preparations of a defensive nature should be allowed for a period of ten years: this included the stationing of troops, anti-aircraft defences, coastal artillery, etc.; fortifications in the full sense of the word should not be erected. In the event of war or the danger of war, plans were in existence—the speaker did not specify details—for "joint Swedish-Finnish intervention on the Aaland Islands themselves for the defence of this island group, seeing that it was vital to the neutrality of their two countries"; this was the first intimation that the transfer of Swedish troops to Aaland was contemplated. Boheman concluded by saying that it was felt that the people of Aaland themselves should contribute to the defence of their islands. Their interests should be

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guaranteed. For example, all troops sent to Aaland should have Swedish as their mother tongue, and the military training of the islanders themselves should be conducted in Swedish.

The Government delegations met again early in January 1939, and drew up the final plan for united action which is generally known as the Stockholm plan. On 7th January they issued a statement outlining briefly the contents of the plan, though it really said little more than had been made known in November. As before, it was emphasised that the plan would only be put into operation if the other interested Powers agreed. It was also stated that "the Finnish Government agrees to include in the Bill to be submitted to the Finnish Riksdag, introducing conscription for the province of Aaland, an undertaking that the officers concerned should all be Swedish-speaking and establishing Swedish as the language of command for Aaland military units." The Stockholm plan was accepted by the two Governments, which then applied to the signatory Powers to the 1921 Convention for approval of the proposed temporary relaxation of the demilitarisation provisions of the Convention; the notes mentioned that the consent of the League of Nations would be sought later. A note was also handed to the Russian Government, requesting the Soviet Union as a Member of the League Council to use its good offices in favour of the Swedish-Finnish proposal. All the notes stated that the proposals had been considered necessary because of "the weakening of the League of Nations security system and the present political and military difficulties in applying the guarantee system provided for in the 1921 Convention . . .," but also stated that the League of Nations guarantee, incorporated in Articles 6 and 7 of the Convention, was to be preserved. Sweden nevertheless reserved the right, "as the nearest guaranteeing Power and in view of her own vital interests, to take part at the request of Finland in the application of the defence measures provided for in Articles 6 and 7 to ensure the neutrality of the Aaland Islands. Any request to intervene in the above-mentioned contingency will be rejected by the two said Powers."

During January and February six of the signatory Powers—Denmark, Estonia, France, Great Britain, Latvia and Poland—notified their agreement to the proposals. The French reply stipulated that her assent was "conditional upon the agreement of the other interested Powers," and the British reply stipulated that the Soviet Government should be consulted and the question submitted to the League of Nations Council. Germany and Italy did not reply until the beginning of May. Their answers too were favourable, although they pointed out that there was a discrepancy between the reason given for the proposal, namely the weakening of the League of Nations, and the declared intention to retain in all essentials the guarantee system

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established in 1921. When all the replies had been received, the Swedish Government on 5th May asked the Riksdag's approval of "an agreement relating to the defence of the neutrality of the Aaland Islands", in general accordance with the texts annexed to the Bill: the report of the Government delegations of 7th January, and the notes to the signatory Powers and to Russia. I will deal later with the history of the Aaland question after presentation of this Bill.

Relations between Finland and Aaland continued to be strained. The Aaland Landsting, at its continued session after the Helsingfors conference, refused to deal realistically with the proposal for the introduction of conscription on Aaland, one of its objections being that it ought not to be possible for a Conscription Law to be altered without the consent of the Landsting. In June 1939, the Finnish Government submitted to the Landsting fresh proposals, which largely met the Aaland criticisms. The Conscription Law was to be subject to the approval of the Landsting, the language of command and training on Aaland was to be Swedish, all service personnel stationed on Aaland were to be Swedish-speaking. This proposal too the Landsting rejected at the end of June 1939 by 21 votes to 7. It argued that the period of validity of the Conscription law was not limited, and that civil-military personnel who might be sent to Aaland did not need to be Swedish-speaking. An address, attacking the Swedish-Finnish proposals for modification of the 1921 Convention and signed by practically the whole adult population of Aaland, was sent to the League of Nations Council in April 1939. "Aaland considers," it stated, "that the proposed alteration would constitute a serious danger to the solemnly pledged neutrality of the Aaland Islands and the application of the nationality guarantees embodied in the Law. In view of the possible consequences which an alteration in the *status quo* might have, and of their responsibilities towards future generations, the people of the Aaland Islands feel it their duty to make a serious protest against the measures now planned, which directly threaten their well-being." The attitude of the Aaland Islanders was severely, sometimes bitterly, criticised in Finland by both the Finnish and Swedish population. In Finland proper only a few Finnish-Swedish papers, such as *Vasabladet* and *Svenska Finland*, seem at this time to have been critical of the Swedish-Finnish plans and sympathetic towards the Aaland point of view.

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Discussion of the second Aaland question, as of the first, took place chiefly in the Press, although this time pamphlets and speeches on the subject were more numerous than in 1918—1921. The Riksdag again played a very subordinate part in the discussion, and an investigation of arguments and opinions limited to the Riksdag records

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and other official sources, would give a thoroughly one-sided and inadequate picture.

We will now consider under one heading the discussion which took place outside the Riksdag from the time of the first official statement of Government policy on the Aaland question, i.e. the end of August 1938, up to the presentation of the Bill at the beginning of May 1939. Under this treatment it will not be possible to trace the development of the different points of view so clearly as could be done in a chronological account, but the modifications which took place can to a certain extent be indicated, and in any case they were not important enough to justify a detailed and lengthy account. The brief Riksdag debates on the subject will be dealt with later.

As in the first Aaland discussion around 1920, it was frequently stated that public opinion was unitedly behind Government policy. This was certainly true of the leading groups in the four main parties, though their degrees of enthusiasm varied. All the leading politicians of these parties who expressed their views either inside or outside the Riksdag, in the main supported the Government, and the only open opposition inside the Riksdag came from the Communist and Socialist parties. But an investigation of the Press shows that in many respects public opinion was divided and confused. Government policy received its strongest support from the Conservatives and the Social Democrats. By far the greater part of the Conservative Press was decidedly in favour of the Aaland plan; perhaps the greatest enthusiasm was shown by the leading Conservative papers, principally *Svenska Dagbladet*. But whereas the Conservatives were obviously divided, the Social Democrats were practically completely united. After the Government declaration of attitude, hardly any criticism of the political reorientation appeared in this section of the Press; the few exemptions will be dealt with later. But the tone of the Social Democratic Press in general was unquestionably less enthusiastic than that of the majority group of Conservative papers; the discussion was unusually keen in *Arbetet*, *Social-Demokraten* and *Örebro-Kuriren*. It is worth mentioning, though it may not have any particular significance, that *Tiden* never mentioned the subject, while *Svensk Tidskrift* supported the Government in a number of articles. The Farmers' League accepted the Aaland plan, though to judge by the Press, without much enthusiasm; Westman, the Minister of Justice, defended the Government's action in an energetic and much-discussed speech at the beginning of April 1939. In the People's party, opinion was sharply divided; the majority of the party's newspapers, among them *Stockholms-Tidningen*, *Svenska Morgonbladet* and *Göteborgs Handelstidning*, supported the official policy. *Nationell Tidskrift*, the organ of the National League, pleaded passionately for an active policy on Aaland.

Definite opposition was shown by the parties which otherwise

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represented the extreme opposites in Swedish politics: the National Socialist groups proper, the Socialists, and the Communists. *Aftonbladet*, particularly during the spring of 1939, conducted a systematic campaign against the Government policy. Other papers unquestionably antagonistic were *Helsingborgs Dagblad* and *Göteborgs Aftonblad*, which generally took the same line as the National League, as well as certain Conservative papers which were also closely associated with this League: *Östgöta Correspondenten* and *Göteborgs Morgonpost*. Other Conservative papers, such as *Härnösands-Posten* and *Smålands Allehanda*, also showed a certain lack of enthusiasm and a tendency to criticise Government policy on points of detail. Many of the People's party organs, such as *Dagens Nyheter*, *Karlstads-Tidningen*, *Eskilstuna-Kuriren*, *Hudiksvalls Nyheter*, *Jönköpings-Posten*, *Vestmanlands Läns Tidning*, *Västerbottens-Kuriren* and *Bohuslännningen*, adopted a sceptical though, at first at any rate, not hostile attitude. In the later stages of the discussion, many of these papers must be definitely reckoned among the opposition.

Early in March 1939, some of the opposition to the Aaland plan took shape in what was known as the Aaland Committee. The circle associated with this Committee was even more remarkably heterogeneous than the opposition in general. It included, for example, persons who were known for their sympathies with the new German régime—such as Major-General Falk, Professors Gottfrid Carlsson and Nilsson-Ehle, E. Ridderstad, the editor of *Östgöta Correspondenten*—as well as Selander, the editor of *Eskilstuna-Kuriren*, the Social Democrat Lindhagen, the Left-Socialist Flyg, the historian Yngve Lorents and Dr. Lennart Norrlin, all of whom had previously taken little part in politics. The Aaland Committee organised a number of political meetings against the Sandler policy and published a series of pamphlets (*Publications issued by the Aaland Committee*). In view of its curious and not very representative composition and its extreme views, the Committee was an easy target for attack by supporters of the Government policy.

Only the most outstanding features of the discussion can be dealt with here. On no other question of foreign policy during the period under consideration was the argument for and against so involved and complicated, and a full account of it would need a book to itself.

The military and political arguments in favour of the Aaland plan, as set forth in Sandler's speech, the 1939 Bill, and a number of representative statements by military and political experts and the leading newspapers, were in the main these.³¹ The danger of a war between the Great Powers involving the Baltic had greatly increased of recent years. At the same time the intervention by the League of Nations to protect Aaland's neutrality, provided for in the 1921 Convention, had become less probable and the value of the League guarantee in general had diminished. In a war between the Baltic

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Powers, however, the occupation of Aaland would have great strategic importance, and it was therefore to be feared that, if such a war came, one or more Great Powers would seek to occupy Aaland, either for their own ends or to prevent its falling into the hands of their opponents. If Aaland were demilitarised and the League of Nations inactive, such occupation would meet with little resistance. Possession of Aaland by a Great Power would constitute a serious danger to both Sweden and Finland, but more particularly to Sweden: it would facilitate air attacks and landing operations against the central parts of the country, and enable sea communications between southern Sweden and Norrland to be easily cut. Consequently defensive measures must be taken in advance on Aaland; Aaland should be remilitarised for the purpose of securing its neutrality in accordance with the Convention, i.e. to prevent belligerent Powers attacking it or exploiting it for military purposes. The approaches to the Aaland Sea and the Aaland mainland should be protected by more permanent fortifications erected on the three southernmost islands of K kar, Bj rk r and L gsk r; these fortifications would help in the protection of transports from Sweden to Aaland, but would not in themselves be suitable for operations against Sweden, as they would not be within effective artillery range of Swedish coastal waters. In the remainder of the Aaland area less permanent fortifications would be required, chiefly anti-aircraft guns and other mobile defences. In the event of war, the defence organisation would have to be increased, and in this connection it would be reasonable, in view of Sweden's interest in Aaland's neutrality, for Swedish troops to be sent to Aaland and the Swedish Navy to co-operate in holding open communications between Sweden and Aaland. The Swedish-Finnish co-operation envisaged would, of course, be dependent on the two States being neutral and their Governments agreeing to set the plan in operation. It was not directed against any particular Power; actually it was in the interests of all Powers that Sweden and Finland should protect their neutrality. The proposed co-operation would also benefit general relations between the two States and the Scandinavian States in general. "The establishment of more intimate relations between the Governments of Finland and the other Scandinavian States, in particular Sweden, also offers good prospects that the old differences between the two national groups in Finland itself may be speedily forgotten," ran the text of the Bill. "It is reasonable to hope that a settlement of the Aaland question will further strengthen those harmonious relations in Scandinavia which it is the constant concern of the Swedish Government in every way to promote."

With this general line of argumentation as basis, it was quite possible to assert diametrically opposed views on certain essential points. Some such were put forward in the discussion, even though the most authoritative contributions showed a natural tendency to

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avoid more complicated and delicate questions. The defence of the Government policy was therefore, regarded as a whole, confused and contradictory.

As to the bearing the Aaland plan would have on Sweden's foreign policy and commitments, the leading politicians contented themselves on the whole with saying that it was a question of securing neutrality: in the first place, that of the Aaland Islands, in the second place, of Sweden, in the third, of Scandinavia. The co-operation that was to be established under the plan between Sweden and Finland was indeed variously regarded; whereas most people spoke of a policy "within the framework of neutrality," Undén stated in one of his speeches that the plan would constitute a departure from pure neutrality. But these turns of phrase are of minor interest. What matters is the fact that the essence of the plan was declared to be the preservation of neutrality, i.e. the endeavour not to become involved in war. Consider, for example, Sandler's broadcast of April 1938, which amounted to a definite declaration of a neutrality policy. He also stated, obviously with reference to the Aaland question, that Scandinavia's resolve not to become involved in war might result in an "armed neutrality extending even to military operations"; it was possible to imagine "limited areas or questions in respect of which a co-ordination of the defence forces of all or several of the Scandinavian States would increase our prospects of avoiding war." The only common enemy was "the danger of war." This line of reasoning was characteristic of all the authoritative statements. They carried the argument to the point that the remilitarisation of Aaland would prevent the warring Great Powers from occupying Aaland and so coming dangerously close to Sweden. But they stopped short of the next question, what would be the effect of Sweden's Aaland commitments, if in spite of the remilitarisation Aaland were attacked by a foreign Power, whether in conjunction with a general attack on Finland or not. Would not her Aaland commitments mean in this case that Sweden would become involved in a war which she might otherwise have avoided?

This cardinal point was not discussed in detail, so far as I have been able to ascertain, by any responsible politician. It was referred to but little even in the Press which most closely reflected Government opinion, but which on this point followed the Government in silence. On the other hand it was raised, either openly or by inference, in a number of other papers which supported the Aaland plan. Some of them even showed a certain degree of uneasiness. *Göteborgs Handelsstidning* was at first doubtful about Swedish-Finnish co-operation (9th September) because of the heavy commitments it would bring, but later came round to the view that Sweden's own interests demanded that she should provide military aid for the defence of Aaland (11th November). It often stated that the Aaland plan was the

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beginning of, or a step towards, a defensive alliance with Finland, but then it pointed out that at bottom it was only a question of the defence of Aaland, so that the risks were limited. *Nationell Tidning*, on the other hand, declared that the plan really meant a Swedish-Finnish defensive alliance directed against Russia alone, as Finland could never be imagined to be willing to go to war with any other State. "The fact that, in the Aaland agreement, Mr. Sandler is actually creating a Swedish-Finnish defensive alliance which it will not be easy to back out of, is more important from the national point of view than the fact that Mr. Sandler himself and certain other groups describe the agreement as the product of a Scandinavian Popular Front." A similar view, though differing in its conception of the ultimate political consequences, may perhaps be read into certain Social Democratic newspapers, which on the one hand violently attacked German policy and defended the principle of collective security, on the other asserted that Sweden could not keep out of a war between the Great Powers, that the Aaland plan should be put into effect and that Finland should be prepared to defend Aaland against any aggressor. From this point of view, the chief exponent of which was *Arbetet*, the Aaland plan must, even if this were not expressly admitted, be regarded primarily as a defensive alliance directed against Germany. *Örebro-Kuriren* remarked that the demand for remilitarisation "is not formally directed against any particular State. But since Germany is the strongest naval Power in the Baltic, it is directed more against Germany than against any other Power."

The assumption on which the plan for the joint defence of Aaland rested was that Sweden and Finland would remain neutral in the event of a war between the Great Powers, i.e. would restrict themselves to defence in the event of attack. It was assumed, in fact, that it would be possible to distinguish clearly between a war of attack and defence, although the difficulties likely to be met with had already been frequently emphasised. Sweden thus became dependent—as a number of commentators pointed out—on Finland's real will to maintain her neutrality. It was argued in favour of the Government policy in this respect that the agreement on co-operation would in itself strengthen Finland's determination to remain neutral. Thus: the agreement was based on the preservation of neutrality, but would by its very existence contribute towards this, would itself ensure the conditions on which it was based. A comment made by *Svensk Tidskrift* is typical. It was possible, this paper wrote, that Finland would not remain neutral in a future war; in that case, it could be taken for granted that Sweden's neutrality too—irrespective of any agreement—would be endangered, and that Finland would break the Aaland Convention without the consent of Sweden and the other signatory Powers. The essential thing about the agreement was therefore that Sweden "gives proof of the sincerity of her will to co-operate, and—

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not least in view of Germany's feelers for the purpose of attaining closer German-Finnish co-operation—lends support to those forces in Finland which are working for the preservation of the Scandinavian orientation; that Sweden can assert with better right than before that Finland's neutrality is a common Scandinavian interest; and that foreign Powers are deprived of a pretext for interfering in our mutual affairs."

We need not concern ourselves here with the essentially military aspects of the question. No concrete particulars were given of what Swedish-Finnish co-operation would really mean. Responsible Service Chiefs stated that the plans were calculated to secure Aaland against attack by a Great Power, but as the plans were secret, they could not give any concrete basis for this statement. As to the consequences the Aaland plan would have for Swedish defence policy, opinions differed. The Foreign Minister stated in a speech in November that the neutrality defences which were necessary for the Aaland Islands in their existing *status* could be considerably reduced "when the installations planned for the Aaland area have been established"; a similar idea was conveyed by the Bill of 1939. Both the military experts and the Conservative party asserted on the contrary that when the Aaland plan was put into effect, stronger military establishments would be required in various areas.

