

THE ÅLAND ISLANDS
DEMILITARIZED
REGION

9H
A-30

W37

U. Rindhult & Söner & Söner & Söner

8724

The Åland Islands

Demilitarized Region

Ålands fredsförening

Publishers: Ålands fredsförening (Åland Peace Society)
ISBN 952-90-7146-9
Editor and layout: Marlene Öhberg
Photo: Inga-Britt Wiktorsson, page 68
Cover: Johan Scott
Translation: Jocelyn Palmer
Printed by: Ålandstryckeriet, Mariehamn 1995

Foreword

"I have a dream," Martin Luther King said once in a speech in the 1960s. It was a dream of a more peaceful, just world. A community in which all races could live on an equal, fair basis.

The century which is soon ending has perhaps been the cruellest and bloodiest century in the history of the world, during which millions and millions of people have been murdered, maimed and subjected to the most brutal, evil outrages. In those circumstances, I believe it is important to keep on sustaining dreams and visions; to continue believing that non-violence, democracy and justice are the means of creating a society worthy of human beings.

In world society, Åland is a miniature community, a dot on the map, which most people do not even know of. Yet, the League of Nations took the Åland Islands question extremely seriously in 1921 when that matter was put on the agenda. The solution was that Åland became an autonomous region under the Republic of Finland. During the seventy or so years which have elapsed since then, Åland has developed into a community in which its autonomy has become the common denominator of democracy, justice and peace. Autonomy has given the Ålanders their identity.

Today we live in a world which seems to be more and more divided, disintegrated and chaotic. Many people live their daily lives as refugees in fear of their lives. Ethnic conflicts are taking place in many of the countries which had obvious roles under the leadership of the two super-powers, before the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Concepts such as "ethnic cleansing" are once more resounding as slogans against population groups who have neither political, economic, nor military means of defending themselves. Again we have to ask ourselves, what is it that creates a peaceful, stable society?

One standard of a peaceful, stable society is, naturally, the way in which the majority in a country behaves towards those who are different as regards language, culture, nationality, colour, religion, etc. If it is a society in which

Foreword

each individual is regarded as equal in value to every other individual - with the same rights, obligations and opportunities - then that society will be fairer and less prone to violence.

In the case of the Åland Islands, Finland has, together with Åland, created a model which can serve in many ways as a prototype for addressing the countless so-called ethnic conflicts existing round the world. I do not claim that the solution of the Åland Islands question is the only universal solution. Every conflict between ethnic groups or between a majority and a minority or minorities naturally has its own special character and therefore has to be solved on the basis of its own conditions. The only fact on which humanity can agree, is that violence or war never solves problems - rather they consolidate them. History throws that truth in our faces time after time.

In the following articles Susanne Eriksson, Lars Ingmar Johansson and Barbro Sundback illustrate what the Autonomy Act and the Conventions on demilitarization and neutralization have meant to Åland and its development into a democratic, well-functioning community.

Mariehamn, 15 July 1994

Marlene Öhberg
Editor

Contents

page

Facts about Åland 6

Åland - a Demilitarized, Neutralized Region 9
Susanne Eriksson

The Autonomy of Åland - Background and Present Situation 29
Lars Ingmar Johansson

From National Fragment to International Entity 59
Barbro Sundback

The Authors 83

Facts about Åland

The Åland Islands have a long history. As far back as the Stone and Bronze Ages, there were settlements in this group of islands situated in the Baltic Sea. Today Åland is part of the archipelago stretching between Turku/Åbo in the east and Stockholm in the west.

Åland is an autonomous, demilitarized and unilingually Swedish province of Finland. It consists of more than 6,500 islands and skerries, 65 of which are inhabited today. Åland is divided into 16 districts, each of which has its own local administration and local government office. The largest district is Mariehamn, the only town of Åland, with somewhat more than 10,000 inhabitants, and the smallest is the outer island district of Sottunga, with some 130 inhabitants. The latter is also the smallest district of Finland.

For centuries the basic industries of Åland have been shipping, agriculture and fishing. Tourism has been expanding vigorously since the 1960s. In pace with the increase in tourism, the traditional basic industries have been declining more and more. Agriculture has focussed more and more upon special crops such as onions, Chinese leaves, apples, cucumbers, sugarbeet and potatoes. In the fishing branch, fish farming, primarily of rainbow trout, has become an important source of livelihood in the outer island districts.

Shipping has undergone an extensive structural change during the present century. One sector which has expanded vigorously since its emergence at the end of the 1950s is that of car and passenger ferry services between Sweden, Åland and Finland.

Manufacturing is on a small scale, consisting mainly of processed agricultural products and fish. In labour market terms Åland has to compete particularly with the Stockholm region, with its high standard of living. Emigration has always been an alternative to unemployment on Åland. In view of this, and the fact that the economy has been expansive in many sectors, the employment situation has generally been good in Åland. In the last ten years there has been a considerable change in the interest taken by employees in trade union activities. Nowadays almost half of the Åland

employees belong to some trade union. One factor contributing to this is that in a large part of the public sector Åland employees can negotiate and enter into agreements independently.

In the sphere of education, Åland can provide vocational training in sectors such as shipping, nursing/welfare, commerce, tourism, technology and agriculture. There is also a theoretical secondary school, and the Åland Institute of Higher Education provides opportunities of studying certain academic courses.

Åland has a well-developed social security insurance system covering medical care, dental care, child care and care of the elderly. Facilities for care of the elderly are decentralized and are being built up in most of the districts. The educational system is well organized, and today there are junior and senior level schools in almost all districts. Child day care has been developing too, with the result that nearly 70% of the Åland women are wage-earners.

There are two newspapers, Åland and Nya Åland, appearing five and four times a week respectively. The local radio, Radio Åland, has been broadcasting regularly since 1962. In recent years Radio 93 has also emerged. Since the 1980s local TV programmes have been broadcast over the Åland cable networks. Cultural life is and always has been flourishing. It is mainly fostered by non-profit-making societies, but many professional musicians, authors, artists and others visit Åland occasionally.

The landscape of the Åland Islands is the result of still continuing processes of natural forces, which have shaped it into a typical archipelago landscape. Its fundamental character is displayed in rapid alternations between land and water scenes and between cultivated areas and hills and forests, as well as in the remarkable profusion of flora and fauna species and the many types of vegetation and animal colonies which have evolved. The mosaic-like patterns of islands, with their fantastic waterways and land formations and their teeming flocks of sea fowl, make an unforgettable impression upon the beholder. But Åland's colourful history, with prehistoric graves, medieval churches and its castle also attracts visitors.



Åland - a Demilitarized, Neutralized Region

by Susanne Eriksson

With their central situation in the Baltic Sea, midway between two States, the Åland Islands have long attracted great interest from the aspect of military strategy. Åland was part of the Kingdom of Sweden right up to the War of 1808-09, when Sweden was forced to cede Finland and Åland to Russia under the terms of the Peace Treaty of Fredrikshamn/Hamina. That brought about a change in Åland's international status - the islands in the Swedish inland sea became Russia's farthest outpost in the west, close to Stockholm, capital city of its hereditary enemy Sweden.

Åland's vital strategic situation has had considerable influence on its history. Great interest has been shown in the sovereignty of the islands, one result being the autonomous position enjoyed by Åland today in the world community. The strategic situation of the islands is also, naturally, the cause of their demilitarized, neutralized status.

Background

After the Peace of Fredrikshamn in 1809, the Tsar of Russia realized how to utilize the pearl which he had been given. Åland was fortified with great thoroughness, more than 30 batteries being installed in various places. Work also commenced on the large fortress in Bomarsund on the eastern side of the Main Island. Bomarsund Fortress was destroyed during the Crimean War after an attack by French and British naval forces, and at the



1. French and British soldiers in Åland during the Crimean War. Bomarsund Fortress in the background. Photographs from Dolby's Sketches, Åland Museum.



2. Part of Bomarsund after its destruction. Photographs from Dolby's Sketches, Åland Museum.

THE 1856 CONVENTION ON THE DEMILITARIZATION OF THE ÅLAND ISLANDS

"In the name of God the Almighty.

His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias, His Majesty the Emperor of the French, and Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, wishing to extend to the Baltic Sea the agreement so happily re-established between them in the East, and thereby to secure the benefits of general peace.....declare that the Åland Islands will not be fortified and that no military or naval establishment will be maintained or set up in them." (Quotation from "Internationella avtal och dokument rörande Åland, (International Treaties and Documents Concerning the Åland Islands), 1856-1992", Ålands kulturstiftelse, Mariehamn 1993.)

conclusion of peace in 1856, the demilitarization and neutralization of the Åland Islands became for the first time the subject of a settlement under international law. At quite an early stage the French and British offered Åland to Sweden, which declined the offer, however. Fear of Russia and determination to preserve its neutrality restrained Sweden from incorporating Åland into its territory.

Since the Russian threat (according to the Swedish peace negotiators, the Russian Empire aimed its "pistol at the heart of Sweden") could not be rendered impotent through reunion of Åland with Sweden, the victorious powers compelled Russia to undertake to demilitarize Åland by means of the Åland Servitude. In the first place this involved a ban upon fortifying the islands.

Although the demilitarization of Åland came about against the will of Russia, adherence to it is considered to have been remarkably good. Russian forces did conceive several plans for fortifying Åland, but most of them were never achieved. The outbreak of World War I revealed a flaw in the 1856 Convention, which did not contain any provisions for the defence of Åland in wartime. Since there appeared to be a great risk of a German invasion, Russia fortified Åland with the consent of Sweden, Britain and France, with the proviso that the fortifications were to be destroyed at the end of the war. So there was never any question of nullifying the Åland Servitude.

In conjunction with the peace negotiations resulting in a separate peace between Russia and Germany in 1918, a decision was made to have the Åland fortifications removed as soon as possible. Sweden's interest in Åland had manifested itself again, this time in the form of a note to Germany, in which Sweden requested that the fortifications should be removed as soon as possible and that the Åland Islands should be neutralized for all time. The subject of neutralization was not brought up at the negotiations, since the parties intended to conclude an agreement on the matter at a later occasion. Demolition work was carried out by Swedish and Finnish troops in the summer of 1919.



3. Swedish officers in Åland in 1918. Photo: Åland Museum.
4. German officers in Åland in 1918. Photo: Åland Museum.

With the disintegration of the Russian Empire, the Ålanders entertained hopes of a reunion with their "motherland", Sweden. By reason of its international nature, the Åland Islands question was referred to the League of Nations, whose Council reached its decision in June 1921. Finland received sovereignty over the Åland Islands but was forced to accept two important restrictions upon that sovereignty:

1. The Ålanders were to be assured guarantees for the protection of their Swedish language, culture and local customs.
2. Åland was to be demilitarized and neutralized by means of an international agreement.

The demilitarization and neutralization of Åland came about according to the decision of the League of Nations with the purpose of "constituting a guarantee to the Swedish people and to all the countries concerned, that the



5. Russian officers in Åland in 1917. Photo: Åland Museum.
6. Åland Home Guardsmen during World War I. Photo: Åland Museum.

Åland Islands would never become a source of danger from the military point of view." So fortification of Åland was considered to be a potential threat to Sweden.

The decision of the League of Nations meant that none of the three parties to the conflict was bypassed: Finland received sovereignty over the Åland Islands, Sweden received guarantees that Åland would not be a military threat, and the Ålanders received their autonomy plus guarantees for the protection of their language and culture.

The Council of the League of Nations decided that a convention on Åland's demilitarization and neutralization should be prepared. Unlike the 1856 Convention, the new Convention involved neutralization as well. It was signed in November 1921 by ten European States. It is now known as the 1921 Convention.

Since the Soviet-Russian regime was not recognized at the time of the signing of the 1921 Convention, the Soviet Union was not invited to the Peace Conference and so was not a signatory of the Convention. In conjunction with the conclusion of peace after the 1939-40 "Winter War" between Finland and the Soviet Union, a treaty was contracted in 1940 between the latter two countries on the demilitarization of the Åland Islands. This Treaty of Moscow did not include neutralization. Åland had been fortified by Finland during the Winter War and was once again fortified "for the defence of neutrality" during the further war between Finland and the Soviet Union in 1941-1944. That was with the tacit consent of the signatories to the 1921 Convention. However, the fortifications did not come to any actual use. Åland's demilitarization was expressly confirmed as being in force again in the Peace Treaty of Paris 1947.

Validity of the Conventions

All the above-mentioned treaties regarding Åland's military status are considered to be still in force. The 1856 Åland Servitude has never been repealed or replaced, and the 1921 Convention confirmed its validity. The 1921 Convention is also regarded as being in force.

The point has also been made in literature that both the demilitarization and neutralization of Åland have acquired prescriptive right under international law, and may thus be regarded as valid common law, being also binding upon the States which have not signed the Conventions. Such a general international law requires both a conception of justice among States and also a practice confirming that conception. However, the breaches of the demilitarization rule which have occurred, indicating a certain vacillation in practice, have not been considered by experts in international law to be sufficient to undermine the legal force of the demilitarization and neutralization.

