



HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Opiskelijakirjaston verkkojulkaisu 2007

Reprinted from "Economic relations and Economic Cooperation between the Nordic Countries in the Nineteenth Century" by Andreas Monrad Møller from *Scandinavian Journal of History*, www.tandf.no/sjhist,1983, 8(1), 37-62, by permission of Taylor & Francis

Tämä aineisto on julkaistu verkossa oikeudenhaltijoiden luvalla. Aineistoa ei saa kopioida, levittää tai saattaa muuten yleisön saataviin ilman oikeudenhaltijoiden lupaa. Aineiston verkko-osoitteeseen saa viitata vapaasti. Aineistoa saa opiskelua, opettamista ja tutkimusta varten tulostaa omaan käyttöön muutamia kappaleita.

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



Economic Relations and Economic Cooperation between the Nordic Countries in the Nineteenth Century

Anders Monrad Møller

Generally speaking, it can be said that economic history has been written from a "national-economic" point of view, which regarded the vital distinction as being that between home and abroad. In this respect, economic history has imitated national political history in the traditional style and has treated the modern national state as the natural unit for historical discussion. This fact emerges quite clearly from the general surveys of economic history that have been published in the Nordic countries in recent years.

In relation to the outside world, the most important quantities for economic history are the figures for imports and exports, movements of capital and so on that have been published in modern times by the state institutions charged with collecting statistical information. When such figures do not exist for earlier periods, it is sometimes possible for the scholar to reconstruct figures, which he always strives to make so complete that they correspond to those provided by modern statistics. The national state and its boundaries are thus projected backwards in time and are therefore made to afford the framework also for descriptions of economic conditions in earlier periods of history.

In this perspective, what interests economic historians most about relations between home and abroad are which countries were the most important suppliers of imports and not least which were the most important customers for exports. In the case of the nineteenth century, this approach makes it most relevant, for example, for scholars in the individual Nordic countries to concern themselves with a question like where on the world market a purchaser could be found for Danish agricultural produce, Finnish timber, Norwegian fish and Swedish iron; and in this connection the other Nordic countries did not necessarily play a particularly large role.

Economic relations between the different Nordic countries are only touched upon in accounts of the broad economic context when they are regarded as of sufficient

*Anders Monrad Møller, born 1942, dr. phil., Research Fellow attached to the Institute of Economic History, University of Copenhagen, has published *Fra Galeoth til Galease, studier i de kongerigske provinseres sefart i det 18. århundrede* and several articles on 18th- and 19th-century Danish maritime history.*

Address: Institut for økonomisk historie, Københavns Universitet, Njalsgade 102, 2300 Kbh. S.

importance for the overall picture. A typical example that can be mentioned is the great difficulties experienced by the Norwegian ironworks when they were deprived of a protected market in Denmark by the dissolution of the Dano-Norwegian union in 1814, an event which subsequently led on the other hand to a period of expansion for Danish iron foundries.¹ Some discussion can also be found of the negative effects which the separation of Finland from Sweden in 1809 had in the long run on trade between these two countries. Finland had usually enjoyed a surplus in this trade, but Russia naturally now became gradually more important as a commercial partner.² A further example is the share the Norwegian merchant marine won in the transportation of Swedish timber in the middle of the nineteenth century, and the Swedish-Norwegian Interstate Treaty of 1874 is usually ascribed some significance for the economic history of the decades during which it was in force. Both countries, but especially Norway, benefited from the large home market which resulted from the mutual relaxation of trade barriers between them.³ It is also usually mentioned that very large quantities of colonial products and the like passed in transit over Denmark to Sweden, which meant that, as a result of the relatively liberal customs policy adopted by Sweden in the eighteen sixties, large parts of southern Sweden were very important commercially at some periods as an economic hinterland for Copenhagen.⁴ Norway and Sweden were still generally regarded as relatively important customers in the middle of the nineteenth century for Danish grain, even though they only took 25—30% of the Danish grain that was exported, and Denmark for her part was a not entirely insignificant market for timber from the Scandinavian peninsula.⁵ Finally, the Scandinavian currency union established in the middle of the eighteen seventies is usually emphasized as an interesting example of Scandinavian cooperation, although it is not clear how great an effect this agreement really had in the economic field.

These examples constitute the main parts of the usual picture given in general surveys of economic relations between the Nordic countries in the nineteenth century, and it is typical of these works that when overall accounts of economic developments in the North are attempted, they are constructed as a comparison between four mutually independent units, four national economies. It must be conceded that from the perspective of the usual economic-historical point of view this approach is consistent and very reasonable and that comparative analysis seems fruitful and rewarding.⁶

This whole approach rests on one definite assumption, namely that economic

¹ F. Hodne, *An Economic History of Norway 1815-1970* (Preliminary Edition, 1975), p. 23; F. Hodne, *Norges Økonomiske Historie 1815-1970* (Oslo, 1981), p. 54; S. Dyrvik, A. B. Fossen, E. Hovland and S.

Tveite, *Norsk Økonomisk Historie 1500-1970*, vol. 1, 1500-1850 (Oslo, 1979), p. 171.

² A. Montgomery, *Industrialismens genombrott i Sverige* (Stockholm, 1947), p. 161.

³ *Norsk Økonomisk Historie 1500—1850*, p. 181 and L. Jörberg, "The Industrial Revolution in Scandinavia 1850—1914" in *The Fontana Economic History of Europe* (London and Glasgow), p. 70.

⁴ S. A. Hansen, *Økonomisk vækst i Danmark*, vol. 1 (København, 1972), p. 184 and Montgomery, op. cit., p.158.

⁵ Montgomery, op. cit., p. 139 and *Norsk Økonomisk Historie 1500-1850*, p. 182.

⁶ Jorberg, op. cit., pp. 102-3.

areas are identical with national states, but it may be asked whether national frontiers in reality did constitute sharp economic boundaries in the nineteenth century. It is a recognized fact that official statistics do not give a complete picture of commercial exchanges between neighbours either by land or sea in a number of frontier areas in the Nordic countries.

In these areas, national boundaries had traditionally hardly had a particularly great separating function, and they did not suddenly acquire this function immediately after the reorganization of the state system in the North at the end of the Napoleonic Wars. A number of economic links at the local level were able to continue in the customary way far into the nineteenth century. A clear example is provided by frontier trade across the Swedish-Norwegian border.

Frontier trade by land

In 1933 the Swedish scholar Sigurd Erixon pointed out in a book called *Hur Norge och Sverige mötas* (How Norway and Sweden meet) that there were a number of common cultural features on both sides of the frontier. For example, types of farmhouse in Hedmark and Østfold in Norway were similar to those which could be found in Värmland in Sweden, and there were corresponding similarities between Trøndelag on the one side and Dalarna, Hälsingland and Ångermanland on the other. In the same way, there were many other parallels with regard to agricultural methods, tools and so on.⁷

Sigurd Erixon naturally regarded such common cultural features as the result in part of geography (the boundary of mountain pasturing runs east to west, not north to south) but when it came to explaining the similarities, he employed, of course, the idea of one form or another of mutual influence. In this connection, he observed that "it is possible in some cases to identify somewhat more closely the routes by which certain cultural forms were disseminated. . . because all the evidence suggests that trade across the Swedish-Norwegian border was both lively and important". He then went on to adduce several pieces of evidence to support this statement, but he did so while conceding that he had not examined the published and archival sources in detail.

By this somewhat indirect route, we have arrived at the question of border trade, and it is exceptionally difficult to acquire exact information on its scope and direction. In the eighteen forties a Dane, Viggo Rothe, took a strong interest in economic relations between the Nordic countries. Rothe used statistics published at the time and undertook journeys to see conditions for himself; and his observations on and descriptions of frontier trade between Sweden and Norway are very interesting ones. According to regulations issued in 1815, certain goods of domestic provenance could be transported between the two countries duty-free if moved by land and at half the normal if moved by sea. This difference undoubtedly reflected the

⁷ S. Erixon, "Hur Norge och Sverige mötas", *Studier rörande kulturgränser och kultursamband på skandinaviska halvön, Bidrag til bondesamfundet historie*, vol. 2, pp. 183-299, published by Instituttet for sammenlignende kulturforskning (Oslo, 1933).

fact that it was easier for the authorities to control the movement of goods by sea. The practical difficulties in the way of exercising any control whatsoever over commodities moved by land were very great also with regard to goods that were not duty-free. Those transporting goods over the frontier could only have complied with the regulation to call at one of the few customs stations at great cost to themselves; and Rothe concluded that the law was "virtually disregarded in frontier areas" and that duty was almost never paid. In the eighteenth century prevailing practice was legalized, when the transportation of all goods was made duty-free with the exception of certain typically industrial or colonial products: woollens and cottons, ironware, sugar and tobacco.⁸

These exceptions naturally made smuggling a perpetually tempting possibility so long as there were customs stations on the Norwegian side of the frontier only at Frederikshald, Frederiksstad, Moss, Drammen, Christiania, Raros and Trondheim. It was symptomatic of the lack of control exercised by the authorities over frontier trade that in 1846 the Norwegian Ministry of Finance commissioned a study of precisely how many routes across the frontier really were in use. The result of this study was ready five years later in the form of a map which showed no less than 39 routes that could be used in winter between Sweden and Norway in the area between Svinesund in the south and Raros in the north.⁹

Against this background there is hardly any reason to believe that economic contacts were less lively in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and it seems likely that Sigurd Erixon and other writers were right when they emphasized the importance of a traditional legal or illegal frontier trade. It is, of course, difficult to quantify this frontier trade in figures that can be used in the writing of a general economic history, but some of the characteristics of this frontier trade are described in the available secondary sources.¹⁰

In his book, Erixon mentions a number of Norwegian trading centres, of which Levanger and Grundset were the most important and shows that they very largely existed because of Swedes who crossed the frontier in order to trade at them. This view is fully confirmed by other scholars who have concerned themselves with frontier trade. Norwegians appear to have travelled to Swedish trading centres far more seldom, and Norwegian goods were disposed of at these trading centres by Swedes returning from Norway.

