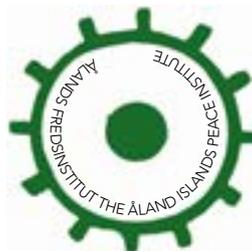


A Peace Institute on Åland

Processes, motives and arguments 1981-1992

Martha Hannus





Martha Hannus is currently working at the Ministry of Employment in Sweden as a Project Coordinator for the EU-project "Good Relations" that aims at counteracting xenophobia. She has previously worked as a researcher at the antiracial independent charitable foundation Expo where she has among others written the reports "Counterjihad - a part of the anti-muslim movement" and "A threat towards visibility - Right wing extremist homophobes in European Parliaments". She is currently finalizing her Masters thesis in political science on the effect of the EU accession process on the Roma in Central and Eastern Europe. During the summer of 2011 Martha was an intern at the Åland Islands Peace Institute and during the summer of 2012 she was employed for writing the current report.

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Martha Hannus

Translation: Anna Hannus
Original title: Ett fredsinstitut på Åland
Processer, motiv och argument 1981-1992

Rapport från Ålands fredsinstitut
Report from the Åland Islands Peace Institute
No. 1-2013

ISSN 1797-1845 (Printed)
ISSN 1797-1853 (Online)
ISBN 978-952-5265-69-9 (Printed)
ISBN 978-952-5265-70-5 (Online)

Published by the Åland Islands Peace Institute
PB 85, AX-22101 Mariehamn, Åland, Finland
Phone +358 18 15570, fax +358 18 21026
peace@peace.ax www.peace.ax
This report can be downloaded from www.peace.ax

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Printed in Mariehamn by the Åland Islands Peace Institute 2013

Preface

This report analyses the process of initiation and establishment of the Åland Islands Peace Institute. The report was originally written in Swedish as part of the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Peace Institute but we soon realised that it serves also as a case study of global relevance as it illustrates a number of more general and principled points. These points include the role of civil society in introducing innovations which neither the public sector nor private initiative have the interest and ability to do. The study also shows the diverging perceptions and expectations of what Åland and the Åland Example represent in Finland, the region and internationally. Martha Hannus has been able to capture the importance and power of non-profit driven collective action as well as the long-standing contributions of many committed and generous individuals of different professional backgrounds and political positions. Their efforts were finally able to overcome the resistance and bureaucratic obstacles encountered over many years. Many of those persons are still engaged in and supportive of the work done by the Åland Islands Peace Institute. The mandate of the Institute in working practically and theoretically for peace and in bridging local and international peace efforts was largely understood in such a way from the very outset and is still honoured today. We hope that this report can function as a source of knowledge and inspiration for all those who believe that independent civil society institutions are a crucial element of modern democracies.

Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark
Associate professor
Director, The Åland Islands Peace Institute

Abstract

The purpose of this report is to capture and to describe the process that led to the establishment of the Åland Islands Peace Institute (ÅIPI) in October 1992, with a specific focus on the arguments, motives and ideas that surfaced in the debate about a peace institution on Åland in the 1980's. The report is based on interviews with persons who had a central position in the Ålandic peace movement in the 1980's as well as on literature and archive materials such as newspaper articles, campaign materials, and letters. While the local authorities were originally reluctant to establish a peace institute, the ten years of opinion building from the part of the civil society was important to create the broad support that the Peace institute today has from politicians and the general public. The autonomy of the ÅIPI in relation to authorities was important considering that foreign policy is a sole competence of the Finnish state. The perception among Ålanders of the specific Åland solution changed during the 1980's as a result of the discussions about Åland as a peace example. Thus, international interest and NGO activities have served as a mirror for the Ålanders to understand their own situation as an self-governed, demilitarized and neutralized minority.

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1. Introduction

The 20th anniversary of the Åland Islands Peace Institute (ÅIPI) foundation was celebrated on Åland's Autonomy Day June 9th 2012 with a party at the premises of Hamngatan 4, Mariehamn, which has long housed the Institute. On this occasion, the Åland government officially handed over the premises to the Institute, following a decision by the Åland parliament the previous autumn. Several politicians held festive speeches, expressing their appreciation for the work carried out by the Peace Institute over the years. Minister of Administration Gun-Marie Lindholm describes the Peace Institute as a landmark for peace work, and expresses hope for future cooperation and efforts for the development of Åland's autonomy, and for the joint work for peace. Carina Aaltonen, Minister of Social Affairs and Chairperson of Emmaus Åland, highlighted the fruitful cooperation with the Åland Peace Association since the Peace Association started the foundation on October 25th, 1992. Member of Parliament and representative of the Board of the Peace Institute Roger Jansson talked about how the cooperation between the Parliament and the Åland Islands Peace Institute was already intensive 17-18 years ago during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, when representatives for the Institute and the Parliament visited a "peace effort" in Kyrgyzstan. Barbro Sundback, Member of Parliament and Chair of the Board of the Peace Institute highlighted in her speech individuals who were important for the popular movement which affected Ålandic politics and which led to inquiries about how Åland was to "institutionalize its role as a stronghold of peace". She describes the versatility of the activities of the Peace Institute: international cooperation, theoretical and concrete and practical activities.

But it hasn't always been as self-evident that there should be a Peace Institute on Åland, or

in which form it should operate. During the 1980's, different powers were working for different types of peace initiative. Today, most Ålanders know what the Peace Institute is, even if not everybody knows what the Peace Institute does. Most people are aware of the meaning of demilitarization, the expression "Islands of Peace", and the international interest in the Åland Example. This also has not always been the case. The story of how the Åland Islands Peace Institute came into being in the autumn of 1992 is a story of a process where politicians, academics, and civil society together formed the image of Åland as a place for peace work and peace research, an image which is today considered self-evident.

Purpose and approach

The purpose of this report is to provide a picture of the motives and arguments which characterized the process which led to the foundation of the Åland Islands Peace Institute in October 1992. The report focuses on the period of time between 1980 and 1992. Where did the inspiration for peace work on Åland come from? Why did people want to establish a peace institute, a peace centre, or a house of peace? What differences were there between civil society actors and the Ålandic authorities? And how did these actors' perspectives on Åland as the "Islands of Peace" change over time? What did the interaction between authorities and civil society look like?