Contents of the 1921 Demilitarization and Neutralization Convention

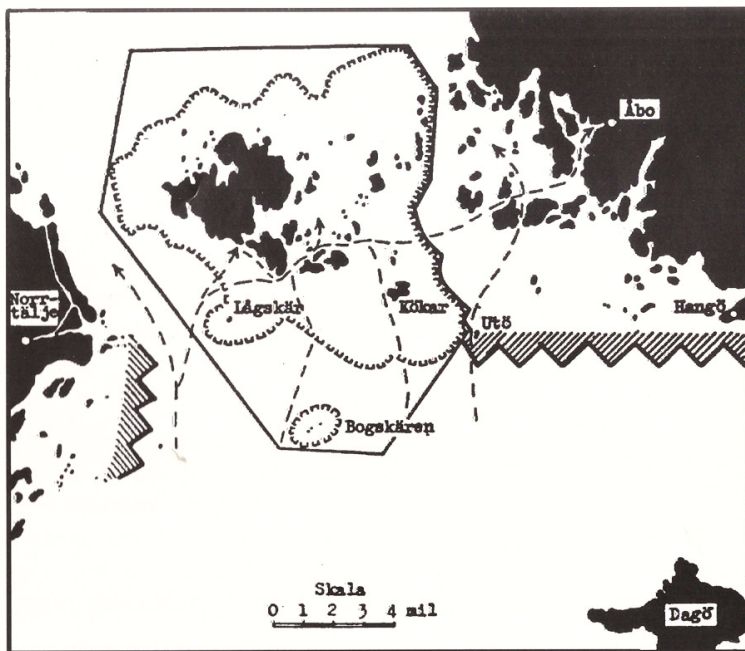
Bans upon fortifications

Under the 1921 Convention Finland undertakes not to fortify the Åland Islands. No military installations, operational bases or other facilities for warlike purposes are permitted in Åland. The manufacture, import, transiting and export of weapons and war materials are also banned.

Ban upon military forces

The Convention also stipulates that no army, navy or air force belonging to any power whatsoever may stay inside Åland territory except in four special cases applying in peace time. The exceptions are the following:

1. If extremely special circumstances require, an armed force may stay in Åland for a short time to maintain order. Since conditions have been stable for a long time, this exception is considered to have lost its relevance.
2. Finland has the right "occasionally to allow one or two of its light warships intended for surface navigation to visit the islands" and "to anchor temporarily in waters belonging to the islands." This rule has been interpreted in practice to mean that warships are not to stay in Åland waters longer than for 24 hours at a time.
3. If special circumstances of weight require, other surface ships too may be brought into and temporarily kept in Åland territory. Special circumstances are understood to mean mainly acute threats to neutralization or internal disturbances.
4. Finland may let its aerial combat forces fly over Åland but not land otherwise than in cases of force majeure, that is, in unforeseen, extraordinary cases.



7. The Åland Islands. The whole line denotes the region affected by the Convention, dashed lines the parts of that area situated inside the three-mile border, forming the neutralized zone. The zigzag lines show current Swedish and Finnish coastal fortifications. (Picture from N. Björk's *Tre Nordiska försvarsproblem*, Helsingfors 1986).

Neutralized region

Under the Convention Åland is also to be considered a neutralized region and must not be used either directly or indirectly for military purposes. That is, the signatory States undertake to leave Åland outside war operations in wartime. The only permissible exceptions are that Finland has the right to mine Åland waters temporarily if the Baltic Sea is affected by war, and that, in the event of a sudden attack against Åland or against Finland through Åland, Finland shall take the measures required to stop and repel the attacker until the other signatory states can intervene.

The Convention gives the contracting parties the right to consult the Council of the League of Nations for a decision on measures to ensure the enforcement of the provisions of the Convention.

Since the general opinion among experts on international law is that the United Nations have not assumed the role of the League of Nations, the stipulations on the obligation of the signatory powers to protect Åland's neutralization are regarded as having lapsed with the dissolution of the League of Nations.

The 1921 Convention does not contain any categorical prohibition against the signatory powers participating in the defence of Åland's neutrality. However, a certain restriction is made in the 1940 Treaty, to the effect that Finland must not place Åland at the disposal of foreign armed forces. Aid can be supplied in other forms anyway, and in addition, opinion on the capabilities of the UN to intervene in conflicts appears to have changed somewhat in recent times. Finland is still considered to have the right and obligation to defend Åland's neutrality in the event of an attack.

Nuclear-free zone

The prohibition against weapons in the Convention naturally applies to nuclear weapons too. Under the Convention on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, Finland is already prohibited from possessing and manufacturing nuclear weapons, but current interpretation does not prevent a so-called nuclear power from placing nuclear weapons in Finland, with the exception of Åland.

Contents of the 1940 Treaty

Under the 1940 Treaty Finland makes a commitment towards the Soviet Union not to fortify Åland nor to place Åland at the disposal of the armed forces of foreign States. According to the Treaty this also means that neither Finland nor any other States may maintain or erect facilities or installations of a military nature in Åland.



8. In December 1993 the Åland Islands Peace Institute, in co-operation with the Inter-Parliamentary Council of the OSS countries and the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation, arranged a meeting in Mariehamn with Members of Parliament from Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabach. The meeting attracted international interest. Right, Olof Jansson, then Speaker of the Åland Parliament, and left, Medetkan Sherimkulov, Speaker of the Parliament of Kirghizia. Photo: Jan Andersson.

Further, the Treaty gives the Soviet Union the right to maintain a consulate of its own in Åland. Besides ordinary consular obligations, the consulate has the duty of supervising compliance with the undertakings laid down in the Treaty. The consular representative has the right to consult

Finnish authorities for the purpose of a joint investigation, in the event of any suspicion of a breach of the demilitarization stipulations of the Treaty.

Exemption from military service

As a result of Åland's demilitarized and neutralized status, Ålanders are exempt from the obligation of performing military service. Stipulations on exemption from military service are contained in the Autonomy Act, which can only be altered with the consent of the Åland Parliament.

The first Autonomy Act of 1920 already contained a statute to the effect that Ålanders were under obligation, instead of performing military service, to "serve in a corresponding manner in the pilotage or lighthouse service, as laid down by law." Under the current Autonomy Act a person possessing Åland regional citizenship is entitled, instead of performing military service, to serve in a corresponding manner in the pilotage or lighthouse service or in some other civil administration, in accordance with the statutes of national law.

During the time that the Autonomy Act has been in force, the obligation of Ålanders to serve in the pilotage or lighthouse service or other civil authority has not been introduced in national law. Between 1922 and 1938 the Finnish Government did submit four bills altogether on the subject of such service, and a bill for introducing partial military service for Ålanders, but none of the bills resulted in legislation, and the proposals fell on either formal or political grounds.

Exception from military service is connected with regional citizenship and does not apply to persons moving to Åland after the age of twelve.

Changes in the world around

With the independence of the Baltic States and subsequently with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the question arose as to whether those events had brought about a change in Åland's international status as demilitarized and neutralized zone.

Estonia and Latvia are among the signatories of the 1921 Convention. Since both these countries are not designated new States but restored States, the legal situation at the time of the restoration of their independence is regarded as being the same as at the time when they were incorporated into the Soviet Union. This means that Estonia and Latvia must be considered to be bound again by the 1921 Convention but not by the agreements contracted by the Soviet Union regarding Åland.

In conjunction with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the previous obligations of the Union under international law were theoretically taken over by both Russia and the other members of the CIS. The 1940 Treaty is indubitably in force between Russia and Finland, and consequently it is included in the protocol signed in July 1992, concerning those two States' bilateral agreements. Negotiations are in progress between Finland and other members of the CIS about explicit agreements as to which bilateral treaties remain in force.

Demilitarization and the EU

Under the stipulations of the Autonomy Act the Åland Parliament must give its consent to such international treaties as are contracted by Finland in issues coming under the competence of Åland, in order for the treaty to apply in Åland too. So, when Finland joined the EU, the consent of the Åland Parliament was required for Åland not to be placed outside the Union, like the Faroes and Greenland, for example. Since the Maastricht Treaty only contains a manifestation of will but not any concrete stipulations about future co-operation in military and security policy, Finnish membership of the European Union is not regarded as affecting the conventions on Åland's demilitarization and neutralization. However, if the intentions of the Treaty are realized later, the 1921 Convention may be affected. Such an expansion of European co-operation would not require the consent of the Åland Parliament, and accordingly, in conjunction with negotiations on Finnish membership there was political unanimity that some form of confirmation of

Åland's status under international law was desirable.

Negotiations between the EU and Finland resulted in an agreement upon an Åland protocol which was attached to the actual of Accession Treaty, thus being part of the EU's primary law. The Åland protocol stresses the special status which Åland enjoys under international law, and which embraces Åland's demilitarized, neutralized status. When Finland and Åland joined the EU, the Union further accepted the inclusion in the minutes of the Conference on Accession of a unilateral declaration from Finland acknowledging the status of Åland. In the declaration the Government of Finland recalls that the autonomy of Åland is constitutionally guaranteed to the Ålanders and that the Åland Islands are the subject of an established status under International Law. On the part of both the Union and Finland there is agreement that "established status under International Law" includes demilitarization and neutralization.

In spite of the stipulations on increased Åland influence regarding international treaties, negotiations on the Finnish membership of the EU revived the question as to whether there is adequate Åland influence on such treaties which are vital to Åland but which do not concern the sphere of Åland competence.

Has Åland a say?

The Åland Islands are not formally a party to the conventions on demilitarization and neutralization, but during the latter part of the 1980's the Åland Executive Council considered itself to have a voice in relation to the Government of Finland as regards the meaning of demilitarization.

As an argument in favour of such a right, the Ålanders have made the point, that demilitarization and neutralization are components of an indivisible "trinity" together with autonomy and national status. They refer to the fact that the 1921 decision of the Council of the League of Nations must be regarded as a comprehensive solution of the Åland Islands question, and that the autonomy system as a whole requires active participation on the

part of the Ålanders. Arguments against the idea of the indivisible trinity have usually been based upon the history of the origin and background of Åland's autonomy, demilitarization and neutralization.

In its decision of 1921, the Council of the League of Nations states that "peace, future cordial relations between Finland and Sweden and the prosperity and happiness of the islands themselves can only be consolidated through measures envisaging a) new guarantees for the population of the islands, b) the neutralization and non-fortification of the archipelago."

Mention of the prosperity and happiness of the Åland Islands themselves as one of the aims of demilitarization and neutralization has also been cited as an argument that the views of the Åland representatives in matters such as the interpretation of the conventions should be of significance.

The new Autonomy Act which came into force on 1 January 1993 entails increased Åland influence as regards international treaties. For example, if considered appropriate, the Åland Government must be informed of negotiations on international treaties also as regards issues outside the competence of Åland but which may be of special importance to Åland. In such cases, the Åland Government must be given the opportunity to participate in negotiations, should special reasons exist. Any change in one of the conventions concerning demilitarization or neutralization should in all certainty be regarded as such an issue of special importance to Åland.

For that reason the Army Command of Finland has taken the initiative to a discussion on Åland's demilitarized status. However, Russia's interests in the northern Baltic presumably focus in the first place upon the possibility of free passage into St Petersburg, to which demilitarization and neutralization by no means constitute any hindrance. On the contrary, the change in security policy can justifiably be considered to entail increased importance and greater interest in maintaining demilitarization and neutralization. Public statements from representatives of both the Finnish and Swedish Governments, as well as from the Ambassador of Russia to Finland, indicate that official political authorities do not find any cause to revise Åland's international status.



9. Northern Åland.
Photo: Inga-Britt
Wiktorsson.

In the discussion initiated by the Finnish Army Command, the point has been made on the part of Åland, that the question of Åland's demilitarized and neutralized status is an international concern over which Finland cannot have sole control, that demilitarization and neutralization constitute Åland's principal protection and that a possibly more unstable situation of political security in the Baltic is no reason for abolishing Åland's demilitarization and neutralization. On the contrary, it may be considered that the significance of the conventions will be enhanced in the event of an unstable political situation, and that the need of further consolidating Åland's demilitarized and neutralized status will be even greater - a view supported by Article 8 of the 1921 Convention. According to that Article, the provisions of the Convention will "remain in force, whatever changes may take place in the present status quo in the Baltic."

At the time of the emergence of Åland's autonomy, there was a strong belief in the principle of the right of self-determination of nations, even though that principle was not applied as regards Åland. The concept of national sovereignty, that is, one State - one people, has proved difficult to apply in the world of many cultures characterized to a great extent by ethnic conflicts, not least in Europe. When ethnic problems can no longer be solved by forming states, new forms of co-existence must be found, guaranteeing ethnic groups security and identity. Interest in alternative solutions has thus been steadily increasing, and Åland has come to represent a model of a successful solution to a minority problem.

Åland's demilitarized, neutralized status is also attracting more and more international interest in the search for new and new-old forms and means of peaceful solutions to conflicts. In "An Agenda for Peace" the UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, points to demilitarized zones as a form of preventive deployment and a means of separating potential belligerents for the purpose of removing any pretext for attack. In that way, according to Mr Boutros-Ghali, demilitarized zones could serve as symbols of the international community's concern that conflict be prevented.