This frontier trade took place almost exclusively in winter when goods could be transported by sledge, since in summertime the roads could only be travelled on foot

⁸ V. Rothe, *Danmarks Industrielle Forhold betragtede nærmest med Hensyn til Spørgsmålet om Afslutning af Told- og Handelsforeninger med Nabostaterne*, vol. 1—2 (København, 1843—45)

⁹ N. Sletbak, "Norsk-svensk grensehandel før 1870, Vegleier, smugling og 'vevskytt'-handel", *Årbog for Glåmdalen* (Elverum, 1972), pp. 114-127.

¹⁰ The following paragraphs are based on the works by Erixon, Rothe and Sletbak already cited and on: T. Gjone, *Grundset Marked* (Kristiania, 1922); U. Jacobsson, "Om Härjedalens samfärdsel med Hälsingland och Norge på 1800-talet", *Jämtens*, (Östersund, 1954), pp. 26-32; H. Skirbekk, "Grundset Marknad", *Årbok for Glåmdalen* (Elverum, 1960), pp. 5-15; G. Rudie, "Trek fra grensehandelen i eldre tid", *Värmland förr och nu* (1974), pp. 111-119; S. Dahl, "Travelling Pedlars in Nineteenth-Century Sweden", *The Scandinavian Economic History Review*, vol. 7:2 (1959), pp. 167-178; and G. Boger, *Västgotaknallarna* (Ulricehamn, 1963).

or horseback, while the winter ice often made lakes also easily passable between December and March.

The commodities involved in this trade were on the Norwegian side above all foodstuffs like dried fish and grain, while Swedes travelling to Norway mainly sold ironware and textiles. In addition, a great number of other goods that could be bartered were exchanged, and this trade occurred in the varied and lively environment of the trading centres, an environment that often aroused moral indignation and the displeasure of the authorities.

The extent to which involvement in this trade had become a profession is not clear, but Erixon mentions particularly two groups of itinerant vendors (*gårdfart-handlare*): Dalecarlians (*dalsvenskar*), who specialized in selling ironware; and men from Västgötaland, the so-called "*veskjytter*" or "*västgotaknallar*" from the area around Borås and Ulricehamn, who particularly traded in textiles. Both these groups were, along with men from Värmland, strongly represented at the Grundset market in Elverum.

It is difficult to assess the development of the frontier trade between Norway and Sweden in the nineteenth century. It has been suggested that variations in yield from the harvest in Sweden may largely have been the explanation for the oscillations in the number of Swedes visiting the Norwegian trading centres. These oscillations can only be measured with great uncertainty on the basis of the surviving records of the frontier customs stations, but there can be no doubt that the second half of the nineteenth century saw the decline of *traditional* frontier trade. It is clear that trade with Norway was important for the *whole* of Härjedalen as late as the eighteen fifties, and it has been said that the golden age of Grundset market ended in the eighteen sixties. All the writers who have concerned themselves with the reasons for this decline are agreed in mentioning the importance of modern means of transportation in this case the railways.

The railway network was hardly built with special consideration for the frontier areas, since it was the main national and international lines that were constructed first. However, when the railways reached these areas, the pattern of transportation was radically changed and this change had the effect of uniting the state as more remote regions were gradually linked to the *national* railway system.¹¹ A rather telling example is Grundset market, the best known of all the Norwegian trading centres, which began to decline once the railway reached Hamar in 1862 and Åmotdalen in 1871, even though the market was only formally discontinued in 1900. By that time it had in practice already been displaced as a commercial centre by Hamar and Kongsvinger. It is also characteristic that the introduction to an article about "*färdmän*", itinerant traders from Jämtland, contains the following statement: "before the building of the railway, a phrase that is often used in Jämtland to describe the period before the new epoch which opened around the beginning of the eighteen eighties with the coming of the railway . . ."¹²

¹¹ F. Sejerstad, *Synpunkter på norsk økonomisk historie i del 19. århundre* (Kompendium 1969, Historisk Institutt, Oslo), pp. 54-5 and p. 80.

¹² H. Geijer, "Färdmän", *Jämtens* (Östersund, 1918), pp. 26-38.

This does not mean, of course, that every form of frontier trade between Norway and Sweden ceased, but in the second half of the nineteenth century it must have assumed more "modern" organized forms.

In the northernmost part of the Scandinavian peninsula, there were not only traditional contacts between Norway and Sweden in the Alta area and Norrbotten but also between Sweden and Finland, and all the evidence suggests that developments followed a parallel course in the case of Fenno-Swedish frontier trade. There is no detailed information about commercial activity, but it has been claimed that the drawing of a frontier along the Torne River did not have any great importance for daily life. It was first at the end of the nineteenth century that a tougher foreign policy on the part of Russia led to the introduction of restrictions on local commercial contacts and frontier traffic across the river in the Torne valley.¹³

Communications by sea

In the same way, conditions did not change immediately after 1809 with regard to communications between the two sides of the Gulf of Bothnia. Small Finnish and Swedish ships from this coastline had traditionally sailed almost exclusively to the Swedish capital.¹⁴ By the beginning of the nineteenth century the "*botniska handels-tvånget*", which had obliged the towns of the Gulf of Bothnia to trade solely through Stockholm, had long since been abolished, but trade between the Swedish capital and *both* Västerbotten and Österbotten and Åland continued to be important far into the nineteenth century. The "*botniska handelstvånget*" had therefore clearly not rested on compulsion alone. Tar, timber products and foodstuffs continued to be brought to Stockholm by sea, and a more varied assortment of goods to be taken back to the towns of the Bothnian coast.

There were also certain common features in the way shipping developed on both sides of the Gulf of Bothnia later in the century. First, the Finnish and Swedish Bothnian towns gradually freed themselves from their dependence on Stockholm, and there was a growth in direct contact across the Gulf of Bothnia between Österbotten and Swedish towns like Gävle, Härnösand and Luleå. Secondly, a more independent form of seafaring developed: using larger ships, vessels based on the Bothnian towns began to undertake longer voyages than to Swedish ports. It is possible that the Finnish skippers were forced to make this change somewhat earlier than their Swedish counterparts, since customs duties for Finnish goods in Sweden and vice versa began to become heavy a couple of decades after the Peace of Fredrikshamn of 1809. However, it can also be pointed out in this connection that

¹³ A. Moberg, "Litet om handel och gränstrafik i gammal tid inom Nordkalotten", *Ottar*, Populære småskrifter fra Tromsø Museum, no. 2 (1955); H. Bäer, "Migrationen mellan Sverige och Finland", *Nordisk Udredningsserie*, vol. 14:70 (Stockholm, 1970), p. 48.

¹⁴ A. Moberg, *Sjöstad, Skeppsbyggnad och Sjöfart i Luleå under 350 år* (Luleå, 1971), p. 78; D. Papp, *Åländsk altmogeseglation* (Lund, 1971), p. 110; N. Häggström, "Västerbottens och Österbottens utrikeshandel 1765-1880", *Västerbotten* (1967), pp. 59-74; G. Rosenholm, "Bondeseglationen i Solfkapellförsamling i svenska Österbotten", *Västerbotten* (1967), pp. 59-74; K. Boberg, "Glimtar från trafiken över Kvarken", *Västerbotten* (1967), pp. 75-84; P.-U. Ågren, "Bottnisk Kontakt" *Västerbotten* (1967), pp. 207-219.

Finnish towns, especially Gamla Karleby, Uleåborg and Vasa, had by this time already had vessels plying the longer routes for some time.

Despite this tendency away from seafaring traders operating on a modest scale towards a more modern form of commercial shipping, it was technical developments which finally put an end to traditional seafaring activity in the Gulf of Bothnia. It has been written concerning shipping from the Malax area in Finland around 1890 that by then "the last seafaring peasants had begun to convey their 'peasant products' to Sweden by the regular Vasa-Sundsvall ferry".