In the work with the report I have made use of the archive materials and library of the Peace Institute, and of government archives. I have flicked through news clippings, stencils, reports, investigations and letters. I have also conducted interviews with persons who in different ways have been active in the process of creating a peace institute on Åland. Some have been enthusiasts, activists, and engaged in associations. Others have been politicians on Åland and in Finland, and of-

officials. Sometimes, they have held both roles.

When mapping the motives behind a process, one rarely arrives at a simple answer. The goal is also not to explain why a peace institute came to be on Åland at the time of its foundation. Instead, I want to try to describe how an institution such as a peace institute can be born from a context where many actors with differing goals and motives interact. This is a process which is affected by individuals, and which affects them. I do not claim to have covered all motives or views which were present in the debate. After a while, however, the same arguments and perspectives begin to reappear, and I believe I have covered the most prominent and most important arguments.

The report begins with a description of how the international context, the peace movement and the Cold War tensions were experienced on Åland, and how different international and Nordic events inspired the Ålanders. Then follows a description of how the Åland Peace Association, and Ålandic civil society, worked to establish a peace institution on Åland. After this, the treatment of the question by the Ålandic authorities is described. The report ends with a summary and some reflections around the process which preceded the foundation of the Åland Islands Peace Institute.

2. The Cold War and the peace movement: Åland in an international context

The attractiveness of Åland both as an example of peace and as a physical meeting place for peace discussions became apparent through the several international events arranged on Åland in the early 1980's. Young students and activists interested in peace, who would later become central in Ålandic politics as well as in the civil sector, travelled the world and were inspired by the global peace movement. The threat of the Cold War and the tensions around the world were tangible, and brought out counterforces and new initiatives. There were also indications from the Nordic region that a peace institute on Åland was desired.

Nordic peace meeting and the Red Cross conference

Åland, as a nuclear free zone due to demilitarization, became symbolic for the Nordic struggle against nuclear weapons. Barbro Sundback, in her speech at the Peace Institute's party on June 9th 2012, described Åland as "the favorite place of the Nordic peace movement" during the early 1980's. But it was the initiative of individual persons which brought the Nordic countries to Åland. On June 24-28 1981 a Nordic peace meeting with participants from all Nordic countries was arranged on Åland, with the discussion centering on the possibility of making the Nordic region nuclear free. Almost 400 people participated in the meeting, which was held in the debating chamber of the Åland parliament. The meeting was arranged by a committee in Stockholm and on Åland, explains Marlene Öhberg, then a research assistant newly graduated from the university, today teacher educator at Stockholm University. In addition to Marlene Öhberg, the participants were Siv Ekström, Gunda Åbonde-Wickström, Gunnevi Nord-

man, Hasse Svensson and Sven-Erik Fagerlund from Åland, and Elisabeth Adebo and Torgny Sköldborg from Stockholm. It took a lot of work, Öhberg remembers, but she stresses that it is not impossible to organize this type of events. "Young people really can do things, it isn't that hard." Öhberg lists persons who participated: Ólafur Grímsson, current president of Iceland, Hannes Alfvén, Swedish physicist and Noble Prize winner, Swedish Social Democrat Maj-Britt Theorin, Professor of Peace Studies Johan Galtung, Jens Evensen, Norwegian lawyer in the Hague, Göran von Bonsdorff, Professor of Political Science, and Harald Ofstad, Professor of Practical Philosophy, whom Öhberg knew from her studies at Stockholm University. President of Finland Urho Kekkonen was the protector of the meeting, says Öhberg. It was not difficult to get people to participate, continues Öhberg, "People want to be part of these things." The meeting resulted in two resolutions: one urging the great powers to guarantee the Nordic region as a zone free of nuclear weapons, and one suggesting the parliaments of the Nordic countries and the Nordic Council should support recurrent peace meetings financially and enable the creation of a Nordic forum for peace (Den öppna högskoleundervisningen 40 år, 2009). The book "Vår röst – en makt" ('Our voice – a power'), edited by Marlene Öhberg and Harald Ofstad, was published in 1982, based on lectures from the peace meeting.

On Åland, the event resulted in continued engagement for peace.

"It was somewhat a preamble to the Peace Association here too, a lot of people participated, among them Siv Ekström [...] then the Peace Association was founded." explains Öhberg.

Sundback also remembers the Nordic meeting as something that affected and inspired:

”It was probably decisive, there were so many [participants], and from all Nordic countries...”

The discussion about the Nordic region as a nuclear free zone continued, and took place also in other locations. For example, Speaker of the Ålandic Parliament Sune Carlsson, Pastor Stefan Snellman, and Ålandic Member of the Finnish Parliament Gunnar Jansson visited a Nordic meeting about nuclear arms issues in Copenhagen in the autumn of 1984. Hufvudstadsbladet (Hbl), the largest Swedish-language newspaper in Finland, concluded that ”Åland is today the only region in the Nordic countries which is actually a nuclear weapons free zone.” (27.11.1984).

A few days earlier, the Greenland Parliament had declared Greenland a nuclear free zone, a decision that was presented to the Danish Government. Nearly all Nordic parties participated, and Jansson told Hbl that such a pan-Nordic base, with such political breadth, had not been possible three or four years ago. Sune Carlsson said that above all, the discussion around a nuclear-free Nordic region had to be kept alive. Then Member of the Finnish Parliament and



Clipping from the local newspaper Tidningen Åland 27.11.1984. Gunnar Jansson, Stefan Snellman and Sune Carlsson interviewed on the topic of Nordic work for a nuclear free zone in the Nordic countries.

today Member of the Åland Parliament Gunnar Jansson tells that:

”[...] then, the sentiment was that we have to remove the nuclear weapons tomorrow, and I suggested that for the 600 year anniversary of the Union of Kalmar the aim would be to remove nuclear weapons, prevent nuclear weapons in the Nordic countries [...] I even believe it was included in the final resolution”.

That the International Red Cross arranged its second international peace conference, with delegates from 105 different states, on Åland is another example of an occasion where Ålanders were made aware of the international interest in Åland and the possibility of making Åland a meeting place.

”The fact that the Red Cross located such a large peace conference on Åland, and different events in connection to it, was probably the greatest reason that a greater portion of the Ålandic population had their eyes opened to the fact that [Åland] also in contexts of peace had a place on the international map”,

writes Elisabeth Naucmér in her report about an Ålandic center for peace from 1988 (p. 6).