Thus the supporters of the Aaland plan contradicted each other on every particular as to what it would really mean. They said it was a product of the neutrality policy, but also a deviation from it. They described it on the one hand as a limited military commitment, on the other as a defensive alliance. Some said it was directed against Russia, others against Germany. It was based on the assumption of Finnish neutrality in the event of a war between the Great Powers, but was also regarded as a condition for that neutrality. It would enable Sweden to reduce her defence forces, but also compel her to increase them. These contradictions were glossed over in the most authoritative statements by merely describing the plan and its consequences in general terms, without dwelling upon or analysing the delicate points.

The reaction by supporters of the plan to the Aaland Islanders' resistance to it is of minor interest from the present point of view. It may be mentioned that the Swedish Press, while emphasising the importance of guarantees for Aaland, frequently criticised the Aaland Islanders' attitude and urged them to give in to the demands for conscription and other alterations in their legal *status*. These opinions were sometimes quite sharply expressed, and the constant insistence on the duty of the Aaland Islanders to adapt themselves to Finnish-Swedish wishes contrasted, as the opposition Press pointed out, with the respect for the views of the Aaland people which had been the basis of Swedish public opinion eighteen years previously. During

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the spring of 1939, however, the tone changed to a certain extent, particularly in the Conservative Press, probably largely on account of certain Finnish statements which suggested a tendency to ignore the guarantees to the Aaland people or even to abolish their minority rights. It was pointed out with increasing firmness that the agreement could not be finally accepted unless Aaland's special position was assured to the fullest possible degree. But it was hoped that these questions might be finally settled by mutual agreement between Finland, Aaland and Sweden, once the changes in the Aaland Convention had been effected by international negotiation.

The Social Democratic newspaper *Arbetarbladet* wrote, in an attack on the opposition to the Aaland plan (7th February 1939) that the agitation against the Government policy came from certain political "types," such as pacifists and anti-Finns. The position may be stated more objectively by saying that the opposition rested on two main lines of argument: on the one hand, uneasiness that the Aaland plan might involve increased danger of war, on the other, suspicion of Finland, combined with the desire to support the Aaland Islanders or even, in certain groups, to revive the question of the reunion of the Aaland Islands with Sweden. If the Government supporters were a heterogeneous collection, so were their critics. A combination such as National Socialists, Conservatives with Nazi sympathies, members of the People's party, Socialists and Communists could hardly all be actuated by the same motives. Divergencies do appear in the debate, but are not nearly so marked as might reasonably have been expected, if each party had revealed its motives honestly. But they, like the Government supporters, showed a tendency to uniformity, to emphasising those points which they had in common and glossing over anything which might offend other groups in this fortuitous and ill-assorted combination.

The section of the People's party which deviated from the majority and criticised Government policy with increasing asperity concentrated chiefly on the question of what effect the Aaland plan would have on Swedish foreign policy in general. The most influential mouth-piece of this group was *Dagens Nyheter*, a paper which did not begin to offer definite opposition to the plan until the summer of 1939, though even before that its tone had been distinctly critical. Immediately after Sandler's first account of the Swedish-Finnish negotiations, it emphasised (10th September) that the extent of the proposed Swedish commitments was not clear, and that a certain hesitation was therefore natural. "A representative of, shall we say, the military 'Either—Or' point of view, would not, of course, be subject to any doubts. If you have made up your mind more or less clearly from the start for a form of co-operation between Sweden and Finland which would have the force, if not the form, of a defensive alliance, then the proposed Aaland agreement would appear as a great step

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towards the goal . . . But others who have definite reasons—among others the possibility of difficulties arising in connection with our neutrality if a crisis came—for fearing a connection of this kind, will not find it so easy to view the proposed arrangement in its entirety with satisfaction.” How far would Sweden contribute to the defence of Aaland? What would happen if Finland’s and Sweden’s interests parted company in a world war, if the neutrality policy of the two countries did not fit into the same framework? Was Russia likely, as had been assumed, to agree to the revision of the Convention? These points were further developed and emphasised in a series of later articles. The paper pointed out, for example, how difficult it would be to guarantee a common policy of neutrality in a world war which might perhaps last several years. If Swedish troops had once been sent to Aaland, it would be difficult to recall them if the conditions on which the Aaland convention was based, became obsolete, for example if a conflict arose which was not connected with the Aaland policy. There was a certain amount of suspicion in Sweden of Finland and her intentions. Sweden could not, and did not hope to, gain anything by a war. But with Finland, in the Swedish view, the position was different. “Finland is a young, recently-established nation, which would not have anything against gaining certain advantages by a war and whose main interest, in the opinion of certain circles, is not to avoid war, but to be on the ‘right’ or victorious side. Sweden cannot be convinced that the democratic system which is so firmly established among her own people would have strength to survive in her Eastern neighbour if it were put to the test. And finally she views with concern, in spite of the valued assurances of the present Government, the growing pressure on the Swedish race and Swedish language in Finland . . .”

This argument was reproduced in different forms by the section of the Press of the People’s party which was doubtful or critical of Government policy. Did not the Aaland plan really amount to a defensive alliance, was it not an attempt to re-introduce by the back door the very plans for alliance with Finland which had already been put forward by certain circles and rejected by public opinion? Other opposition groups asked the same question too, although their criticism was mainly concentrated on other points. To the general fears of an alliance with Finland was added distrust of her future policy. Finland might turn Nazi, and then “a fortified Aaland would become a threat to all Scandinavia” (*Hudiksvalls Nyheter*). Aaland might fall into German hands as the result of a Finnish-German alliance against Russia (*Bohuslänningen*). The possibility that the fortifications on Aaland might be used against Sweden was particularly stressed by the Aaland Committee and the newspapers which supported it, such as *Aftonbladet* and *Östgöta Correspondenten*. The proposed installations on Aaland, wrote Colonel Lagerlöf in one of

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the Publications issued by the Aaland Committee, would "greatly facilitate military operations against Sweden or constitute a useful method of exerting pressure on Sweden"; as Finland might conceivably enter a combination of Powers directed against Sweden, "a fortified Aaland would be a latent threat to our neutrality." *Östgöta Correspondenten* voiced the same thought: "No one can foretell the future course of Finnish foreign policy. In various circumstances the guns of these fortifications might be turned against Sweden. We should then find ourselves in the exact strategic situation which we have been seeking for generations to avoid." It was often pointed out in this connection that Lägskär, one of the islands to be fortified under the plan, lay less than eighteen miles from the Swedish coast.

The extreme opposition groups asserted that the Swedish-Finnish plans were really designed to serve the interests of certain Great Powers, or in any case would do so in practice. But their views as to which Power or Powers were involved were directly opposed. According to the Communist and Syndicalist Press, the Aaland plan was inspired by Germany and represented the first step towards closer relations with her; a remilitarised Aaland would satisfy the wishes of the Swedish capitalists by protecting the export of Swedish iron ore to Germany in the event of a war between Germany and Russia. Flyg, the Left-Socialist leader, declared on the other hand in speeches and articles that Great Britain intended in the first place to use Sweden, Aaland and Finland as connecting links with Russia to complete the encirclement of Germany; or if she was not able to achieve closer relations with Russia, then she intended the Swedish-Finnish alliance as a buffer against Russia. This policy, according to Flyg, was backed by "international big finance." Pro-German Conservative circles which were opposed to the Aaland plan also occasionally suggested that it was designed to throw a bridge between the Western Powers and Russia. The National Socialists took a similar view, although they regarded the plan as mainly an expression of Greater Finnish expansionism; Germany's approval, they said, was due to a misunderstanding of the real position.

The second main line of argument against the Aaland plan was more restricted in scope: it concerned the relations between Sweden, Aaland and Finland. Here again, opinions were conflicting in the extreme. The most important group, the opposition of the People's party with *Dagens Nyheter* at their head, together with certain groups of Government supporters, strongly stressed the need for guarantees for the continuance of the special privileges, such as home-rule, enjoyed by the Aaland Islanders. But they seem to have taken little account of the wishes of the Aaland Islanders themselves. The otherwise heterogeneous groups which were united in the Aaland Committee took a different line. They attacked Finnish policy in general, and regarded the attempt to change the *status* of Aaland as

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part of a systematic policy for bringing the islands under Finnish domination. In their eyes the interests of Aaland and Sweden coincided, and the revival of the Aaland problem offered an obvious opportunity for again pressing the old demand for the union of Aaland with Sweden. The campaign conducted by the Aaland Committee, in which some Aaland Islanders took part—although most adopted a policy of wait and see—rested upon Branting's statement in Geneva in June 1921, that the right of self-determination would eventually be granted to the Aaland Islanders. The first public meeting organised by the Committee, on 14th February 1939, passed a resolution to the effect that the Aaland Convention should be retained unaltered, and that everything should be done to sustain "the constant hopes of the Aaland Islanders, supported by the earlier efforts of Swedish statesmen both at home and in the League of Nations, that Aaland, that ancient Swedish settlement, should some day, in accordance with the principle of national self-determination, be returned as justice required to its rightful motherland." This view was supported, though with different degrees of enthusiasm, by *Aftonbladet*, *Folkets Dagblad*, various National Socialist publications, *Östgöta Correspondenten*, *Göteborgs Morgonpost*, *Göteborgs Aftonblad*, *Helsingborgs Dagblad* and *Eskilstuna-Kuriren*. This last was the only organ of the People's party to demand the reunion of Aaland with Sweden; it held—unlike the others—that Aaland should be fortified but only if it became Swedish.

This demand for an active campaign for the reunion of Aaland with Sweden seems, judging by the minutes of meetings and other sources, to have won some support outside the groups which first initiated it. It never became a serious rival to Government policy on the question. It was rejected, firmly and generally contemptuously, not only by the Government supporters but also by the greater part of the opposition Press (the People's party and the Communists). The reasons given were the same as had been advanced eighteen years earlier by a minority of the Press against the Aaland policy of that day: the principle of nationality could not be applied to all areas, and to press it in this particular case would mean Finland leaving the Scandinavian circle, or even a Swedish-Finnish war.

The Aaland discussion was also influenced a great deal by considerations other than the actual matter in hand. The Government, and particularly the Foreign Minister, was criticised by a large section of the non-Social Democratic Press, even by circles which in principle agreed with its policy, for exaggerated secrecy in its treatment of the problem. It was pointed out how for a long time absolute secrecy had been observed, how after that the information given had never been sufficient to enable the Press and the general public to form their own opinion, and how the statements made by leading politicians had been apparently deliberately vague and ambiguous in tone. Looking back

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on the discussion, this criticism appears particularly well justified. The silence of the Foreign Office may, of course, have been dictated by considerations of discretion forced upon it during the negotiations with Finland. It is also conceivable that it was considered tactically advisable, as a means of preparing public opinion step by step to accept a far-reaching change of policy which, if revealed at once, would have provoked a violent reaction. Whether in this case these tactics were successful, or whether they merely caused irritation, cannot be judged.

Meantime the pro-Government Press, in particular the Social Democratic Press, relied on the general arguments always employed in discussions on foreign affairs to silence opposition. They emphasised the importance of unity in a difficult situation, pointed out how attacks at home would injure the Government's prestige abroad, appealed to the people to trust in their "responsible" representatives, and accused the opposition of irresponsibility, negativism, partisanship and demagoguery.

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The Speech from the Throne to the 1939 Riksdag contained a statement that negotiations were in progress "relating to the safeguarding of the Aaland Islands as a neutralised area." On 13th January, both Chambers met in secret session and heard an account of the development of the Aaland question and the result of the recently concluded negotiations in Stockholm.³² The sittings lasted about two hours. Sandler explained later (21st March) that the relevant information had been given in advance to the party groups, and that all that happened at the sessions was that spokesmen of the leading parties declared their support for Government policy.

In the *remiss* debate a few days later, the Aaland question was referred to by a number of speakers, but mostly only in general terms. The spokesmen of the Conservative and Social Democratic parties emphasised their solidarity with the Government (Bagge, Domö, Åkerberg). The Prime Minister (the Foreign Minister was in Geneva) stated in reply to one speaker that the Swedish Government hoped it would be possible to settle the Aaland question in co-operation with the Aaland Islanders. The Social Democrat Lindhagen asked for the application of the principle of national self-determination. Only the Left-Socialist and Communist speakers discussed the matter at any length. They mostly repeated views already familiar from the Press. The Aaland policy, said the Communists, was inspired by Germany; to Sweden, a remilitarised Aaland would be a danger, not an added security. Flyg declared that the Government had systematically whipped in the parties and the Press, and that the support for its Aaland policy, given at the secret sessions, had been more or less

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forced. No detailed concrete information on the question was forthcoming in the debate.

The only public Riksdag session at which any real debate took place on the Aaland question was in the Second Chamber on 21st March 1939. The occasion was a question by Flyg, who asked for information as to the contents of the Stockholm plan and the Government's views on questions connected with this plan. The question was answered by the Foreign Minister, who now gave the first detailed account of the Swedish-Finnish negotiations and described the contents of the Stockholm plan in full. The chief interest in the present connection lies in the Minister's defence of the Government against charges of "excessive secrecy," and his extremely bitter attacks on its critics.

On the first point, the Minister stated that a certain amount of discretion had been necessary and that the contents of the plan could only be revealed little by little. "It is reasonable that public opinion should desire concrete information on which to base its own judgment, but this desire must be satisfied with an eye to the effect on the discussions and negotiations in progress..." The Government had, however, realised that it could not on its own authority confront the nation with a *fait accompli*, and had therefore kept in close touch during the various stages of the negotiations with the Foreign Affairs Committee. The Press, too, had been kept informed at various confidential Press conferences—on 3rd May and 7th November 1938, and again on 10th January 1939. The number of journalists present on these occasions had varied between 24 and 42; it was evident, therefore, that the whole of the Press had not been invited. Some of the Foreign Minister's statements in this connection were startling. He said, for example, that the Press had been allowed to know more than the general public—"but it would seem natural that the Press, which is there to inform the public, should know more than it." This statement might be interpreted as an argument in favour of the principle that the Press should be used by the Foreign Office to prepare public opinion to receive the Government's views. His reference to the fact that the Press had been asked to exercise restraint, and not to commit itself "unnecessarily" to any definite point of view "before it had been possible to weigh and consider all the various factors of the problem," pointed in the same direction. Another of his sentences also attracted attention: "I know of no occasion on which such full information has been given to the Press as in the present case." In his speech at Finspång on 8th September Sandler had stated, as already mentioned, that "the patience of the Press must reach its limits some time," and was obviously working on the assumption that this limit was already reached at the time he made the speech, or in other words he seemed to feel that the Government could not withhold information on the subject any longer.

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The Foreign Minister then turned on the Opposition, and in particular the groups which had tried to revive the question of sovereignty over Aaland. It had been wrong to seek to sow suspicion of Finland's will to neutrality and Scandinavian orientation. The critics—"a multifarious group"—should offer their alternative. "What is it? To veto any change? Passivity? Acquisition of Aaland? They should also explain what effects their policy would have on relations between Sweden and Finland, and try to take some account of the rights of the Aaland Islanders." He characterised the agitation for the reunion of Aaland with Sweden as injurious to the State. "To sow dissention between Sweden and Finland is hardly the right way to read the signs of the times and pass on the message to the small nations. We cannot allow the policy of the responsible Swedish Government to be deflected along such a dangerous course by a handful of individuals."

Two of the leading Conservatives, Bagge and Ivar Anderson, made short speeches declaring their own and their party's adherence to the Government policy. Bagge said that a happy solution of the Aaland question should improve understanding between Sweden and Finland. But before it could be achieved, Finland would have to show respect for the rights of the Aaland Islanders, and they in turn should consider their duties. The Swedish Navy would have to be strengthened to enable Sweden to fulfil her commitments under the plan. A third Conservative, R. Lundqvist, regretted that the plan had not been laid before the Riksdag before being finally approved by the Swedish and Finnish Governments, and spoke again of the lack of publicity in the earlier stages of the discussions; but he expressly stated that he was not opposed to the scheme. The Conservative party, as Ivar Anderson emphasised in his speech, stood unitedly behind all that Bagge had said. Andersson i Rasjön, the leader of the People's party, recalled that "when the question came up for discussion before, he had expressed certain doubts, and he would have preferred to see the Swedish Government from the start courteously reject Finnish representations on the subject," this chiefly "for fear of the complications which might be expected to arise in the course of the diplomatic negotiations . . ." In the existing circumstances, however, he thought that the plan should be carried through; "If we were to turn back now, our relations with Finland would be seriously impaired and our international prestige would suffer." If opposition were met with from any of the signatory Powers or the League Council, the question would have to be reconsidered. The attempt to revive the old Aaland question met with no response, according to Andersson i Rasjön, in responsible political quarters. In conclusion he suggested that the Foreign Office had observed too great secrecy in its earlier handling of the question. Another member of the People's party, however, O. E. Sandberg, seconded by a third, opposed the plan. It increased Sweden's danger

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of becoming involved in war. "One can never be sure that two States, however much they have in common, will be found in a delicate situation to have the same interests and the same power of resistance to the attempts which will probably be made to force them to take sides in a conflict. In these circumstances it is unfortunate to have a military agreement on an outstanding point with another State. And if we should feel it necessary to withdraw from the agreement—in so far as this was practicable—the fortifications which we have helped to encourage would remain as a direct threat to us." Besides this, the proposed fortifications on Aaland would probably not be very effective against a powerful attack. Of the two Social Democrats—besides Sandler—who spoke, one, A. Råstock, agreed briefly with the Government, while the second, Lindberg in Umeå, supported by another member of the same party, briefly explained his reasons for hesitation. "If I am dubious on this matter, it is because the Stockholm plan envisages Swedish military commitments, voluntary though they are, on Aaland. The consequences of accepting such a principle . . . may be serious enough. But I fear also that the inclusion of this clause in the Stockholm agreement may in the future, instead of strengthening the bonds between us, become a source of friction between Sweden and Finland." Lindberg had already (though not until after the secret sessions of the Riksdag) criticised the Aaland plan in his newspaper—the only Social Democratic organ which failed to support the Government.