At the beginning of the nineteenth century Copenhagen provided in many respects a parallel to Stockholm in that it played the same role of a capital with far-reaching commercial links by sea not only with the Danish provinces but also over the Sound with Skåne. The importance of this Swedish hinterland for Copenhagen companies dealing in colonial and other products is well known from general economic histories, but rather less is known about the rather special circumstances which attended trade across a narrow strait that was so difficult to police. After the Napoleonic Wars the re-export of colonial products to Skåne occurred under particularly mysterious forms as plain smuggling in which small Swedish boats were mainly used. This traffic required from the boatmen "special kinds of local knowledge and a high degree of cunning", qualities that have characterized so much frontier trade through the ages. However, in 1826 a treaty was signed which freed Dano-Swedish trade from the constricting bonds that had hitherto impeded it and thus legalized the traffic across the Sound.¹⁵ Re-export from Copenhagen to Skåne was, of course, subject to oscillations; but, as we have seen, a considerable increase occurred, using more modern forms of transportation, later in the century. The products which had previously been moved across in open boat at dead of night could now be sent in broad daylight in one of the numerous steamships that plied the Sound.

The treaty of 1826 was also important for the export of Danish grain to Norway, which was one of the traditional elements in inter-Nordic trade that continued relatively unchanged far into the nineteenth century. It is well known that the shipping districts in northern Jutland had for long been entirely based on trade with southern Norway. It has been less known that, although there was a certain degree of specialization, a great number of other Danish districts had lively contacts on a far larger scale with Norway and that vessels from south Norway called at most Danish ports.¹⁶

Another striking parallel between the development of shipping in the Danish provinces and in the Gulf of Bothnia should also be mentioned. Alongside this traffic with Norway, ships from Danish ports also began to sail more frequently somewhat before the middle of the nineteenth century to far more distant destinations than neighbouring countries, a development which began not long after a similar expan-

¹⁵ M. Rubin, *Frederik VI's Tid, Fra Kielerfreden til Kongens Død. Økonomiske og historiske Studier* (København, 1895), p. 135.

¹⁶ A. M. Møller, *Fra galeoth til galease, Studier i de kongerigskeprovinser se/art i det 18. århundrede* (Esbjerg, 1981), pp. 144-5.

sion had started in Norway. Larger ships and longer journeys increasingly came to dominate both Danish and Norwegian shipping, but a group of "traditionalists" remained in northern Jutland and southern Norway, and this helps to explain why these areas in particular are reputed to be so closely linked. However, the pattern became less rigid even in the case of these "traditionalists", as is demonstrated by the example of the shipmaster from Hjørring in the eighteen thirties who was engaged, because of the opportunities for smuggling, in sailing both to Arendal in Norway and to Altona in Holstein.¹⁷

Maritime links between Denmark and Norway later in the century are not particularly well documented. Denmark was still Norway's most important supplier of grain, in the middle of the century, and it may be assumed that at this time the traditional pattern of maritime communications between the two countries was still relatively unchanged. However, in the second half of the century steamships and railways, functioning once again as factors that promoted national unity, created unavoidable changes in the structure and development of Danish agriculture which led to a decline in grain production and a growing emphasis on markets other than Norway.

The detailed information on conditions before 1800 which we have makes it certain that traffic across the Kattegat and Skagerak was far more extensive in a north-south direction than in an east-west direction.¹⁸ However, some links between, for example, towns in Jutland like Ålborg and Randers and ports in western Sweden can be observed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and it is very likely that contacts continued into the nineteenth century, even though the existing documentary sources do not make it possible to give a general assessment of these contacts despite one mention of smuggling into Sweden from Jutland.¹⁹ It can also be said with certainty that the railways combined with the opening of regular steamships routes like that between Fredrikshavn and Gothenburg from the eighteen seventies onwards must have had an effect on these traditional links.

We have now covered the marginal areas of the Nordic countries, including both frontier and coastal districts, and a brief summary has been given of the commercial links which at the beginning of the nineteenth century were firmly established and traditional, but which subsequently altered in character, not least because of developments in the field of transportation. However, these open frontiers did not only facilitate trade but also allowed another phenomenon of not inconsiderable historical interest, namely the exchange of labour in the form of individuals, to occur.

¹⁷ A. M. Møller, "Tomme tønder, te og toldsvig, Smuglerteknik i Hjørring Tolddistrikt i 1830'rne", *Zise, Toldhistorisk Tidsskrift*, no. 2 (1978), pp. 3—15. The most recent survey, which contains a full bibliography, of the traditional trading activities of small vessels is D. H. Carlsen, "Skudehandelen mellem Nordjylland og Sydnorge, Fra bondehandel til handelskapitalisme?" *Kattegat-Skageraks Kulturhistorie under 1800-talet* (paper given at conference 9-11 September 1981).

¹⁸ Møller, *Fra galeoth til galease*, Appendix. 6.

¹⁹ Montgomery, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

Migration in search of work

Permanent settlement by the natives of one Nordic country in another has, of course taken place on a greater or lesser scale at all periods of history, but will not be considered in this essay. Instead, I will examine seasonal migrations in search of work, a phenomenon which to some extent involved the crossing of national frontiers.

In relation to the Swedish-Norwegian border, we are dealing in this case too with what was primarily a movement from east to west. Dalecarlians and other seasonal workers from Värmland and Bohuslän travelled to Norway throughout the whole of the nineteenth century in search of work.²⁰ These Swedes who came to the eastern parts of Norway most commonly found employment in agriculture, forestry or the building trade. As in the case of frontier trade, migration in search of work was dependent to some extent on conditions at home. A quotation from 1822 illustrates the "push effect" experienced by the inhabitants of Värmland: "In difficult years they wander to other areas, frequently Norway, and as they are known for their toughness and ability to work they are received with pleasure." However, it should be added that the people involved were not only those forced by necessity to find work elsewhere but also to some extent specialists in the cultivation of hitherto unbroken soil who came with their own horses and ploughs. Swedish women also travelled westward and found employment as servants or in industry in towns like Christiania. The attraction of the Norwegian capital was felt beyond the frontier with Sweden.²¹

It is natural to assume that the changed and improved means of communication of the second half of the century would have had a positive influence on the frequency of such migrations, but in fact this may not have been the case. It is by no means certain that the sort of Swedes who sought work in Norway were among the first and most eager users of the railways and steamships, since these were not particularly aimed at reaching a mass market through low prices, and it has been claimed that migration to Norway in search of work, at any rate from Värmland, largely ceased with the dissolution of the union in 1905.

While Swedes from the western parts of Sweden travelled to Norway for work, a similar migration occurred from Finland to Sweden. There appears to be no information on this subject from the beginning of the nineteenth century, but it has been said that from about 1870 onwards larger numbers of Finnish workers than before were employed in the Swedish forestry industry (one reason why they came was to avoid the long period of conscription in the Russian empire); and there is evidence that Finns from the Vasa district came to Sundsvall and Härnösand in Sweden around 1900 in order to work in horticulture and agriculture or at brick-works and breweries.²²

²⁰ G. Rosander, *Herrarbete, Dalfolkets säsongsvisa arbetsvandringar i jämförande belysning* (Upsala, 1967), which contains an extensive bibliography and summaries on pp. 54— and 303—; Erixon, *op. cit.*; and G. Utterström, *Jordbrukets arbetare, Levnadsvilkor och arbetsliv på landsbygden från frihetstiden till mitten af 1800-talet*, vol. I (Stockholm, 1957), p. 729-31.

²¹ H. Eles, "Värmländska arbetsvandringar till Norge", *Värmland förr och nu* (1974), pp. 99—110.

²² Rosander, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

It is not clear whether Stockholm attracted would-be servants from other areas in the way that Christiania/Oslo did, but Copenhagen at any rate had a significant element of Swedes in its population throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. Many of them must have been temporarily employed. Furthermore, ships based on the Copenhagen area had a considerable number of Scanian seamen in their crews just before 1800, and there were generally a large number of Swedes resident in Zealand at that time.²³ The Napoleonic Wars may have interrupted migrations across the Sound, but since commercial relations were quickly resumed after 1815, the same must undoubtedly have been the case with regard to seasonal work. At any rate, there were thousands of Swedes in the Danish capital in the second half of the nineteenth century employed as artisans, unskilled labourers and female servants. Female labour from Skåne was also used from the eighteen seventies and for a long time afterwards in the sugar beet fields of Lolland.²⁴

Once again it is therefore possible to detect a marked westwards tendency in the migrations from Swedish areas, but it should be noted that in the second half of the nineteenth century it is difficult to distinguish such seasonal migrations in search of work from the great mass emigration to more remote and westerly parts of the world. Something which began as a temporary stay in a neighbouring country could become permanent through marriage or acquiring a good job or it could become the first step on the way to America.

Economic Scandinavianism

The preceding sections of this article aimed above all at showing that the frontiers between the Nordic countries in the matters of trade and communications were anything but closed, at least in the case of neighbouring areas. Against this background, it is possible to express in passing some bemusement at the traditional description of student Scandinavianism, that is to say that movement among students and younger university teachers to which posterity has ascribed a central importance in the emergence of a feeling of mutual affinity among the Nordic peoples in modern times. The traditional view is that an especially severe frost caused the Sound to freeze in 1838 and that this provided an "opportunity for contact at a more popular level between the inhabitants of Scania and Zealand, a contact which laid the foundations not only for closer links between the citizens of Elsinore and Helsingborg but also for the so-called student Scandinavianism".²⁵ There is something rather amusing about the notion that people from the two sides of the Sound suddenly and publicly fell upon each other's necks, when all the evidence suggests that they had in reality been trading with each other more or less

²³ Møller, op. cit., p. 166 and Rosander, op. cit., pp. 115—6.