Thanks to the farsighted decision of the Council of the League of Nations on Åland's international status as an autonomous, demilitarized and neutralized region, Åland can be said today to be a symbol, not only of the efforts of the international community, but also of its successful achievements.

Significance of Demilitarization and Neutralization in the Present-Day Situation

Åland's situation from the aspect of military strategy was the cause of the demilitarization and neutralization of the islands. At the time when the 1921 Convention came into existence, Åland was considered to be potentially a source of danger to Stockholm from the military point of view. Since then the security policy situation has undergone several changes. During the Cold War the strategic military significance of Åland was in part no longer

relevant, and the development of military technology led to a general view that a remilitarization of the Åland Islands was difficult to justify.

The rapid changes in Eastern Europe, resulting in a more divided situation in the Baltic Sea, together with the northward shift in the focal point of security policy in the Baltic, have led to a situation which, particularly from the military aspect, is regarded as being more unstable than in the days of the Cold War.

Mention of the prosperity and happiness of the Åland Islands themselves as one of the aims of demilitarization and neutralization has also been cited as an argument that the views of the Åland representatives in matters such as the interpretation of the conventions should be of significance. The new Autonomy Act which came into force on 1. January 1993 entails increased Åland influence as regards international treaties. For example, if considered appropriate, the Åland Government must be informed of negotiations on international treaties also as regards issues outside the competence of Åland but which may be of special importance to Åland. In such cases, the Åland Government must be given the opportunity to participate in negotiations, should special reasons exist. Any change in one of the conventions concerning demilitarization or neutralization should in all certainty be regarded as such an issue of special importance to Åland.

Bibliography:

Barros James: The Åland Islands Question: Its Settlement by the League of Nations, New Haven 1968.

Björkholm Mikaela och Rosas Allan: Ålandsöarnas demilitarisering och neutralisering, Åbo 1990.

Boutros-Ghali Boutros: An Agenda for Peace, Preventive Diplomacy, Peace-Making and Peace-keeping, Report of the Secretary-General Pursuant to the Statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992., United Nations, New York 1992.

Bring Ove: Nedrustningen folkrätt, Stockholm 1967.

Castrén Erik: Die Entmilitarisierung und Neutralisierung der Ålandsinseln, Festschrift für Alfred Verdross, Wien 1960.

Fagerlund Niklas: Ålands folkrättsliga status och EG, Mariehamn 1993.

Fleischmann Max: Die Ålandfrage, Eine Denkschrift, Berlin 1918.

Fördrag mellan Finland och de Socialistiska Rådsrepublikernas förbund angående Ålandsöarna (1940) Finlands Författningssamlings Fördragsserie 24/1940.

Internationella avtal och dokument rörande Åland, International Treaties and Documents concerning Åland Islands 1856-1992, Ålands kulturstiftelse, Mariehamn 1993.

Lindholm Göran: Bakgrunden till Ålands folkrättsliga ställning, uppsats i folkrätt, Ht. 1980.

La question des îles d'Åland Documents diplomatique publ. oct. 1920 par le Minister des affaires etrangers, Helsingfors 1920.

Stjernfelt Bertil: Ålands hav och öar - brygga eller barriär? svensk- finsk försvarsfråga 1915-1945, Stockholm 1991.

Söderhjelm J.O: Démilitarisation et neutralisation des îles d'Åland en 1856 et 1921. Helsingfors 1928.

Wallbäck Krister: Finlandsfrågan i svensk politik 1937 - 1953, Stockholm 1964.

Wernlund Axel: Ålands kamp för självhåvelse, Mariehamn 1953.

Ålandsfrågan inför Nationernas förbund I-III, Diplomatiske aktstycken utgivna av Kungliga utrikesdepartementet, Stockholm 1920-1921.

År 1917 den 20 augusti sammanträdde i folkskolan i Finström till gemensam kommunalstämma med de åländska kommunerna följande personer:
från Mariehamns stad redaktören Julius Sundblom och sjökaptenen Anders Östörn; för Finströms socken bönderna Johannes Erikson och Johan Jansson; postmissionären Gösta Lindeman och folkskoleföreståndaren Teodor Bertel för Geta socken sjökaptenen Erik Mattsson; för Hamma lands socken bonden Uno Andersson; för Ekers socken sjökaptenen Robert Karlsson; för Jomala socken bönderna ~~Teodor Jansson~~ ^{Karlsson} och Gustaf Adolf Östörn; för Saltvik socken postvärdsgärdaren Robert Rosenblad; för Sund socken bonden Einar Sundman och för Lemland socken bonden Erik Lundberg.

§ 1.

Sedan till ordförande vid stämman utsattes bonden Johannes Erikson samt till sekreterare folkskoleföreståndaren Teodor Bertel, erinrade ordföranden om de många öfvergrepp som under sommaren begåtts af den härstades garnisonerade ryska militären samt föreslog, att stämman skulle till Finlands Senat aflåta en hemställan därom, att Senaten med alla tillbudsstående insedel måtte insända dänkan, att sagda militär blefve från värvad aflägsna eller åtminstone svättas med sådana trupper, hos hvilka ett spår af disciplin ännu kvarlefdes.

Sedan stämman om ordförandens förslag sig förenat, beslöts att ut en delegation, bestående af ordföranden redaktören Julius Sundblom, och sekreteraren skulle öfverlämnas att sagda hemställan aflåta och skulle utdrag ur detta protokoll tjena dem som fullmakt.

§ 2.

Sedan med anslutning till under föregående af protokollet behandlade ärende ordföranden framhållde möjligheten däraf, att Ålands politiska ställning

på grund af dess läge i smellan Finland och Sverige,
 samt dess stora strategiska betydelse, vid det stundande
 pressslutet möjligen kunde komma att undergå en för-
 ändring, hemställde ordföranden, med hänseende tillika
 till den i frågan förda pressdiskussionen, till stämman af-
 görande, huruvida från den åländska befolkningens sida
 något borde tillgöras för att påverka frågans lösning i en
 eller annan riktning. Efter i frågan försiggången dis-
 kussion och efter det de tillstädeskomna ombuden för-
 klarat sig samtliga företrädare opinionen inom sina
 respektive kommuner i denna sak, beslöt stämman
 att genom en deputation, bestående af redaktören
 Julius Sundblom och vice häradshöfdingen Carl
 Björkman, bägge från Marichamn, possessionaten
 Gösta Lindeman från Gröby Kungö gård afven som
 stämman ordförande bonden Johannes Eriksson,
 bringa till den svenska regeringen och representationen
 kännedom, att på grund af särskilda orsaker den
 åländska befolkningen lifligt åstundade sina öars
 förening med Sveriges rike.

§ 3.

Att justera detta protokoll utsågos: bönderne
 Johan Jansson från Finström och Uno Andersson
 från Hammarland.

Och till förutskrifue.

På kommunalstämmans vägnar:

Johannes Eriksson

ordf.

Therese Bertell,

sekr. utnäm.

Justerat och godkänt.

Johan Jansson. Uno Andersson

The Autonomy of Åland - Background and Present Situation

by Lars Ingmar Johansson

A few years ago an article appeared in an issue of a Swedish travel publication, describing the characteristics of the Ålanders and their auton-
 omy. It was written by a person who had spent several years here in official
 duties, which had given him the opportunity of following events in Åland.
 One comment he wrote was this: "When it concerns the internal affairs of
 their islands, the Ålanders are often quarrelsome and inclined to put on
 political displays to demonstrate their various views. But as soon as the
 question of Åland's autonomy arises, they join in a united front to defend
 their self-government, their Swedish language and culture and their distinc-
 tiveness as Ålanders." These are probably characteristics which the Ålanders
 share in part with other island-dwellers and with the populations of other
 autonomous regions of Europe, for example, the Faroes, South Tyrol and
 the Channel Islands. In the following article I shall try and explain the
 background and substance of this autonomy which the Ålanders so staunchly
 defend today and so willingly demonstrate as an example of successful
 means of safeguarding the language and cultural interests of a small
 population group under the sovereignty of a larger nation.

Åland has a rich history. More than 11,000 old graves and dwelling sites
 bear witness of inhabitation during the Stone and Bronze Ages. The
 Christian faith was brought to Åland around the year 1,000, remarkably
 earlier than to the Finnish mainland. Place-names and the way churches
 were built show the completely Scandinavian and Swedish roots of the
 Ålanders. Already in documents from 1322 an institution for the inner self-
 government of Åland is mentioned. Also in the future Åland had quite an

The text on the preceding
 pages is that of the
 minutes written at the
 secret meeting held by
 representatives of the
 districts of Åland at the
 Åland Folk High School
 on 20 August 1917. The
 meeting decided to work
 for a reunion with
 Sweden.

independent position towards the Swedish kingdom. Due to economic and geographical reasons the contacts from Åland went mainly to Stockholm. Typical Åland produce was sold there, like wood, fish and meat, and for the money people bought different kinds of city goods.

When Sweden was forced to give Finland up to Russia after the war of 1808-9, Åland was united with the Grand Duchy of Finland, but not without resistance from the peasants.

On the Russian side Åland came to be seen as an important outpost in the defence of Russia. Already in the 1820s a huge fortification of Åland was begun on the eastern side of the main island, at Bomarsund. Bomarsund was meant to be part of a series of fortresses along the Finnish coast, designed to protect the then imperial capital of St Petersburg. The fortress and everything it represented soon became very much disliked by the Ålanders, who from



10. The Madonna in Lemland church from about 1310.
Photo: Åland Museum.



11. Åland ships loaded with firewood at Strandvägen, Stockholm, in the beginning of the 20th Century.
Photo: Åland Museum.

time to time were forced both to work and deliver goods during the period of building. Large Russian troops were also gathered at the fortress, at times up to 10,000 men.

The so called Crimean wars in the middle of the 1850s had their offshoot in the Baltic region as well. A combined fleet of British and French vessels sailed into the Baltic Sea and attacked the fortress at Bomarsund in the

summer of 1854. After only a few days' bombardment the Russian troops were forced to surrender to an allied force which outnumbered them three to one. The parts of the fortress that were not destroyed in the attack were blown to pieces during the next few days. Today only a few small ruins remain of the once so proud fortress.

During the peace negotiations after the Crimean war the winning powers tried to offer the sovereignty of Åland to Sweden. The aim was to prevent Russia from controlling the Baltic sea through the strategic position of Åland. These plans came to nothing. Instead the Peace of Paris 1856 contains the so called Åland servitude between Britain, France and Russia. Its aim was to keep Åland outside all military actions in the future, and for that reason the servitude contained stipulations that Åland was to be demilitarized for all time. This was the foundation of the special position which Åland still holds today in the world community.

The period under Russian sovereignty felt oppressive at times. At the outbreak of World War I large numbers of Russian forces were brought to Åland; sometimes there were more than 6,000 men here. In spite of the demilitarization stipulations, Russia built fortifications in various places in the islands. When the winds of Revolution began to blow in Russia, anxiety was noticeable in Åland too, in spite of its position on the periphery of events. At the same time the traditional culture and language ties with Sweden were felt to be even stronger in a situation where the future of the Swedish element in Finland and of the whole country's existence appeared uncertain. In Europe the principle of the right of national self-determination was being given more emphasis as the war continued.

Efforts towards reunion

It is in the light of the above events that we must view the efforts made by the Ålanders towards reunion with their old mother country of Sweden. Those efforts received their first official expression on August 20, 1917. On that date representatives of all the districts of Åland held a secret meeting



12. Russian soldiers
unloading war material in
Åland in 1918.
Photo: Åland Museum.

at the Åland Folk High School, where they decided to work for a reunion of Åland with Sweden. This wish was conveyed to the King and Government of Sweden by elected Åland representatives, being supported by a hastily arranged list of signatures in December of the same year. This mass petition was signed by more than 7,000, a clear majority of the Ålanders of legally competent age. To support their endeavours the Ålanders also elected an unofficial legislature already in 1918. This was subsequently called the non-legalized "landsting". Its duty was to pursue the goal of reunion with Sweden.



On December 6, 1917, Finland had proclaimed itself an independent republic, by virtue of the same principle of national self-determination which was being invoked by the Ålanders. However, the Finns were not prepared to comply with the Ålanders' demand for reunion with Sweden. Instead they could envisage giving the Ålanders a certain form of internal self-government, entailing the right of having their own legislation. An Autonomy Act for Åland was prepared in all haste and was adopted by the Finnish Parliament on May 6, 1920. At that stage, however, the Ålanders were unwilling to accept such an offer. After a heated meeting in Mariehamn between Prime Minister Rafael Erich and representatives of the Ålanders, the Åland question took a dramatic turn, with the two Åland leaders Julius Sundblom and Carl Björkman being imprisoned on the charge of high treason.

13. Julius Sundblom, left, and Carl Björkman, right, upon their return to Mariehamn after being imprisoned in Turku/Åbo on the charge of high treason. Photo: Åland Museum.