This type of events introduced the Ålanders to a new way of talking about peace and seeing Åland as an example of peace. Barbro Sundback:

”It was as if it was strange for Ålanders to discuss in these terms [about demilitarization, war]. Because this discourse of autonomy, it was as if it was only about the language. But then a big international Red Cross conference was held on Åland [...] In that context Sune Carlsson, then speaker of parliament, he was a Center Party politician and very well renowned in all parties, and he gave a speech where he called Åland the islands of peace. And then it became more normal to talk about peace and about the ‘islands of peace’.”

According to Hasse Svensson (Nyan 4.9.1984), "[Sune Carlsson] gave our autonomous region a new designation in official discourse: The Islands of Peace."

In addition to great media attention, the Red Cross conference directly and concretely affected the official Åland authorities. Elisabeth Naucér, Member of the Finnish Parliament, explains that the whole parliament building had been made available for the conference. Naucér, who then worked in the parliament, suddenly had no office, and offered to assist with the conference. Thanks to her French skills she got to attend many meetings. This gave rise to many interesting contacts, and "maybe also my interest for the Red Cross and the ICRC", an interest which has characterized Naucér's later career. Overall, the way in which this type of initiatives made Ålandic politicians and civil servants to realize the appeal of the Åland Islands should not be underrated.

"The Nordic initiative"

Within Nordic cooperation, the establishment of a Nordic Institute located on Åland was being planned in the early 1980's. At the same time, it was suggested that this institute would be combined with a peace museum on Åland. In March 1983, Hasse Svensson wrote in *Nya Åland*, one of the Ålandic newspapers, about the plans of a peace museum in cooperation with the plans for a Nordic Institute on Åland.

"The Swedish radio profile Rune Runbro's idea of locating a Nordic peace museum on Åland is so striking that one can only wonder how the Ålanders haven't come up with it themselves."

In August 1983, Svensson wrote that the Ålanders would have to push the question of a peace museum on Åland themselves, and concluded that "the mills of the Nordic decision-making process can work slowly" and that Åland has

the possibility of preparing for the discussion to come. Svensson imagined that a working group would aim at creating

"[...] a real attraction for people, of a touristic metropolis of the Nordic region, with good possibilities of hosting symposia and events for great audiences."

In a proposition from members of the Nordic Council Lennart Andersson, Arne Gadd, Paul Jansson, Tyra Johansson, Grethe Lundblad, Gunnar Nilsson, Sture Palm and Bengt Wiklund, during the 33rd session of 1985, the Nordic Council was asked to recommend the Nordic Council of Ministers to make a suggestion for a Nordic peace center/peace museum "in connection to the planning of a Nordic Institute on Åland." The authors of the proposition imagine an institution with "two faces", on one hand a base exhibition about Nordic history up until "the cooperation of our days", on the other hand a "Nordic peace center" which would "find expression through courses, conferences, and symposia as well as research on peace issues" (Nordiska rådet: Kulturutskottets betänkande, 33:e sessionen 1985 Förtryck A 678/k). Elisabeth Naucér writes in the report of 1988 that no Ålandic representatives signed the proposition in the Nordic Council, because of fears that changes to the plan of a Nordic institute at this stage would put the entire project at risk. The proposition was also never remitted. The Cultural Committee also chose not to recommend the proposition, referring to the attention already given to peace questions within the framework of Nordic cooperation. The Committee were of the opinion, however, "that there are good preconditions on Åland especially for the type of conference activity that is called for in the proposition", and thought that the Committee for Nordic cooperation for international politics should continue to place their conferences and seminars on Åland in the future.

In the early 1980's, current Member of the Finnish Parliament Elisabeth Nauclér was secretary of the Ålandic delegation to the Nordic Council, and had insight in the work of the government as well as in the work of the Nordic Council. When Nauclér began to work with Nordic questions in 1983, the most important task was, according to Nauclér, "trying to lobby for a Nordic institute" to be built on Åland. According to Nauclér, the Nordic view was that a Nordic house was important for example for the Faroe Islands as they were geographically remote – while Åland was considered centrally located. On Åland, the argument was used that Åland was in need of Nordic contacts due to Ålanders speaking another language than that spoken in Finland. Nauclér:

"But there was a massive resistance [against a Nordic institute on Åland]" says Nauclér. "There were tensions here too, between the political circles; some thought that a Nordic institute was good and I think others thought it wasn't so good". "It was Folke Woivalin who was the Premier [of Åland] who had been working very hard for this Nordic institute question, Olof Jansson too, and they absolutely wanted this to come into being."

The proposition to the Nordic Council of a combined peace museum and Nordic institute was an attempt to prevent a Nordic institute on Åland, says Nauclér.

"It was of course unthinkable that the Nordic Council of Ministers, who hadn't even managed to get around to investing in one institution would suddenly invest in two, but the purpose with this Nordic initiative was just to drown this [project]."

For this reason the Ålanders in the Nordic Council opposed the initiative for a peace museum.

"We were very negative", explains Nauclér, "because we wanted, at all costs, that a Nordic institute would come to Åland".

A peace museum was neither built in connection with the founding of the Nordic Institute on Åland. Barbro Sundback has another perspective on the Nordic initiative. For some it meant a first step to see Åland from a Nordic perspective. Barbro tells:

"It was difficult for many people to identify with this discussion and [peace] issues, there was a habit of looking inward on Åland, and seeing Åland in a more international context... the closest one dared to go was this Nordic context."

Vice Premier Gunnevi Nordman of the Liberal Party comments on the rejection by the Nordic Council's Cultural Committee of the proposition for a peace institute on Åland: "The project has nonetheless brought the good thing with it, that the demilitarization of Åland is perceived around the Nordic region", says Nordman according to *Nya Åland* on March 7th, 1985. And later on, peace activities on Åland were often interpreted as steps towards an Ålandic peace institution. In September 1987, Nordsam's conference "peace and trust" is portrayed in *Nya Åland* as the beginning of a peace center on Åland. The conference was a success, and the participants suggested future expansion.

*Bipolarity, nuclear threat,
and interest of the outside world*

Yet it is not merely the awareness of the interest in Åland and the possibility to arrange conferences which gave rise to the ideas of a peace center on Åland. The early 1980's were characterized by the bipolarity of the Cold War, but also by a large popular movement for peace and democracy. In order to understand what happened on Åland, one must understand what happened

in the outside world and which tendencies were dominant. Barbro Sundback, a social democrat active in the peace movement, describes the sentiments of the early 1980's: "It had a European, popular context, what happened on Åland." A longing for change, and for doing something concrete to meet the threat, was present. Marlene Öhberg:

"There's a time when one feels that there is an immense popular power, where change is wanted", says. "It was, of course, another time, there was a strong movement in the entire Europe and in the USA too, against nuclear weapons.[...] The women's rights movement, which was strong in itself, also liaised with democratic movements".