²⁴ R. Willerslev, "Svenske gæstearbejdere i København 1850-1914", *Fortid og Nutid*, vol. 29:2 (1981), pp. 224-241; G. Nørregaard, *Arbejdsforhold indenfor dansk Haandværk og Industri 1857-1899* (København, 1943), p. 323; K. Hvidt, *Flugten til Amerika eller Drivkrefter i masseudvandringen fra Danmark 1868-1914* (Århus, 1971), p. 259; Å. Holmberg, "Sverige och den ekonomiska skandinavismen vid 1860-talets början" *Studier tillågnade Curt Weibull* (Göteborg, 1946), p. 210.

²⁵ H. Becker-Christensen, *Skandinaviske drømme og politiske realiteter 1830-1850* (Århus, 1981), p. 42.

secretly for years past. This tradition about 1838, therefore tells us less about reality than about the sort of "mythological" suggestions which quite naturally always become associated with the emergence of phenomena like Scandinavianism. Such traditions serve to emphasize the view that it was a "spiritual movement".

The common term *political* Scandinavianism which is used to describe this movement and its objectives up until 1864 is undeniably accurate enough, since the aim was to create a full political and dynastic union, which was preferably to be brought about at one stroke and as quickly as possible. However, it has rightly been pointed out that the German "*Zollverein*" of 1834 served as a shining model for those interested in creating closer links between the Nordic countries, and in fact the idea of a customs union was put forward as early as February 1838, at a time when it was still possible to walk upon the ice in the Sound. What was suggested was "a customs union between Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, which facilitated and protected the lively trade between three countries whose products supplemented each other's in such a remarkable way and which therefore laid the foundations for a single commercial and industrial unit".²⁶

This desire for a single economic unit achieved through cooperation over customs duties, once it had been expressed, was repeatedly put forward as an objective though it is true that up until the eighteen sixties a customs union was always seen as a secondary aim in comparison with more far-reaching political aspiration.²⁷ It is possible to detect a slightly apologetic air on the part of Scandinavianists when they concerned themselves with something as mundane as economic matter. This emerges clearly from the introductory words of a lecture entitled "On a Scandinavian commercial and customs union" given in February 1848 at a meeting of the Scandinavian Society (*Det skandinaviske Selskab*) in Copenhagen:

To some extent, this question lies outside the circle of ideas, to which we are accustomed at our meetings to turn our thoughts, since the latter usually concern the spiritual links between the Scandinavian nations.

The words "spiritual links" should be noted. They were undoubtedly interpreted by all those present in a political and far-reaching sense.²⁸

Nonetheless, the question of a customs union had been made an issue of public discussion; and, as we shall see below, from the late eighteen sixties onwards the idea of a customs union played a central role as the foremost objective of economic Scandinavianism. In the early stages, it was only isolated individuals, including among others the Dane mentioned earlier, Viggo Rothe, who concerned themselves in detail with economic matters and the economic relations between the Nordic countries.

Viggo Rothe was a qualified engineer and director of the Danish board of commerce (*Kommercekollegium*), and he published his two books as early as 1843 and

²⁶ Ibid, p. 47.

²⁷ Ibid, pp. 69, 72, 80, 85, 126, 183; Åke Holmberg, *Skandinavismen i Sverige vid 1800-talets mitt* (Göteborg, 1946), pp. 113-4, 196, 197-8, 315.

²⁸ V. Rothe, *Om en skandinavisk Handels- og Toldforening* (Et Foredrag holdt i det skandinaviske Selskab i Kjøbenhavn den 28 Februar 1848).

1845. Characteristically enough, the first dealt with the relations between Denmark and her southern neighbours, and contained a full discussion of the question whether Denmark ought to join the German *Zollverein*. The answer Rothe gave to this question was a clear no on both economic and national grounds. In the second book, Rothe turned to the Nordic countries and concluded after much discussion that none of the Nordic states had any serious reason to fear the effects of the free trade between them, although certain financial problems because of lower customs revenue might arise. Unfortunately, Rothe was unable to quantify his assumptions about the favourable effects of a customs union, since he had found when comparing the statistics given by the individual Nordic states for trade between them that these figures were inconsistent with each other, partly because of the large number of goods which were transported from one Nordic country to another without paying customs duty. He was obliged to concede soberly that a considerable number of changes in existing conditions were required before the objective could be achieved, but he thought the idea was right in principle and that it could be put into practice gradually, for example by first exempting from customs duty the indigenous products of the three countries.

Rothe's work has been described fairly fully because it contained features that often occurred in subsequent discussions. First, there was the problem presented by official statistics, which did not adequately record the extent of inter-Scandinavian trade. Secondly, there was the declaration of support for an overriding objective of a customs union, which was almost presented as an article of faith. Thirdly, there was the somewhat resigned suggestion that it was at least possible to begin moving towards the ultimate goal by one step at a time.²⁹

Both Viggo Rothe and his ideas later appeared again at the Scandinavian economic conferences which formed the most important public forum for discussions of economic cooperation until 1888. The connection between these meetings and the earlier phase of political Scandinavianism is underlined by the fact that the first of them was held as early as 1863, that is to say the year before the decisive setback for the idea of an immediate union of the three Scandinavian kingdoms constituted by the Dano-German war of 1864.

In an article published in 1937 Torun Hedlund-Nystrom expressed the opinion that the background for the Scandinavian economic conference in Gothenburg in 1863 lay in Swedish desires for peaceful cooperation rather than active involvement in Denmark's current problems in the area of foreign policy. He therefore saw the meetings above all as a forum in 1863 and subsequently for Nordic economists interested in the practical and theoretical aspects of their profession. This would seem to be a somewhat incomplete description both of the reasons for the first conference and of its participants.³⁰

In 1946 Åke Holmberg studied the 1863 conference in much greater depth and

²⁹ V. Rothe. *Danmarks Industrielle Forhold betragtede nærmest med Hensyn til Spørgsmålet om Afslutning af Told- og Handelsforeninger med Nabostatene*, vol. 1 — 2 (København, 1843—45).

³⁰ T. Hedlund-Nyström, "Nordiska nationalekonomiska problem, I belysning av de nordiska national-ekonomiska motena 1863-1935", *Statsvetenskaplig Tidskrift* (1937), pp. 115-130.

came to the following conclusions. In the years 1862—63 the Swedish parliament discussed the desirability of a Nordic union in the areas of currency, weights and measure and as a result, it asked the Swedish government to examine the feasibility of such a union in more detail. This development was a very convenient one for Carl XV, who wanted to have the question of a Scandinavian union placed on the political agenda and who saw the suggestion for a joint currency and a common system of weights and measures as a brilliant opportunity to stage a Scandinavian conference which had earlier been discussed but never held. The invitations were issued by a great number of prominent Swedes, including A. O. Wallenberg and A. W. Björck, who had proposed in parliament that the possibility of a currency union and a common system of weights and measures should be considered. In other words, in Holmberg's view we are dealing in this case with a Swedish political initiative emanating from the highest circles, which resulted in the meeting that took place in May 1863.³¹

Holmberg's arguments appear convincing in this respect, but his analysis of the composition of the participating group and his final description of the course of the conference do not seem entirely accurate. Holmberg is at pains to reject the notion that *vital* Swedish economic interests were involved, a view that is perhaps a little anachronistic. Holmberg notes to be sure the eager involvement of representatives of the business community in Gothenburg, but denies that this arose out of anything more than a desire to participate in the social activities associated with the conference, while military officers attended as specialists in weights and measures and civil servants because the postal and telegraph system were to be discussed. In contrast, Holmberg emphasizes that *very* few representatives of Swedish industry were present.

Holmberg's preoccupation with Swedish economic interests and the "absence" of industrialists at this meeting seems to have prevented him from making a number of observations about the participants whom he does *not* discuss. He merely writes that "behind the desires expressed and the proposals made lay not so much the demands of the Swedish economy, as the general Scandinavianist orientation of opinion among the country's educated classes". This is undoubtedly a correct statement, but Holmberg does not take into account the self-evident fact that King Carl XV was not the only one who might have exploited the meeting for his own purposes. From a Danish point of view, for example, it is striking that not only the Danish financier C. F. Tietgen (who came partly in order to meet his Swedish colleague, A. O. Wallenberg) but also such leaders of the Scandinavianist movement in Denmark as A. Hage and Carl Ploug attended the meeting. The latter was simply an obvious opportunity for many convinced Scandinavianists to concern themselves with matter other than the "spiritual links" they had concentrated on in earlier periods. By exclusively dealing with this first conference, Holmberg also misses the fact that the old Scandinavianists continued to attend such meetings in the future. In 1866 the veteran of Danish political Scandinavianism, Orla

³¹ Å. Holmberg, "Sverige och den ekonomiska skandinavismen vid 1860-talets början", *Studier tillägnade Curt Weibull* (Göteborg, 1946), pp. 195-224.

