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Aland is one of the most remarkable shipping communities in the world, and for more reasons than one. For many many years now this group of northern islands has received international recognition because of the fact that ships from there have carried cargoes to ports all over the world and, as a consequence of this, the population of Aland has gathered a unique knowledge of conditions in other countries and has had the opportunity to truly international, while at the same time having not only a most sincere affection for their islands but also a sense of individuality which has recently been officially recognized in Finland when special Aland stamps were made available.

I have a special reason for this introduction, an interest of which is not to flatter. As a young boy in Aland I was taught to believe, and in particular their seamen and shipowners. I think that shipping in and has an interesting link to the institution called World Maritime University in Malmö.

The Alanders have conquered the world in the field of shipping from their relatively speaking anonymous group of islands in the Baltic and have thus served the need of world trade over many years. The World Maritime University is working in the same spirit but the other way around.

The WMU — for short — has been established as a focal point in the Nordic area for international activities in shipping, but in contrast to Aland we do not deliver services abroad — instead we train highly qualified persons engaged in maritime activities all over the world who come to Malmö in order to expand their knowledge of various maritime activities. Now, you might very well ask, what is the reason for establishing such an institution in the Nordic countries, from where we normally export shipping services in the interest of world trade?

One simple answer — and I think every Alander would agree — that we have that the experience of the Nordic countries in the field of shipping, the traditions and the know how developed here do give us, not only a commercial advantage which we can try to use to the benefit of our own interests, but also an obligation to act actively in the transfer of technology which is necessary if the gap between the developing and the developed world is ever to be closed.

Again, this is nothing new. Humanity has constantly witnessed how conditions change and how a country or a group of countries successively has taken over advantages from others as they grow in strength and competence. In the field of shipping we have recently witnessed, and we continue to witness, such a change taking place before our very eyes in that countries in the Far East and elsewhere have been able to acquire a prominent position in

the field of shipping and in shipbuilding using methods and policies developed in the Western Hemisphere and for a long time considered to be the sole affair of a limited number of traditional maritime countries.

The modern environment in shipping and shipbuilding was created in Western Europe and Japan and if the focal point of those activities is now shifting to other countries and areas it might be deplored and criticized but it is only a logical consequence of the basic and simple philosophy that still has the upper hand in maritime activities: Those who can produce services efficiently and at a competitive level should have the business.

Having said this I also think we all agree that it is an important responsibility of those who to-day control modern technology to share their experience with developing countries. Consultancy activities have their part to play in that transfer but there are also important political decisions in many bodies related to the United Nations which for this important theme: The world is one and those who possess knowledge must share that knowledge with those who have not got it but desperately need it and, in the end, it is in the interest of everybody that the level of competence is enhanced everywhere.

In a promotional film about the World Maritime University the Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization, Mr C P Srivastava, the Government of Sweden, and the City of Malmö played vital roles in the establishment of this institution at a place which I truly believe to be unparalleled in the United Nations family. Barely 15 months passed between the start of the project and the arrival of the first students in Malmö. The University has by now some 170 students — the aim being to have 200 students with 100 admitted every year for two-year courses — and so far the students represent no less than 46 countries and areas.

Rector Erik Nordström (55), L.L.B., has after service at Swedish courts of law since 1961 been employed by the Swedish Shipowners' Association; since 1969 in the capacity of deputy managing director. In November last year he took command of the World Maritime University in Malmö.

During his long service for the Swedish Shipowners' Association, Erik Nordström attained a very genuine knowledge of the shipping industry, its functions and problems, and he is not doubt one of today's foremost experts in the field of international shipping.

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A shipyard with long traditions

by Rolf Ohlsson

At the end of the 1670s the possibility of acquiring a new peace-time base for the Navy began to be an urgent consideration. The reason? The Swedish fleet lay ice-bound in the Stockholm archipelago during the winter, while the Danish fleet was able to operate undisturbed in ice-free southern waters. A decree issued by King Karl XI on 5 December 1679 ordered that the fleet should be stationed at Blekinge and Trossö (Karlskrona), and that a shipyard should be established there for the purpose of building new vessels.

Work commenced in the autumn of 1679, a shipyard with two slips being set up at Vämö in what was to become Karlskrona. The first vessel to be built there was the 68-cannon ship BLEKING. Two more vessels were built there before operations were moved to a newly constructed dock in the south shore of Trossö, where the Karlakronavarvet is still situated today. Work there had started already in 1681, and at the time when operations moved there three slips were available with necessary workshops, supply depots, bridges and wharves.

From the period when the Yard was established right up to the 1870s timber was the material used for building all ships. Propulsion was by wind-power via sails or muscle power via oars. Timber (primarily oak) was fetched from south Sweden, where the State owned all the oak-trees. 1694 saw the completion of a 300-metre-long roypewalk at Karlskrona. Still in existence today, it is the oldest building in the Yard. Rope-making was discontinued in 1961.

The Polhem Dock was built between 1716–24 at the proposal of the naval architect Carl Sheldon, with Christopher Polhem as technical adviser. The "Fivefinger Docks" were begun in 1756, being completed about a century later. Still in use, they are well suited for the new light Swedish fleet.

In conjunction with the docks a derrick crane was built in 1803–06. Designed by the architect Fredrik Blom, it is probably the most depicted building in the Yard.

Newbuilding activity was uneven, but in 1782–85 ten 60-cannon ships and ten 40-cannon frigates were built under the supervision of af Chapman. He utilized sophisticated methods of building in sections, and the longest time that ships remained on the stocks was 145 days, the shortest being 45 days.

The dominating position held by the Karlakrona Yard in building naval vessels during the 18th century declined somewhat with the emergence of steam and new propulsion and new techniques involving steam hulls. The Navy started using the big civil shipyards more and more. However, throughout these 300 years and more, the Karlakrona Yard has maintained its position as leading shipyard for repairs, upkeep and conversion work.

The first step towards civil production was taken when the industrial section of the Naval Yard was re-organized in 1945 as Marinverkstäderna (Marine Workshops). In 1950 a civil company was formed: the Karlakronavarvet with the Defence Department as principal. Ten years later it was transferred to Stalbäckens (State Enterprises). On 1 July 1977 it became a subsidiary of the Svenska Varv AB (Swedish Shipyards).

Nowadays the Karlakronavarvet is an up-to-date shipyard with excellent technical resources both for building new ships and for carrying out repairs and maintenance work. The sector for naval vessels has dominated throughout the years, but now too—as may be seen from a separate article here—a speciality has emerged, craft built of glass-reinforced plastic.

(Translated by Jocelyn Palmer)

Hong Kong

Hong Kong shipowners have no plans to move their activities from the crown colony, either in the years before 1997 or afterwards. The agreement reached between representatives of the PRC and Great Britain was recently characterised as "an outstanding agreement" and "a very sensitive and practical agreement" by shipowners Helmuth Schmen from World Wide and Frank Cheo from Wah Kwong. Both looked forward to a new Hong Kong shipping register that should be in place and working well before 1997.

Hong Kong owners today operate the second largest fleet in the world, and a major advantage of the Hong Kong register is that it will provide local shipowners, who own nearly 1500 vessels totalling about 85m tdw, with greater representation in international affairs.

Ålands Sjöfart 1 — 1986