There was, says Öhberg, a great belief that people could change the world and work together in collective movements.

"One should always remember that citizen's can have influence [...] there was some embryo there, which grew".

For Barbro Sundback, engagement began with the Nordic women's peace march from Copenhagen to Paris in 1981.

"That probably changed my view fundamentally, on peace work and politics, and [created] a strong belief in the people and the civil society. Because it was an enormous experience, and of course it was also covered by the media."

The feeling of living under a threat was tangible also on Åland. Several interviewees return to the recognition of the threat scenario during the Cold War as a background against which engagement in the peace movement became central. At the start, disarmament and the possibilities to stop nuclear weapons in Europe constituted the main goal. Both Öhberg and Sundback describe the heavily fortified German border, and the th-

reat present in Europe. Sundback tells about the experience of the partitioned Germany during the peace march in 1981:

"They were of course afraid, the people... [...] it was the Cold War, the war would be brought to Europe, not to the USA, it was NATO missiles that were to be deployed, and the Soviets had deployed them on their side. So then they said that 'we will protect you', but people didn't want that protection."

Member of Parliament Gunnar Jansson, who was also Chair of the Peace Association and engaged in the debate about the Nordic region as a nuclear free zone, tells that his own engagement for peace awakened during his years as a student. The Paris Spring of 1968, and the events in Prague in the autumn of the same year, inspired:

"It left deep traces in our way of thinking. [...] There was a need to somehow deal with our past [...] in order to achieve a change in society in general, but also in the international atmosphere, which was perceived as highly bipolar, particularly in Europe."

Jansson himself grew interested in human rights and European law. The period was characterized by distrust and bipolar division:

"When I was elected to Parliament, the partition of Europe was complete [...] The bipolar world order could not continue, and among the more viable methods for making change happen was highlighting the respect for human rights, also in peace work."

Robert Jansson, managing director of Emmaus Åland and previously active within the Åland Peace Association and the Åland Islands Peace Institute, was engaged in the peace movement during the late 1980's, and most of all wanted to fight for international justice and solidarity.

Robert Jansson:

”[...] a feeling of wanting to take part and trying to change. [...] It was a dream for me coming home and being able to build something new”,

Robert Jansson, had studied international relations, political science and sociology before returning to Åland where he became one of the key persons in the establishment of a peace institute on Åland.

Also Rolf and Leena Lindqvist, active in the Åland Peace Association and the campaign ”Peace under Full Sail” in 1987, stress the global situation as a reason for their engagement for peace. What motivated the campaign Peace Under Full Sail, says Rolf Lindqvist, was

” [...] doing something against all the threat scenarios, and trying to get people to stand up and join in.”



Programme from a peace party March 14th 1987. Part of the campaign Peace Under Full Sails.

The nuclear threat was great, but there were also highlights and opportunities for change. Rolf Lindqvist continues:

”[...] if politicians were to spend as much time on peace work as the military does on armanent for war, we would have completely different politics”.

Rolf Lindqvist also remembers then President of Finland Urho Kekkonen had an idea that the Baltic Sea could be demilitarized, and says that the Islands of Peace could have served as a starting point.

”Since Åland is a peace project which succeeded, it’s tremendously positive to be able to have it as an example.”

There was also a view on peace as something among us, something permeating speech and social interaction. Leena Lindqvist tells about how she, in her role as teacher of sociology at Åland’s vocational school, discussed with her students what peace was about:

”[...] and it is just the way we treat each other, and the way we speak, for example what expressions politicians use for things”.

Even though racism or generalizations about other people were discussed and considered part of an unpeaceful society:

”[...] there was still the ’they’re like this and they’re like that’... and that’s why it was so fun that this youth exchange came about.”

Rolf Lindqvist continues:

”There is of course [...] the peace that’s near-by, between ourselves, and the major political peace, but it’s all interrelated.”

Also solidarity with those who fled, and flee, from conflict areas to Åland, comes through in

Rolf's and Lena Lindqvist's story of the campaign. I also ask Robert Jansson, today managing director of Emmaus Åland, about how broad the perspective on peace was, and how present the local peace was, in the discussions in the early 1990's:

"Not as much, more focus lay on the international in the beginning. It may have had something to do with the decline of the peace movement [...] because earlier there was a lot of talk of peace in the school, within the family, cultural exchange... that perhaps came back after a number of years. [...] Of course, it's always a lot easier to look at conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh and East Timor than to look at one's own society, and inequality, and what creates injustices at home. And maybe it was this that brought us back in our reasoning, when we started girl group activities and so on. [...] It was realized that one has to work at all levels ... One can't go on presenting Åland as some sort of perfect picture [...] without also problematizing [things]".

Once the Peace Institute was founded in 1992, the motives may have been somewhat changed. The nuclear threat was not perceived as strongly, but instead minority issues and refugee issues emerged.

Robert Jansson:

"It was quite an exciting time in the sense that the Soviet Union had fallen and the Baltic states were free, and then the discussion here went quite a lot along the lines that now we have to watch out, now millions of refugees, particularly from the Baltic states, will be pouring in, and we have to build walls and watch out, and in the peace movement we were trying to say that maybe there aren't that many dangerous people there at all, and it's far from certain that everyone wanted to move away from home because they're now free and able to do so, that perhaps they were wishing to build their own society, and we have to see them as neighbors instead".

This was part of the reason that the Peace Institute was founded, and it was, according to Robert Jansson, something that was being discussed, just like the nuclear threat had been discussed before. "So they were very present in the discussions, these threat scenarios, which threats there were." The popular engagement for the Baltics was strong, and there was great interest in establishing contacts, says Robert Jansson.

"But at the bottom of it was still this Åland Example. [...] and to have the capacity to receive groups from abroad, who wanted to come here and see how this Åland Example worked".

Also Gunnar Jansson is of the opinion that minority issues became more present in the early 1990's, as the world was changing.