The longest speeches, apart from the introductory statement by the Foreign Minister, were made by the Left-Socialist Flyg and the Communist Hagberg. Flyg complained of the secrecy which had been observed in the early handling of the question, and of the lack of full information even at the existing stage. Without knowing exactly what the Finnish fortifications on the southernmost Aaland Islands were to amount to, they could not reasonably be expected to accept the Stockholm plan. When the Swedish Government received the Finnish representations the previous year, it should have taken up the Aaland question in its entirety, i.e. the question of the reunion of the islands with Sweden. The present plan might result in Finland dominating the entrance to the Gulf of Bothnia, in Swedish Service men being required in certain circumstances to serve abroad, and in difficulties consequently arising over Sweden's policy of neutrality. "The plan would mean that Finland in time of peace, *and some Great Power in time of war* . . . would obtain military control over Aaland and its Swedish population, and that Sweden would have helped to bring this about." There would be constant friction over the implementing of the plan, and this would mean worse, not better, relations between Sweden and Finland. Hagberg expressed complete disagreement with Flyg and the Aaland Committee, and objected to the plan, which in his view was inspired by Germany, on other grounds. "As we see the

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matter, the fortifications on Aaland will turn Aaland into a theatre of war. The Government's subservience to Finland on this point will certainly drag not only Finland, but Sweden too, into a future war. Probably Finland will have to surrender Aaland to whatever Power demands it. But this in its turn will place Sweden and Finland in an altogether intolerable situation. If Germany is interested in the fortification of Aaland, as the tone of the German Press seems to indicate, this may not be entirely due to her anxiety to be able to transport iron ore unmolested from Norrbotten to the German war industries. It must seem still more important in German eyes that, if she could obtain possession of a fortified Aaland, she could hold Sweden and Finland in a vice, practically paralyse the administrative functions in the two countries, and subject their Governments to the same sort of coercion that we saw exerted on Prague a fortnight ago."

The Foreign Minister, who wound up the debate, said that the Chamber appeared to be in favour of a positive contribution "in this branch of Swedish neutrality policy . . ."

A number of motions was put forward for the rejection of the Aaland Bill. One by Lindhagen, others by Flyg and other left-Socialists, demanded that the right of national self-determination should be recognised, i.e. revived the question of the reunion of Aaland with Sweden. Three members of the People's party in the Second Chamber moved rejection on the grounds that the Aaland Islands could be protected without any alteration in the 1921 Convention, and that the proposed co-operation with Finland would involve difficulties. But neither the Bill nor the motions were ever considered by the Riksdag. On 2nd June 1939, less than a month after the Government had presented its Bill, it decided to withdraw it.

The reason was that Russia had objected to the revision of the Aaland Convention. At the meetings of the League of Nations Council on 22nd and 27th May, Sweden and Finland asked the Council's approval of the proposed modifications to the Convention which had already been accepted in principle by the signatory Powers.³³ The Commissioner appointed by the Council reported at its second meeting that the Council had only undertaken to assume certain functions specified in Article 7 in connection with the Convention, and that modification was not required in this article. The conclusion must be—although this was not clearly specified—that the signatory Powers did not need the approval of the Council in order to grant the Swedish-Finnish request. But the Russian delegate Maisky, who was the chairman of the Council, asked for the question to be postponed; if an immediate decision had to be taken, Russia would vote against the Swedish-Finnish proposal. The reason he gave for this attitude was that the object and extent of the proposed fortifications

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were not clear, and that they might possibly be used by an aggressive Power against Russia. Sweden and Finland had, of course, informed Russia of their plans, but had not, as in the case of the signatory Powers, asked for her approval in advance. Sandler, supported by the Finnish Foreign Minister Holsti, pointed out that the report had ruled that only the approval of the signatory Powers was needed. He presumed that such approval had already been given, and "that it only remained for Finland and Sweden to agree upon a date in 1939 on which the proposed measures should be placed in operation." To Maisky Sandler expressed his hopes that the Soviet Government would reconsider its objections to the Swedish-Finnish agreement, as the security of the Aaland region was a matter of interest to all the Baltic Powers. The French delegate referred to the French Government's note on the question, and hoped that "the agreement of the signatory Powers to the 1921 Convention would soon be confirmed by the consent of the other interested Powers." The British delegate merely recalled the previous attitude of his Government. Maisky concluded the debate by declaring that the Council had not reached any decision.—A speech made by the Russian Foreign Minister Molotov on 31st May showed that Russia was definitely opposed to the granting of the Swedish-Finnish request, and regarded the remilitarisation of Aaland as a threat. She did not admit any special right of Sweden's to protect Aaland, and Molotov indicated that on the contrary Russia occupied a special position in this respect. But she did not definitely refuse to discuss the Swedish-Finnish plans.

The meaning of these negotiations at Geneva is not altogether clear. According to the Commissioner's report, the Council had no say in the matter; but this view had not been confirmed by a Council decision. Even if the Commissioner's view were accepted, it might be argued that the British and French declarations—taken in conjunction with their previous notes—constituted a demand that the approval of Russia as well as of the signatory Powers must be obtained. Sandler, whose main speech was made before the declarations in question, did not refer to this question. To judge by his recorded speeches he, like Holsti, seems to have taken the line that only the consent of the signatory Powers was required, and that this had already been obtained.

The only explanation the Government gave in withdrawing the Bill was that, in view of various unexpected circumstances, it had become necessary to postpone preliminary discussion of the measure. But as the matter would have to be decided quickly, it might be necessary to summon the Riksdag later for an extraordinary session. The Press assumed that the Government intended to open direct negotiations with Russia. The Riksdag adjourned on 17th June. The same month, the Finnish Riksdag passed the Finnish Government's Bill on the subject, including the voting of appropriations for the re-

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militarisation of Aaland and regulations governing the introduction of conscription there; but, as already mentioned, this law was rejected by the Aaland Landsting.

Discussion on the Aaland plan continued for the next few months up to the outbreak of war. The outstanding question was whether to proceed with the plan even without Russia's approval. On the whole, the same division was maintained between Government supporters and opposition as before, but it was clear that the sceptical attitude was gradually gaining ground, and criticism of the Government becoming stronger.

Russia's action was generally criticised in the pro-Government Press, which saw a connection between that and the negotiations then in progress between Russia and the Western Powers with reference to Russia's special rights in the Baltic States and Finland. Certain differences of view were evident even at the time of the Geneva meeting and the withdrawal of the Government Bill. The Conservatives were inclined to regret the shelving of the plan, and various statements appeared urging that it should be proceeded with in all circumstances, all the more so as the Finnish Government had not withdrawn its corresponding Bill. Just before the announcement of the withdrawal of the Swedish Government Bill (3rd June), *Svenska Dagbladet* wrote that any such measure would be interpreted as a retreat before Russia; it might also give rise to doubts "whether the Swedish Government understands what *serious neutrality* means . . ." Similar views were expressed at about the same time by a number of other papers. What had happened showed, wrote *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* (3rd June), that there was a real danger of a tug-of-war about Aaland if war came between the Great Powers, and that consequently the security measures proposed in the Aaland plan were very much needed. *Karls- hamns Allehanda*, which was typical in this respect of a number of provincial papers, stated (8th June) that Russia's attitude only confirmed the fears which had led to the framing of the Aaland plan. "Now that it is seen that the situation which the Aaland plan envisages and which it is intended to protect us against, is likely to arise, it would really be the height of inconsequence and national irresponsibility to throw the whole plan overboard . . . That would mean capitulation in the face of a misunderstanding of our foreign policy." It was also suggested that the dropping of the plan might be interpreted as an unfriendly act towards the States which had agreed to a revision of the 1921 Convention. Such suggestions were sometimes coupled with sharp criticism of those in charge of Sweden's foreign policy, for not anticipating Russia's resistance. The remainder of the Press which supported the Government on the whole approved unreservedly of the withdrawal of the Bill, and expressed itself, more definitely than the Conservative papers, in favour of separate negotiations with Russia. The Social Democratic organs in particular frequently ex-

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pressed their doubts as to what would happen if Russia maintained her veto. *Social-Demokraten* (4th June) attacked the Conservative papers which wanted to "force" the Aaland plan through, and urged negotiations with Russia, but declared at the same time that it was not compatible with the neutrality policy of Sweden or Finland "to make the realisation of the plan dependent on the attitude of the Soviet Government"; "the Russians should not be given the impression by Swedish public opinion that they can sabotage the plan or force Sweden out of her clearly defined neutral attitude." The uncertainty apparent in these statements may possibly have been due to the fact that, as stated in the Press, disagreement had arisen in the Social Democratic Riksdag group. The People's party organs which were favourable to the plan generally took the line that the question must definitely be postponed; an exception was *Stockholms-Tidningen*, which declared that in any case the formal obstacles to its realisation were now removed.

On 14th June the leader of the Conservative party made a speech in which he stated that it had been right to postpone the Aaland plan in order to avoid bad feeling with Russia (Bagge: *Tal 1939—1941*). But he pointed out that Russia's attitude was only another manifestation of her determination to acquire a special position with regard to Finland. The Aaland plan must not in any circumstances be abandoned, but must be put into effect in the near future. "It would be both unworthy and unwise to fail Finland in this way, and not to throw all our strength into putting the preliminary agreement for the defence of Aaland into effect." He added: "If the Aaland plan were dropped, the consequences to our country would be extremely serious. That it would also mean moral bankruptcy for the Government which produced the plan, must be evident to the majority parties." On 18th June, Undén made a speech in which he defended the Aaland plan while admitting that it constituted a "departure from the policy of absolute neutrality"—a statement which roused lively comment, though it was evidently only intended as a statement of fact. On 30th July, Sandler took the matter up in a speech at Stocka. He severely criticised the suggestion of a Russian-British-French guarantee system for Finland, which would involve the limitation of Finland's independence. Sweden had made her position on the Aaland question clear in Moscow—obviously without tangible results. Sweden must, of course, pursue a policy of caution, "but that is not the same thing as a policy of fear, of failure to assert and protect Swedish interests on the false supposition that if you only keep quiet in your corner, no one will disturb you." This and other statements suggested that the Government intended to return to the question of implementing the plan in the near future, irrespective of Russia's resistance. On the same day as this speech of Sandler's, Westman, the Minister of Justice, gave a similar account of the Government's attitude. These statements,

taken in conjunction with what had been revealed of the Government's plans at the time of the Munich crisis the year before, suggest that the Government was considering the transfer of Swedish fighting forces to Aaland if war broke out.

When it contemplated carrying out the Aaland plan even without Russian agreement, the Government had the support of that section of the Conservative Press which had favoured its policy from the start—but it should be mentioned that a number of Conservative papers, such as *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, were still undecided at this time. *Svenska Dagbladet* was particularly anxious to see the plan put into effect. Sandler also received active support from the majority of leading Social Democratic papers, in particular *Social-Demokraten* and *Arbetet*. Their tone was quite different by the beginning of August from what it had been in June; they demanded the immediate implementing of the plan and violently attacked the opposition, which they said was subservient to Russia. But a great many Social Democratic papers did not take part in the discussion. In addition, most of the Farmer's League Press—in so far as it expressed an opinion—and a group of People's party papers, foremost among them *Stockholms-Tidningen* and *Göteborgs Handelstidning*, supported Sandler. They emphasised particularly that Finland needed Sweden's support in the existing circumstances, as the negotiations between Russia and the Western Powers might result in certain demands. Otherwise Finland, where there was considerable impatience at the Swedish hesitation, would not be able to maintain her Scandinavian orientation. The refusal of the Western Powers to accept Russian claims might, wrote *Svenska Dagbladet* (5th August) be due to their knowledge that "an overwhelming popular opinion in Sweden shares Finland's view that she is entitled to maintain a clear-out Scandinavian policy." The opposition's fear that the Aaland plan might lead to war represented "a flight from the seriousness and responsibility of our policy of neutrality. For this demands as an essential condition the will and ability to defend ourselves effectively."

It is obvious, all the same, that a considerable change came over public opinion during these summer months. Newspapers which had previously been critical, set themselves more vigorously against the plan than ever. Others which had been uncertain went over to the opposition, either on the grounds of the general dangers inherent in the plan, or more frequently because they did not think it should be put into effect immediately in the face of Russian opposition. For these same reasons other papers which had previously supported the plan, became doubtful or critical. These changes were most apparent in the People's party Press. Among the many of its papers which noticeably changed their tone may be mentioned *Svenska Morgonbladet*, *Upsala Nya Tidning*, *Göteborgs-Posten*, and the party leader's own paper, *Falu-Kuriren*. By about 1st August, most of the representative

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party newspapers were against putting the Aaland plan into effect for the present. In addition, a number of Social Democratic papers which had previously supported the Government, observed a silence which was felt to be significant.

It is not possible to go into all the various shades of criticism in detail. The whole field came to be dominated by the question of what would be the effect of an active policy on Sweden's general position. The arguments were most clearly presented in *Dagens Nyheter*; in addition to the leading articles (generally written by Dr. Leif Kihlberg), special mention may be made of a long article on 16th June by Dr. Johannes Wickman.

The opposition case was that earlier in the debate it had been assumed, even by the Government, that the Aaland plan would require the approval of the signatory Powers, the Council of the League of Nations and other interested Powers, and also the consent of the Aaland people. It was doubtful whether any of these conditions had been fulfilled, but beyond doubt they had not all been. The League of Nations Council had not given the unequivocal approval which had been expected. The signatory Powers had agreed in principle, but so far as Great Britain and France were concerned, with reservations which seemed to imply that their approval was conditional upon Russia's co-operation. Russia—the State most closely concerned apart from the signatory Powers—had refused. The objections of the Aaland population remained. Even the fact that Russia refused to agree, however, made it extremely risky to put the plan into effect. Sweden would be striking out (Wickman) on “an entirely new policy which, in the existing circumstances, would mean a Swedish-Finnish alliance, far removed from neutrality, in opposition to the Power bloc Great Britain—France—Soviet Union, and inevitably dependent upon Germany.” The Stockholm plan could be likened to “a Swedish attempt at suicide for fear of being murdered” (Dehlgren). It was also asserted that the very fact of the plan being put into effect might lead to a Russian attack on Finland, and that Sweden would then inevitably be involved. Altogether it would only be reasonable to carry it out, wrote *Upsala Nya Tidning* (14th August) if it was assumed that Sweden could in no circumstances remain outside a future war: if this assumption were not granted, then the plan would mean the deliberate renunciation of every hope of remaining neutral. Criticism of the particular point at issue was combined with severe censure of the Government and in particular of its conduct of foreign affairs. Sandler, it was pointed out, had originally assumed that the plan would be accepted by everyone, even by Russia; Russia's action at Geneva had come as a complete surprise; the whole Aaland policy had therefore been built on false premises. *Falu-Kuriren* in a significant article (12th August) urged the opposition not to attack the Government too hard, or the

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Aaland question would become a question of prestige for it, which would cause the Government parties to gather closer together.

According to various Press statements, the Government at the beginning of August could count upon the support of practically the whole Right-Wing and the Farmers' League in attempting to carry through the Aaland plan, while most of the People's party and some Social Democrats were expected to oppose it. Definite information as to the state of party opinion on this question at that time is not really available, as the Riksdag was not sitting and so opinions had no outlet.

The Russo-German Treaty of Alliance, published on 22nd August, altered the whole background to the Aaland question. During the next few days up to the outbreak of war, only a few papers referred to the subject. *Stockholms-Tidningen* stated (26th August) that the Stockholm plan certainly had not the same immediate urgency now that it had had before, but that it might be best to carry it through quickly, as in existing circumstances no objections could be raised by the great Baltic Powers. *Dagens Nyheter*, on the day before the German attack on Poland, uttered a warning against any idea of a Swedish-Finnish occupation of Aaland if war came. In addition to the objections already raised to the plan, there was now the further consideration that the strongest argument in its favour—the fear of a German-Russian “race” for Aaland—had lost all justification. “Surely it is out of the question that a Swedish Government should persist in the present circumstances in an arrangement which no longer corresponds with Swedish interests, and which—we trust—both the Riksdag and its leading members during the new crisis will utterly reject.”