Lehmann, was the Danish vice chairman of the conference, and the 1872 conference was attended by Viggo Rothe, whom we encountered before as the author of two markedly Scandinavianist works and who was now director of the Zealand railways.

It may therefore be legitimate to ask whether any assessment of the Scandinavian economic conferences ought not to place somewhat greater emphasis than has hitherto been the case on the element of continuity and the links between these conferences and the earlier efforts of the Scandinavianist movement. It is also likely that analysis of the composition of the group that attended these conferences would produce rather interesting results. It is very conceivable that many others who, like Viggo Rothe, had been students in the eighteen thirties and forties participated in the conferences during the eighteen sixties and seventies as well-established civil servants.

There are grounds for taking issue with Holmberg's account on another point too. He writes that the idea of a Nordic customs union was generally rejected because the participants adhered to the liberal view that free trade with all countries should be introduced. It is very difficult to reconcile this assertion with the resolution that was in fact passed at the conference in 1863, which referred to "a common system of customs duties for the Scandinavian countries" and discussed the principles on which this system ought to be based. At this time, free trade ideas were, of course, quite dominant, and Holmberg is right that a pure liberal point of views regarded all customs duties as contrary to the true faith. Indeed, it may be added that the eighteen sixties and early seventies were a period in which the trend was towards fewer and fewer protectionist obstacles to trade, and that this trend also made itself felt in the relationship between Denmark, Norway and Sweden. However, it was impossible for financial reasons alone to remove all tariffs immediately, and the problems associated with customs duties therefore continued to feature on the agenda of these conferences. In 1866 a resolution was passed which recommended the appointment of a joint committee to consider changes in the legislation concerning customs duties, and this resolution can only be taken as evidence that a desire for cooperation in this field continued to make itself felt at the Stockholm conference of 1866.³²

However, at the next conference in Copenhagen in 1872, a proposed resolution which also recommended the establishment of a commission to investigate the tariff question did not get very far. The Swedes and Norwegians present were uninterested, probably because their two countries were at that time engaged in the negotiation which led to the Interstate Treaty of 1874. At the next economic conference in Malmö in 1881, this treaty between Sweden and Norway with its

³² *Forhandlingar vid skandinaviske National-Ekonomiska Motet i Gøteborg år 1863* (Göteborg 1863); *Forhandlingar vid andre skandinaviska Nationalekonomiska Motet i Stockholm år 1866* (Stockholm, 1866); *Forhandlingerne ved det tredie skandinaviske Nationaløkonomiske Mede i Kjøbenhavn 1872* edited by D. Dessau (København, 1872); *Forhandlingar vid det fjerde skandinaviska Nationalekonomiska Motet i Malmö 1881* (Stockholm, 1882). *Forhandlingerne paa det nordiske Nationaløkonomiske Møde i Kjøbenhavn 1888* edited by A. Petersen-Studnitz (København, 1888).

mutual tariff reductions was presented as something positive for Scandinavia as a whole. The discussion on this topic was introduced by the Swede, C. F. Waern, who gave a lecture full of facts and figures on trade between the three Nordic countries represented at the conference; and, unlike Viggo Rothe just under 40 years before, he was able to give figures for this trade. However, like Rothe in the past, he was obliged to concede that a full "Zollverein" was too difficult to achieve and could not therefore be the immediate objective. On the other hand, he believed that the Interstate Treaty could serve as a model and he proposed a reduction in the tariff barriers between the three countries, especially with regard to indigeneous products. On this occasion, this proposal did not meet with widespread support.

The world economic climate had become less favourable since the preceding conference, and protectionist currents of opinion had begun to make themselves felt in Scandinavia, above all in Sweden. This development greatly complicated the discussion. The first rejoinder to Waern at the 1881 conference came from another Swede who maintained that "phrases extolling free trade had fallen all too easily from the lips of participants at earlier conferences". A long discussion then ensued in which almost every speaker claimed that the conference was an unsuitable forum for a debate on the virtues of free trade and protectionism, but nonetheless went on to give his contribution to this debate. Waern's moderately worded resolution calling for cooperation was adopted to be sure, but only after the unusual procedure for these conferences of a vote. The protectionists, who were clearly on the offensive, lost on this occasion, but the report on the 1881 conference (which incidentally only had a very small number of participants from Norway and Denmark) gives the impression that the whole concept of Scandinavian economic conferences was in danger of being destroyed by this internal Swedish dispute, a dispute that was a portent of the great political struggle over tariffs in Sweden a few years later.³³

During the following years the question of a customs union seems above all to have played a role in Danish public debate. A series of pamphlets written by prominent Danes like C. F. Tietgen, Julius Schovelin and Marcus Rubin may be regarded as a sort of introduction for the fifth and for the time being last Scandinavian economic conference in Copenhagen in 1888. These pamphlets contained a mixture of, on the one hand, a relatively realistic appreciation of the fact that the prospects of achieving much in this matter were not very great (the authors of these pamphlets were not, in fact, themselves rabid free traders) and, on the other, of a not inconsiderable measure of propaganda. For example, Marcus Rubin was obliged to concede that, although the idea of a customs union was supported by certain circles in Sweden with "much warmth" there was "in any case no doubt that the idea (should) not for the present seek its adherents among protectionists in Sweden". He went on to write that "if there were no tariffs, there would be no need to concern oneself with the questions of a customs union" and that there had been a time when it was possible to hope that tariffs had largely played out their role as a means of economic protection, but in this respect times had changed decisively and this fact had to be faced. With regard to the prospects of establishing a customs union, Rubin

³³ A. Montgomery, *Svensk Tullpolitik 1816-1911* (Stockholm, 1921) pp. 135-6.

concluded by making the following statement, which clearly expressed the agitational side of his pamphlet:

If we filled the Sound with ink and used it all to write speeches and reports if we carved graphical descriptions of the matter into both sides of Kølén there would still be no customs union without the will to create it. Do the Nordic nations *want* to join together in order to form a single economic whole and do they have the *men* who can achieve this goal? Only if one has the courage to answer these questions affirmatively, should one hope for the establishment of a Nordic customs union.³⁴

Nonetheless, the 1888 conference seems to have aroused a certain degree of optimism before it met.³⁵ Those arranging the conference had chosen, presumably in order to avoid a repetition of the somewhat unfortunate course of events at the 1881 conference, to take the bull by the horns and had invited a Swede of protectionist views to introduce the debate on commercial issues. This decision may be said to have been reasonable in that the protectionists had at this time gained the upper hand in Sweden.

Pontus Fahlbeck, a docent from Lund, claimed in his speech that "any possible commercial link in the future between the three Nordic peoples must either be protectionist or it will never come about". He described the Interstate Treaty between Sweden and Norway as open to criticism from an economic point of view and as something to be regarded above all as a political necessity because of the union between the two countries. Nonetheless, Fahlbeck was well able to conceive of the gradual growth of a free common market between the three Scandinavian countries, provided that it maintained protective tariffs against the outside world.

The ensuing discussion revealed great, though not unexpected disagreement, but was conducted with courtesy. Those arranging the conference repeatedly emphasized that the issue of free trade versus protection was *not* as such the question under debate. The many speeches will not be described in detail, but a few significant contributions will be mentioned. The former Norwegian minister Helliesen gave quite a thorough account of the background for the Interstate Treaty in earlier frontier trade between Sweden and Norway, and described the most recent Swedish change (to Norway's disadvantage) as tantamount to making the treaty a whipping boy that was punished because of quite unrelated problems. C. F. Tietgen emphasized that in reality no progress had been made since the eighteen forties when

³⁴ M. Rubin, *En Nordisk Toldunion* (Foredrag i Industriforeningen i Kjøbenhavn i December 1887); M. Rubin, *Frihandel og Beskyttelse med strligt Hensyn til den tyske Toldreform*, edited by Den norske Haandværks-og Industriforening (Kristiania, 1886); C. F. Tietgen, *Om en nordisk Told-Forening* (Foredrag . . . ved Handelsmødet 1885, Frederikshald 1886); J. Schovelin, *Den tyske Toldforening og en nordisk Toldunion* (Kjøbenhavn, 1888). On the subject of C. F. Tietgen and Scandinavianism see J. Schovelin, *Tidens Hjul og Tutgen* (Kjøbenhavn, 1929) pp. 398-9 and 427.

³⁵ This optimism is attested by a later statement made by one of the participants, the Norwegian Bredo Morgenstjerne: "In particular, practical results were expected from the rather detailed discussions at the Copenhagen conference of 1888." See *En nordisk Toldforbindelse, Tre Udredninger af Professor Bredo Morgenstjerne, Overfetsagfører Just-Lund og Direktør Sven Palme*, edited by Nordisk Forening til økonomisk Samarbejde (Kjøbenhavn and Kristiania, 1904).

Viggo Rothe (who was still alive and present at the conference) had written his two books. This somewhat dejected attitude over the lack of success that the idea of Scandinavian economic cooperation had obtained was also present in the remark by Herslow, a newspaper editor from Malmö, that "an idea is not transformed into a reality merely by making it an article of faith". He went on to say that they all had some experience in this respect from their youthful dreams of "Scandinavianism". Nonetheless, he concluded that "great ideas have usually seemed like illusions at first" and concluded by recommending that the state should initiate thorough examination of the question in the different Nordic countries.