Decision by the League of Nations

The Åland question placed a great strain at times upon relations between Sweden and the young Republic of Finland. With a view to disposing of the matter by peaceful means, Great Britain took the initiative of referring the Åland Islands question to be decided by the newly-formed world organisation, the League of Nations, with headquarters in Geneva. Having established that it was competent to deal with the matter, the League of Nations dispatched a Commission of Inquiry to Sweden and Finland.

The League Council delivered its resolution on June 24, 1921. Sovereignty over the Åland Islands was awarded to Finland. At the same time the Council decided that fresh guarantees should be granted to the Ålanders and be inserted in the 1920 Autonomy Act. The Council also decided to commence negotiations as soon as possible for contracting an international treaty on the demilitarization and neutralization of Åland. In addition, the Council gave Finland and Sweden directives to negotiate how the guarantees envisaged by the Council of the League of Nations should be achieved. This was done, and three days later, on June 27, 1922, the Council inserted the Åland Agreement in its minutes. This document, together with the decision of the League Council, forms the foundation of Åland Autonomy under international law. The most important guarantees in the Åland Agreement, the principles of which still apply today, were these:

1. The teaching language in Åland schools is to be Swedish. In the new Autonomy Act of 1991 this provision is made more concrete by means of a rule that the language of education shall be Swedish in schools maintained by public funds or subsidized from such funds. Exceptions to this rule can only be made through an Act legislated by the Åland Parliament.

2. Right of owning land in Åland shall be reserved to the Ålanders themselves. This principle was carried into effect in 1975 in new legislation replacing an out-of-date law. Under this new law any person not possessing Åland right of domicile, and any company or organisation, including those domiciled in Åland, must apply to the Åland Government for a permit in order

to acquire land in Åland. Such applications undergo thorough examination, the relevant district authorities being heard, and investigations being made of such aspects as the buyer's connection with Åland, the situation and nature of the area involved and the circumstances of the seller. The Åland Islands lie halfway between the metropolitan regions of Sweden and Finland, and in view of the interest in weekend and holiday cottages there is a strong pressure on Åland land.

3. The right of voting in local elections and elections to the Åland Parliament shall be reserved to the resident population. This is effected by allowing only persons with the above-mentioned right of domicile to vote in such elections. Right of domicile is possessed by all children whose father or mother possesses such right. Finnish citizens moving to Åland are granted right of domicile upon application, provided they have lived in Åland for five years and have adequate knowledge of Swedish.

4. Only a person who is accepted by the Ålanders themselves may be appointed County Governor, that is, the highest representative of the Republic of Finland in Åland. Before appointing a County Governor, the President of Finland consults the Speaker of the Åland Parliament, who submits proposals for suitable candidates after discussions with members of the Åland Parliament.

The decision of the League of Nations involved more than guarantees for the language and culture of the population of the Åland Islands. It also confirmed the status of the islands as a neutral and non-fortified region, that is, the situation that had prevailed since the 1856 convention. A special convention drawn up in November 1921 declared that no military or naval establishments nor any other military bases could be maintained in Åland. The boundaries of neutral Åland were drawn on a demilitarized map. The restrictions laid down in the additional conventions of 1921 were much more severe than the rules from 1856. The latter actually only specified permanent military and naval fortifications, while the decision of 1921 in effect



14. The first Parliament of Åland. Its first plenary session was held on 9 June 1922. Julius Sundblom was elected Speaker and concluded his speech with the words: "We members of Åland's legislative assembly, its democratically elected Parliament, deeply feel our responsibility and are fully aware of our limited capacity, but nevertheless we go to our work in good spirits and confidence, since what we lack in learning, knowledge and experience will, we hope, be compensated by the strong, ardent love which binds us together with the anciently Swedish Åland of our fathers and our sons. During the work which is commencing, the welfare of this island people will show the way to us its representatives, and be our guiding star." Photo: Ålands Museum.

prohibited all kinds of military activity in Åland. One consequence of this aspect of the League of Nations decision is that under the stipulations of the Autonomy Act Ålanders are exempt from all military service.

Application of the Autonomy Act Begins

After the settlement of the Åland question through the decision of the League of Nations, the guarantees negotiated by Finland and Sweden and sanctioned by the League of Nations were inserted into the special so-called Guarantee Act which was passed by the Parliament of Finland.

This considerably strengthened the nationality protection of the Ålanders, who were now prepared to administer the Autonomy Act of 1920, which they had previously rejected. The first popularly elected body, the "landsting" or Åland Parliament, was elected through general elections and it assembled for its first plenary session on June 9, 1922. This day is now celebrated annually as Åland's Autonomy Day.

The Autonomy Act adopted in 1920, that is, before the League of Nations had reached its decision on the Åland question, had been drafted in haste and naturally soon proved to be unsuitable. Work of revising it commenced

already in the 1930s, but was interrupted by the war and did not yield results until 1951, when a new Autonomy Act for Åland was passed. The development of society progressed rapidly, especially during the 1960s and 1970s, so it soon became necessary to revise the 1951 Autonomy Act too. First preparatory work was performed in Åland, then a State committee with strong Åland participation drew up a draft of a new Act. After further revision the draft was submitted in the spring of 1990 to the Parliament of Finland, which adopted the Act in the spring of 1991. Subsequently it passed to the Åland Parliament, which gave its unanimous approval in June 1991.

Dated August 16, 1991, the current Autonomy Act came into force on January 1, 1993.

The legal constitutional guarantee for Åland's autonomy

From the constitutional aspect Åland's autonomy has a very strong position, which, together with its above-mentioned international basis, gives it a special, if not unique place among other autonomies.

The Autonomy Act is adopted by the Parliament of Finland with the approval of the Åland Parliament. It cannot be altered or repealed without the Parliaments of Finland and Åland reaching concurrent decisions, the Parliament of Finland having to follow the complicated procedure for decisions on constitutional matters, and the Åland Parliament with a qualified (2/3rds) majority. As Finland's Minister of Justice stated when dealing with the new Autonomy Act: "it is the most complicated legislative Act known to the constitutional hierarchy of Finland."

No alterations whatsoever in the autonomy system can be made against the Ålanders' own will as expressed in their Parliament. Many other autonomy systems are based upon unilateral commitments from the mother countries. In other words, as was stated on the 70th anniversary of the autonomy in 1992, Åland has "the strongest legal guarantee for its autonomy which is at all possible."

Spheres of competence Åland - Finland

The Autonomy Act provides the framework of Åland's self-government. Its fundamental principle is to give the Ålanders as great a freedom to manage their internal affairs as is possible with regard to "the internal and external security of the country," to borrow the wording of the Autonomy Act. The Autonomy Act specifies the spheres in which the Åland Legislative Assembly, "Lagting", has the right to pass laws. Some of the most important spheres are:

- * education and culture
- * the police service
- * local district administration
- * health and medical services
- * social legislation
- * the postal service
- * promotion of industry
- * internal communications
- * tenancy
- * the right of broadcasting radio and television programmes

We may say that in these spheres Åland functions in just about the same way as a miniature independent state with its own legislation and administrative machinery.

In the spheres where the "Lagting" has legislative competence, the laws adopted by the "Lagting" apply in Åland, not any corresponding laws adopted by the Parliament of Finland. In sectors where the "Lagting" does not possess legislative competence, the laws of Finland apply in Åland just like in the rest of the country. Examples of such sectors are:

- * constitutional laws and deviations from them
- * customs and monetary services
- * courts of justice and the penal code

- * most aspects of civil law, like family, inheritance and commercial law
- * land law
- * labour legislation with the exception of collective pay agreements
- * the foreign service and frontier guard service

To enable it to take part in nation-wide issues, Åland has a representative in the Parliament of Finland, who is elected in the same way as other members of parliament. In such elections Åland forms a separate constituency.

The Autonomy Act also gives Åland the opportunity at a later stage of taking over the right of legislation altogether or partly in certain other sectors, eg. social insurance and alcohol legislation. However, this will take place only after further preparatory work and negotiations between the Autonomy authorities and the State.

Composition of the Åland Parliament and how it functions

Legislative competence in Åland within the spheres of competence of the Autonomy is exercised by the Autonomy Parliament, the "Lagting".

The Åland Parliament, the Legislative Assembly, consists of 30 members, elected for a period of four years by means of secret, proportional ballot. Persons of 18 years of age and over, who possess Åland right of domicile are entitled to vote and to stand for election. The political groups in Åland are independent from the parties in Finland but have ideological principles in common with equivalent groups in neighbouring countries. The last election was held in October 1991. The Åland Centre obtained 10 seats, the Liberals of Åland seven, the Moderates or Conservatives ("Frisinnad samverkan") six seats, the Åland Social Democrats four, and the Independent Group three seats. At present four of the 30 members are women.

The main "employer" of the Åland Parliament is the Provincial Executive Council, or Åland Government, which submits the majority of bills. Matters concerning international treaties (see below) are submitted to the Åland Parliament by the President of Finland. Individual members of the Åland



15. Women politicians in the Åland Parliament in 1991. Uppermost, left to right, Britt-Marie Lund (Social Democrats), Gunnevi Nordman (Liberals), Anne-May Pehrsson (Centre), Harriet Lindeman ("Frisinnad Samverkan"), and below, right, Barbro Sundback (Social Democrats).
Photo: Daniel Eriksson.

Parliament also have the right of introducing a bill. Once a year there is a general period of 10 days for introducing bills, and proposals in the form of prepared draft bills may also be submitted during the whole year.

The procedures followed in the Åland Parliament resemble to a great extent those of the Parliament of Finland and other parliaments. Each bill is dealt with three times, while financial matters and other initiatives not leading to legislation are dealt with once. Every item is prepared in one of



16. President Urho Kekkonen together with Mrs Sylvi Kekkonen and Anton Häggblom, Chairman of the Mariehamn Town Council, entering the festival chamber of the Town Hall in 1961. Urho Kekkonen and his predecessors and successors as Presidents of Finland have had a favourable view of Åland's autonomy. Photo: Åland Museum.

the five special committees. They are the standing committee on laws, the finance committee, the committee on economy, the committee on culture and the social and environmental committee. Bills may also be sent for further consideration to the committee on standing affairs.

The President's Supervisory Powers

After the Åland Parliament has adopted a bill, the decision is sent to the President of Finland, who holds quite a special position in the autonomy

system. In two cases the President can rule "that the decision of the Åland Parliament shall remain unconfirmed", as the term goes, that is, he can make use of his veto as laid down in the Autonomy Act. The first case is when the Åland Parliament has exceeded its legislative competence, which naturally occurs some time every year, on account of difficulties in interpreting the provisions of the Autonomy Act. Determining the borderline is more complicated than one would think. The other case is when there is a threat to the internal or external security of the country, a statute without any practical significance, which has been applied only once during the history of the Autonomy.

The President bases his decision upon statements he has obtained from a special body of experts, the Åland Delegation, consisting of experts in legislation and economics, half of them being chosen by the Government of Finland and half by the Åland Parliament, and sometimes also upon statements from the Supreme Court. It is worth mentioning here that the President's right of veto in connection with Åland legislation is more restricted than the veto he may exercise in respect of legislation of the Finnish Parliament. In the latter case he exercises an absolute veto, at least formally - that is, he can refuse to ratify any law whatsoever adopted by the Parliament of Finland. In the case of a law adopted by the Åland Parliament he can impose a veto only in the two cases mentioned above, on special grounds named in the Åland constitution.

Principles of Self-Government

The other main duty of the Åland Parliament, besides legislation, is to exercise economic authority. In the revision of the Autonomy Act in 1993 the greatest changes took place just in economic relations between Åland and Finland.

Under the rules applying during the first seventy years of the Autonomy, the Åland Delegation exercised strict subsequent checks on the use of allocations in the Åland budget. The result was that in practice Åland was

much tied to the structure of outlays in Finland, thereby having limited budgetary power.

Under the new Autonomy Act too, State taxation is a matter for the Finnish authorities. Taxes to the State, customs and excise duty and other charges are collected from Ålanders under the same rules applying to other citizens and associations in Finland. These funds go to the Finnish State Exchequer.

Affairs managed by the Autonomy authorities are such as would have devolved upon the Finnish State authorities if the Åland autonomy did not exist. To finance these affairs Åland receives a form of tax refund from the State. The money annually allocated in its budget by the Parliament of Finland for transfer to Åland is sometimes misconstrued as a State subvention of Åland. That is not the case.

The so-called equalization sum which is annually transferred to Åland corresponds to 0.45% of the income in the final accounts of the State, with the exception of new State loans contracted. When it was determined this ratio was based upon a comparison between the sums which Åland had been allocated in previous years and the income of the State during an equivalent period. The decision was preceded by an intensive political debate and many contacts between Åland and Finland. The ratio of 0.45% may be increased or decreased upon agreement between Åland and the State, should vital changes occur, for example, as regards apportionment of competence or costs for the Autonomy.

Should any unusually great outlay arise of a non-recurrent nature, the Åland Parliament may apply to the Åland Delegation for an extra-ordinary allocation. Under the previous Act such funds could be granted for extensive electrification projects, large bridges or ferries, etc. So far there has been no case of any extra-ordinary allocation being granted under the new Act.