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The discussion on the second Aaland question was more confused and obscure than that on any other question of foreign policy during the inter-war period. This was unquestionably partly due to the Government's unwillingness to supply information, or, when it did, to give more than was absolutely necessary for the moment—a circumstance which influenced the discussion more than it has been possible to show in this brief account. It is sufficient, perhaps, to recall that Sandler's first speech on the subject, on 8th September 1938, did not contain any reference to the proposed military aid for the defence of Aaland, and could only with difficulty, and by ignoring certain contradictory phrases, be taken to convey that some of the Aaland Islands were to be fortified in the ordinary sense of the word. During the next few months, information was given on these points, but the nature of the fortifications to be erected in southern Aaland and of the proposed Swedish-Finnish co-operation was still kept secret. It is possible, as already suggested, that this method of giving informa-

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tion by instalments was tactically sound, in that certain groups were induced by this means to commit themselves to support of Government policy before they altogether knew what it was, but it was certainly not conducive to clarity. A similar discretion was observed on the question of the position of the Aaland Islanders and the international conditions necessary for putting the plan into effect. Added to this, the Government, though without admitting the fact, materially altered its own point of view. In the beginning of 1939 it assumed that the Aaland plan could not be carried through without the consent of the interested Powers, and that such consent could easily be obtained; a few months later, it declared that it was necessary to carry out the plan even though one of the foremost interested Powers refused to agree and some of the signatory Powers had only given conditional assent. It was really in a sense a triumph for the Government that the greater part of the Swedish Press continued to support the plan, even though the conditions on which it was admittedly based proved to be illusory.

The discussion revealed an unusual amount of disagreement both as to the actual situation which the plan if implemented would produce, and how this situation was to be estimated. For example, it is clear that *Nationell Tidning* and the Communist Press took much the same view of the consequences of the plan, but they differed completely in their attitude towards these consequences; the one side wished for a Swedish-Finnish defensive alliance directed against Russia, to the other this was anathema. *Svenska Morgonbladet*, like *Dagens Nyheter*, was opposed to the idea of a defensive alliance, but the former paper believed that the Aaland commitment could be given a limited character, while the other doubted or denied it. These examples, which could be multiplied, show that the opponents were often arguing on entirely different planes, which is why they so seldom directly disagreed.

The obscurity was still further increased by the fact that even the supporters of the plan had basically different conceptions of what it would mean, or rather, of the situation it would bring about. Some emphasised its limitations and spoke of it as a defensive measure for the protection of Sweden only. Others regarded it as a link in the defence of Scandinavia and above all of Finland, as a condition for Finland's Scandinavian orientation, as a bond between Sweden and Finland. Aaland was described as the "key" to the ports of Sweden, but also as a "belt" enclosing the two States round the Gulf of Bothnia. In fact, these differences of view, which were never openly expressed, were probably also to be found among the political and military circles which framed the plan. The military, who were eager for a defensive alliance with Finland, would hardly have been likely to abandon this attitude when the Aaland question came up; on the contrary: it must be assumed that they at any rate counted upon the

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possibility of the Aaland commitment developing into, or having the same effect as, a defensive alliance. Similarly the majority in the People's and Social Democratic parties, which always criticised the idea of a defensive alliance, probably genuinely, not merely for purposes of the debate, believed that the Aaland plan would only involve the relatively restricted obligations actually laid down, and would not be used as a starting-point for more far-reaching developments. This latent difference of view among the Government *bloc* may partly explain why the most authoritative spokesmen at the same time emphasised the limited nature of the Aaland plan and described its general consequences in terms which seemed to imply something much wider. Alternatively, those in authority may, as so often happens with political questions, have wavered between different points of view, with the half-conscious intention of later following the line which the general trend of public opinion or events showed to be most opportune. They may have hoped to win over the more suspicious elements at home by pointing out the restricted character of the plan, and at the same time to influence Finland by the larger and more undefined perspectives; this latter tendency would be all the more natural as Finland notoriously wished for a more general co-operation with Sweden, and they may have feared that, if her wishes appeared to be disregarded, she might form a more ambitious alliance with Germany. It should also be borne in mind that the emphasis placed on Finland's Scandinavian orientation and on the strong measure of agreement between Sweden and Finland may have been intended to deter Russia from attack on Finland or Germany from planning an alliance with her. That even the same individual might hold conflicting views and waver between the principle of limited obligation and the possibility of a real defensive alliance, is clearly shown by Sandler's well-known speeches in the *remiss* debate of 1940. These revealed beyond doubt that the Foreign Minister himself had not definitely defined his aims, and was inclined in certain circumstances to regard the Aaland plan, even before it had been put into effect, as a promise of military aid to Finland.

The opposition in the Aaland question was heterogeneous in the extreme, and the critical arguments used showed a corresponding lack of unity. This was, however, both actually and from the dialectic point of view, less important than the differences of opinion on the Government side. By far the most important political opposition group belonged to the People's party, in which it gradually gained the majority; this group, which concentrated its criticism on the general consequences of the Aaland plan for Swedish foreign policy, was actuated on the whole by the same views and motives. The opposition too was largely influenced by considerations which were never clearly expressed in the debate. They emphasised that the

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Aaland plan might have the same effect as a defensive alliance and involve Sweden in war, but they only hinted that the connection might be fraught with special dangers on account of Finland's relations with the leading Baltic Powers. But this latter consideration was undoubtedly very important. It was considered unlikely that Finland would in any circumstances defend her neutrality by force of arms against Germany in the event of a Russo-German war; on the contrary, it seemed possible or even probable that she would join in on the German side. But this view was never clearly stated, for fear of damaging Sweden's relations with Finland and Germany, and Finland's with Russia.

The differences on the Aaland question among groups which were normally held together by their pro-German sympathies and a general "national" tendency, attracted attention and gave rise to various speculations. But the matter does not seem of sufficient interest to warrant a detailed investigation. We will only point out that the differences were to a certain extent connected with traditional differences of attitude on the matter of relations with Finland among the groups which may be said to represent Swedish nationalism. The one side regards Finland as the outpost to the east, Sweden's natural protection or ally against Russia; this "Greater Swedish" view has tended to identify Finland with Sweden, to regard Finland as a Swedish frontier territory or outer fortification, and sometimes leads to rather far-flung ideas about a "reunion" of Finland with Sweden. The other side sees Finland as a rival or competitor, attacks Finnish policy towards the Swedes in Finland, and fears Greater Finnish expansionist plans at the cost of Sweden. These conflicting views, sometimes held at the same time by the same person, are clearly perceptible in the Aaland debate. The "national" critics of the Aaland plan showed traces of suspicion or ill-will towards Finland which were sometimes combined with a sense of rivalry as to relations with Germany.

Other considerations and motives than those discussed here undoubtedly played a very important part in the Aaland debate or, more correctly, in the view taken of the Aaland question. Some allowance must also be made for more incidental or personal factors into which we cannot enter here.

During the Aaland crisis of 1918—1921 the official Swedish attitude had been: firstly, that Aaland should be reunited with Sweden, secondly, that Aaland should not be fortified or used for any military purposes. During the second Aaland crisis, the predominating view was that Finnish Aaland should be remilitarised with Swedish support and fortified to a certain extent, while the question of sovereignty over the islands was not to be revived. We need not pursue the reasons for this complete reversal of Swedish foreign policy. But it inevitably meant a reversal of views and expressions: in 1920 an unfortified

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Swedish Aaland, in 1939 a fortified Finnish Aaland, was to form a bridge between Sweden and Finland; in 1920 a fortified Aaland was a pistol aimed at Sweden, in 1939 an unfortified Aaland was "an aerial bomb aimed at the heart of Sweden" (*Svenska Dagbladet*); on the first occasion the right of national self-determination was much discussed, on the second it was not to be mentioned. It is more interesting that the constellation of political parties in the two crises was much the same. The positive course was argued, with considerable patriotic fervour and energy, chiefly by the Conservatives and the military circles closely connected with them, but was also embraced by the Social Democrats, whose co-operation made it possible to follow the policy adopted. Their support had at first been doubtful or unwilling, but became almost unanimous after the party leader issued fresh directives. In both cases a Social Democratic Minister—Palmstierna and Sandler—seems to have played an important part in mobilising the party along the chosen course; in both cases, the systematic influence exerted on the Press by these same Ministers seems to have been an important factor. During both Aaland crises, the chief opposition came from a section of the non-Socialist Left. Similar parallels could be drawn even with regard to the individual papers; it is sufficient to recall that *Svenska Dagbladet*, *Stockholms-Tidningen* and *Arbetet* vigorously supported the positive line, *Dagens Nyheter* adopted a critical attitude, and that a number of papers of the Progressive or People's party went over to the opposition during the final phase of the crises. A rule cannot be established on two cases; but it seems probable for various reasons that the combinations in question reflect a recurring tendency in Swedish politics.

In the relations existing between the Government, the Riksdag, the Press and public opinion, the parallel between the two Aaland crises is again obvious. Contact between the Government and the Riksdag was certainly maintained—in 1938—1939 by both the Foreign Affairs Committee and the individual party groups—but the Riksdag had little opportunity for discussion and the expression of opinion. Branting and Palmstierna did not proclaim their demand for the acquisition of Aaland in the Riksdag, but in newspaper articles and speeches; Sandler propounded the fundamentals of the new Aaland policy in Finspång, not in the Riksdag. The few and brief Riksdag debates gave only a pale reflection of the lively and interesting Press discussion; the critical point of view—with the exception of a few contributions by extreme parties which had no influence at all—was hardly represented in the parliamentary discussions. During both crises, the Riksdag served primarily as an organ for the demonstration of a fictitious unity. Probably this was largely due to the power of the party leaders and the realisation of the value of unity on questions of foreign policy. Finally as regards public opinion, it is doubtful whether, even in the case of the second Aaland question, the general

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public really had any opinion. Meetings, discussions and resolutions were rare; the only large-scale activity along these lines was that developed by the Aaland Committee. For most Swedes outside the inner circles, interest in foreign affairs was probably so entirely concentrated on the events which were leading up to the Second World War that they had little attention to spare for the relatively specialised and technical question of the defence of Aaland—even though the whole future of the country might hang upon the treatment of that question.

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When in 1930 the Riksdag ordered a re-investigation of the defence question, it was generally assumed that the result would be a further reduction in armaments or even complete disarmament. But during the five years for which the 1930 Defence Commission sat, the international situation steadily deteriorated. It is sufficient to recall the economic crisis and the tendency apparent everywhere towards commercial isolation, Japan's operations against China, the emergence in Germany of the National Socialist régime, and Italy's more and more open preparations for an attack on Abyssinia. A study of the Press shows that these events made a deep impression everywhere in Sweden, even on those groups which in 1929 and 1930 had asserted that Sweden ought to disarm without reference to the international or military situation. Nothing did more to inspire doubts among the supporters of disarmament than the victory of National Socialism and the policy pursued by the new German Government. One Social Democratic newspaper after another came out with statements that Sweden could not stand defenceless in face of the policy of national expansionism that was to be expected now. So gradually the ground was prepared during the period 1933—1935 for a change in radical opinion. The groups which had always been opposed to the idea of a reduction in armaments or disarmament naturally made the most of the danger of war inherent in the tense international situation.

When the 1930 Defence Commission published its report on 30th July 1935—an extremely comprehensive and full report—it was seen that its views had completely changed since 1930. It had not reached agreement: it was split into three main groups—the Right Wing, the majority group consisting of representatives of the Farmer's League and the People's party, and the Social Democrats. But the thirteen members of the Commission were, with one exception, agreed that the defences should not be reduced, but retained or strengthened, and the representatives of all the main parties gave the tense international situation as the reason for their attitude.

The majority stated in their introductory survey—against which

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the Right-Wing raised no objections—that the outcome of the World War and the subsequent peace treaties had greatly improved Sweden's position from the point of view of defence. Of recent years, however, there had been a pronounced deterioration. As regards the League of Nations, the Commission emphasised the hopes which had been entertained that the League would set up an effective organisation of international justice, smooth away differences between States, and organise international disarmament. These hopes had mostly not been fulfilled. The League had not become universal; two of the Great Powers which had formerly belonged to it, Japan and Germany, had now withdrawn. Some progress had been recorded in the sphere of arbitration and conciliation, but there was no great faith in the agreements concluded, as their provisions had on several occasions been flouted. The League had once or twice contributed successfully to the solution of disputes, but otherwise had "failed in its task with fateful consequences to peaceful developments." As to the collective measures for the strengthening of general security, hardly any results had been attained. So little real importance could be attributed to the innumerable treaties concluded between different States that the situation might be described as one of "treaty inflation." Attempts to bring about a general disarmament agreement had completely failed, and now a general rearmament race had begun. The League's efforts to bring the different nations closer together had been equally unsuccessful. "The general distrust has probably never been so great as now... No one can deny that the world is at present passing through a phase of ruthless competition in the economic sphere, resulting in increased bitterness between nations and in most cases unemployment or lowered standards of living for the great masses of the people." The tendency towards isolation was even active in the sphere of "factual information, thoughts and views"; restrictions of freedom and official propaganda had standardised public opinion in the majority of European States.

The Commission therefore felt it could justly state that in most respects the work of the League of Nations had either failed or suffered a set-back. It had to be admitted that "the general situation in the world at present is uncertain and threatening. This is by no means to say that an armed conflict on a greater or smaller scale must be regarded as inevitable or inescapable. In face of the threatening situation which has developed, in face of the prospect of fresh armed conflicts which, with the technical devices now available, must be expected to be even more devastating than the World War, we have reason to hope that the love of peace, the common sense, which characterise all nations and their rulers to some extent, will prove strong enough to overcome the obstacles to a more peaceful development. But there can be no assurance that this will be so." In any case a decisive improvement could only come about slowly, and a

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defence organisation could not be adapted to slight changes in the situation, but must be based on more permanent tendencies.

As to Sweden herself, the Commission stated that "as a result of her geographical position and the foreign policy she has always pursued, whatever party was in power, Sweden has less reason than most other countries to fear an isolated attack on her territory for purposes of conquest or coercion. The complete absence of any territorial or political aspirations whatever on Sweden's part, or of any acute political disputes with any of her neighbouring States, leads to the same conclusion. This, of course, always provided that she does not denude herself of effective defence forces, in which case the situation might be different." But in spite of this, Sweden ran considerable danger of becoming involved in a war. It was uncertain how far the provisions of the Covenant of the League of Nations would be applied in any conflict which might arise, or whether their application would mean any danger of war for Sweden. Probably the Baltic area would be involved, and this might mean that various Powers would find it expedient to use Swedish territory or some part of it for operations against the enemy. "The possibility of remaining neutral in such circumstances might depend upon the neutral State representing a military *power* factor of such magnitude that neither of the belligerent groups would find it compatible with its interests to drive it over to the other side." In view of these considerations, the Committee felt that it must recommend a strengthening of the Swedish defence forces.

The main minority report by the Social Democrats—but not the separate report by the Right-Wing members—gave a separate account of the international situation. In the main this agreed with the majority account, but its tone was not quite so pessimistic. For example, the minority emphasised more strongly than the majority that fear of the destruction which a modern war must bring would be likely to act as a restraining factor. They spoke of the aggressive intentions of the nationalistic dictatorships, but suggested that the internal differences which existed in these States, and which in the event of a war might be dangerous to the Governments concerned, might have a restraining influence. They criticised the majority for its inconsistency in, on the one hand, regarding the League as powerless, and on the other supposing that it might demand Sweden's co-operation in sanctions. They felt it not impossible that the League, if supported by a strong public opinion in various countries, might intervene effectively in the event of a conflict. But they entirely agreed with the majority in demanding effective defences. They emphasised in particular the duty which devolved on the democratic States to contribute to the maintenance of international order. It would certainly be difficult to organise any concerted action by the democracies, but this only increased the responsibility resting on the individual States. "These

States are the chief exponents of the idea of disarmament as the future salvation of the world, though it is perhaps natural that, in the times through which we are now passing, this idea can only find uncertain expression. It would benefit neither democracy nor disarmament if the States which chiefly represent these ideas rendered themselves defenceless, while others which were hostile to them armed to the teeth." But there was no definite pronouncement in favour of a combined defence according to the principles of collective security. It was not necessary, the minority continued, to discuss the question: Can Sweden defend herself? "The only answer which need be given to such a question is that Sweden will defend herself if she is attacked, and that she must not lack the means to defend herself, if attack seems likely."

A Social Democratic member of the Commission, Elof Lindberg, put forward two alternative proposals, one for a considerable reduction in armaments and the other for disarmament, i.e. the replacement of the defence forces by a security and neutrality guard, which would only cost a fraction of the sum that would be required for a defence organisation in the ordinary sense. Lindberg used the same arguments as had been brought forward by the advocates of isolated disarmament, particularly during the discussions of 1929—1930. He took a far more optimistic view of Sweden's international relations and military position than either the majority report or the principle minority report of the Social Democrats. There was no danger of Sweden's becoming involved in war because of her association with the League of Nations. "The League of Nations is at present reduced to a state which precludes the possibility of its ordering any sanctions in Europe now or certainly for some time to come"; this view proved false within two months. Neither was an attack on Sweden to be feared in connection with a war between other States. "For more than a hundred years, no free, civilised nation in Europe has ever been conquered, and it appears inconceivable that any nation in Europe should dare to attack a defenceless land. On the other hand, it should not be entirely forgotten . . . that the existence of a military organisation may in itself bring danger. Excessive concern with military matters must always produce uneasiness among the neighbouring States and stimulate them to take corresponding measures." Only the reduction of armaments or disarmament could avert a war. That this course could not be adopted collectively, had been shown by developments since the World War. Each State individually must try to reduce the uneasiness in the world by cutting down its own armaments.

The Bill submitted by the Social Democratic Government to the 1936 Riksdag, represented a considerable expansion of the Social Democratic minority report of the Defence Commission. The Bill only dealt briefly with the international aspect of the defence question. Since 1925, the situation had "taken a decidedly unfavourable turn.