"When the Paris Declaration was adopted in 1990 in cooperation between the Council of Europe and the OSCE [...] it was admitted, for the first time, that [...] the respect for minority rights is part of the protection of human rights, the right to be a minority is a human right, at least at the individual level."

Barbro Sundback remembers what a profile within the American peace movement said to her when they met in the USA: "A movement like this is kept alive for five years, and then something else comes along" The motives for peace engagement changed as the contemporary world changed.

"And with the European Union, the end of the Cold War [...] the immediate threat of war, it is no more in Europe. [...] Then the time for this particular type of peace engagement was probably gone, but it lived on, on Åland, in this more autonomy-political context, where it can be discussed, and now it's being discussed again".

Why Åland?

There were different ideas and arguments for why Åland would be a good place for peace activities. Increasingly, and in addition to Åland being a zone free from military and weapons, Åland as an example of a successful solution to an international conflict came to be discussed. The awareness of the meaning of demilitarization also grew stronger.

Marlene Öhberg describes what is particular about Åland's demilitarization:

"There are other areas that are demilitarized too, but we're located right between the East and the West." In addition, the very origin of the Åland agreement is unique internationally: "These great countries which signed [the agreement] were still Russia, England, Great Britain, France... It's still unique."

Nevertheless the awareness of the meaning of demilitarization appears not to have been particularly large in the beginning of the 1980's. Maybe the amount of time passed since the Åland agreement also explains that it's not that close to the Ålanders, says Sundback. "It's so old, it's so far back in time, that it's not that remarkable." As an example, Sundback tells about how Premier Folke Woivalin at a press conference was asked what demilitarization meant for Åland, and responded "it's as if it's in our blood." "I tend to think about that it [demilitarization] was a completely unreflected and unproblematic dimension on Åland", says Sundback. Leena Lindqvist describes the focus on power balance during the Cold War and says that Åland was probably seen as an example that it did not have to be like that:

"Then there was this vacuum thinking that if there is a vacuum anywhere there will be a hundred millions of bombs, and then we talked about spreading the word that it is working here."

Even though Åland was free from military, there was no armament on and no race for Åland. Also Robert Jansson thinks that Åland had a symbolic meaning, especially in the aftermath of the Cold War.

"That there was a place that didn't have any military [...] it probably had great significance. Maybe greater than we've understood."

Gunnar Jansson stresses that the Åland solution prioritizes diplomacy instead of armed struggle.

"It's natural to deal with these things on Åland, whose whole existence is based on a conflict resolution where the primacy of diplomacy over weaponry was admitted. [...] I believe this thinking came with Evald Häggblom... [...] once I succeeded him, this slogan, the Islands of Peace, probably got a content based on the autonomy arrangement, but also [based on] the very beginnings of the autonomy [of Åland], in the sense that it was a victory of diplomacy over the armed forces. [...] The unique [event] occurred that the states were quarrelling, [...] yet diplomacy was prioritized, so when the issue eventually ended up in the League of Nations, the parties committed to following the decision, whatever it would be."

Barbro Sundback says that Ålanders eventually became more used to speaking of peace and demilitarization, the more the concepts were brought up in the debate. At the beginning, people were unaccustomed to dealing with military issues.

"If one were to speak of peace, it was immediately connected to war and military by the male Ålandic politicians [...] Ålandic politicians become insecure when military [personnel] enter and [...] give an impression of firmness and adherence to principle and talk in a discourse which doesn't fit in on Åland".

The perception of the possibilities of using Åland as an example also changed the view of Ålandic society, and became a way for Ålanders to see themselves from the outside.

”[Åland as an example] is very special and very inspiring to people who want to improve the world and who want to think and use their heads and not guns... and it becomes a reflection for the Ålanders, seeing themselves not just from the inside, that they're an island people, and the Swedish language [...] but they can see Åland in a broader perspective, and that, I believe, has affected society a lot. [...] The political debate changed a lot.”

Also Elisabeth Nauclér believes that the thought that Åland can be used as an example has grown over time.

The increasing international interest also became a confirmation that the Peace Association was on the right track in their striving towards a peace institute. Ilkka Taipale at the Peace Union of Finland ”initiated the first booklet we made about Åland – “autonomous and demilitarized area” - which we produced in many different languages”, says Barbro Sundback. There were many in stock, so the Peace Association sent out the brochure to a lot of peace associations around the world:

”That whole Ireland project, was a result of that mailing [...] It made rings on the water, influential people highlighted Åland, and then one could tell that there was an interest.”

Also Robert Jansson thinks that the view of Åland as an example of peace changed. In particular, he mentions international visits as a reason why people realized that Åland was something special.

But also the experience of being a minority is highlighted as special for Åland.

Marlene Öhberg:

”Because we are a minority ourselves, we have some knowledge and experiences which are very valuable [...] One dares to drive things, one dares to be a little bit proud for being a minority. [...] Also, that we have managed this society well. It's a prosperous society”.

That Åland could gain from doing peace work is also a motive that occurred in the debate. It could be a means to attract tourism, and strengthen Åland's position internationally. I ask Elisabeth Nauclér about the thought that Åland could benefit from having a peace institute, as Nauclér also mentions in her investigation:

”Roger Jansson has always talked about the benefit for Åland, but that's not how I was thinking then [...] but it's correct, one cannot engage in these questions if it doesn't give anything to the society.”

It was not only the Peace Association and the government investigators who had opinions about a coming peace center. Naturally, many people on Åland as well as outside of Åland had opinions about what a peace institution on Åland should look like and what it should do. Anders Wijkman, then general secretary of the Red Cross in Sweden, says that:

”Åland should become a center for peace work. Here, regular education in peace issues could be arranged. A peace institute on the demilitarized Åland would be a perfect fit.” (Nya Åland 8.9.1984)

Vice General Secretary for the Red Cross in Finland Gunnar Rosén visited Åland in April 1987, and then said that one task for an Ålandic peace center could be to spread knowledge about human rights (Ålandstidningen 23.4.1987). At the Finnish singer and political activist Arja Saijonmaa's concert, Premier Sune Carlsson

spoke about that a peace center would have the possibility to highlight Åland as an example for conflict solution and minority solution. He also said that the center could be an educational center for peace workers, and help "fostering children and youth towards international understanding" (Nya Åland 3.2.1987).

Pertti Joenniemi in Ålandstidningen 1987:

"The Baltic Sea needs an institute, and there is as of today no peace institute that deals with the Baltic Sea, which after all is called the 'Sea of Peace'".