This recommendation was adopted by the conference. The participants agreed to disagree on the subject of free trade versus protection, but it was accepted that as several speakers had argued, further investigations of the subject would be useful, because cooperation as such was certainly regarded as something positive by the participants. The resolution adopted by the conference read as follows:

Recognizing that both the present general economic conditions and especially the state of production within the Nordic countries makes it desirable for them to draw closer together in the field of trade policy, this conference calls upon the governments of the Nordic Kingdoms to appoint a joint commission to examine the relevant circumstances.

This resolution was adopted unanimously, but had no effect whatsoever and it may also serve as a good example of well-meaning but futile Nordic recommendations. The 1888 conference was the last of the series of such meetings held in the nineteenth century, but it is not clear why Scandinavian economic conferences were first resumed in 1920. However, one explanation is probably the general despondency which seems to have prevailed after the 1888 conference about the prospects of achieving anything concrete in this quite central area of Scandinavian economic cooperation. It has also been rightly pointed out that the three countries were developing in different directions at this time. Norway followed Sweden into protectionism during the eighteen nineties, especially after the Interstate Treasury was abrogated at Sweden's initiative. Denmark, in contrast, continued to follow a policy that was more inclined towards free trade in the period when the great reorganization of Danish agriculture occurred during the last decades of the century.³⁶

However, the idea of a Nordic customs union was put forward one further time before the First World War. In 1904 a number of the participants in the earlier debate on this subject, including Professors Morgenstjerne (Norway), Fahlbeck (Sweden) and Scharling (Denmark), took part in the establishment of a Nordic Society for Economic Cooperation (*Nordisk Forening til økonomisk Samarbejde*). The programme of the society could be summed up in two words, "economic union", though it was strongly emphasized from the start that the society took no view on the question of free trade versus protection.³⁷

³⁶ Jörberg, op. cit., p. 70 and B. Morgenstjerne, *Bidrag til Spørgsmaalet om Økonomisk Tilnærmelse mellem de skandinaviske Lande*, Udtalelser af Skandinaviske Økonomer (Stockholm, 1917), p. 149.

³⁷ *Stiftelse og indbydelse til medlemskab af Nordisk Forening til økonomisk Samarbejde* (see note 35).

The society's programme echoed Viggo Rothe's writings when it emphasized its belief in "a common Scandinavian market" in the fullness of time but also recognized that the only way was to proceed step by step. The society was resolved to engage in practical activity in the matter of the investigations that were necessary. It decided at its constituent meeting in Gothenburg to establish a research office (*Arbejdsbureau*) in Christiania under the Norwegian, Morgenstjerne's direction, while the Dane, Scharling, became chairman of the society's central committee.

The work of investigation did begin as envisaged. In 1905 the society met in Copenhagen and appealed earnestly to the men in charge of the Norwegian, Danish and Swedish statistical offices to contribute to clarifying the extent of trade between the three countries by making a special collection of statistical material on the subject.³⁸ This appeal was not without effect,³⁹ but it must be said that the most unfortunate possible moment had been chosen to launch the society, a fact that no one, of course, could have known in advance. The evidence suggests that the dissolution of the Swedish-Norwegian union in 1905 had a negative effect on the ability of the pro-union Morgenstjerne and his "research office" to function effectively, and it was only during the First World War that this Norwegian who had played such a central role in efforts to create closer links in Scandinavia again obtained an opportunity to take a new initiative in cooperation with other Scandinavian economists. It was Morgenstjerne who described in the most succinct and telling fashion the reasons for the slight success of all the efforts in the nineteenth century to create a far-reaching measure of economic cooperation between the Scandinavian countries:

I believe it is true to say that the Scandinavian North would probably at this moment have been more closely associated in organized cooperation if the state unions first between Denmark and Norway and then between Sweden and Norway had never existed. The balance is now after all better with three legs instead of two.⁴⁰

Practical Scandinavianism

The term "economic Scandinavianism" was used in the preceding section to describe the efforts to achieve through economic integration an objective which was as far-reaching in the last resort as that pursued by political Scandinavianism in its time, namely the unification of the three Nordic kingdoms. The goal was unity not merely under one crown but within one economy, and the primary means of attaining it was to be the creation in the field of tariffs of a single unit in relating to the rest of the world. This article has treated this issue as the central aspect of economic relations and cooperation between the Nordic countries in the nineteenth century.

³⁸ *Medet om en fælles-nordisk Handelsstatistik i København d.11 og 12. August 1905* (København, 1905).

³⁹ *Interskandinavisk Handelsomsætning i Aarene 1900—1906 paa Grundlag af de tre nordiske Landes officielle Handelsstatistik* (København, 1909).

⁴⁰ *Bidrag til Spørgsmaalet*. . . , p. 137 (see note 36).

However, it should, of course, be emphasized that the Scandinavian economic conferences brought together not only convinced "economic Scandinavianists" but also people whose efforts were primarily concerned in a more limited and entirely concrete way with working towards practical solutions of common problems. A man with Scandinavianist ideals could whole-heartedly participate in this more mundane type of work and regard the results that were in fact gradually achieved as steps in the right direction.

Many subjects other than the tariff problem and the possibility of a customs union were discussed at the economic conferences, and many other groups adopted the idea of holding such inter-Nordic meetings and discussed at these conferences some of the *same* subjects. Apart from the conferences arranged by natural scientists, which began as early as the eighteen forties, the economists were the first in the field but they were quickly imitated by a long series of other groups. A list drawn up in 1917 contained the names of no fewer than 33 different groups which held Scandinavian or Nordic conferences, ranging from booksellers and brewers to architects and teetotallers.⁴¹ The emergence of a tradition of holding Nordic conferences is a very interesting topic, but gaining an overall view of it is extremely difficult and an examination of the organization and working methods of the bodies involved would in itself be a task for a larger work than this article. I will restrict myself to discussing the initiatives which may be said to have been of greatest significance in the economic field.

As we have seen, the questions of a currency union and a common system of weights and measures had first been discussed as early as 1863, and this was one of the areas in which visible results really were achieved. The attitude towards a common system of weights and measures was a positive one in all quarters, but the specifically Scandinavian aspect of this question was not in fact particularly pronounced since it was agreed from the start that the three Scandinavian countries should adopt the French metric system. Cooperation therefore came to consist of the passing of a series of resolutions and later of the exchange of information concerning the experiences of each of the three countries as they gradually introduced the metric system. As late as 1872 it was felt necessary to adopt a resolution containing a general exhortation to the authorities to put these reforms into effect, but shortly afterwards all three countries adhered to the international metric convention of 1875. The Swedes were able to report at the 1881 conference that the metric system had been successfully introduced, and at the 1888 conference the Danes, who were still not quite ready, were able to benefit from accounts of Swedish and Norwegian experiences. At this conference, it was proudly stated that "among the reforms for which the initiatives taken by the Scandinavian economic conferences can be thanked has been the introduction of the metric system for weights and measures", and there was therefore no longer any need to adopt a resolution concerning a matter that was making such satisfactory progress. It is possible to suspect that the transition to the metric system would have come sooner or later under all circumst-

⁴¹ L. T. Arnskov, *Norden og den ny Tid* (København, 1917), p. 79.

ances, but there was, of course, good reason to be content that it occurred under a form of Nordic supervision.

The manner in which a common currency was achieved has been seen as a triumph for Nordic cooperation and has been presented as the most spectacular result of the efforts made in the field of Scandinavian coordination.

During the latter part of the century a certain community of economic interests began to make itself felt. From the mid-1870's up to the First World War a Scandinavian monetary union was in force.⁴²

In this question, both the local Scandinavian background and international developments were of importance.

At this time, Danish small coins were in circulation to some extent in Norway and no less in southern Sweden, while Swedish small coins were in circulation in Denmark. This was possible because the main currency unit in all three countries had almost the same value. The Danish *rigsdaler* and the Norwegian *speciedaler* were virtually identical for historical reasons and only differed in value from the Swedish *rigsdaler* by one percent. As a result, these differences were unimportant in daily commerce so long as small coins were used. "The judgement of the common man and of existing practice had therefore already been pronounced in favour of a currency union on the grounds that the currencies of the other two Scandinavian countries was just as good as that of his own country."⁴³ The existing situation thus created the best possible background for the proposal for a monetary union that was presented in 1863.

The planned reforms were in a way a parallel to the introduction of the metric system, because in this case too the adoption of the French system with a silver coin of the same size as the franc, divided into 100 parts, was envisaged, and this is what was recommended in 1863. However, by the time of the next conference three years later the international situation had changed in that the currency union between the Latin countries of 1865 was based on the adoption of a gold standard. At the 1866 Scandinavian economic conference, the gold standard was discussed and the conference recommended that Scandinavia should follow the franc in this respect too. Confidence in the French currency took a jolt during the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, but when Germany also began to prepare in the following year for the adoption of a gold standard, the time had come to act. The currency question was thoroughly discussed at the 1872 conference in Copenhagen and the conclusion reached was to recommend a gold standard, a common decimalized currency and a joint commission from the three countries to draw up a final proposal. Immediate support for this recommendation came from the first Nordic industrial conference, which was held in Copenhagen the same year.⁴⁴

The proposed commission was appointed and was able to produce its report later

⁴²Jörberg, op. cit., p. 6.