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This does not mean to imply that any direct threat to Sweden's independence or territorial integrity can be detected now any more than then. Now as then the danger with which we have to reckon is the prevailing state of uncertainty in the world which carries with it the possibility that our country might become involved in conflicts between other States. But this general state of uncertainty is more pronounced now than ever." At the same time, the Bill pointed out that peaceful forces were steadily at work. "The efforts which are constantly being made to secure a peaceful order should be taken fully into account in shaping a defence organisation which is not intended to apply merely to the immediate future."

At the Social Democratic Party Congress which was held between presentation of the Bill and discussion by the Riksdag of the defence question, the Government was found to have the majority of the party behind it. The general reasons which had driven the party over to a definitely positive attitude on the question were, to judge by the Congress debates, the same as those actuating the Social Democratic minority on the Defence Commission. When the dictatorships were arming, the democracies could not stand defenceless. A strong defence might discourage the Great Powers from violating Swedish neutrality, even if it did not give absolute security. The idea of disarmament, its supporters said, must be revived when times were calmer. "We must remember that anywhere in Europe where there is a military vacuum, it will immediately be filled by Nazi troops. If it is not German Nazi troops, it will be private troops of the State concerned, animated by the Nazi spirit. . . . If a Social Democratic party is compelled for the moment, under the tremendous pressure of world events and partly because of the internal political situation, to strike a retreat in the military question, that does not mean that it has abandoned its theoretical principles. We are surely all agreed that, as soon as external circumstances allow, we must again take up the struggle against militarism and the struggle for disarmament with all our strength" (Höglund).

The 1936 army organisation was indeed carried through by the non-Socialist parties and under opposition from the Social Democrats, but actually it was very much a compromise solution, for the Social Democratic opposition was due to special reasons (the coupling of the defence question with the question of old age pensions) and the party spokesmen said they had no intention of trying to reverse the decision. The arguments brought forward about Sweden's position were very much the same as those outlined above. When the defence organisation was further expanded during the next few years, hardly any differences in principle occurred between the parties. The Conservatives were the most eager for an increase in the defence forces, and frequently criticised the Government, and in particular the Social Democrats, for not fully realising

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the needs of the situation, but on the necessity for a higher degree of military preparedness there was complete agreement. In the debates which took place on the subject, the international and military aspects of the question were mentioned but little; after 1936, all the main parties were agreed that the general danger of war was great, that Sweden might become involved in a European war, and that it was necessary to arm to meet the danger. There is therefore no need to linger over these debates.

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In Sweden, as in other countries, complaints are sometimes raised about the lack of interest shown in foreign policy. It is probably safe to say that questions of foreign policy, in relation to their importance, always arouse less discussion and less active interest than questions of home policy. There is obviously a considerable difference. In foreign affairs, only a very small minority can form an opinion based on first-hand information and experience. It is difficult or impossible, particularly in the more important questions, to find out what are the real facts of the situation, because foreign policy is always conducted to a greater or less degree in secret. An important political event abroad or an important move in foreign policy by its own Government only in exceptional cases directly influences the standard of life or customs of a people; even when it does, the connection is often obscure or arguable. The discussion itself, in delicate or important questions, must always have a certain quality of unreality. The foreign nations on whose opinions and actions everything depends, listen to what is said, and the knowledge that this is so must limit the sincerity and curb the passions of many commentators, not least the experts. They fall back on innuendoes and circumlocutions, and tend to address themselves mainly to the exclusive public which is already well informed. Not infrequently they possess knowledge which they cannot pass on to the general public, and the latter is confused rather than enlightened by remarks which are primarily addressed to the initiated circles.

It may be taken for granted that in a country like Sweden—with no part to play in major politics, without political aspirations abroad to be satisfied at the cost of others, and on the whole without fear of aggression—the discussion on foreign policy must be relatively limited, and interest in foreign affairs relatively weak. In normal times, discussion and arguments must be preponderantly concerned with internal questions. Only when danger is on foot, when security

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and independence are threatened, will foreign policy come into the limelight. Just as a well-balanced individual only thinks of sickness or death when his health is threatened, so a nation whose main aim is to continue its development in peace and quiet will think about foreign policy and war only when a crisis is at hand.

When political factions in Sweden and other democratically governed States agitate for the "democratisation of foreign policy," their immediate aim is not to stimulate a more lively discussion or a more active public opinion on the questions concerned. They want partly greater publicity in the handling of foreign affairs, partly the exercise of a stronger and firmer control over the Government by Parliament. But behind these demands lies the conception that foreign policy should be the object of discussion and consideration by the people on the broadest possible basis. The reform of the constitutional provisions governing the management of foreign affairs, which was carried through in Sweden in 1921, was mainly inspired by this idea. The first consideration was to increase the power of the Riksdag, which would have the effect of bringing the electorate into closer touch with the executive on questions of foreign policy. "It is a matter of the utmost importance" runs a representative passage in the report by the Constitutional Committee of 1917, "to create the strongest possible guarantees for firm and confidential relations between the Government and the people on major questions of foreign policy. Such a relationship is the best surety that our nation will be able to present a united front to other nations, in defence of its independence and vital interests" (Constitutional Committee, 1917).

This does not necessarily mean that the people, or even the Riksdag, must be informed about or show an interest in international questions of only secondary importance. But if the democratic viewpoint is accepted, it is unquestionably an anomaly that the electors and their representatives should not have the knowledge and interest to form an opinion worthy of the name on questions in the decision of which such issues as peace and war, independence and liberty are likely to be at stake. It is chiefly from this point of view that the Swedish discussion on foreign policy will be dealt with here.

It will have been realised from the accounts already given that the debates on questions of foreign policy in the Swedish Riksdag were extremely limited. This fact will not be made any clearer by quoting figures and statistics for the exact number of debates, proposals, questions and speeches. For many of the matters which were considered were not of general interest, and in many cases in which private members intervened on important questions, their action, for reasons to which we will return later, had no intrinsic or political significance. The essential point is that, in all the central questions of

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Swedish foreign policy which came before it, the Riksdag's contribution was generally scanty or non-existent. Sweden's relations with the League of Nations were, of course, the subject of a comprehensive debate in 1920, in which a high level was maintained. But for the next fifteen years, this important question was hardly discussed at all. The numerous motions about secession from the League were rejected by the committees concerned in a few general phrases; in the Riksdag itself, only a few members spoke, generally representatives of the small and extreme group which had proposed the motion. The basic principles on which the League was organised, such as the sanctions question, were never thoroughly debated. Sweden's policy in specific cases was only discussed on one or two occasions (the Ruhr action of 1923, the Council question 1926), and then from a strongly party point of view. Only in connection with serious proposals that Sweden should renounce her obligations, or even her membership of the League, were these questions discussed at all thoroughly by the Riksdag; during the period 1936—1939, a few debates of intrinsic value and political importance did take place. In other questions, the passivity shown by the Riksdag was almost complete. The campaign for the acquisition of Aaland, Sweden's main pre-occupation abroad over a period of three years, has hardly left any trace in the Riksdag minutes; even at the secret sessions, to judge by available reports, it was not subjected to any detailed or thorough consideration. The Scandinavian problem, with which public opinion was so deeply concerned during the 1930's, was only touched upon in passing by the Riksdag in a few speeches during *remiss* debates. The Foreign Minister—and other important politicians—let fall remarks which might be interpreted, and were interpreted by many, as at any rate a half promise of military assistance to the neighbouring States if they were attacked, but the Riksdag never asked for an explanation or even for information. The second Aaland crisis, in which the main issue was a direct question of military co-operation with Finland—even though within a limited area—was considered by the Riksdag at one secret and one public session, but only after the Stockholm plan was settled in all essentials, and the announcement of Swedish-Finnish agreement had already been made in public speeches by the Foreign Minister and in other ways. In this case moreover, as in the first Aaland question, the Riksdag debate seemed intended to serve chiefly as a framework and support for the Government action; it testified to a national unity the somewhat fictitious nature of which was revealed by the Press discussion. Only in connection with the defence question were foreign affairs debated at all systematically, but here the chief object was to establish Sweden's position, not to lay down guiding lines for Swedish policy.

In the only general debate on policy which takes place in the

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Swedish Riksdag, the *remiss* debate, questions of foreign policy were often mentioned, though always in a minor capacity. Generally there was no question of a discussion in the proper sense of the word; the speakers, in accordance with the general custom in these debates, each called attention to certain questions which interested them personally, without referring to what previous speakers had said. In these circumstances there could naturally be no thrashing out of important questions. For the rest, the frequency of comments on foreign affairs in the *remiss* debates to a certain extent reflected the general situation; in calm years, the late 1920's and early 1930's, the subject was only touched upon by a very few speakers, but at other times, even if only incidentally, by ten or more.

A characteristic feature of the Riksdag debates on foreign affairs is that, apart from the leaders of the main parties, the chief participants were members of extremist groups, to whom this offered a good opportunity for developing their particular views or spreading ideological propaganda. Frequently the main parties contributed little more to the debate than declarations of principle, while all the rest of the time was taken up with violent clashes between extremist members, chiefly Left-Socialists and Communists (e.g. the Aaland debate of March 1939). The vast majority of the resolutions moved and questions asked on foreign affairs came from these groups, if not from the Utopian Lindhagen. During the years 1935—1939, for example, 41 questions were asked on foreign affairs; 18 of these were put by Lindhagen and 21 by Left-Socialists, Communists and Nationalists, only 2 by other parties (the Right-Wing); 25 of the questions were overruled, or—this applies to the great majority—not answered. It will be seen, then, that the references to foreign policy give a far less typical picture of representative opinion than their—in itself inconsiderable—number and extent would seem to indicate. Absurd and extreme views were relatively far more predominant than in any other sphere. To anyone reading through the debates, the reasonable and well-thought-out speeches often come like oases in a desert of primitive propaganda.

Secret sessions of the Riksdag, provided for since 1921 under paragraph 56 of the Riksdag regulations, were, as already indicated, not used to any considerable extent to supplement the public deliberations. Only six were held during the period 1921—1939. They dealt with the following questions: the Aaland question (5th June 1921), the trade agreement with Russia (15th February 1924), nomination of the Swedish delegate to the Permanent Court of International Justice at the Hague (28th April 1931), Sweden's attitude towards the League on the Sino-Japanese conflict (3rd March 1932), measures to maintain Swedish exports against foreign trade restrictions (24th May 1932), revision of the Aaland Convention (13th January 1939).

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Contact between the Riksdag and the Government on foreign affairs was thus chiefly maintained by the Foreign Affairs Committee. There has been some criticism of this body on the grounds that it meets too rarely and does not always provide opportunities for such ample discussion as might be desirable. But on the whole the Committee certainly kept in close touch with the Government's foreign policy, and evidently agreement was generally reached between the two sides, as is shown by the unanimity in the Riksdag's treatment of these questions. How far the Committee influenced the Government's attitude is not known. But as Bruswitz has pointed out, the Government has every opportunity for influencing the Committee, as it takes the initiative and holds all the information. Once the Committee has been convinced, then, so far as can be judged, unanimity in the Riksdag follows more or less automatically, at any rate as regards the main parties, which are represented on the Committee. It may therefore be assumed that the chief function of the Committee is to assure acceptance of Government policy by the Riksdag, and that the absence of differences of opinion and consequently of detailed debates which characterises the Riksdag's work in this sphere is to a certain extent a result of the activities of this Committee.

Another point that should be mentioned in this connection is that questions of foreign policy played only a very small part in party programmes and election campaigns. At no election during this period was any attempt made to treat any questions of foreign policy as a major issue. Even the Aaland question was hardly mentioned during the elections which occurred at the acute period of the crisis (1920). As the predominating issues on such occasions are generally those on which there is a clear-cut difference of opinion, this is hardly surprising. It is more remarkable that the members of the Government, in particular the Foreign Minister, only rarely came forward with any information about foreign affairs. Sandler was the only exception; but his numerous discourses were hardly appropriate, as has already been sufficiently shown, to serve as a basis for a sober discussion of foreign affairs.

Verner Söderberg stated in an article written in 1923 that the Swedish Press had shown a greatly increasing interest in foreign policy during the past few decades. Whereas previously articles on the subject had been rare, he said, at all events the larger newspapers now followed political events with steady interest. This development seems to have continued unabated, possibly owing to the abundance recently of sensational events which were bound to interest the reading public. A number of samples taken at random show that the larger newspapers devote 20—30 per cent of their leader space to international questions or to events and conditions in foreign countries. On the whole it may be said that the Press has become the centre of the discussion to a far greater extent than in questions of home policy.³⁴

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In the correspondence which took place after Louis Napoleon's *coup* in France in 1851 between representatives of the British Government and the editors of *The Times*, sharp differences of opinion emerged on the subject of the duties of journalists in discussing questions of foreign policy.³⁵ The Government, in connection with *The Times'* attack on Louis Napoleon, had asked the paper to observe restraint in order not to endanger peace. The editors of *The Times* pointed out that there is a distinction between statesmen and journalists; the former must always behave with official correctness, the latter were in duty bound to state facts and express opinions without fear or favour, so as to inform and guide public opinion. This particular problem never arose in Sweden until after the outbreak of the Second World War. But the correspondence had also raised the general question of whether journalists should express their personal views on foreign affairs, or act as the mouthpiece for official policy.

With the growing and universally recognised importance of the Press in international affairs, and the close association which has sprung up between parties and newspapers, the principles enunciated by *The Times* have actually come to be less generally accepted and applied by journalists. In the Swedish Press, the prevailing tendency—coupled frequently with admonitions about the need for national unity—has been to support the Government policy or at any rate only to suggest opposing views with a statesmanlike caution and discretion. In proportion as this tendency gains in strength, free expression of opinion in the full sense of the word obviously ceases. On the whole, however, the Press still reveals a variety and individuality which has no counterpart in the Riksdag debates. On a number of occasions party differences which hardly came out at all in the Riksdag have been clearly and succinctly expressed in the newspapers. Examples are: the second Aaland question, the special line taken by a number of Conservative newspapers on the League of Nations, the discussion in the Social Democratic Press about the sanctions question and allied questions 1937—1938.

A considerable difference may be detected in this respect between different newspapers and journalists. To estimate the specific degree of independence shown by individual journalists towards the newspaper proprietor, the party and the Government would of course be impossible. But it is obvious that, for example, the leading writers on foreign affairs—such as Segerstedt, Stridsberg, Wickman—have been relatively unaffected by the party associations of the newspapers they write for, and that their articles were generally the expression of their personal views. Probably this had something to do with the fact that these men were not members of the Riksdag and did not take part in party politics in the narrower meaning of the word. If a journalist is closely associated with a party, he is apt,

probably without realising it, to approximate his views to those of the party and lose his independence of attitude.

Some parties, too, require greater conformity than others. The greatest amount of variation, the most obvious independence of party leadership, is to be found in the Liberal parties. Here a variety of views were expressed on almost all disputed questions; frequently papers belonging to this group were the only ones, apart from certain extremist organs, to refuse to associate themselves with the otherwise unbroken national front. This may have been due to various circumstances: the general lack of homogeneity in the party, the financial independence of a number of its newspapers, its peculiar combination of liberalism and individualism, which did not invite or take kindly to restrictions. The Conservatives may be said to have occupied an intermediate position; it is worth noticing that a section of the party which was hardly represented in the Riksdag, and which might possibly be described as nationalistic, was very active in the Press (for longer or shorter periods *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, *Östgöta Correspondenten*, *Lunds Dagblad*, *Norrbottens-Kuriren*, etc.). The Social Democrats, particularly during the long periods when they were in power either alone or in coalition with another party, showed a striking uniformity. Some papers occasionally adopted a highly critical tone such as it would have been impossible for the responsible Government to employ (in connection with, for example, National Socialism, the non-intervention policy in Spain, the Munich Agreement). But in formulating their attitude on any specific question, they followed the official lead almost to a man, even though they might previously have taken a different line (the Aaland questions, the Council question of 1926, the sanctions question 1938). This presumably has something to do with the facts that Social Democratic journalists are frequently members of the Riksdag, that in any case a political career in the full meaning of the word is the natural goal of their ambitions, that they are regarded and regard themselves as a sort of party officials, and that they are financially dependent on the party.

As regards the influence of the Press and the relations between the Press and the Government, it is difficult to draw more than a few obvious conclusions. The Press is clearly the most important agent in creating the views held by the general public on conditions in other countries and international events such as lie outside the sphere of Swedish political activity; the Government and the Riksdag have hardly anything to say here, and the private individual has no opportunity of forming an independent opinion. This applies, for example, to the general attitude of the public towards the work of the League of Nations, the Japanese policy of aggression in China, or the National Socialist Government. When it comes to Swedish foreign policy in concrete cases, the situation is different. During

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certain stages of the two "nationalist" campaigns on the Aaland question, the Government set itself, on the whole successfully, to lead the Press and with it public opinion; the majority of newspapers of all the main parties—to a certain extent at any rate, under the influence of directives and information given at secret conferences—supported Government policy. In other cases, one has the impression that the Press took the lead in forming public opinion, and that the Government and the Riksdag were influenced by its views; this applies, for example, to the campaign for Sweden's liberation from sanctions obligations during the years immediately preceding the Second World War. Mostly there was a general interaction, in which the importance of the different factors cannot be assessed.

When the Press or a large part of it is united, it is generally said to represent public opinion on that particular question. This is probably true to the extent that, where there is such unanimity, it shows that no strong opposition exists to the point of view sponsored by the Press. But it does not show that a large section of public opinion is actively in favour of it. Unanimity may be one side of the medal, the reverse of which is indifference. It seems incontestable that in a number of cases both the Riksdag and the Press campaigned with considerable unanimity for a cause about which the people as a whole cared little. The League of Nations seems hardly to have aroused the interest and enthusiasm that might be inferred from the tone of the Riksdag and the Press at certain periods (cf. p. 82 ff.). The gap dividing public utterances and silent opinion was doubtless wider still on the two Aaland questions. The first of these, in which the almost unbroken unanimity of the Press had an artificiality which was only revealed after the campaign was over, offered a clear example of how powerless official or semi-official declarations can be to influence public feeling.