Joenniemi wants to harness the Ålanders' knowledge of cooperation at sea, and thinks the institute should be broadened to encompass issues of the Baltic Sea.

Svante Karlsson, peace researcher at Gothenburg University, said in a panel discussion in 1991 that a combined peace and minority institute on Åland would be interesting, since "ethnic problems or minority problems" probably were to constitute the big issue in Europe in the future (Ålandstidningen 25.10.1991).

Hungarian translator Bela Javorsky, who was also active in the Hungarian Democratic Forum, visited Åland and expressed the view that a minority research institute would fit well on Åland, because of the symbolic value of Ålandic autonomy. He imagined an institute which not only worked with research, but which could also be "a meeting place for minorities" (Nya Åland, 12.6.1990). Hasse Svensson also suggested, in a panel discussion in October 1991, that Åland for example could receive torture victims in need of a final period of convalescence. "Here, there is no military which through its presence can disturb the recovery of the victims" (Nya Åland 26.10.1991).

3. Grassroots, disappointments, and own initiatives: The work of the non-profit sector for a peace institution on Åland

During the 1980's, the Åland Peace Association was very active. The campaign Peace Under Full Sail engaged peace activists on Åland for a "House of Peace". At the start, the support from politicians appears to have been important. But the decisions and the support from the official Åland dragged on, and finally the Peace Association took matters in their own hands.

The Åland Peace Association: First half of the 1980's

The Peace Association was established in 1981 by Susanna Skogberg, Siv Ekström and Stefan Snellman against the background of the conferences that had been arranged on Åland, particularly the Nordic peace meeting, and the thre-

at scenarios in the world during the Cold War. Also Lars Ångström from the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society inspired the founders, according to documents in the archives of the Peace Institute. After a year or so, Barbro Sundback, who had then, in her own words, become "a bit of a peace profile, with those marches", became Chair of the Association. In 1983, Marlene Öhberg moved to the USA, where she participated in the so-called Freeze movement, among other engagements. A while after she returned, she became Chair of the Peace Association.

In the early 1980's, the Peace Association was very active. The Hiroshima Day of 1982 was described in the internal documents of the Peace Institute as an event that attracted many visitors, and the number of members increased. In 1983, propositions for a peace institution on Åland began to be publicly discussed. During the Nordic peace days arranged by the Peace Union of Finland and the Åland Peace Association, a march to Bomarsund was undertaken, and then Chair



Feature from local newspaper Nya Åland 7th of August 1984 about the peace march to Bomarsund.

of the Peace Association Barbro Sundback spoke of making Bomarsund an Ålandic peace center focusing on the role of Åland as demilitarized zone (Nya Åland 7.8.1984). Parallel to the work for establishing a peace institution on Åland, the Peace Association ran broad, popular activities, with different campaigns, camps, meetings and calls for action, a detailed description of which is remains out of the scope of this report.

In addition to being inspired by the outside world, the Nordic Council initiatives, and the many conferences, the Peace Association probably also gained inspiration from other peace associations in the Nordic countries. The Peace Union of Finland appointed a working group in May 1984 following a suggestion by Knut Drake, which was tasked with investigating the possibilities for founding a peace museum. The working group thinks that the peace museum ought to “be sustained by a foundation with strong support in the peace movement”, and imagines that the museum will be placed in Helsinki, but be independent from other museums, possibly cooperating with the museum of the labor movement. In 1984, the Nordic peace forum (Nordiskt fredsforum), and thereby the Nordic peace associations, backed the plans for a center peace education on Åland, and said they were willing to work for the issue and proposition to be “advanced” in the Nordic Council (Hbl 26.3.1984). In August 1984, a Nordic peace seminar was held on Åland, under the direction of the peace forum. In 1984, Snellman also participated in the third Finland-Swedish peace conference in Tammisaari/Ekenäs and there discussed the plans for an Ålandic peace center. In his essay book from 2006 (titled “Spån från min tankesmedja”), Stefan Snellman writes that he initiated the Åland Islands Peace Institute in a column in Hufvudstadsbladet in 1981, and that he introduced Pertti Joenniemi to the idea (Snellman, p. 53).

Barbro Sundback tells Ålandstidningen on

May 12th, 1984 that the Board of the Åland Peace Association has decided to take the initiative for creating a working group with representatives from the Norden Association. “Discussions have been quite lively, but nothing concrete has been done”, says Sundback, who also explains that the Association rather talks about a peace center than a peace museum. But the Nordic initiative ebbs away. In late 1984, the Åland Peace Association sends a memorandum to a number of people representing peace organizations and research institutions, asking for opinions within the month of February on the text, which is authored by Vice Chair of the Association Stefan Snellman, and which may be considered the first concrete proposal for a peace center on Åland. The text expresses that there are problems with gaining support for the ideas in “the political circles responsible”. “Thoughts about an Ålandic peace center” in an attached letter are said to constitute a summary of “all the ideas that have emerged during the years of discussion”. Among the people on the list at the back of the letter, presumably the intended recipients of the text, are Göran von Bonsdorff of the Peace Union of Finland, Pertti Joenniemi of the Tampere Peace Research Institute, Hilikka Pietilä of the Finnish United Nations Association, Paavo Lipponen of the Finland-Soviet Union association, Kai Warras, Folke Sundman of the Committee of 100 in Finland, Gunnar Rosén of the Red Cross, Tor Magnusson of the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society, Anders Wijkman of the Swedish Red Cross, Johan Galtung, and contacts on the Faroe Islands and on Iceland. The only responses archived are from the Peace Union of Finland and from the Finnish United Nations Association. Von Bonsdorff writes that it is a “particularly significant” thought, and highlights the importance of a “proper peace college, and institution for education for active peace workers”. Hilikka Pietilä gives “all her support, personally,” and thinks that the center could work

at three levels, as a "center for peace research and fostering of peace", as "a Nordic center for peace work and fostering of peace", and as a place for international events.

The Peace Association's message is characterized by the belief in consensus and humanism as a way to peace. Snellman writes that an Ålandic peace center would be tasked with

"[...] working for new thinking when it comes to the view of fellow human beings and those groups of people who have another culture and other values than the group one belongs to".