⁴³ A. Nielsen, *Den skandinaviske Møntunion* (København, 1917), p. 3; J. Wilcke, *Sølv og Guldmøntføde 1845-1914* (København, 1930); and S. A. Hansen, *Dansk Pengehistorie*, vol. 1 (København, 1968), p. 305.

⁴⁴ *Det første nordiske Industrimedde den 8de-19de Juli 1872* (København, 1873).

Economic relations and economic cooperation between 57

in 1872.⁴⁵ The commission did not want the Scandinavian countries to join either the French, German or British systems and suggested an independent Scandinavian system based on a *krone* divided into 100 *øre*. The convention of 18 December 1872 was rejected by the Norwegian parliament, but Denmark and Sweden established the planned currency union alone in 1873 and Norway eventually adhered to it three years later.

The bank notes in circulation were not covered by these agreements, since it was expected that the gold coins would gradually replace bank notes for the payment of large amounts. However, this did not prove to be the case, and one can therefore say that strictly speaking the Scandinavian countries were in the same position after the reform as before it. Small coins circulated freely between the three kingdoms, but notes were used for the payment of large sums and the rates of exchange for notes were still subject to minor variations. It was consequently still possible to discuss monetary problems at later Scandinavian economic conferences. The problem was partly solved in 1885 when the three central banks agreed to accept cash orders from each other at the par of exchange in the case of large payments. Finally, full mutual convertibility of bank notes was achieved and remained in force for a couple of years after 1901. However, with the dissolution of the Swedish-Norwegian union in 1905 the trend turned in the other direction, and during the First World War the whole system broke down irreversibly.

It is difficult to find any assessment of the economic importance of the currency union. A Danish observer at the time claimed to have had equal difficulty in this respect, but believed that it was beyond all doubt that the monetary union had been beneficial for economic relations between the Scandinavian countries. Twentieth century historical writings have exhibited an astonishing silence about the currency union and its effect.⁴⁶

However, there can hardly be any doubt about the psychological effects of the monetary union both within and outside Scandinavia. Coins of a uniform size and value were issued in all three countries and served to remind their inhabitants daily in a very tangible way of a piece of practical Scandinavian cooperation. Abroad, the Scandinavian currency convention was known as the most far-reaching example of this kind of cooperation during this period.

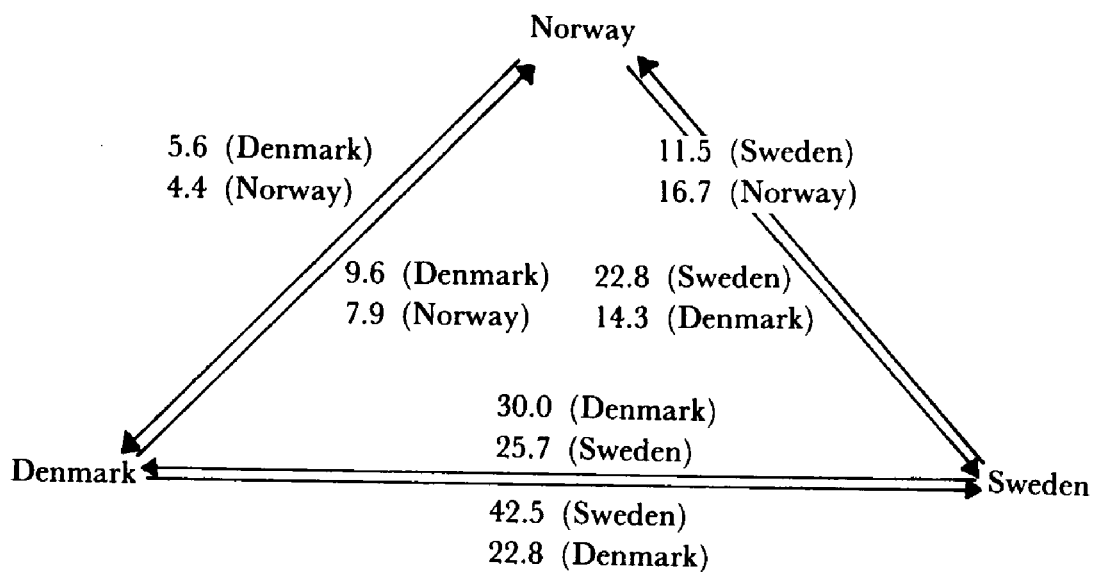
One of the reasons why it was so difficult at the time to assess the effects of the currency union was the unsuitability of official Scandinavian statistics for comparing the imports and exports of the Nordic countries. Viggo Rothe had pointed this out at an early stage, and the 1866 conference explicitly recommended a greater degree of uniformity in the preparation of trade statistics and in the methods of collecting reports in the Scandinavian countries. However, the question was first discussed seriously at the 1888 conference, at which Marcus Rubin, a prominent Danish economist, statistician and historian whom we have encountered before,

⁴⁵ *Betenkning afgiven af den af de tre nordiske Kongeriger anordnede Møntcommission* (København, 1872).

⁴⁶ Nielsen, op. cit., p. 55; On the other hand, there is no assessment of the currency union in S. A. Hansen, *Økonomisk vækst i Danmark*, vol. 1 (København, 1972), which does not even mention it or in *Dansk Pengehistorie*, which only mentions it in passing.

gave a long lecture describing in detail the difficulties in the way of comparative analyses using official trade statistics.

These problems arose first of all from the fact that the customs services of the three countries divided commodities into categories in different ways when preparing their basic figures. Secondly, they employed different regulations for stating the provenance and destination of goods, and thirdly they did not assess value in a uniform way. Rubin demonstrated the effects of these divergences in a striking manner by presenting the figures given in the official statistics of the three countries for trade between them in 1866. The following diagram illustrates the figures, with the source in brackets behind them, which he quoted. The direction in which the arrow points indicates in each case which is the exporting country, and the figures represent millions of *kroner* at the common, Scandinavian gold value.



According to Danish statistics, the value of Norwegian exports to Denmark was thus 5.6 million *kroner*, while Norwegian statistics gave the value as only 4.4 million *kroner*. The discrepancy is especially striking in the case of Danish exports to Sweden, which were valued at 22.8 million *kroner* in the Danish statistics and no less than 42.5 million *kroner* in the Swedish ones, but the differences are significant in every case.

There ought, of course, to have been some divergences, because the figures for imports and exports are in principle calculated differently with the former always including the costs of transportation (CIF) and the latter always excluding them (FOB). The statistics of the importing country will therefore provide higher figures than those of the exporting country. However, this is naturally an insufficient explanation for the substantial variations in the figures quoted by Rubin. It was under all circumstances inconceivable that the total cost of transporting goods worth 14 million *kroner* from Norway to Sweden should be over 8 million *kroner*.

One of Rubin's observations about these figures was that the great divergences in the statistics for Danish exports to Sweden quite clearly arose from differing interpretations of what constituted goods in transit. Rubin was also puzzled by the

Norwegian statistical practice of dividing imports into three categories — those that arrived by sea, by railway or by "other land routes". The explanation was that only goods in the first two categories could be calculated with a fair measure of certainty. Clearly, there was still some frontier trade between Norway and Sweden which could only be approximately measured for inclusion in the official statistics.

Against this background, Rubin directed an earnest appeal to the directors of the central statistical office in the three countries to attempt to coordinate their methods and he added that this would be "the first contribution made by statisticians to cooperation in the economic field between the three kingdoms". A resolution along the lines suggested by Rubin was adopted by the 1888 conference, and in the following year the first Nordic statistical conference was held in Kristiania. A second meeting took place in Stockholm in 1890 and a third in Copenhagen in 1891.⁴⁷ The central topics at these conferences which were attended by all the directors of the Scandinavian central statistical offices were the statistics for trade and shipping issued by these offices, but no very great progress can have been made in the period before the First World War, because, as we have seen, it was felt necessary in 1904 to establish Professor Morgenstjerne's special "research office" to investigate inter-Scandinavian trade.

Economic statistics were thus another field in which cooperation was thought to be required and in which formalized cooperation was established. This development was assisted by the fact that international statistical conferences on a European level had been held ever since the eighteen fifties. Cooperation in the statistical field was therefore not an isolated Scandinavian phenomenon.

The relative emphasis placed in this article on the problems associated with trade statistics is due, of course, to the importance of demonstrating that it really was and is difficult to obtain a clear picture of the true extent of trade between the Nordic countries in the nineteenth century. Rubin's analysis of official statistics also throw a rather interesting light on certain figures that have been very widely used in the writing of "national" economic history.