Further, the chapter on financial management in the Autonomy Act contains a stipulation on tax retribution. If in some year the income and capital tax collected in Åland exceeds 0.5% of the whole country's taxes, the sum in excess is to be transferred to Åland. This is a system of "diligence



17. Each year Åland receives up to one and a half million visitors. The ferries serving Åland are among the biggest, most modern ships in the world. Photo: Hasse Svensson.

money"; if the economic development in Åland is more favourable than in the country as a whole, Åland is to enjoy the fruits of that.

Should the islands be afflicted by a disaster or comparable event, Åland is entitled to an additional grant from the State. The same applies if anything exceptional should occur in the national economy, for example, major recessions in shipping and tourism arising from causes which Åland cannot influence. The Åland economy stands "on fewer legs" than that of the whole of the country, and that makes Åland more sensitive to changes.

The lump sum from the State is the largest item on the income side of the budget which the Åland Parliament has to consider every year. Other income is received from earnings from land and from profits from slot-machine operations. Should these funds be insufficient to cover all the outlays planned, the Åland Parliament may decide to float a loan.

Within the framework of its right of budgeting, the Åland Parliament is free to administer the lump sum transferred by the State. In contrast to previous systems, there are no longer any rules for apportionment, nor any subsequent check. There is one rule of thumb, however: in the matter of social benefits for inhabitants of Åland, the Åland Parliament is to see that they are at least the same as in the rest of the country.

The new provisions on the economy have given the Åland Parliament more freedom of movement and have also placed greater demands upon politicians' sense of responsibility. The political factions can now submit more distinct alternatives in apportionment policy, while the various groups have more incentive to watch over their interests. The automatic security contained in previous laws is no longer a self-evident matter.

At the same time the system contains elements for further debate on its expediency. The refund of tax money (0.45%) is based upon the tax power of the whole of Finland, not on the regional Åland tax basis. Does this lead to Åland being deprived of income generated by its own economy? Or should the rules be viewed as a guarantee that the standard of living in Åland is at least the same as that of the country as a whole? There are voices advocating that State taxation too should be transferred to the sphere of competence of the Autonomy, to be used as a means of economic and political control. Others maintain that taking over the right of taxation altogether would not only require administrative resources but also involve unnecessary risks in view of Åland's dependence on economic situations which it cannot influence.

The Åland Executive Council - a Provincial Government and Administrative Board

Administrative power is exercised by the Åland Executive Council, the Government of Åland. Its chairman is the "lantråd", alongside whom there may be four to six members.

The Åland Parliament, which has a strong influence on the formation of the Government, follows a proposal of the Speaker and appoints a candidate to the position of "lantråd" or "Prime Minister". The latter conducts negotiations on the composition and programme of the Executive Council, which may be appointed as either a coalition government or a majority government; a minority government, however, is forbidden under the Constitution. The new Executive Council must receive the active support of the Åland Parliament before entering upon its duties. At least 16 of the 30 members of the Åland Parliament must vote in favour of the "lantråd" candidate's proposal for the composition and programme of the Executive Council. If negotiations fail, or if the required majority is not attained during the specified negotiation period, the Executive Council is appointed through proportional elections in the Åland Parliament. The Åland Parliament may use a vote of no-confidence in order to compel the whole cabinet or individual members to resign.

The rules for appointing the Executive Council and the rules on parliamentary responsibility mean that (possibly apart from the prohibition against forming a minority government) Åland has a regular parliamentary system of a Nordic model. The political parties conduct debates in public and formulate their goals in an awareness that alternations in power are a natural element of the democratic process. After the election in the autumn of 1991 an Executive Council was formed consisting of representatives of three of the five groups in the Åland Parliament, with the support of 20 seats. The Centre, which holds the post of "lantråd", "Frisinnad samverkan" and the Social Democrats govern together in the coalition.

To assist it the Executive Council has an administrative body, consisting of about 100 civil servants at various levels. The central administrative board has six departments, their names indicating their operations: the administrative department (a kind of Ministry of the Interior), the finance department, the social and health services department, the education department (which also deals with cultural matters), the economies department (which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and environmental matters) and the communi-

cations department. Closely associated with the central administration is the law-drafting office.

The Åland Government exercises administration over all the spheres of activity devolving upon the Åland authorities under the Autonomy Act. Through a special arrangement certain matters coming under State bodies can also be transferred to the Åland Government. Thanks to its autonomy, Åland's own institutions carry out such duties as would otherwise devolve upon the State authorities of Finland. So the Åland Government has charge of matters which in Finland itself come under the Cabinet and various ministries, county administrative boards and various central administrative boards such as the housing, education, road or water boards. Under the new Autonomy Act the Executive Council has also obtained stronger, greater influence in sectors for which the State is still responsible. A complicated negotiations process and a system of compulsory hearing is to be applied in matters formally coming under the State but affecting Åland in some way. Examples are ship and aircraft communications, income negotiations in farming and fishing, production of statistics and consumer protection.

Language provisions

One of the most important reference points in the decision of the Council of the League of Nations in 1922 was to safeguard the Ålanders' nationality protection. The Åland Agreement of June 27, 1922 committed Finland to guaranteeing the Ålanders the preservation of their Swedish language. So it is natural for language provisions to hold a central place in the autonomy system.

Åland is a unilingually Swedish region in all respects. The official language in the Executive Council and in local district and State administration is Swedish. When authorities in Finland correspond with those in Åland, they are obliged to use Swedish. However, in law courts and other State instances Finnish speakers are entitled to use their own language.

The State is obliged to see that its officials in Åland master Swedish, and that necessary information not only from authorities but also as far as



18. The Nordic Council in Mariehamn in 1993. Left, Gro Harlem-Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway, and right, Carl Bildt, Sweden. Photo: Inga-Britt Wiktorsson.

possible concerning goods and services is available in Swedish. An often recurring source of irritation is that circulars and other similar documents are not always available in Swedish.

The language of instruction in schools maintained or financially supported by the Åland authorities or the local districts is Swedish. Exceptions may be made only if the Åland Parliament passes a law to that effect. This naturally does not prevent Finnish being taught as a subject like other languages in the Åland schools. A knowledge of Swedish is a requirement for a person being granted Åland right of domicile. No examination or test is required, the aim being only to enable the person to manage in daily life in the only official language of Åland.

Ålanders are well-known for strictly adhering to their right to their own language. When something occasionally goes wrong in service in Swedish, there are echoes in letters to the editor in the newspapers. The demand from Ålanders for information in Swedish has also many times entailed vital support to the situation of the Swedish language in community life in otherwise bilingual Finland.

Åland in International Co-operation

In 1970 Åland obtained its own representation in the Nordic Council, the Åland Parliament being given the right to elect a full member of Finland's delegation to the Council. Thanks to alterations in the Helsinki Agreement on Nordic co-operation, Åland's participation has strengthened, deepened and expanded. As from 1984 the Åland Parliament has elected two members of the Council, who, together with the representatives of the Executive Council, form a separate Åland delegation. The two members elected by the Åland Parliament also take part in the work of Finland's delegation. Nowadays the self-governing regions (Åland, the Faroes and Greenland) have much better opportunities of collaborating in the important work of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Ålanders place great value upon their membership, partly for reasons of principle, since it means an acknowledgement of Åland's special situation in the Nordic community, and partly for practical reasons, since it provides insight into the whole of the extensive inter-Nordic work of fact-finding and co-ordination. Many Nordic meetings, including several sessions of the Nordic Council in its entirety, have been held in Åland during the course of the years.

Nordic co-operation covers many current matters of interest to Ålanders, fishing and environmental control (primarily problems of the Baltic Sea), TV exchange and cultural contacts with other Nordic countries, harmonizing of education, etc. After several years of preparation a Nordic Institute was founded in Åland, its task being to take an active part in cultural exchange

between Åland and other Nordic countries and to spread knowledge of Nordic co-operation in Åland and of Åland and its autonomy in other Nordic countries.

Alongside Nordic co-operation, contacts with countries round the Baltic Sea have been developed in recent years, especially after the collapse of the former Eastern bloc. Co-operation involves both contacts between members of Parliament and also exchange of a more practical nature in matters such as culture, fishing, tourism, etc. Intercourse with the Baltic countries, which was broken for more than fifty years, has now been resumed, involving not only politicians but also various groups of citizens.

As far as Finland and also Åland are concerned, the present decade has brought about an even greater focus upon European matters. The EES Treaty with its principles of the four freedoms was contracted in 1992, and shortly afterwards preparations began for Finland's entry into the EU. Relations with foreign powers are actually a matter in the sphere of the State's competence, under the Autonomy Act. However, there is also a provision that international treaties concerning spheres within the competence of Åland must be considered by the Åland Parliament as well. Should any treaty contain provisions directly contrary to the Autonomy Act, it must be approved by the Parliament of Finland in the order applying to constitutional laws and by the Åland Parliament with a qualified majority. Should the treaty contain provisions within the competence prescribed in the Autonomy Act without conflicting with the law, the Åland Parliament must approve the national act or statute entailing the validity of the treaty.

If Finland commences negotiations with a foreign state in matters belonging to the competence of Åland, the Government is obliged to inform the Executive Council. In that way the Åland authorities may have opportunities to influence the contents of the agreements while they are being prepared. Åland representatives are also to be able to take part in negotiations on agreements with foreign powers, should the agreement affect vital Åland interests. A minimum requirement is that the State shall keep the Autonomy authorities informed in such matters.



In the agreement concerning Finland's joining the EU there are also special stipulations for Åland. When Finland became a member of the EU, Åland was granted the right still to apply the stipulations restricting the acquisition of land and the right of establishing business to persons with Åland right of domicile. Åland is also excepted from harmonizing turnover and selective tax and other indirect taxes. This will make it possible to retain for the time being the important tax-free benefits in sea services to Åland which are so vital to its transport economy. A record in the protocol in conjunction with Finland's joining the EU notes that Åland's autonomy is guaranteed in the constitutional laws of Finland and rests upon a basis of international law through international decisions and agreements. This should be regarded as a very significant international confirmation of Åland's special status.

Symbols of Autonomy

Every nation or cultural unit is eager to manifest its status by means of various symbols. Since 1954 Åland has a flag of its own, a blue-yellow-red Nordic cross flag. It is used in Åland and on official buildings of the Åland authorities and local districts. Nowadays too it may be used as a maritime flag on ships registered in Åland.

Since the postal service became a concern for Åland as from 1993, the Åland postal administration has been issuing its own stamps. Finnish postage stamps cannot be used any longer in Åland. Actually, ten years before the new Autonomy Act, after lengthy negotiations with the Autonomy authorities, the Finnish postal administration began issuing Åland stamps which rapidly became popular among both customers and philatelists.

A Viable Community

The account given above actually only indicates the formal framework of the Åland autonomy, which is unique of its kind. What is vital is the way in which the inhabitants of Åland utilize the rights they have been given through international decisions and during a democratic process which has been going on since the 1920s.

The Åland model has provided a basis of a community development, unusual in many respects, which is adapted to the special circumstances of Åland. One example from recent times is the community planning policy established by the Åland Parliament in the beginning of the 1980's, which is still used as a reference. Full employment, preservation of the natural and cultural environment and a balanced regional development were some of the most important aims. The standard of living of the population of Åland is to be compared with that of surrounding regions also as regards social, cultural and environmental factors. That is, standard cannot be measured in purely economic terms.

Achieving these high aims is the everyday task of politics. In the programmes of action drawn up by Executive Council coalitions of recent years and approved by the Åland Parliament there are more concrete wordings. On these and similar issues opinions diverge in a continual discussion in the Åland Parliament, inside and between the political groups, in the mass media and between ordinary Ålanders.

Outside observers often testify that Åland is a well-managed community in many respects. One contributory cause is definitely the fact that the Autonomy provides opportunities for an efficient, personalized management of joint community affairs. A speaker at an Åland celebration expressed the matter as follows: "A community is fortunate which feels that it is not governed from the outside, but by the will of its inhabitants."

Many people maintain that just this right which the Ålanders possess, of deciding their own affairs themselves within wide limits, has given them an identity and feeling of affinity, which have laid the foundation of a versatile economic and cultural development. One of the previous Speakers of the Åland Parliament has somewhat poetically described the Åland Autonomy "as a source of strength and an indispensable way of life."

In spite of its small size, its dependence upon the world around it and its relative isolation, Åland must be described today as a viable local community, to a great extent thanks to the progress it has made under its Autonomy.



19. On 5. November 1993, guests from the Falkland Islands visited Åland. Left to right, Santos Goni Marenco, "Iäntråd" Ragnar Erlandsson, Guido di Tolla and Hugo Urtubeg. Photo: Jan Andersson.

The example of Åland

Our world is constantly undergoing changes. Frontiers are opened, old regimes give way to new ideals. Various national groups and minorities seek their places in the new community structures. In that development Åland is worthwhile studying. The Åland model has been attracting greater and greater attention in international contexts.

Many observers have noted how it has been possible to build up autonomy and prosperity through negotiations and compromises, through political means and debates, not through violence and threats. South Tyrol, the Falkland Islands, former Yugoslavia are just a few hotbeds of problems where the Åland model has sometimes been proposed.