The weaknesses to which the Press is liable in its functions of instructing and shaping public opinion are obvious. One is the tendency to adapt its presentation of facts to fit its own theories. To take one example, the rapid downfall of the Communist, Fascist and National Socialist dictatorships has long been foretold by newspapers which dislike these régimes. A newspaper cannot be contradicted by its public in the same way as a speaker addressing the Riksdag or other public gathering, and so is often tempted to use dialectically effective but illogical arguments. In many of the discussions on foreign policy, the introduction of a little more logic would undoubtedly have cleared the ground and brought to the fore the really important differences in estimation and judgment. How much a debate of this sort can do to clarify the issue is shown by the Riksdag's treatment of the question of joining the League of Nations in 1920.

A brief attempt may be made here to sum up the attitude of the political parties towards foreign affairs. In their general attitude

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towards the aims of Swedish foreign policy, the main parties hardly differed at all—the small extremist parties may be left out of account—and it is therefore possible to speak, as will be further illustrated in a later section, of a united Swedish front on foreign policy. At the same time different tendencies, partly connected with the ideological background of the parties, did make themselves felt. (cf. p. 30 ff.). The Conservatives were more sceptical about the League of Nations and the possibility of assuring peace, more inclined to welcome Scandinavian co-operation or a Swedish or Scandinavian policy of isolationism or neutrality, more vigorous in their support of campaigns of a specifically national character. It would be a gross exaggeration to say that the Right-Wing was nationalistic and the Left-Wing international in outlook, but the tendencies were in that direction. Or it might be said that the Right-Wing tended to emphasise the importance of foreign policy, the Left-Wing of home policy. Their attitude towards concrete problems of foreign policy was naturally to a certain extent influenced by, or an expression of, these tendencies. But there is another point which it is more important to stress. Party polemics, obviously inspired by political and tactical motives, arose in connection with a number of questions of secondary importance, e.g. the Hederstierna case of 1923, and the Council question of 1926. But on questions of greater importance there was more unity; this is illustrated by the Conservative acceptance of League policy immediately after the 1920 decision, the treatment of the two Aaland questions, the discussion about sanctions procedure against Italy, and about the abolition of the sanctions system during the next few years. On no occasion therefore (except possibly the League of Nations question in 1920) have at any rate the main parties been divided on any question of foreign policy.

Probably this was partly because of the prevalent idea that a nation ought to be united on its foreign policy. In Sweden, as in other countries, it has always been held that party differences should be swept aside in all matters of relations with other countries, and that any individuals or groups which disagreed with the prevailing view were irresponsible or unpatriotic. The basis of this idea is that a united front strengthens the international position of a country, that, as the Constitutional Committee expressed it in 1917, "relations of trust between the Government and the people . . . afford the best surety that our country will be able to present a united front to other nations . . ." It is also important to remember that the Government has special facilities for influencing the attitude of the nation on questions of foreign policy; its views are spread in constantly widening circles from Government to Foreign Affairs Committee, the Riksdag, the Press and the public. A final factor making for unity has been that, as important issues in foreign affairs are of rare occurrence, the parties have been built up around ideas and demands con-

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nected with home policy. Questions of foreign policy are strange, they cannot be fitted into the ordinary framework, there is no accepted point of view; so it is not difficult to create a new, uniform, even if not always very well-informed or active public opinion.

The above circumstances help to explain how it was possible to obtain general agreement so quickly on the more specifically national issues which arose during the period under review: the attempts to obtain the incorporation of Aaland with Sweden, and Swedish-Finnish co-operation for the defence of Aaland. The saving factor was that the Social Democrats were willing to abandon the views they had held—not always very strongly—before, and to adopt the more active line. The interests of this party were normally mainly concentrated on internal questions, which meant that in questions of foreign policy it was prepared to follow its leaders, and its vigorous representatives on the Government—Palmstierna in 1918—1920, Sandler in 1938—1939—were able quickly to achieve almost complete unanimity in the Riksdag group and the Press. Nationalistically coloured objectives originally sponsored by the Conservatives, were thus rapidly transformed by the Social Democratic leaders into goals for Government and party policy.

If the parties did not differ greatly on the question of the guiding lines for Swedish foreign policy, there were fundamental differences in their assessment of the international outlook and the effects this would have on the Swedish defence position. This subject aroused fierce controversy, in which the opponents even frequently accused each other of speaking and acting in bad faith. The Right-Wing charged the Left-Wing with painting the situation in too bright colours so as to provide an appropriate background for their disarmament propaganda. The Left-Wing, and above all the Social Democrats, they said, wanted to gloss over the failures of the League and conceal the dangers which threatened, so as to bring about their dearest wish, the reduction of armaments. The Left-Wing accused the Right of corresponding distortions of the facts. In the newspaper discussion in the 1920's, it was even asserted that the Conservatives rejoiced at international crises and nationalistic movements, because in this way their demand for stronger defences was strengthened.

Did the Conservatives want a strong defence because they thought the international situation dangerous, or did they paint the international situation as dangerous because they wanted a strong defence? And again: did the Left-Wing believe Sweden could disarm because they thought peace was secure, or did they believe in peace because they wanted to cut down the armed forces? These questions may appear absurd, but they must occur to anyone reading through the defence debates of the 1920's. The correlation between the traditional attitude towards defence in the party—chiefly the Conservative and the Social Democratic parties—and their view of foreign policy was

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absolute. The most extraordinary arguments were brought forward to prove that the international situation really demanded the policy for which the group in question stood. Prominent Conservatives and Service Chiefs stated that the situation in the early 1920's was more dangerous than in 1914; leading Social Democrats, while at the same time objecting to the military obligations attendant on sanctions, maintained that the League constituted a sufficient guarantee of Swedish security, that world conscience would never allow an attack on a disarmed State, and that Sweden's example would encourage other States to reduce their armaments or disarm. Utterly unrealistic views were put forward both by Service Chiefs anxious for strong armed forces and by Social Democrats arguing in favour of isolated disarmament.

The reasons for this have already been discussed. Probably the usual method was adopted of bringing up every possible argument to support the chosen point of view, regardless of the fact that a weak argument is simply a gift to one's opponent. Each side was so firmly set on its own line of action that it would have needed the most radical changes in the outward circumstances to deflect it at all. When such changes occurred in the early 1930's, the result was a considerable modification of views among the Leftists, in particular the Social Democrats.

The demand for the "democratisation of foreign policy" was presumably based, as indicated at the beginning of this chapter, on a view which may be summarised in the form of the two postulates: questions of foreign policy should be the subject of discussion and consideration on a broad basis, and they should be characterised by "relations of firm confidence and trust between the Government and the people." A lively and general discussion on foreign affairs would, according to this view, provide the conditions necessary for close unity between Government and people. It has not been sufficiently remarked that these two requirements are actually divergent. For real discussion and the formation of independent opinions, there must be differences of view and conflicting opinions; a debate does not arise because a number of people say the same thing, and an opinion is not vital if it is the only one in the field. The unity on foreign policy constantly held up as desirable can hardly be attained except by leadership from above, from the Government, and a willingness to be led, derived ultimately from indifference, among those governed. At a certain point, a choice has to be made between the two alternatives. In Sweden, the tendency has been to choose the second. The idea of a valuable debate has been, as so many Riksdag statements show, that the party leaders, with the agreement of the other members, declare their unreserved support of Government policy. Only in a few

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exceptional cases has a real debate ever taken place in Parliament. On certain occasions when there undoubtedly were differences of opinion, these have been covered over and pushed into the background in order to make a show of a basically fictitious unity.

Our object here is to point out the incompatibility of the principles constantly proclaimed. It is obvious that from the democratic point of view, the complete victory of unity over the principle of free and open discussion is not desirable. Now against this it may be maintained that the principles of democracy must be set aside on this point, that there must be unity brought about by leadership in order that a country, as the Constitutional Committee of 1917 expressed it, "shall be able to present a united front to other countries, for the protection of its own independence and vital interests." No final verdict can be passed on this point. But it must be emphasised that the demand for unity may appear legitimate in critical situations, above all in wartime, without necessarily being justifiable in all important questions of foreign policy. When the demand is raised in less extraordinary circumstances, this simply means that a tried polemic method is being used to assert the dominance of the Government side, that the Opposition is being struck down by a phrase which, vague and general though it is, has a certain sanctity in tradition. To this must be added another consideration on which we have already touched. When it is a question of a nation defending "its independence and vital interests," a strong and united popular opinion is possible. But on less central questions, it is not. A united popular opinion becomes the same thing as a weak popular opinion, one that can really hardly be described as such but rather as the indifferent acceptance of the aims and measures favoured by the Government. A popular opinion of this sort is no source of strength, at most it may serve as a façade of doubtful value—as in the first Aaland question—towards the outer world. But whenever there has been talk in Sweden about public opinion being the firm support of the Government, it has generally been a quasi-opinion of this sort that was meant.

The Press has to a large extent supplemented official discussion. But in the first place the tendency towards unanimity has in some cases been strong even in the Press, and in the second newspapers, each of which largely appeals to a limited section of the population, cannot replace debate before one and the same forum. A profitable debate, in which irrelevant or illogical arguments are eliminated and the essential differences in estimates and values kept well to the fore, requires a continuous interplay of arguments such as seldom occurs in the Press and in any case would not be possible in one and the same newspaper. From this point of view vigorous debates in the Riksdag would be very valuable: not because the reports of the debates are read, but because they would influence the ideas of the leading political circles from which the Riksdag is recruited. Or

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various other methods might be possible: for example, one way of spreading information and encouraging a more rational interest in public affairs would be for the representatives of different points of view to be given the opportunity to explain the reasons for their attitude in pamphlets addressed to the electors (cf. the practice customary at referenda in certain States of the American and Swiss Federal Nations).

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Definition always involves comparison. To describe the typical characteristics of an individual or nation, one must know other individuals, other nations. For this reason an account of Sweden's attitude towards foreign policy must be incomplete, if it is not based on a thorough knowledge of corresponding discussions and the state of public opinion in other countries. We have not got this knowledge; it could only be provided if investigations were carried out into conditions in a number of other countries, similar to that made here on Sweden's account, and so far as I am aware this has never been done. If in spite of this an attempt to characterise the Swedish attitude seems justifiable, this is partly because even a superficial study of the foreign policy of other countries provides certain bases for comparison, partly because I do not set out to establish what are the specifically Swedish characteristics. Actually it will be clear that much of what will be said below about the Swedish attitude could be said with much the same justice about a number of other countries whose development, position and cultural milieu are similar to those of Sweden.

Another difficulty should also be mentioned. Is there a Swedish attitude to foreign policy? Is it not rather a question of a number of different attitudes represented by different groups, parties and individuals? These objections are quite natural, for hitherto we have mainly stressed the differences between the various Swedish schools of thought. But it should unquestionably be possible to establish certain general tendencies and ideas underlying the greater part of the criticism and comments, and common to all the parties which were influential during this period. It is these that have to be considered in this connection. And as they were so universal, they have often not been analysed or even defined, they have been the half-conscious forces by which actions and reflections were moulded. To a certain extent, therefore, it is necessary to see what was done and thought as the expression of "deeper" values and views which lay behind.

One obvious element in the Swedish attitude has been a general self-satisfaction, a sense of moral superiority. The Swedes themselves

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in describing their "national character" have always stressed firstly that they are extremely outstanding in certain spheres, secondly that as a nation they suffer from an inability to assert themselves, they are tolerant and unselfish to the point of submissiveness, supineness, weakness for the foreigner.³⁶ The same view recurs in countless commentaries on Swedish foreign policy. Sweden's action is described—as has been adequately shown by the quotations already given—as being dictated by the will to serve the whole, as free from national egoism, narrowness of vision, all low or underhand motives. When an outstanding politician said: "However differently the different States may behave in the League, they are all alike in that they place themselves first—except Sweden," he seems to have been expressing, even though in an extreme form, what was a fairly generally accepted view. During the campaign on the first Aaland question, the Swedish Press was flooded with nationalistic propaganda, but at the same time with laments over the Swedish people's lack of national feeling. With their faith in their own superiority goes a belief in their humility. The Swedes are the only nation which does not believe itself to be "the finest, most gifted and remarkable nation in the world," states a writer on foreign affairs. The Swedes and Swedish diplomats are assumed to be noble, naive and credulous, while foreigners are described as vicious and clever.

But it would certainly be incorrect to describe this attitude as characteristic of Sweden alone. It is to be found, as far as can be judged, in all or practically all nations. The consciousness of a high moral standard, not merely of strength or capacity, seems to be a necessary adjunct of the mental equipment of a modern nation. The refinement of superiority which finds expression in exaggerated claims of unselfishness, mildness and tolerance, which boasts of its own modesty and that its good qualities are dangerously over-developed, is also usual among cultured nations of to-day. In recent years, even the most barbarous acts have been defended on the grounds that the natural tendency towards understanding and sympathy in the nation concerned must be kept within reasonable bounds. Each country believes that its own statesmen and diplomats are well-meaning, slow-witted and easily deceived, while "foreigners" are crafty and ruthless.³⁷

Thus the conception of moral superiority cannot be said to be specifically Swedish. On the other hand, this might be true to a certain extent of opinions and motives closely connected with this conception. But before going further into this question, we will first consider another: has it ever been asserted in any specific case, not merely that Swedish policy inclines towards unselfishness, but that the Swedish attitude ought to be determined by unselfish motives? Has it been felt that Sweden ought to act in her own interests, or that she should to a greater or less degree replace these interests by other aims, such as the preservation of world peace or the establish-

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ment of a system of international justice? The question is admittedly not clear; it is difficult to distinguish mentally between such abstract motives, and particularly in connection with a matter such as, for example, world peace, to separate general idealistic hopes from the primary Swedish interest of the preservation of peace. Nevertheless, there are indications that unselfish considerations did count. When the question of Sweden's entry into the League was being discussed, some of the phrases used suggested that purely idealistic motives were felt to be important; it was said to be a moral duty, "a historic task," for Sweden to co-operative in the great work of organisation. Even the minority which opposed entry used similar arguments; if a "real" league of nations were formed, Sweden would be willing "to make great sacrifices on behalf of such a demonstration of the will of the peoples for solidarity and brotherhood," said the Right-Wing minority report. Similarly in the discussions about a Swedish-Finnish defensive alliance, various sides emphasised the duty of upholding the "Finnish sister-nation." In the debate about Swedish neutrality before the Second World War, considerations of Sweden's own interests were certainly in the foreground, but the idealistic reasons in favour of the attitude adopted also carried considerable weight: Sweden was to be an island of peace, in which the universal human values, which were sullied by war even among those fighting for the right, would be preserved intact. In all debates on foreign affairs, idealistic arguments of this sort played a part.

But at the same time it is obvious that these arguments never carried decisive weight. When, in the debate about entering the League, the minority objected that Sweden's interests should not be sacrificed to internationalistic considerations, the League supporters replied that Sweden should join in her own interests. In the questions of Sweden's relations with Finland and Scandinavia, of a solidarity or neutrality policy, the same thing happened again. Idealistic reasons were always brought in, but so far as is known it was never suggested that these should take precedence over considerations of Swedish interests. In other words, when it came to the point, spokesmen of every party always identified Sweden's interests with their respective idealistic aims, the individual good with the common good. No one ever suggested: a certain measure is harmful to Sweden herself, but should be taken because it would be in the interests of Finland, or Scandinavia, or the world. Even international relief measures of a purely humanitarian nature were recommended as being directly advantageous for Sweden—as advertisement, to promote friendly relations with other countries, etc.

This is not, of course, to say that Sweden's own interests were felt to be the only important consideration. That question cannot be answered here. What we wish to point out is that there was hardly ever any conscious conflict between motives each of which was con-

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sidered legitimate in itself. It was a case of Sweden's interests *and* the world's, not of Sweden's *against* the world's, or of the world's *against* Sweden's. In this respect too, the Swedish foreign affairs debate would appear to be normal and representative, not peculiar. In any case, the other democratic and humanitarian States behave similarly. It is even questionable whether the nationalistic dictatorships constitute any exception. They certainly start from the assumption that their own nation ought to rule over others, but by and large they consider their rule to be beneficial for all.

"Sweden's relations with other Powers are friendly. The unselfish and impartial policy which our country has followed throughout the disturbances of the past ten years, will certainly bear fruit in the future. Our great goal is peace and confidence between the nations. The contributions we have been able to make throughout our history to the cause of peace and justice offer proof enough that our ancient kingdom seeks honour firstly in the service of humanity and civilisation..." (the 1924 Speech from the Throne). "The goal of our foreign policy has for more than a century been peace. At the same time our nation has asserted its unquestionable right to fashion its own internal life according to its individual nature and the demands of its high culture, without interference from other Powers.—This is a tradition which we must preserve. We therefore participate with the warmest interest in all endeavours directed towards the pursuit of such a policy for the common good of humanity" (the 1929 Speech from the Throne). These speeches, made under two different Conservative Governments, summarise views which we constantly encounter both in official statements and in political discussions, and which form one of the main ingredients in the Swedish brand of a sense of moral superiority.