At the 1888 conference, Rubin also discussed the statistics for shipping and his judgement on them was somewhat less severe than that on trade statistics.⁴⁸ However, he did refer unfavourably to one practice in the traditional way of computing the number of ships visiting Danish ports. The Danish statistics did not distinguish between long voyages and short passages like those across the Sound, and Rubin thought this was unreasonable, because the Swedish statistics showed that traffic across the Sound "accounted for a considerable part of Danish and Swedish shipping", though it was "of a rather special character".

Rubin's remarks are undoubtedly connected with the general interest in facilitating local maritime communications, which had already made itself felt on earlier

⁴⁷ *Forhandlinger ved Det 3die nordiske statistiske Møde som afholdtes i Kjøbenhavn den 21de til 24de September 1891* (København, 1891).

⁴⁸ This was perhaps due to a knowledge of what the Norwegian A. N. Kiær was working on at this time. See A. N. Kiær, "Historical Sketch of the Development of Scandinavian Shipping", *The Journal of Political Economy*, vol. I (1892-93), pp. 329-364.

occasions. This subject was on the agenda at the 1863 conference, and a resolution adopted at the 1866 conference recommended that any vessels from one of the three Scandinavian countries should be free to participate in the coastal traffic of the other two. The 1872 conference was able to note with satisfaction that Norway had opened coastal traffic in her waters to all ships in 1869 and that a declaration of 1871 had given free access to all Danish and Swedish vessels to the Sound region between Kullen and Falsterbo and between Elsinore and Køge. The next conference in 1881 noted further, small advances and suggested that a joint revised Maritime Law should be introduced. However, after 1881 a new forum for discussing cooperation in this field was established with the first Nordic shipping conference in 1883. This first conference was described as "Scandinavian", but subsequent meetings were called "Nordic" in order to encourage Finnish participation.⁴⁹

The background for this development was undoubtedly the work that had just begun on a new Maritime Law, since a commission on which all three Scandinavian countries were represented was appointed at the beginning of 1883 to draw up a joint draft law. The conference at Gothenburg in the spring of 1883 should therefore be seen in the first instance as a continuation of efforts that had already started, and indeed the first item on the agenda at the conference was the question whether it would be useful to bring the Maritime Laws of the three countries into harmony.

The shipping conference naturally answered this question clearly in the affirmative, but characteristically the resolution adopted described the goal as being "harmony in the shipping legislation in force in different countries, especially the Scandinavian countries". This wording indicates that many of the problems associated with shipping were of an international rather than purely Scandinavian character, and this is also clear from the other subjects that were discussed at this and the following conference. The 1883 meeting concerned itself with topics like compensation after collisions, the investigation of accidents at sea by experts, a uniform system of classifying ships, whether it should be compulsory or not to carry pilots, sailors who jumped ship and the "moral attitude" of sailors. The main subjects at the 1888 conference in Copenhagen were the establishment of a permanent, international shipping commission (a proposal that was warmly supported by the conference) and the report presented by the commission on the reform of the Maritime Law, which was discussed in detail. The matters touched upon ranged from the general to the extremely specialized. For example, a special sub-committee was appointed at both conferences to conduct practical experiments with a new type of lantern, and the use of life rockets etc. was demonstrated.

Other subjects associated with transportation and communications were also debated both at the Scandinavian economic conferences and at more specialist gatherings. In these areas, a number of concrete results were achieved like postal conventions establishing a common, low postage rate within Scandinavia, agreements concerning telegraphic charges, the coordination of rail and ferry links etc.

⁴⁹ *Förhandlingarna vid det första Skandinaviska Sjöfartsmötet i Göteborg den 23—26 Maj 1883*, edited by E. Bring (Göteborg, 1884); *Forhandlingerne paa det andel nordiske Søfartsmøde i Kjøbenhavn den 2—4 August 1888*, edited by J. Schovelin (København, 1888).

The question of contacts with the European continent in particular was discussed at the Scandinavian economic conference of 1888, and the need of businessmen to be able to travel rapidly both to Berlin and to western Europe via Hamburg led to an "urgent request" to the Scandinavian governments to cooperate in this field. An interesting distinction was made during this debate between "travellers for whom time is of the essence, while cost is a subordinate consideration, and travellers for whom time is of less importance and the price of great significance". It was C. F. Tietgen who put forward this "time-is-money" argument, and he was supported in his view by other participants.

The discussions on communications sometimes became almost ludicrously detailed, but all this interest in practical cooperation in the fields of transportation and communications naturally reflected not only the individual participants' personal travelling problems but also the great changes in these fields during the second half of the nineteenth century. After the improvements, renewal and extension of the transportation system in each individual country it was inevitable that the question of linking national systems more effectively to those of other countries would soon arise, and it was natural to discuss this question in a Scandinavian context whether or not the persons involved were well disposed to the concept of "economic Scandinavianism". A great number of agreements on minor or concrete practical matters was the result.

There remains to mention, with regard to the broad trends of development, the results attained in the field of joint Nordic legislation on economic matters. The achievement that was most extolled and regarded as the most important was the virtually identical Maritime Laws which emerged from the labours of the joint commission on this subject. Its work was completed in 1887 and the new Maritime Laws in their final form were enacted in the early eighteen nineties.⁵⁰

The harmonization of laws was also connected with the initiation, after a Swedish initiative, of Nordic jurists' conferences. The first such meeting was held in Copenhagen in 1872.⁵¹ At this conference, the desirability of common legislation regarding bills of exchange was emphasized and this led to the passage of identical laws on this matter all bearing the same date of 7 May 1880, in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Several other types of legislation were harmonized in the period before the First World War. Between 1884 and 1890 an identical law was adopted concerning the protection of trade marks to which Finland also adhered. Legislation governing trade registers, firms and authority to act on behalf of a company was also passed during these years. In the eighteen nineties there was joint legislation concerning cheques, a common law on the sale of goods was adopted between 1905 and 1907 and, finally, agreement was reached immediately before the outbreak of war on a number of changes to the Maritime Laws.⁵²

⁵⁰ *Beretning og Lovforslag fra den under 3. Februar 1883 til at fremsatte Forslag til Forandringer i den gjeldende Sølovgivning allerhøist nedsatte Kommission* (København, Stockholm, 1887).

⁵¹ *Forhandlingeme paa det første nordiske Juristmøde i Kjøbenhavn den 22de—24de August 1872* (København, 1872).

⁵² "Gemensam lagstiftning i rättstillämpningen", *Nordisk Udredningsserie* 1961/6 (Stockholm, 1961); "Oversikt över lagar tillkomna genom nordiskt samarbete" *Nordisk Udredningsserie* 1965/2 (Stockholm, 1966). The second of these works contains an extensive bibliography.

The Nordic sense of affinity and developments during the nineteenth century

This survey of economic links and cooperation in the North during the nineteenth century began with a sketch of the traditional contacts between the Nordic countries in the form of frontier trade in its various manifestations and of migration for a shorter or longer period in search of work. These phenomena cannot be quantified in figures, but they are a part of the overall picture, a supplement to the better known commercial and economic activities described in "national-economic" historical writings. At the same time, they convey an impression of frontiers which were "blurred" and which, paradoxically were only made sharp and divisive because of the rapid development that affected transportation and communications.

Against this background, the growth of "a certain community of economic interests" in the second half of the nineteenth century seems no less paradoxical at a time when the long-term trend of economic development was not drawing the Nordic countries closer together and, on the contrary, was leading each of them to specialize with an eye to international markets that of necessity had to be larger than anything a common Nordic market could offer.

It is not therefore difficult today to understand why a Nordic economic union could not be created, but it is difficult to understand why "economic Scandinavianism" proved so tenacious. How are we to explain the mechanisms which allowed a continuing accentuation of "national" economies to be accompanied by such frequently expressed desires for closer Nordic cooperation?

The series of practical results achieved by the many efforts on the part of "economic Scandinavianists" like a common system of weights and measures, the currency union, the harmonization of laws etc. could perhaps be cited as a stimulus to further cooperation. However, as we have seen, in all these areas what was done was *also* a part of a broader international cooperation or a continuation of developments that affected countries outside Scandinavia as well. The specifically Nordic element in these activities was not particularly pronounced.

In reality, the many attempts to promote "practical Scandinavianism" did not have very great economic effects. However, the effects on the psychological level were perhaps more significant, not least in relation to the outside world. In many fields some of which are more important than others, of an economic, political and cultural nature, the Nordic countries do in fact succeed in acting jointly *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world, and the latter is almost more inclined to regard these four states as a whole than, for example their own historians are.

Finally, it can be said that the appearance of articles on a Nordic subject in a *Scandinavian Journal of History* is in itself an expression of the survival of a part of the inheritance from the nineteenth century. This was a period that saw the emergence of a *conscious* Nordic sense of affinity which, in the last resort, should perhaps be regarded as a sort of compensation for the loss of the many earlier, real economic contacts between these countries.

⁵³ This article was originally written as a report for the Danish council for research in the humanities. The following works, which were not immediately available, could not be consulted: I. Wedervang, "Saker, personer og opfatninger ved de nordiske nasjonaløkonomiske møter", *Statsøkonomisk Tidsskrift Tillæg* (Oslo, 1933); K. Samuelsson, *Den ekonomiska betydelsen för Stockholm av Finlands förlust* (Uppsala, 1945).