During the course of the years countless visits to Åland have been paid by representatives of various linguistic and cultural minorities, by diplomats



20. Among delegates from the 108 countries representing the International Red Cross during the Peace Congress in Mariehamn in 1985 were two from Senegal. Photo: Anki Rostén.

and journalists, as well as by scientists with an interest in minority questions and matters concerning peace and demilitarization in an international perspective.

During the large Peace Conference arranged by the International Red Cross in Mariehamn in the middle of the 1980s, the expression was coined, "The Spirit of Åland". In the Parliament of Finland the Foreign Minister has declared that the Åland Islands question has attracted great attention as an example of a peaceful solution to an international problem affecting the right of regional self-determination. So information on Åland's autonomy abroad is an organic part of the work of the Foreign Ministry to make Finland known abroad.

For many observers Åland has been viewed as an exemplary model of the relationship between a sovereign State and a minority. That circum-

stance has been mentioned at the highest level of authority in Finland too. In a speech in Mariehamn, Mr Mauno Koivisto, former President of Finland, stated that "... It is with great satisfaction that politically responsible bodies in Finland observe the present principle of consensus between the State and Åland. That is important not least for our country as such and for its international standing." Mr Koivisto went on to point out that the principle of Åland's autonomous status is "respected by the authorities of Finland and accepted by the authorities of Åland."

The principle of consensus received practical expression in the work on the new Autonomy Act which came into force in 1993. During its preparation in committees and working groups, and also during the final work in the Parliament of Finland, the issue was pursued as a process with two equally important parties negotiating and compromising while endeavouring to reach agreement.

In its exposition of reasons for the new Autonomy Act the Government of Finland states, "The Åland Autonomy is generally acknowledged and firmly rooted in the constitution of Finland. So it is a natural, unshakeable principle to observe the international provisions on Åland and to preserve and develop the Åland autonomy on the national level." The Åland Autonomy has been successively developed and strengthened since 1922. As may be seen from the above, autonomy has become a more and more self-evident form of government for Åland and its population, but also an integral component of the established order of Finland. In view of that, it is natural that the present generation of Åland politicians do not speak of reunion with Sweden but of a strong will to administer and develop that autonomy.

Bibliography

Barros James: The Åland Islands Question, Its settlement by the League of Nations, New Haven 1968.

Björkholm Mikaela och Allan Rosas: Ålandsöarnas demilitarisering och neutralisering, Åbo 1990.

Drejier Matts: Ålands självstyrelse 25 år, Festskrift, Mariehamn 1947.

Drejier Matts: Ålands självstyrelse 1947-1972, Festskrift, Mariehamn 1972.

Fagerlund Niklas: Ålands folkrättsliga status och EG, Mariehamn 1993.

Hannikainen Lauri: Cultural, Linguistic and Educational Rights in the Åland Islands, Rovaniemi 1992.

Internationella avtal och dokument rörande Åland 1856-1992. Utgivna av Ålands kulturstiftelse. Mariehamn 1993.

Isaksson Martin: Carl Björkman: Ålands första lantråd. Mariehamn 1988.

Modeen Tore: De folkrättsliga garantierna för bevarandet av Ålandsöarnas nationella karaktär. Mariehamn 1973.

Salminen Johannes: Ålandskungen. Helsingfors 1979.

Åland i utveckling. Festskrift utgiven av Ålands landsting med anledning av självstyrelsens 60-års jubileum den 9 juni 1982. Mariehamn 1982.

Åland in brief. Published by Ålands landskapsstyrelse and Ålands landsting. Mariehamn 1988.

Ålands näringspolitiska behov vid medlemskap i Europeiska unionen: Rapport från Integrationskommittén. Mariehamn 1992. (Åländsk utredningsserie 1992:12 + Bilagedel).

The Book of Åland. Published by Ålands landskapsstyrelse. Mariehamn 1987.

Ny självstyrelselag för Åland/Ålandskommittén. Kommittébetänkande 1987:31.

Förslag till ny självstyrelselag för Åland. Betänkande av Ålandsarbetsgruppen. Lagberedningsavdelningens publikationer (justitieministeriet) 1989:7

Parliamentary Papers:

Regeringens proposition 73/90

Grundlagsutskottets betänkande 15/90 och 3/91

Stora utskottets betänkande 332/90

Ålands Legislative Assembly papers:

Rep. Presidents framst. nr 7/1990-91

Lagutskottets bet. nr 27/1990-91

Stora utskottets bet. nr 38/1990-91

Finlands författningssamling (FFS) 1144/91

Ålands författningssamling (ÅFS) 71/91

From National Fragment to International Entity

by Barbro Sundback

The Ålanders' conception of themselves has naturally changed throughout the course of history. Their autonomy brought about a radical change in political circumstances. It provided opportunities for them to create a national identity. During the time of the Åland movement, the Ålanders were depicted as helpless victims whose fate lay completely in the hands of other powers. The achievement of their autonomy gradually gave rise to an active struggle for nationality, with the result that the Ålanders began to view themselves more and more as a separate national group. The political development in recent decades is reflected in the fact that the Ålanders often have their own representation in various international contexts. This in itself is evidence that there has definitely been a development from a position as political object to that of a more and more independent entity under international law. This dynamic political process has perceptibly strengthened the self-esteem of the Ålanders, increasing their confidence in their own capacity to satisfy the interests and needs of their own population by democratic, peaceful means.

Political Concepts of the Programme of the Åland Movement

The petition which representatives of the Åland movement submitted to King Gustav V of Sweden on 3 February 1918 contains the statement:

"Affinity in origin, language, culture, way of thinking and customs as well as an assurance of future security under the sceptre of Sweden have urged the Ålanders to this action."



21. Little sailor-boy Åland standing looking longingly at Mother Svea, who is turning her back to Finland kneeling before Germany. Abandoned Mother Svea says: "He has deceived me, the villain. I, who showed him so much understanding. But I shall take a cruel revenge - he can keep the child!" (Cartoon from the Finland-Swedish paper *Fyren*, year unknown.)

This quotation and many other texts from that period emphasize the Ålanders' Swedish origin. The term motherland of Sweden was used to stress their common origin and to allude to the role of mother. Åland was depicted as the forgotten child appealing to be reunited with Mother Svea. The separation from Sweden after the 1808-09 War is described in the

above-mentioned petition in the following strongly dramatic words:

"With bleeding hearts the population of Åland, Swedish from ancient times, received the news that their islands could no longer belong to Sweden. Deeply distressed in their innermost being by this separation, which in the Åland view was contrary to human and divine law, the Åland people nevertheless did not abandon the hope which they nourished in their national soul of a future reunion of their islands with the Kingdom of Sweden."

The stubborn demand of the Åland movement for reunion with Sweden was strengthened by the famous fourteen points made by President Wilson of America in January 1918, proclaiming the right of nations to self-determination and the equality of all peoples as a requirement for any form of international law.

The Åland movement made use of a national romantic language which was typical of the time. Its background of political concepts is to be found in 19th century Germany, where the nation or people was represented as the only legitimate foundation of a body politic. According to that view, the nation consists of a tribe which is the bearer of the national soul, in that all those belonging to the tribe, including fragments of nations which have been separated from the tribe, have the same origin, speak the same language and maintain the same customs and habits. The Ålanders regarded themselves as a small, ancient Swedish fragment, which in its innermost being was an inseparable part of the Swedish tribe. This conception of their own national status was confirmed, according to the Ålanders, by the international community when the Åland Islands question was placed on the agenda of the League of Nations. The tug-of-war between Finland and Sweden for Åland increased the political consciousness of the Åland population, and at the time of the final decision of the League of Nations we find that an overwhelming majority of Ålanders supported the idea of reunion.

When the decision of the League of Nations was made on 24 June 1921, there was naturally great disappointment among the Ålanders and their political leaders.

The bitterness of the political leadership at the solution of the Åland Islands question had far-reaching consequences for the general development of society in Åland. Reluctance to accept the decision of the League of Nations turned into antipathy towards the authorities of Finland, and relations between autonomous Åland and the youthful Republic of Finland remained cool for a long time ahead.

Ålanders and Finland-Swedes

Among the general public the defeat left smaller traces, and adaptation to the new circumstances took place without opposition. However, certain traces of the strong separatistic aspirations of the reunion period may be clearly discerned in the further intercourse with Finland-Swedes. During the big Finland-Swedish choral and music festival in Åland in 1922, "The Ålander's Song" was sung for the first time, and the Åland hosts refused to agree to ending the festival with Finland's national anthem "Our land." Instead the festival ended with the Finland-Swedish rallying ceremonial song, "Song of our mother tongue." Upon that occasion the Ålanders further emphasized their distinctive character by hoisting a flag of their own for the first time. Not an officially approved flag, it consisted of three stripes, blue, yellow and blue.

At the time of its composition, the text of "The Ålander Song" was very usable in political respects, since it did not commit itself on the Ålanders' national status. The first two verses contain homage to the Ålander's native place, completely following the method of expression of that time. In the third verse the author succeeds in singing the praises of the Swedish language without indicating whether it is the Swedish spoken in Finland or Sweden.

"Loud will it ring, our Swedish tongue, speak in exhortation, light up our way like a flaming beacon, showing where our home is!"

The choral festival at Midsummer 1922 was of great cultural and political significance. It brought thousands of Finland-Swedes to Åland. The festival became a genuine manifestation that the Swedish speakers in Finland had



22. Young Ålanders at the Choral Festival in 1946 round the unofficial three-striped Åland flag from 1922.
Photo: Åland Museum.

reached national equality with the Finnish-speaking majority. The Constitution Act of 1919 established that the Swedish language was to be one of the country's national languages alongside Finnish, and the Autonomy Act of 1920 stipulated that Åland was to be unilingually Swedish. During the

struggle for reunion the Ålanders had become alienated from the Finland-Swedes. At the choral festival in Mariehamn the time was ripe to resume the cultural contacts which had been created back at the beginning of the century within the framework of the all-Swedish youth movement and the regional rural culture organizations. From the time of the festival, mutual interest in preserving the Swedish language and the position of Finland-Swedish culture in Finland formed a natural cornerstone in cultural exchange between Åland and Swedish-speaking Finland.

Nevertheless, experiences from the struggle for reunion and a growing consciousness of Åland distinctiveness changed the role of Ålanders in Finland-Swedish contexts. Through their autonomy the Ålanders gave more and more prominence to their ethnic identity, which meant that they became less involved in general political matters concerning Finland-Swedes. At the same time ties were strengthened westwards to popular movements of various kinds.

Political lull

For many of the leading figures of the Åland movement, it was difficult to abandon the thought of reunion. In the memoirs of the farmer leader Johannes Eriksson, published after his death in 1939, disappointment at the decision of the League of Nations shows clearly throughout the text. He could not accept what had happened, and he never abandoned the thought of reunion. He wrote the following political testament:

“Åland’s well-demarcated area, Åland’s history and the unanimous will of the Åland people should have constituted full reasons for a fairer solution of the Åland Islands question. I fervently hope with the poet, “Day will yet come, all is not yet past.”

Julius Sundblom has come to stand out as the foremost representative of the Åland movement. He held the post of Speaker of the Åland Parliament and was Editor of “Tidningen Åland”, the only newspaper of Åland during the first period of the Autonomy from 1921 - 45. Like Johannes Eriksson, Julius



23. Julius Sundblom speaking to participants in the Farmers' March 1938. Photo: Åland Museum.



24. In the Farmers' March on 31 October 1938, the Ålanders protested against plans for fortifications in Åland. Photo: Åland Museum.

Sundblom could not quite abandon the thought of reunion. During the final stages of World War II, when peace negotiations commenced in Paris, and old and new frontiers were to be reviewed, the idea of reunion suddenly flared up anew. The Åland Parliament was activated in the matter under Sundblom's leadership. Interest on the part of Sweden, however, was cooler than ever. With that, enthusiasm died and the idea of reunion was buried for good. The prominent figures of the Åland movement were also the first custodians of the autonomy. Their strong ideological bonds with the struggle for reunion made them more or less incapable of adjusting politically to develop the autonomy. They lacked an ethnic view of Åland and the Ålanders, which prevented them from systematically and determinedly setting about to develop the opportunities offered by the autonomy in spite of all. Other circumstances too impeded an advancement of the autonomy. The hastily arranged Autonomy Act from 1920 proved difficult to apply in practice. The Ålanders were greatly dissatisfied with the Act, and differences of opinion with the authorities of Finland on its application took place repeatedly. Experiences of the first Autonomy Act verified in a way the

suspensions harboured by the Åland movement that Åland under Finnish supremacy would be treated with churlishness and illwill. But the old motherland of Sweden was not to be relied on either. It came as an unpleasant surprise to the Ålanders when the disclosure was made at the end of the 1930s that the governments of Finland and Sweden had far-reaching plans of jointly fortifying Åland. The Ålanders protested strongly, receiving unexpected support from the Soviet Union. The plan was most firmly rejected by the Soviets. The Swedes backed out and the whole idea lapsed.