One proof which is always quoted of Sweden's love of peace is the fact that she has not been at war for more than a century. This is unquestionably a circumstance peculiar to Sweden, for no other, or at any rate no other comparable, State (except Norway, which was united with Sweden for the greater part of the time) can lay claim to such a long period of peace at home and abroad. The curious point is that this peace is so often regarded as something of Sweden's own making, as the result of merit, not of good fortune. There is not much justification for this view in actual nineteenth century history. The few occasions during this period on which military action was considered (the Crimean War and the German-Danish war of 1864) can hardly be quoted as proofs of the Swedish will to peace, as reasons for intervention were weak and the risks that would have been run enormous. The example always brought forward, however, is the peaceful dissolution of the Union between Sweden and Norway in 1905. This is constantly cited as a proof of Sweden's inflexible determination to solve all disputes as far as possible by

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peaceful means, although it must be obvious to almost anyone on the slightest consideration that an attack upon Norway would firstly—in view of the position of the Great Powers—have been an extremely risky undertaking, and secondly have constituted an example unique in modern Europe—before the days of Fascism and National Socialism—of senseless aggression. Since 1921 a favourite example has been the Aaland question, although the situation here was similar; surely few can seriously deny that an attempt to take Aaland by force from the Finnish “sister nation,” which had just been liberated to the accompaniment of Swedish expressions of joy, would have been as stupid as it was mean. Finally mention should also be made of the neutrality policy, “the unselfish and impartial policy,” to quote the 1924 Speech from the Throne, which Sweden pursued during the First World War. Neutrality then was regarded not only as a natural position, for a State that had little or nothing to gain and everything to lose, but also as morally superior.

There were, of course, other views besides those indicated above. Some Nationalists have considered the long period of peace and neutrality demoralising. They felt that the Swedes had become apathetic and effete, as a result of living a peaceful, comfortable and unexciting existence for too long. These views came to the fore particularly during the Aaland campaign—the only serious outburst of “nationalistic” feeling during the period—and have reappeared since then in the works of one or two minor authors with Fascist and Nazi sympathies. Others again criticised the whole idea that there should be anything particularly meritorious in the Swedish love of peace. Wickman wrote in an article (in *Dagens Nyheter* 5th Dec. 1921), with reference particularly to Swedish self-satisfaction over her neutrality during the First World War: “Either we chose a policy of neutrality because we believed that it would best serve our interests—and that is nothing much for a nation to brag about. Or else we stayed passive at home in the warm chimney corner because we did not dare to venture out among the storms and stresses of life—and in that case we had perhaps better keep quiet about our neutrality. In either case, it goes without saying that we need hardly look for any particular commendation from others who have been pouring out their blood and money for years, without counting the cost, to defend their national security.”

But such criticisms were rare. The majority of Swedes, like the Americans under the ideology of isolationism, were inclined to regard the conflicts in the world at large as the result of ill-will or at any rate of culpable failure to establish a lasting order. Sometimes this conception was reinforced by the thought that the Swedes were an old and wise nation, which had left the quarrelsomeness and adventurousness of youth behind it; the emphasis on the blessings of peace was frequently accompanied by “memories of ancient glorious

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days" when things were different. Conflicts and wars are described as folly and madness, even the business of maintaining international relations as something dubious or contemptible. This general condemnation, which has often taken the place of analysis, understanding, reasoned consideration, has been one expression of the Swedes' faith in their own insight and good will.

There is, nevertheless, a kernel of truth in the statement that Sweden's policy is peaceful and unselfish. Not that the desire for peace is anything peculiar to Sweden; all countries desire peace in general, that is to say, if they can attain their goals by peaceful means. The Swedish people are neither more inclined by nature or circumstances to sacrifice their own interests for the preservation of peace than are other nations at the same level of culture, nor characterised by any special desire to serve humanity—these common national boasts have no basis in reality. But Sweden has, for obvious reasons, had nothing to gain by a change in the *status quo*, and has had neither the incentive nor the opportunity to conduct an expansionist policy. From this follows her desire to preserve peace, the special quality of which may be summed up by saying that no possible change appears sufficiently valuable to counterbalance the injuries and dangers which a war, even if it did not directly concern Sweden, would inevitably bring to her. From this point of view Sweden has been one of the "satisfied" States. Now it is a matter for dispute how far the talk about "satisfied" and "hungry" States corresponds to any real difference in their objective circumstances; a State can be set upon aggression in spite of a high standard of living and satisfactory conditions. But obviously the Swedish attitude has been largely inspired by objective circumstances; it is difficult to imagine a modern cultured State which, in Sweden's place, would have conducted an aggressive policy directed towards expanding its territory by war or the threat of war.

Apart from "peace," the central theme in Swedish foreign policy and discussion of foreign affairs has been "justice." The vague ideas connected with this much-used term have already been discussed (cf. p. 33 ff.). Obviously what was meant was not a *status quo* guaranteed by some supra-national organisation; that way leads to the demand for "security," which determined the attitude of several of the Powers victorious in the First World War. Probably the expression was mostly used, more or less consciously, to denote two different things (cf. in particular the 1925 report on the Geneva Protocol, summarised on pp. 43 ff.). *Firstly* a "just" world system, in particular the distribution of territory in accordance with certain principles. By this was meant chiefly a revision of the Versailles Treaty; public opinion in Sweden, as also to a remarkable extent elsewhere, found this treaty unjust and therefore dangerous to peace,

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and was on the whole agreed as to which of its clauses required revision.³⁸ What are the principles on which a just order depends? Nothing like a clear answer to this question can be deduced from the Swedish debate. The principle of national self-determination is, of course, one—though the meaning was vague and controversial—and other general so-called principles of justice were acclaimed (connected with “natural” frontiers, distribution of colonies, alternatively the complete abolition of the colonial system etc.). The exact answer is of minor importance in the present connection. What interests us is that the discussion revealed the fact that many Swedes had visions of a just, and because of its justice a static, system, under which major disputes would never need to arise, in which the States would live in harmony because all their legitimate interests were satisfied. All States would then be as peaceful and content as Sweden. *Secondly*, a “just” system simply meant a system under which agreements would be respected and international disputes settled by impartial arbitration. Here again the meaning is very obscure. Perhaps the usual conception may be said to have been that the decision or settlement should be reached by persons not influenced by the interests of either party but seeking only the good of the whole, i.e. the establishment or maintenance of the harmony which follows from or is identical with justice. This outlook found expression chiefly in the work Sweden did for international arbitration within the framework of the League of Nations.

The construction indicated presupposes, to use the recently defined words, that law is based upon justice, i.e. that the disputes on which a legal decision might be required are of a relatively insignificant nature, because the prevailing system is just, or in the main satisfactory to all. The weakness of the Swedish position may, from its own point of view, be said to be that it postulates a legal system maintained without the use of force, *without* a state of justice which would preclude the possibility of serious differences. Or in other words, the Swedes' love of peace has led them, although admitting in principle the existence of legitimate and serious differences under the existing order, to believe it possible to work with a legal machinery adapted to a just order, and so to denounce the use of force in general as unnecessary and unjust. States which in the Swedish view have been badly treated (chiefly under the Versailles Treaty) may not, it seems to have been argued, use force, because law—in the form of a quasi-judicial procedure—should prevail; States which acquired a privileged position by their victory in the First World War, must not use force either, because justice, i.e. certain principles of territorial distribution etc.—should prevail. Public opinion, in Sweden as in many other countries, found itself in a theoretically untenable, contradictory position. In practice, the position has been that Sweden, while claiming strict neutrality at

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any approach of danger, has condoned breaches of treaty which she considered justified, but in general has condemned war.

Undén touched upon these questions in a speech in October 1925 to which we have already referred (pp. 81 ff.). He maintained that in planning to preserve peace, one must start from the existing order. To postpone the work for peace—and so also for an international legal system—because there were injustices, would be as unreasonable as if the working classes, before they had the vote, had tried to “adopt the standpoint that they could not co-operate in any system for maintaining law and order until all out-of-date and unjust laws had been revised . . . If we would work for peace, we must accept as a starting-point the conditions now prevailing, and trust to the future and the peaceful forces of development to reform the world.” Translated into the terminology used here, this means that the law must be recognised unquestioningly by all, even if justice has not been established. But the trouble with this view is illustrated by the very example which Undén quoted. The discontented working classes, which had no legal means of making themselves heard, largely questioned the rightness of “class justice” and succeeded, often by means which were contrary to the law, in winning “justice” for themselves. And how would the workers have behaved if there had been no organised system of enforcing the law, i.e. if conditions had been the same as in international politics?—During the inter-war period, the Germans actually frequently argued along the same lines as the Marxist-influenced working classes did in former times: they denied that the existing order was “legal,” because they claimed that it was not “just.” Sweden again took the middle course indicated by Undén, i.e. accepted an order which it characterised as unjust, and distinguished between law and justice, between formal law and natural law (we refer again to the report on the Geneva Protocol).

The conception, indirectly hinted at, of a just order under which only insignificant disputes would arise, is, however, also strange. Firstly the principles on which such a condition could be attained are never clearly defined, secondly the idea seems in itself to presuppose a belief in the natural harmony of interests—a belief which, obviously Utopian though it is, has played an important part in recent foreign policy. But that the conception has been widespread in Sweden is easily understandable. The conditions prevailing in Scandinavia might be regarded as a model for a future world order. The States were in all essentials satisfied with existing conditions, such disputes as arose (Åland, Greenland) were of such a nature that a settlement by other than peaceful means would have appeared fantastic. The temptation was to assume that the whole world—or at all events Europe—after a series of vaguely-conceived, far-reaching modifications, could be transformed into a similar group of States, a larger Scandinavia. It was even thought, as can be seen from what has already been said,

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that the necessary alterations could be effected by a peaceful or quasi-judicial procedure, by such methods as can be adopted when either there is already a large degree of harmony or when the decision rests with a State equipped with adequate means of enforcing its will or a super-State.

Occasionally the view was expressed that the Swedish claims to represent the principles of justice were both unwarranted and hypocritical. "We should recognise," wrote *Upsala Nya Tidning* in an interesting article, "that the claims made by Swedish public opinion to stand for justice are as much empty phrases as are various big-sounding declarations of solidarity in other countries. Our country does not in any way occupy a special position. When it comes to our own interests, to the question of peace or war, intervention or neutrality, Swedish foreign policy is on the whole as grossly egoistic, as untouched by considerations of law and justice, as ever that of Great Britain, France or Germany." This is obviously correct in so far that Sweden's insistence on justice did not spring from any specifically unselfish motives. But it is incorrect to the extent that both Swedish statesmen and Swedish public opinion unquestionably honestly held these views. Only it must be remembered that "justice" is a conception that can be interpreted in a variety of ways, and that the demand for "justice" in this connection was an expression of an attitude towards foreign affairs conditioned by Swedish interests or at all events easily compatible with these interests. That the position Sweden assumed took on a particularly moral colouring from the associations which the word justice carries with it, is obvious; "justice" has quite a different ring from, for example "security".

The Swedish attitude towards peace and justice was shared, to a greater or less degree, by a number of other States. This may partly explain why there was a tendency in Sweden to range other States in a sort of order of rank. After Sweden there came (1) the Scandinavian countries, (2) the ex-Neutral small States, (3) the small States in general. On this point, positive values were reversed: the Great Powers were regarded in the Swedish debate almost exclusively as the villains of the piece. This was generally taken quite for granted, as many of the quotations already given have shown; everyone spoke of the self-interest of the Great Powers, their egoism, their brutality. Sometimes some attempt was made to justify these views, as when one article stated that the small States did not, of course, stand on a higher moral level than the large ones, but that "their interests, as always those of the weaker party, coincide with those of justice." It would seem to be clear as daylight that this view, which is to be met with even in works which claim to be scholarly, is untenable. Small States can obviously be just as aggressive and expansionist as Great Powers, even if they cannot pursue such a policy as effectively. The only basis of truth in the idea is that, in the event of a conflict

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between a large and a small State, the small one of course has special reasons for appealing to a "higher" power, whether this be another Great Power or an international organisation. That the conception that there is some sort of ethical difference between small States and Great Powers is so widespread in Sweden, probably has something to do partly with the recently-mentioned fact that a number of ex-Neutral States on the whole shared Sweden's outlook, partly with the fact that international conflicts could not spread to any extent or develop into a threat to world peace unless the Great Powers took part in them; the crises which were deplored were held by a natural transference of ideas to be the fault of the Great Powers. Actually when the words "small State" were used with this approving connotation, it was mostly certain specific States which were meant, as for example, apart from the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland and the Netherlands, but not, for example, Bulgaria or Rumania; when the Great Powers were spoken of in a derogatory sense, the reference was to France, Italy and, later, Germany. Great Britain, whose general aims corresponded so largely with those of Sweden and the Scandinavian States, was not regarded in the same way; when her policy was criticised, it was generally because she did not take a strong enough line against what were generally considered to be Great Power interests in the ordinary sense.

Sweden's policy within the League of Nations, almost unanimously supported as it was by public opinion—in so far as this concerned itself with the matter—was largely determined by the considerations outlined above. The essential point seems to be that Sweden on the whole behaved as though the just and stable order she desired already existed, that she worked for aims which could not readily be realised, or at any rate would not have the effect intended, except under such an order. It may be claimed up to a point that this policy was exemplary, that if generally practised it would have made the League into an effective instrument of peace. But it is also equally true to say that it was Utopian in the sense that it was based on non-existent circumstances. Or alternatively, one might say that if every State had pursued the same sort of policy as Sweden, had the same aims as Sweden, then the League of Nations, regarded as a supra-national disciplinary organisation, would have been superfluous; a purely judicial procedure, of the kind envisaged in the Swedish proposals before the League was founded, would have been sufficient, as dangerous conflicts are not to be expected in an association in which the legitimate interests of all are satisfied.

A few examples will illustrate this point. One of the objects for which Sweden worked was that the small States should have as strong a position as possible within the League; preferably that—as in the Government proposal of 1919—they should enjoy the same *status* as the Great Powers. Given a just and stable situation, such a demand

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would be natural; if only insignificant and easily-solved disputes are likely to arise, why should the size or population or power of a State determine its influence upon the legal procedure involved? But if the League of Nations is to be regarded as the permanent organisational and authoritative power in an uneasy world, then it seems necessary that the Great Powers which will have to provide most of the military forces by which it can enforce its will, should occupy a dominant if not an entirely dominating position. The constantly reiterated demands for universality in the League must be seen as the concrete expression of hopes for a just and generally accepted order. For it is obvious that only if such an order exists or lies close at hand can universality be in itself a source of strength; if a struggle for power is impending between the States, then universality must, as Bagge pointed out in the Riksdag in 1936, lead to further differences and disturbances within the League itself. It is also characteristic that it was generally assumed that action on the League's part would be against one Power only, an isolated "disturber of the peace"; this would be natural if it were assumed that an almost ideal order had already been attained, and that any State which violated the peace was acting irresponsibly, but it is unreasonable if the League is seen as an association of competing States each with conflicting interests. That the League, being what it was, was able on one occasion almost unanimously to put the sanctions regulations into operation—even if not in the way prescribed in the Covenant—must rather be considered to have been due entirely to the peculiar circumstances of the case, namely the relatively isolated character of the Italian campaign in Abyssinia, and the consequent improbability of the majority of small States in the League becoming involved in war as a result of imposing sanctions. To sum up: Sweden's energetic work for the development of the purely judicial regulations was adapted to a situation in which justice was already achieved, and it only remained to perfect the legal instruments.

This Utopian element was not the only feature of Swedish foreign policy, but it was a central and characteristic constituent. As will have been seen from the account given above, the discussion was often conducted on two different planes; some speakers saw the League as it really was, others anticipated the order which, from Sweden's point of view, was desirable. The former aspect came to the fore above all when any question arose of undertaking fresh obligations; an extension of the sanctions system was considered dangerous because the League was not what, in certain other connections, had been tacitly assumed. Sometimes the two ideas clashed seriously, as when Sweden demanded a united, strong and vigorous League, but at the same time persisted in asserting the general principle of equality and demanding that the Assembly should have greater influence as against the Council, the small States as against the large.

The tendency—in spite of realistic arguments in certain special

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cases—to regard the League of Nations as an imperfect expression of a potentially just and harmonious order would seem to provide one of the reasons why the fundamental problems which arise in establishing an international organisation received so little consideration in Sweden. The Swedes were sceptical or critical of the existing order, because they considered that it contained injustices and the seeds of disputes, they tried to evolve an organisation of a structure that could be adapted to a just and harmonious order, and expected that this order would gradually emerge out of the present one. But—as Lundstedt in particular has pointed out on various occasions—the question of how peace was to be maintained in spite of discontent and differences was, to a certain extent, pushed into the background. What would a League of Nations have to be like, to be able to maintain peace in a world in which many serious elements of friction existed? To this question the Swedish discussion provides no answer; the only one it seems to imply, namely that the causes of dispute could and should disappear, begs the whole question.

This again is connected with a strong streak of idealism which, as already sufficiently shown, comes out again and again in the Swedish discussion. Justice, so the argument runs, brings harmony, or even, justice *is* harmony. This conception involves at bottom faith in a state of affairs which is ideal in the sense that in it national demands would correspond on the whole with national interests, and these interests be satisfied within the framework of an all-embracing organisation. Here, as Carr has shown, we have the conception of a “true” community of interests in international politics, which has its roots in the early Liberal faith in “the Invisible Hand,” a dispensation under which the actions taken by all in their own interests further the interests of the whole—a faith to which the nearest modern counterpart is the Communist theory about society liberated from the power of the State. From this point of view the essential consideration is the attainment of a certain condition, while questions of organisation and power fall into the background. This conception—like many other current conceptions—only needs to be expressed in simple words for its untenability to be apparent. In the same way it is clear that, even if the vague principles regarded in the Swedish discussion as constituting “justice” could be realised, harmony would still not be assured, and that consequently the question of the organisation of power must be the primary consideration in international politics, as in the internal affairs of each State.