A peace center could stand on five legs: a peace institute for continuous education for educators and youth workers, "autonomy experts", and mediators; a residential peace college where youth would gather "to, across the national walls and blocks that exist, create understanding and personal friendship – and thereby preconditions for peaceful coexistence in the future" and "bring to the students a perception of humanity that replaces the traditional partition of people into friends and enemies", a house for researchers, conference facilities, and a peace museum. The suggested location is the historical royal estate of Grelsby. It is clear that other ideas for financing existed: there were thoughts of financing the peace center with "means corresponding to those which had been required had general military conscription been maintained on Åland". The text finishes with the thought that the Ålandic autonomy authorities ought to appoint a working group including all political parties, complemented by representatives of relevant organizations.

In 1985, Consul William Nordlund states that it is his intention to donate land for a peace institute, which results in the City Council of Mariehamn deciding that the area would not be developed in such a way that "the localization of a peace institute would be impeded" (Nauclér's

report, p. 11). The City Council thus approved the location, but wanted the Åland Government to investigate the prospects for a peace institute, writes *Nya Åland* on September 21st 1985. In November 1989, William Nordlund offers another site for a peace center on Åland, this time in the Strandnäs area in Northern Mariehamn (*Nya Åland* 3.11.1989). In December 1986, a survey of Ålanders' attitudes towards Åland's demilitarization is conducted by Nina Söderlund, commissioned by the Peace Association. According to the survey, 50 per cent of Ålanders are positive towards a peace center on Åland, "even before the project is developed" (*Vilket genom-brott för fredsoptionen*, Hasse Svensson, *Nya Åland*, 18.12.1986).

In 1986, the Åland Peace Association submits a proposal for an Ålandic peace center to the Åland Parliament. In a letter to the member organizations of the Peace Association, Chairperson Leena Smeds (later Lindqvist) writes that a decision has been made to appeal to the Åland Parliament to take action for "moving the question of an Ålandic peace center to a solution". The intention was to hand over the text to Parliament on March 30th 1986, when 130 years had passed since the Åland Agreement was reached. In the proposal, the Peace Association highlights international factors, but also promises from public authorities on Åland, as motives for an Ålandic peace center: 1986 is the International Year of Peace, declared by the UN. The idea of peace is increasingly embraced by the peoples of the world. Members of the Åland Parliament have said that they want to work for a nuclear free zone in the Nordic region. Representatives of the Autonomy speak of Åland as "the Islands of Peace", and of Åland's specific status. The foundation of a peace center could become Åland's contribution to the International Year of Peace, continues the Peace Association. A peace center could on one hand document and present the work for peace and

disarmament that has already been done ”with regards to the Åland archipelago”, but also ”serve the continued research around and conversations about an alternative politics of security for states and autonomous regions”, be a site for international conferences and a place for education of peace workers. The proposal also stresses the positive attitude to Åland as a congress center and peace center in the world – perhaps as a reference to the already arranged conferences – and highlights that there is a land donation. The Peace Association calls for a decision of principle during the coming Year of Peace.

Peace Under Full Sail

Nothing concrete happens, however, which brings enthusiasts within the Åland Peace Association to take matters in their own hands. In November 1986, Ålandstidningen reports that the fundraising for a peace institute has been initiated. The campaign is driven by a group within the framework of the Peace Association, but under the name ”Peace Under Full Sail”, a name that Benita Laanti-Helander had come up with in a competition launched for the purpose. Rolf Lindqvist says that the purpose of the campaign is to ”get an all-Ålandic commitment to the institute, and to push for the question to be dealt with at the [regional Åland government] level”. In the article, Lindqvist also explains that many Ålandic artists have been contacted and wish to contribute to the campaign, and Marlene Öhberg brought up the idea of introducing mandatory peace training in the future, comparable to civil service.

The start of the campaign is documented in some machine-typed pages in the archives of the Peace Institute. In addition to collecting funds, the campaign is thought of as an popular advocacy project with the intention of creating popular opinion in support of the project. Support from parts of the political actors on Åland already exists. Gunnar Jansson, Member of the

Parliament of Finland, offers to help with contacting politicians and ”financial institutions”.

Campaign workers write:

“Concretely, we believe that the easiest goal to set up is getting a first contribution for a building on the excellent plot which William Nordlund has promised to make available for the purpose”

They do not want to accomplish ”some boastful construction”; the plans were humble. Also Sune Carlsson has promised to bring up the question of a peace center in his New Year’s speech. The fundraising campaign is to be rooted within every political fraction. A close cooperation with the working group appointed by the government is also endeavored. The leadership of the campaign consists of Lars Ingmar Johansson, Göran Fagerlund, Karl-Erik Smulter, Greta Johansson, Folke Lampén, Leena Smeds and Rolf Lindqvist. Nanna Backas participated as treasurer. A brochure describes the motive of the campaign: a ”repressed need” in the Ålandic society to do something concretely for peace. The goal is ”to get a first financial contribution for a House of Peace on Åland”.

”The autonomy [of Åland] can be presented internationally as a model for how minority conflicts can be solved without violence.”

The Nordic region is described as a hot zone, and Åland as a ”relaxed and peaceful environment for international meetings”. The house of peace is to host many things. The activities that are called for are, according to the campaign, school camps, courses in peace fostering and conflict resolution, and discussions on environmental issues. Expertise may be brought in by networking with universities and peace research institutes. Exhibition spaces and a café are also to be provided.

Leena and Rolf Lindqvist offer a broader perspective on the campaign and their own work for peace. There was a wish to do something concrete, and broaden the perception of what peace could be. After Sune Carlsson described Åland as "the islands of peace" at the Red Cross conference, people began to question whether this description was actually true. Leena Lindqvist explains:

"We had quite a lot of discussions at home about whether Åland really is the islands of peace [...] since I was the Secretary of the Peace Association I tried to bring up [the question] there, that we actually were to do something. [...] That it's not just a word. [...] Because we get to be demilitarized we should do something so that this really really becomes visible."

But Leena Lindqvist says that there was not that much support for the idea within the Peace Association. It was Stefan Snellman in particular who was positive. A group was gathered who wanted to work with the information and fundraising idea, but the group kept one foot in the Peace Association in order to facilitate organizational aspects such as applications for different permits.

The campaign was also pulled together because of a realization of the importance of the grassroots in influencing political decisions, in this case decisions about establishing a peace center on Åland. "Breadth and popular opinion was what was needed" says Rolf Lindqvist. "In order to get all the politicians convinced". Therefore it was important, believes Rolf Lindqvist, to work determinedly to get all parties on board, and to get all Ålanders to support the project.