Waiting For a Change of Course

Experiences of the first Autonomy Act resulted in a claim for increased autonomy. The Ålanders demanded of the Finnish authorities that a new Autonomy Act should be legislated. Reluctance to comply with Åland wishes led to the emergence of a traditional political power struggle between State centralism and regional autonomy. Moreover, in their struggle against the Stockholm Plan the Ålanders reached the bitter realization that they had no voice in matters concerning the control of their own territory. After the idea of reunion had died out, and the champions of the Åland movement had left the political arena for ever, the political future of autonomous Åland appeared not only uncertain but in direct need of one or several leaders with the capacity to mark out a political course which would have its reference point in the autonomy, and on that basis to start building up what would be an Åland society in a deeper national sense.

With Their Flag Flying

In the spring of 1954 the Ålanders were able to hoist their official blue-yellow-red flag for the first time. The unofficial three-striped flag from 1922 was forbidden by the State authorities in 1934. That prohibition naturally acted as an incentive to the national fighting spirit behind the demand for an Åland

flag - perhaps the most important symbol for all population groups striving for a confirmation of their national distinctiveness. One may read a continuing strong identification with Sweden in the extensive discussions which were held on the appearance of the Åland flag. The first proposal which the Åland Parliament had to consider was a cross flag of medium blue with a golden yellow cross enclosing a narrower cross of the same blue as the field. The Åland Parliament accepted the proposal, but it was rejected by the Finnish authorities and the President, as being too much like the flag of Sweden. It was thought that the flag might easily create misapprehensions about the national status of Åland.

A new proposal was worked out, based upon the colours of the Åland coat-of-arms, blue and yellow. A cross flag with a yellow field and a blue cross was submitted to the Åland Parliament for consideration. It was received with general dissatisfaction. A group of members of the Åland Parliament was prepared to abandon the cross flag, advocating a return to the old three-striped flag. After many lengthy discussions a majority supported the proposal which subsequently became the flag of Åland. A minority directed criticism against the winning proposal because it contained an inserted cross of red, which was considered to lack a basis in Åland tradition. Carl Holmqvist, a member of the Åland Parliament, defended the inserted red cross as follows:

"We place a red cross within the golden yellow one in the blue-yellow cross flag to distinguish the Åland flag clearly from the Swedish flag. To me that is reason enough, a reason which is easily understood by all, and which accords with the wish of an old sailor, that Åland should have a flag which is both optically clear and also of Åland and Nordic character."

The political process preceding the emergence of the flag is a good example of how Åland nationalism slowly but surely matured. It found its starting point in the historical fellowship in destiny and disappointment at the failure of a reunion, while to an ever greater extent stressing its national character as regards origin, language and culture. A common historical trauma is of great importance for politically mobilizing ethnic groups.

Ålanders are no exception in that respect. The unique feature of the Ålanders' nationality struggle is that it took place after they had obtained autonomy. The typical pattern of the struggle of a population group for its own nationality is first to create political awareness of the group's distinctive character and then to demand self-determination of some kind. In the case of the Ålanders, we can only note that the political development of the autonomy followed its own laws, and that Åland nationalism reached its culmination during the 1960s and 1970s after almost 50 years of autonomy.

Åland historiography

Professor Matts Dreijer devoted a great part of his professional life to recording the history of the Åland people and its autonomy. In conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the autonomy, Professor Dreijer gave the following description of the Ålanders:

"The pages of history testify to the fact that at an early stage the Ålanders were fully conscious of being members of a community, the Åland people, a feeling which is still strong and flourishing among all those who have blood ties down through generations or who through having lived here for a long time have acquired the traditions and customs of Åland. In spite of vigorous influence from above by clergy and teachers over lengthy periods, there are few Ålanders who call themselves anything else than just Ålanders. Neither Sweden nor Finland-Swede has really been accepted, in spite of the linguistic connection."

A comprehensive historiography of this kind is characteristic of that period. Histo-



riography had a clear political tendency, being strengthened by such actions as the raising of several national monuments. The purpose of this historiography was to enhance self-esteem and political awareness of the autonomy. By bringing one's own population group into the centre of history and by creating myths about its origin, the foundations were laid for the emergence of a national movement. One interesting detail in this context is that in texts from that time it is possible to see how the struggle for reunion was transformed into a struggle for autonomy. It was also during that period that people began honouring the prominent figures of the Åland movement as heroes of the autonomy. Thus historiography became an important political means of remoulding the past to make it fit in better with changed political conditions and interests. The minor political role as forsaken child from the days of the struggle for reunion was abandoned for one of the principal parts in the drama of the origin and development of the autonomy. The political task of defending and preserving Åland's unilingual Swedishness, culture and local customs was elevated to a political doctrine under which all other political issues, such as differences of class and regions, were subordinated. The early Åland nationalism was channelled into claims for stronger provisions for protecting the language, culture and traditions. This resulted in the introduction of Åland right of domicile. With the emergence of this instrument opportunities were formalized of categorizing the population. From that time the expression "we Ålanders" received a genuine political, economic and cultural significance. The others, that is, non-Ålanders, were persons lacking full civic rights.

One of the leaders of that trend in politics between 1955 and 1971 was the then Speaker of the Åland Parliament, Thorvald Eriksson. In publications, speeches and articles he launched opinions and values which coloured political language and thinking to a high degree. He introduced concepts which were used daily in political debate. Two of the central concepts were "specific nature" and "will to self-government." The latter was defined by Mr Eriksson as the inner basis of the continued existence of the autonomy. The term specific nature was used generally to justify and

strengthen political claims for special solutions with regard to Åland's constitutional status and the distinctive character of its population. He stated unequivocally that efforts for reunion had been replaced by the will to self-government, which was assumed to be strong among all "genuine" Ålanders. Political rhetoric used such expressions as struggle and defence, reflecting the confrontation policy which occasionally characterized relations between Åland and the State authorities at that time. "Defence" of and "struggle" for the autonomy were dictated by the threat of Finnification which in certain respects was described as imminent. Here we find a political pattern which is easily recognizable from many other ethnic conflicts. With the aid of menacing images ethnic conflicts are escalated. Antagonism is strengthened by reports of infringements. Alien and even inhuman qualities are attributed to the antagonist. In the last phase of the development of an enemy image the statement is made that negotiations are impossible, and the minority believes that it will be able to guarantee its identity and safety only by taking up arms. In the Åland nationality struggle there were never any hints of using violence. Even though the tone in certain special issues during that period might be both sharp and threatening, all differences of opinion were settled by peaceful, democratic means. A special negotiation culture was developed from that time in intercourse between political representatives of Åland and Finland. Characteristic of that culture is that discussions take place on equal terms and that both parties strongly uphold their interests on the basis of constitutional grounds and international law. At the Åland Exhibition in 1976, Thorvald Eriksson summarized his political term in power as follows:

"Autonomy is a source of strength and a way of life which Ålanders today regard as indispensable. It has been defended and strengthened during the years which have passed since it was given to the Ålanders instead of the reunion with Sweden for which they had striven. The will to self-government has succeeded the thought of reunion. And it is good that today we can believe that the future of our autonomy depends in the first place upon the Ålanders themselves."

Language debate

Nationalistic autonomy politics brought about a general debate among the public on the situation of the Finnish language and persons who had moved to Åland. The debate deviated from previous usage in that it was conducted quite openly and freely. Subjects dealt with, mainly in the mass media, concerned the need of controlling Finnish immigration, the voluntary nature of tuition in Finnish and the requirements of industry for Finnish labour. Generally it may be said about the debate that opinions diverged widely and that many people considered the debate unpleasant and even harrowing. Using immigrants as scapegoats to depict a threat of Finnification or a general threat to "genuine Ålandishness" proved doomed to failure. Responsible politicians and parties stood mainly outside the debate, with the result that it gradually died out. Only a small nationalistic group of extremists, outside the deciding organs, continued to question the human rights of various groups in Åland. Attacks on Finnish speakers and other non-Ålanders only exceptionally take place nowadays. The traditional manner of conducting language policy has resumed its place. Following that policy, language issues are pursued on the basis of constitutional appraisals, and problems are confined mainly to the concerns of authorities, organizations and other umbrella structures.

Within the framework of international conflict-solving theory there are psychological research findings indicating certain regularities which may explain the above-mentioned language debate in Åland. Experiences show that youthful states formed after enduring a long period of oppression undergo a dramatic process from having been political victims to being rulers. During that process the new rulers often display their needs for retaliation by persecuting representatives of the previous oppressive regime. The new rulers consider that they are entitled for historical reasons to treat "the others" in a manner deviating from the moral code applying in general. Revenge often finds expression in a form of "cleansing process" of removing everything of the old which is regarded as foreign and an obstacle to the creation of a whole new identity.



25. Maja, acted by Ros-Marie Rosenback in the film, here in the foreground. Photo: C-E Södergård.

As we have seen, the Åland nationality struggle was based upon the concept that the Ålanders were a special population group differing not only from the Finns but also from the Swedes and Finland-Swedes. One consequence of that policy was quite logically a distinct division into "us" and "them". Among "the others" were various categories: Finnish speakers being depicted as the most threatening, since they represented those in power in Finland who were given the historical blame for Åland not being reunited with Sweden. Once more we may see that the political trend in

Åland follows generally observable political patterns for ethnic groups, but that modifications must be made, particularly in view of the fact that developments have taken place in all parts without the use of any kind of violence whatsoever.

At the same time as the debate on ethnic antagonisms was raging in Åland, a series of books appeared about Maja and Janne on Storm Skerry. Authoress Anni Blomqvist's account of the struggle of a poor fisherman family to survive on one of the outermost islands in the middle of the 19th century reaped great successes, not only in Åland but far outside its borders. The main character, Maja, became a beloved female figure, filling a literary and cultural historical vacuum in Åland historiography. This is how the author herself describes her heroine: "Maja experienced all the phases of pioneering, became homeless through the effects of the Crimean War, lost a child through drowning and suffered the disaster of a fire when Christmas was approaching and ice conditions had severed all possibility of contact with neighbouring islands. Her destiny was to often be defeated but never crushed. She persevered, making her own decisions after losing Janne. And primarily: she became friends with the sea."

The books about Maja and her life were filmed by Finland-Swedish television. The film was a vast public success. It was extremely popular among Finnish viewers, and interest in Åland among the large Finnish-speaking public increased remarkably on account of the Maja films. Maja helped to mitigate the negative picture of Åland which emerged in the footsteps of the nationality struggle on autonomy policy. Evald Haggblom, at that time Åland's member of the Finnish Parliament, enthusiastically reported home after the first showing of the Maja film; "Maja broke the language barrier."

Summing-up autonomy policy

From the aspect of practical politics, the nationalistic struggle resulted in many significant advances. The culmination was reached when the Self-Government Building was opened in 1978. The national structure was

completed and could be concretely viewed and admired. Another milestone was passed when the flag of Åland was hoisted alongside other Nordic flags at the session of the Nordic Council in Reykjavik in 1970. The Ålanders were now able to view themselves as a separate nation among others in the Nordic family of nations.

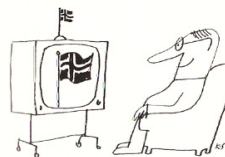
With that the Ålanders had reached several important aims in its autonomy policy. After a long struggle they had achieved a national structure which was both literally and figuratively sanctioned by the Nordic association of states and self-governing regions.

The explanation of these successes lay in a strong consensus policy which in turn was based upon a monolithic view of society implying that all Ålanders in general had the same political interests, opinions and values. The frequently used metaphor, "We are all sitting in the same boat," reveals the spirit of the times. Power was organized as on board ship. At the top was the captain, who gave the course without any discussion. Detailed democratic discussions were not necessary for keeping the course. Under the surface, however, a budding dissatisfaction was growing against this authoritarian, patriarchal method of rule. A more and more well-educated and politically independently thinking middle class began to demand change and influence.

From Consensus to Diversity of Opinions

Political life underwent radical changes at the end of the 1970s and during the whole of the 1980s. The party system was developed and consolidated. An Åland version of parliamentary government was introduced. The effects were political diversity and more stable majorities in the Åland Parliament. The consensus spirit of the nationalistic period changed into a pluralistic outlook. This development was accelerated by a radical change in the media situation. A new local newspaper saw the light of day, breaking the monopoly of opinion held by Tidningen Åland. The incidents round the origin of Nya Åland were of great political significance in themselves. An active, aware

popular movement was formed to found Nya Åland. The aim of the movement was to defend free speech and a free press committed to critically studying the economic and political doings of those in power. The process affected all the Åland media, and as from the emergence of Nya Åland the Åland media became considerably more independent and critical in their reporting. An important consequence of this was a consolidation of the view among the public, that real freedom and diversity of opinion were a necessary requirement for a democratic development of society. As from that period it was impossible for old and new authorities to dominate public debate without contradiction. Competition for readers and listeners resulted in more and more people being involved in the public exchange of opinions, making the picture of the Ålanders and their reality more complex and many-faceted than had previously been the case.