NOTES

SWEDEN, THE WAR AND THE PEACE.

¹ In spite of considerable one-sidedness and exaggeration Lucien Maury's *Den svenska nationalismen och kriget*, 1918, is very interesting on these questions.

² It is interesting to compare the argumentation on Swedish foreign policy in the light of the World War with, on the one hand, the ideology prevalent in Germany during the First World War and, on the other, the later National Socialist propaganda doctrines. The parallels are striking. For example: The Swedish work speaks of Scandinavianism as a distant goal (pp. 19 ff.). Under it, Sweden is to be the "leading political Power." "There must be an end to the sentimental conception of the equality of nations." If Sweden can gather the Scandinavian nations together, it must be for other than purely Scandinavian aims. "The future path of Scandinavianism must lead ultimately on towards the impending struggle of the Germanic races against the encroachment of inferior races." The clash between Great Britain and Germany is explained, among other things as follows (p. 34): "Here we have again the strongest driving-force in modern Imperialism: the thirst of Capitalism after higher interest and profits than the glutted home market can offer." There are also traces of a vague anti-semitism (p. 164): "During the Heroic Age of antiquity, according to a British politician, Helen's fair face set thousands of men and ships in motion—in our Golden Age, the evil genius behind a war is more often the cunning face of some Jewish financier."

³ Full accounts of Sweden's work in the League of Nations, to which reference is made now once and for all, will be found in Eric Cyril Bellquist, *Some Aspects of the Recent Foreign Policy of Sweden*, 1929, and above all S. Shephard Jones, *The Scandinavian States and the League of Nations*, 1939.

⁴ William E. Rappard, *International Relations as viewed from Geneva*, 1925, pp. 163 ff. Rappard's characterisation of the different groups would not always appear to be accurate.

⁵ Cf. Ernst Trygger, *L'entrée de la Suède dans la Société des Nations* (in *Les Origines et l'Œuvre de la Société des Nations*, I, 1923).

⁶ League of Nations, *Records of the Third Assembly, Minutes of the Third Committee*, p. 16 (Undén), cf. pp. 34 and 53 (Branting).

⁷ G. M. Gathorne-Hardy, *A Short History of International Affairs, 1920 to 1934*, 1934, p. 63.

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⁸ Lundstedt has propounded his views in a number of publications, e.g. *Folkkrätten och Genève-politiken*, 1924, *Folkkrätten — en livsfara för folken*, 1927. An account cannot be given here, as it would lie outside the scope of the present work. Lundstedt seems to have had little influence on Swedish policy or public opinion, though some on the purely scientific discussion. He was occasionally quoted by newspapers particularly critical of the League.

⁹ T. P. Conwell-Evans, *The League Council in Action*, 1929, pp. 73 ff.—The following year the Council adopted resolutions more clearly defining its competence in accordance with the Covenant; the Council's interpretations did not agree with the Italian view 1923. Cf. Undén, *Juridik och politik*, 1927, pp. 133 ff.

¹⁰ Sweden's actions met with warm recognition in Germany, cf. Stresemann, *Vermächtnis*, Vol. 2, 1932, pp. 573 ff.

¹¹ Cf. the unpublished Minutes of the Swedish League of Nations Association 1919—1932, also *Meddelanden rörande Nationernas förbund* (publication issued by this Association) 1922—1934; the last number of this publication appeared on 30th June 1934. See also Krabbe, *Folkeförbundet og den offentlige mening (Folkeförbundets første ti aar, 1930 pp. 98 ff.)*.

¹² Joh. Hellner, *Memorandum rörande Sveriges politik i förhållande till Finland under tiden från Finlands självständighetsförklaring till det finska inbördeskrigets slut* (Documents published by the Swedish Foreign Office), 1936, pp. 22 ff.

¹³ *Svensk Tidskrift* 1917, pp. 580 ff. According to Prof. Eli Heckscher, the article was written by prof. G. Bagge with the collaboration, among others, of A. Gripenberg, later Finnish Minister in Stockholm. Gripenberg assumed, as he explained, in another connection, that Åland would remain part of Finland.

¹⁴ Cf. here and for the following, Hellner, *Memorandum . . .* pp. 27 ff., also Karl Hildebrand, *Gustav V (Sveriges Historia till våra dagar, D. 14)*, 1926, pp. 402 ff.

¹⁵ It is also worth mentioning that the banquet given in honour of the Åland delegation on 6th February, at which the Åland demands received strong support, was organised by the Youth Organisations of the Conservatives and Liberals (not the Social Democrats) in Stockholm.

¹⁶ C. Stenroth, *Ett halvt år som Finlands förste utrikesminister*, 1931, p. 75.

¹⁷ In particular *Ålandsfrågan inför Nationernas förbund* (three parts) 1920—1921. This collection of documents is supplemented on certain points by the corresponding Finnish publication: *La Question des îles d'Åland* (Documents diplomatiques publiés par le ministère des affaires étrangères), 1920. —References in detail to the different documents have not been considered necessary.—The Åland question has also been dealt with in a number of theses: Boursot, *La Question des îles d'Åland*, 1923; H. A. Colijn, *La décision de la Société des nations concernant les îles d'Åland*, 1923; Jégou du Laz, *La Question des îles d'Åland*, 1923; Popovici, *La Question des îles d'Åland*, 1923; E. Sinn, *Die gegenwärtige Regelung der Ålandsinseln-Frage*, 1925; Lucien Maury, *La Question des îles d'Åland*, 1930. These works are all of little interest. They consist in brief historical surveys, with dogmatic expositions of questions of international law and politics.—Short accounts of the development of the

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Aaland question will be found in the works by Hildebrand and Essén already mentioned, also Bellquist, *Some Aspects of the Recent Foreign Policy of Sweden*, 1929, pp. 284, ff. So far as I am aware, no work has ever been published which deals in detail with the Swedish discussion on the question. A bibliography will be found in Andrea L. Lindstedt, *Förteckning över litteratur rörande Åland och därmed sammanhängande frågor*, 1940.

¹⁸ It is uncertain how large a proportion of the adult Aaland population took part in the plebiscite. According to information kindly obtained for me by the Registrar, Erland von Hofsten, three sets of figures were included in the census of 31st Dec. 1920, namely:

a) Present population according to parish registers	20,423
b) Total " " " " " " " "	26,911
c) Population registered as "resident for rating" purposes	23,561

Particulars are given of the whereabouts of the absent population. These show that the difference between a) and b) is due to the fact that b) includes a large number of emigrants, seamen, missing persons etc. A great many of those reckoned as absent seem, however, to have been included in the rating register, so that c) is considerably larger than a). Probably c) is the most correct figure, since returning emigrants are included again in the rating register but not in the parish registers. a) and b)—but not c)—are divided into 5-year age groups. a) includes 12,172 over the age of 20, and b) 18,112. Taking c) as the basis and following the age group divisions in a) and b), it may be estimated that there were approximately 17,000 adult men and women on Aaland at the time of the census. At the Landtag elections in 1919 and 1922, there were respectively 12,866 and 12,876 qualified electors on Aaland (i.e. persons over the age of 24 with the exception of certain small categories). This agrees roughly with the figure of 17,000 adults. It would seem certain, therefore, that a very small proportion, not more than $\frac{1}{3}$, of those entitled to vote did not take part in the plebiscite of 1919. Strangely enough, this fact seems not to have been noticed. But it is probable—as this was indirectly recognised even in Finland—that a solid majority of the population of Aaland was in favour of union with Sweden.

^{18a} Cullberg (Georges), *La Scandinavie au Congrès de la paix*, 1919, however, obviously had no semi-official character.

¹⁹ Cf. *Redogörelse för tillkomsten av press- och informationsorganet i Utrikesdepartementet* etc., 1939, p. 36. On this and other points touched upon here I have been guided by the memoirs referred to in the Preface, and by personal information received from various quarters. Palmstierna's activities were also discussed and criticised in the contemporary Press; see e.g. *Göteborgs-Tidningen* 28th Sept. 1920.

²⁰ The account in Axel Brusewitz, *Sveriges riksdag XV 1938*, pp. 105 ff., does not mention the first meeting; cf. for the second meeting Brusewitz, *Utrikesfrågors behandling i den svenska riksdagen*, 1941, p. 76.

²¹ *Contemporary Review*, vol. 118 (1920), p. 794. Among representative expressions of the Finnish point of view may be mentioned: *Åland, rättsvetenskapliga och historiska synpunkter* (Robert Hermanson och Carl von Bonsdorff), 1920; Otto Andersson, *Les origines de la Question d'Åland*, 1920; J. R. Danielson-Kalmari, *La Question des îles d'Åland*, 1921; Robert Hermanson, *I Ålandsfrågan*, 1920; J. J. Sederholm, *La Question d'Åland*, 1920;—Cf. in this connection also Lille, *Étt halvt år såsom Finlands pressrepresentant i Sverige*, 1918; Herman Gummerus, *Sverige och Finland 1917—1918*, 1936, p. 27.

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²² Cf. e.g. Adams, *Great Britain and the American Civil War*, 1925, I, p. 217; O. J. Hale, *Germany and the Diplomatic Revolution*, 1931, p. 18; Sidney Bradshaw Fay, *The Origins of the World War*, 2nd edition, 1941, pp. 47 ff.

²³ Louis De Geer, *Politiska hägkomster från åren 1901—1921*, p. 105: "In my view, the solution of the question ultimately decided upon, which was based on the Commissioners' report, was really the happiest for us. Of course it was hard on the Aaland Islanders, but for Sweden it would certainly have been a doubtful blessing to win our case and consequently, among other things, find ourselves on bad terms with our Finnish neighbours." Cf. for the following: Einar af Wirsén, *Minnen från fred och krig*, 1942, p. 372; Einar af Wirsén, *Ryska problem*, 1942, p. 54. Cf. also e.g. Anna Bugge-Wicksell, *Nationernas förbund*, II, 1925, pp. 62 f.; Otto Stenroth, *Ett halvt år som Finlands förste utrikesminister*, p. 231.

²⁴ Cf. in addition to the works on the Aaland question already quoted, e.g. Conwell-Evans, *The League Council in Action*, 1929, p. 155; Gregory, *The Neutralization of the Aaland Islands (The American Journal of International Law, vol. 17, 1923)*, p. 76; W. C. Langsam, *The World since 1914*, pp. 148 ff.; S. King-Hall, *Our own Times, 1913—1934*, II, 1935, p. 318; P. W. Slosson, *Europe since 1870*, 1935, pp. 496 f.; George Soloveytschick, *Fears and Realities in Scandinavia (International Affairs 1937)* p. 896; R. Cecil, *A Great Experiment*, 1941, p. 127.

²⁵ Here and for much of the information used later, I refer once and for all to Henning Nielsen, *Nordens enhed gennem tiderne*, III, 1938. But in spite of its wide scope, this valuable work is incomplete on a number of points. It should also be emphasised that Nielsen, who is an enthusiastic supporter of the idea of unity, is inclined to over-estimate the importance of contributions which coincide with his own views.—Cf. *Statsvetenskaplig Tidskrift* 1917, pp. 305 ff., 319 ff.

²⁶ *Svenska Dagbladet* published two articles by Dr. Adrian Molin on 2nd and 3rd November 1934 with such pronounced Nazi sympathies that they caused quite a sensation. These articles are stated, however, to have been accepted without the knowledge of the two chief political editors of the paper, G. Stridsberg and O. Järte. The incident illustrates the kind of difficulties which may arise in judging the attitude of a newspaper.—Cf. A. Molin, *Ett svenskt perspektiv på den nazistiska idékretsen*, 1934, *Stafjetten går vidare*, 1936.—Cf. also in this connection Zeth Höglund, *Häxnatt över Europa*, 1939, pp. 5 ff.

²⁷ As examples of works of this pro-Nazi type may be mentioned Böök, *Hitlers Tyskland maj 1933*, 1933; Böök, *Resa till Saar och Paris över Elsass*, 1935 (in particular pp. 240 f.); Sven Hedin, *Tyskland och världsfreden*, 1937 (in particular p. 352). Several other works by Conservative authors show a similar attitude.

²⁸ Cf. in this connection Joseph Edward Davies, *Mission to Moscow*, 1942, pp. 117 f., 346 f.

²⁹ Cf. here and for the following E. Hambro, *Les sanctions et l'attitude actuelles des états du Nord après l'assemblée de la Société des nations de 1938 (Le Nord 1938)*.

³⁰ It is characteristic of Sandler's attitude that, according to a prominent lawyer, in his speech in April 1938 he advocated "a Scandinavian defensive alliance in the form of an armed neutrality prepared even for military measures" (Halvar Sundberg, *Den nordiska frågan*, 1941, p. 50),

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³¹ Cf. in particular Undén, *La Question d'Aland (Le Nord 1938)*; Karl Gustaf Westman, *Försvaret av neutralitetspolitiken och Aland, 1939*; Axel Rappe, *Aktuella försvarsproblem, 1938*; Stig Hansson Ericson, *Försvarsproblem kring Alandsöarna, 1939*.

³² Cf. Axel Brusewitz, *Utrikesfrågors behandling i den svenska riksdagen, 1941*, pp. 77, 80.

³³ League of Nations, *Official Journal 1939*, January—June, pp. 257 ff., 279 ff.

³⁴ An attempt has been made to estimate the amount of leader space devoted by a number of newspapers of various camps to foreign policy or conditions in foreign countries. But it is difficult to draw any really illuminating comparisons. The same paper will vary considerably from year to year. Some papers treat as leaders what others publish as articles from foreign correspondents or independent articles. Particularly of recent years, it has become customary for certain papers to publish several leading articles; sometimes these are of equal length, sometimes there will be one main leader and other minor or intermediate ones; sometimes leaders on foreign affairs will be published in other parts of the paper. It seems clear, however, that during peaceful periods the Press of the Right-Wing and non-Socialist Left on the average devotes more space to foreign affairs than that of the Social Democrats and Farmers' League. At times of crisis, when foreign affairs are in the fore-front, this distinction vanishes or at all events becomes less pronounced.

³⁵ *The History of the Times*, II, 1939, pp. 147—165.

³⁶ Cf. Herbert Tingsten, *Idékritik, 1941*, pp. 97 ff. Cf. here and for the following with regard to the Norwegian attitude. E. Hambro, *Norge og Folkeforbundet, 1938*, pp. 38 ff., 78 f.

³⁷ Cf. O. J. Hale, *Germany and the Diplomatic Revolution, 1931*, p. 4.

³⁸ Cf. E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1939*, pp. 280 f.; De Geer, *Individualismens ödestimma, 1937*, pp. 27 ff.

List of Swedish Governments during the period 1918-1939

<i>Prime Minister</i>	<i>Time of functioning</i>		<i>Party or coalition of parties</i>
Edén, Nils	19/10	1917—10/3	1920 Liberal-Social Democratic
Branting, Hjalmar	19/3	1920—27/10	1920 Social Democratic
De Geer, Louis	27/10	1920—23/2	1921 Non-party cabinet of civil servants
von Sydow, Oscar	23/2	1921—13/10	1921 Non-party cabinet of civil servants
Branting, Hjalmar	13/10	1921—19/4	1923 Social Democratic
Trygger, Ernst	19/4	1923—18/10	1924 Conservative
Branting, Hjalmar	18/10	1924—24/1	1925 Social Democratic
Sandler, Richard	24/1	1925—7/6	1926 Social Democratic
Ekman, Carl	7/6	1926—2/10	1928 Liberal-Progressive
Lindman, Arvid	2/10	1928—7/6	1930 Conservative
Ekman, Carl	7/6	1930—6/8	1932 Progressive
Hamrin, Felix	6/8	1932—24/9	1932 Progressive
Hansson, Per Albin	24/9	1932—19/6	1936 Social Democratic
Pehrsson-Bramstorp, Axel	19/6	1936—28/9	1936 Farmers' League
Hansson, Per Albin	28/9	1936—13/12	1939 Social Democratic Farmers' League

Representatives elected to the First Chamber of the Swedish Riksdag during the period 1918-1939

	Conservatives	Farmers' League	Liberals-Progressive Party (Since 1934 People's Party)		Social Democrats	Left-Socialists	Communists	Total
1918	88	—	45		16	1	—	150
1921	37	19	40		50	4	—	150
1922	41	18	38		50	2	1	150
1925	44	18	13	22	52	—	1	150
1929	49	17	7	24	52	—	1	150
1933	50	18	4	19	58	—	1	150
1935	48	20	19		62	1	—	150
1937	45	22	16		66	1	—	150
1939	41	24	15		69	—	1	150

Representatives elected to the Second Chamber of the Swedish Riksdag during the period 1918-1939

	Conservatives	Farmers' League	Liberals-Progressive party		Social Democrats	Left-Socialists	Communists	Total
1918	59	12	62		86	11	—	230
1921	70	30	48		75	7	—	230
1922	62	21	41		93	6	7	230
1925	65	23	5	28	104	—	5	230
1929	73	27	4	28	90	—	8	230
1933	58	36	4	20	104	6	2	230
1937	44	36	27		112	6	5	230

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