Drawing: Kurt Simons

Åland Identity

It is in the light of this that the steadily more generally current term Åland identity should be analyzed. It replaced the terms previously used: national fragment and specific nature. These two latter expressions were used for collectively describing the Ålanders and their society. Åland in the 1980s was characterized by pluralism, individualism and vigorous mobility. People of all kinds began moving over the Åland borders, making previous criteria for being classed as an Ålander outdated and of minor importance. Language, origin and nationality were no longer a person's destiny in the same way as previously imagined. In modern society the individual had the right to a large extent of choosing his ethnic status himself, and it was no longer unusual for a person to be the bearer of several different identities alternating in relevance depending on the social and cultural contexts. Today the individual has the freedom of choosing his Åland identity himself, and if the majority traditionally maintain a more or less clearly formulated basis of identification, it is finally up to each individual to decide when and in which way he maintains his Åland identity.



26. Nordic peace meeting in Mariehamn in 1981. Seated, left to right, Marlene Öhberg and Elisabeth Adebo. In the rostrum, Professor Harald Ofstad from Norway, who spoke on the subject, "Can Nuclear Armament or War be Justified?"

Islands of Peace

The peace movement swept vigorously over Åland. A big Nordic peace conference on the theme: "The Nordic Countries, a Nuclear-free Zone", was held in Mariehamn in 1981. In the same year the Ålands Fredsförening (Åland Peace Society) was formed, being met with a great response from the population. The public spontaneously interpreted the demilitarization of Åland as an international model for a peaceful solution of conflicts, and a lot of people became committed to developing Åland in that respect. Enthusiasm took many forms of expression, and fresh expectations were placed



27 The Åland Peace Institute was founded in 1992. Present at the inaugural meeting were, left to right, Barbro Sundback, Leena Smeds, Robert Jansson with his son Frans, and Marlene Öhberg. Photo: Hasse Svensson.

upon politicians. A popular campaign for a House of Peace in Åland was commenced, to hasten a political decision on some form of public institution to make Åland's demilitarization more widely known internationally.

In 1984, the Red Cross held a big international Peace Conference in Mariehamn. As from that time Åland has been more and more often described in official contexts as the Islands of Peace. However, the political establishment reacted with great caution and hesitation. Traditionally there was no general political discussion on demilitarization. The whole subject was handled as a State concern of more or less purely military nature. The only deviation was the annual informal meetings between representatives of the autonomy and the frontier guard.

With the increased interest in Åland from the peace policy aspect, its demilitarization gained a more general international and civic character.

That change contributed to yet another interpretation of Åland history. The two terms “peace” and “minority” became new political keywords during the 1980s. In several studies at the end of the 80s attempts were made to formulate the terms and conditions for a public institution whose work would enhance the profile of Åland as an autonomous, demilitarized region for a minority. The studies mentioned a peace centre, a peace and minority centre, and peace a environment centre, a peace institute and a minority institute. In spite of great agreement on the importance of an institution of that kind, no unanimity could be reached. In 1992 the Åland Peace Society decided to found the Åland Peace Institute, with the task of conducting research and popular peace work on the basis of Åland’s status under international law as an autonomous, demilitarized region.

International Entity

A significant re-evaluation of the political role of the autonomy in matters concerning demilitarization took place at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. The preliminary of this process of change was a widely-publicized protest against the PR visit of the warship Turunmaa in Mariehamn in 1988. Several peace activists who were against the visit demonstrated, urging the public not to go on board the ship. The reactions of the public were predominantly negative. The mass media had varying opinions, and political leadership preferred to pass over the incident in silence. After that incident, however, a more systematic follow-up and discussion began on the presence and behaviour of air and naval forces inside the demilitarized zone. The most important question was whether the defence forces were exceeding their authority with respect to the Åland Convention of 1921. In 1922 the Åland Executive Council made its own interpretation of the provisions of the Åland Convention on the right of warships to stay in Åland waters. This interpretation passed the Åland Parliament without much discussion. That standpoint meant that different opinions existed at the army staff in Helsinki and in Åland about the right of

naval forces to be inside the demilitarized zone. The discussion escalated, and the Ålanders found that the presence of Finnish warships was increasing. The climax was reached in 1993, when senior Finnish officers started putting forward views on the need for a discussion on remilitarizing Åland. The political establishment then reacted vigorously, opposing all proposals of remilitarization. The Executive Council maintained that demilitarization was not an internal Finnish defence issue, but an international concern, and that the demilitarization of Åland was a stabilizing factor in view of the changes in security policy in the Baltic Sea region. In other words, the Ålanders had diametrically opposed views of the significance of demilitarization compared with the attitude advocated by the defence forces. When leading Finnish politicians began to dissociate themselves from ideas of remilitarization, those who had supported the proposal in the beginning also saw fit to modify their previous statements. The Åland attitude thereby won a great victory in prestige, and the autonomy acquired a new area, in that representatives of Åland acted as a party in those issues, which had previously been understood by both parties as State concerns.

As a result of the discussion on remilitarization and in view of Finland’s negotiations with the EU, the Executive Council decided in the summer of 1993 to submit its view on the status of Åland under international law. The document establishes that Åland’s autonomous, demilitarized and neutralized status finds expression both in international treaties and through a binding common law resulting from the usage among states and the appertaining conception of justice. The Åland view stressed the significance of common law, and the perspective was widened by Åland’s status under international law being regarded as part of a public European judicial system of objective, permanent character. In the negotiations following the terms for Finland and Åland in membership of the European Union, the Åland view met with success. The result of the negotiations confirmed Åland’s status under international law, and even though the Ålanders are not strictly formally a party in issues concerning the status of Åland under international law, their position has improved considerably and should become still

stronger if European development proceeds as envisaged, that is, the power of national states decreasing in favour of regions and minorities. There is good reason to believe that as far as Åland is concerned internationalization will involve greater independence towards Finland, and that in more and more European contexts Åland will claim and also be granted the right to act with its own representation.

The Åland Model

The explanation of the favourable development of Åland society is mainly to be found in the dialogue which has developed between Åland and Finland. It is based upon a mutual respect for contracted treaties and agreements. Even if relations have not always been very cordial, there has been a strong will on both parts to find compromising solutions. Another cause which has helped to create a politically, economically and culturally flourishing community, despite small, limited material resources, is the Ålanders' pragmatism and great scepticism towards extremist and fundamentalist tendencies. No idea is so sacred that it may not be queried and changed, should it prove appropriate. A third circumstance which cannot be overlooked is the fact that the Ålanders live in an island community without land borders. The autonomy, demilitarization and territory form a clear, well demarcated whole. The structural basis of the Åland community construction is stable, and even if the surrounding world is getting closer, the Ålanders have unusually good opportunities of deciding their own affairs themselves. No guarantees can be given against disasters and war. On the other hand, strong self-esteem and a developed democracy are of irreplaceable value for a community wishing to survive and develop. In this respect the Åland community and the Ålanders should be amply equipped to meet the future.

Bibliography:

- Allart & Starck: Språkgränser och samhällsstruktur, Lund 1981.
- Andersson Otto: Bidrag till kännedom om Ålandsfrågans uppkomst 1917-18, Helsingfors, 1920.
- Björkholm Mikaela & Rosas, Allan: Ålandsöarnas demilitarisering och neutralisering, Åbo 1990
- Von Bonsdorff Göran: Självstyrelsetanken i Finlandssvensk politik, Helsingfors 1950.
- Cullberg Henricsson, Marta: I mänsklighetens utmarker, Kritisk Psykologi, Nr 2 1993, Årg. 48.
- Cullberg Weston Marta: Hur kunde det ske? Psykologer mot kärnvapen, för fred och ekologisk balans, Monografiserie, Nr 2, Stockholm 1994.
- De Geer-Hancock Yvonne: Åländskhet, en studie i nationalism och nationsbygge, Mariehamn 1986
- Drejer Matts: Den historiska bakgrunden till Ålands självstyrelse. Åländsk Odling 1971, Mariehamn 1972.
- Dreijer Matts: Ålands självstyrelse 1947-1972, Mariehamn 1972.
- Eriksson Johannes: Ålandsfrågan 1917-21, minnen och upplevelser, Stockholm 1961.
- Eriksson Thorvald: Ålands självstyrelse i kort översikt, Mariehamn 1964.
- Eriksson Thorvald: Ålands frihetskamp, En personlig återblick på 60-talet, Mariehamn 1992.
- Fagerlund Niklas: Ålands folkrättsliga status och EG, Mariehamn 1993.
- Hannikainen Lauri: Cultural, Linguistic and Educational Rights in the Ålands Islands, Helsingfors 1992.
- Kummel Bengt: Svenskar i all världen förenen eder, Åbo 1994.
- Jungar Sune (red): Självstyrelseregimer i Europa, Ålands högskola 1989:1; Mariehamn 1986.
- Kurtén, Tage: Inflyttning och nationalism, Drag i åländsk idédebatt, i Anckar Dag (red) Förändring och politik på Åland, Åbo 1979.
- Liljeström Lars Övind: Ålands flagga, föredrag hållet 27.10 1993 vid Nordens Institut i Mariehamn.
- Lindberg Steve: Från viljeakt till drivved, Svenska folkskolans vänner, Serie III vol 6, Helsingfors 1992.
- Lindfors Rut: Ålands Ungdomsförbund 70 år, Mariehamn 1979.
- Lysén Göran: Europas grundlag, Göteborg 1993.
- Nordman Dan: Historiker kämpar om Åland, i Jungar & Villstrand(red), Väster om Skiftet, Åbo 1986.

- Packer J. & Myntti, K: The position of ethnic and linguistic minorities in Europe, Åbo 1993.
- Rask Henry: Modersmålets sång och Ålänningens sång, Historisk skriftserie vol. 6, Helsingfors 1986.
- Schwarz David: Identitet och minoritet, Uppsala 1971.
- Sundback Barbro: Åländsk kursändring, Vasabladet 17.10 1979.
- Sundback Barbro: Myt och verklighet i åländsk politik, PQR Nr 2 1992, Mariehamn.
- Sundberg Erik: Läsarägda Nya Åland 5 år, Andelslaget Åländsk Rapport, 1986, Mariehamn
- Tudeer Erik: Ålands Hemvärn 1939-40, Särtryck av krigshistorisk tidskrift Nr 9, 1990.
- Tuominen Harriet: Historik över Ålands gillet och Svensk-Åländska Sällskapet, 1939-1989, Mariehamn 1989.
- Törnudd Klaus: Svenska språkets ställning i Finland, Helsingfors 1978.
- Walhbäck Krister: Ålandsfrågan ställs på nytt, Briefing, 6:93, Utrikesdepartementet Stockholm 1993.

Reports:

- Naucleur Elisabeth: Ålands Fredscentrum, Åländsk utredningsserie 1988:3.
- Holm Olle: Ett förslag till freds-, miljö- och vetenskapscentrum i Mariehamn, Ålands högskola november 1989.
- Lindström Bjarne: Arbetsgruppen för ett freds- och minoritetscentrum på Åland 1991. Ålands landskapsstyrelse.
- Erland Olof: Forskning om regionala minoriteter, Förslag till verksamhet vid Ålands högskola augusti 1992.
- Jansson Robert: Ålands Fredsinstitut Uppbyggnad, verksamhet och organisation, Ålands Fredsförening, augusti 1992.

Other:

- Ålands landskapsstyrelse Nr. 113 Kal, 17. 1 1991
- Ålands landskapsstyrelse Beslut 10.6 1993 "Landskapsstyrelsens tolkning av Ålands folkrättsliga ställning".

Ålands fredsförening/Ålands högskola: Vägval i Europa, grupp publikation, april 1994.
1921 - avgörandets år, Utställningskatalog, Ålands Landskapsarkiv 1991.

Pettersson Inga-Lill: 1922 - Ålands första lagliga landsting, Utställningskatalog, Ålands Landskapsarkiv.

Henriksson Bjarne: 1939 - ett ödesmättat år, Utställningskatalog, Ålands Landskapsarkiv 1989.

Pettersson Inga-Lill: 1951 - års självstyrelselag, Utställningskatalog, Ålands Landskapsarkiv 1991.

The Authors



Susanne Eriksson was born in 1959. She obtained her Bachelor of Laws degree at the University of Stockholm in 1984, and has been working as legal adviser of the Åland Parliament since 1985. She has been active in the committee of the Peace Society since 1988.



Lars Ingmar Johansson was born in 1944. He obtained his degree at the Faculty of Political Science of Åbo Academy in 1969. Between 1968-70 he worked as secretary to the Åland member of the Parliament of Finland in Helsinki, and since 1970 he has held various posts in the administration of the Åland autonomy. Since 1983 he has held the post of secretary of the Åland Parliament. Over the years he has contributed frequent articles and speeches on subjects connected with the autonomy of Åland.



Barbro Sundback was born in Vasa, Finland, in 1945. She trained as a psychologist in Turku/Åbo, and since 1979 she has been a member of the Social Democrats in the Åland Parliament and in the Mariehamn Town Council. In 1981 she took part in the Nordic Womens' Peace March to Paris. Ever since then she has been working actively on peace issues. She was the chairwoman of the Åland Peace Society between 1981-88 and was one of the initiators in forming the Åland Peace Institute in 1992. She is the current chairwoman.