Rolf Lindqvist:

"and the latter succeeded the best, better than the politicians. The people were behind it more than the politicians [...] although there were individuals active within all parties".

There was a thought of popular education in the approach of the campaign. Rolf Lindqvist says today about the campaign's approach and material:

"One must try to be concrete because these are difficult questions for people to take in, but if it is presented to you in a way that makes you understand that you can do something about threats and peace, then... and it did ignite people, and that was the intention."

"The islands of peace was nothing dangerous", says Leena Lindqvist, and highlights that there was always a message in the activities: "What does peace mean?". At the time, the arms race was highly present, and as Leena Lindqvist says: "because we had the benefit of being demilitarized, we will try to do something about it."

The campaign Peace Under Full Sail got a good start, and spread quickly among the Ålanders. Many contributed to the campaign and even more were affected by it. At a party in January 1987 Speaker of Parliament Sune Carlsson gave a speech, and 1200 Ålanders came to see Arja Saijonmaa perform in the chamber of the Åland Parliament on Sunday February 1st, according to Nya Åland. In 1988, a concert with Swedish singer Sven-Bertil Taube was arranged "for the first time on Åland". Karl-Erik Smul-



Article from newspaper Nya Åland 11.6.1987 about the art auction to the benefit of Peace Under Full Sail.

ter held the opening speech, saying that 100 000 Finnish Marks had now been raised (Nya Åland, 3.5.1988).

Rolf Lindqvist says that there was an idea behind the campaign structure: that it would be directed at all age groups. This is reflected in the many dimensions of the campaign. Svenska teatern, the biggest Swedish-language theatre of Finland, directed by Jack Mattson played a Beatles musical in the sports venue Idrottsgården in Mariehamn. "And it fitted so well, all you need is love, love and peace do go well together" says Rolf Lindqvist, and explains that a conscious effort was made to adapt the campaign for all age groups. In addition to the Beatles musical, the campaign included a teenage circus, a music party in the municipality of Sund, a peace party in the municipality of Hammarland, a concert on the radio, a challenge for companies and their employees to make donations to the campaign, an arts auction in the town square of Mariehamn, a gala with Ålandic rock band Limelight, among others, in Mariehamn, and the campaign also received money from the yearly fundraising day of Strandnäs secondary school. The support

from artists was great. "At [Ålandic artist] Guy Frisk's, we got to go there and pick paintings", says Lena. "And then we could say that one had made a donation", says Rolf Lindqvist, so others made donations too. Also media reported on the campaign and thus contributed to spreading the ideas of a peace center on Åland. Leena Lindqvist emphasizes that the Ålandic media clippings do not tell it all. The media attention was great also from other places – Finnish, Swedish, and even Russian media reported on the campaign. The campaign received a lot of volunteer assistance, but those involved were ever-present, providing support and help. Sometimes it was tough, but as Leena Lindqvist says,:

"it was really important to be able to do something yourself, and give others the opportunity to do something as well".

The campaign also met a lot of criticism, says Leena Lindqvist. Some of the criticism was directed at the campaigners wanting to build an "empty house". Leena and Rolf Lindqvist stress that it was peace work that they were trying to get going. Leena Lindqvist: "for us, it was important that so-



Advertising for artist Arja Saijonmaa's extracurricular concert published in newspaper Nya Åland 29.1.1987. The concert was arranged within the campaign Peace Under Full Sail.



Clipping from newspaper Tidningen Åland March 25th 1987. Musician Jack Mattson and stage manager Sven Sid tell about the performance "All you need is love" featuring Beatles covers, arranged within the campaign Peace Under Full Sail.

something was started, not just to be talking about this". In Nya Åland on March 5th, 1987, Leena Smeds defends the plans for a house of peace in a letter to the newspaper, meeting criticism that the building would be a boastful project and that the money would be spent wrongfully:

"We, who work with the campaign 'Peace Under Full Sail', have never talked about a boastful construction [...] We just want a place where, among others, people who have experienced the injustices of the world very strongly, and who want to do something to change the situation, can meet and learn more."

Getting a house was no goal by itself. "The thought was that there were people who wanted to work with these activities", says Rolf Lindqvist, and even if the activities were the most important, a house was something symbolic, a place where activities could gather and develop. There were also hopes for government funding on the regional and national level, tells Rolf Lindqvist, "that [funds] would be given for the work once we get a house, that it would then be filled" and "later it turned out that the work grew first, and the house came later, that was okay too."

In Nya Åland on April 6th 1988, Chair of the campaign Rolf Lindqvist writes a letter saying that it "shouldn't be too difficult to reach political unity around an Ålandic peace center, as it is included in the government's action program". The campaign Peace Under Full Sail is concluded in the City Hall of Mariehamn on April 2nd, 1989. Chair of the Peace Association Gunnar Jansson highlighted the importance of popular peace work for détente in Europe. The government's working group for the peace center, consisting of Jansson, Sune Carlsson and Elisabeth Naucclér, presented their work (Ålandstidningen 4.4.1989).

What were the results of the campaign? What was most needed was a first financial contribu-

tion for the peace institute, says Rolf Lindqvist, and the events which raised the most money were the concerts with Sven-Bertil Taube and Arja Saijonmaa, along with the arts auction. Leena and Rolf Lindqvist believe that another goal was also reached: building opinion, bottom-up.

"The positive was that we got so many people with us, media and the public, and that forced the politicians, I would say. [...] Then, when they saw that it came through the people, they got more interested, when there was so much support."



Clipping from newspaper Nya Åland 15.10.1987. Advertisement for Rock Gala at the Savoy Cinema.



The band Limelight had a success at the Peace Gala, according to the newspaper (Nya Åland 27.10.1987).

Rolf Lindqvist emphasizes that he believes it was good that it "wasn't directed from above [...] that it came from people, bottom-up, a will to create something". Both Rolf and Leena Lindqvist experienced that during the work with the campaign a very big change in attitudes took place, that people became less distrustful towards peace work and began engaging themselves, and that this also applied to the politicians.

The Åland Islands Peace Institute is founded

After the "Peace Under Full Sail" campaign, not much happened. No decision was made about a house of peace, peace museum, or peace center. For the campaign organizers, it was hard: There was some form of exhaustion, says Leena Lindqvist. There was hard work, and the campaign gave much publicity for Åland. Because of this, it felt tough that the politicians did not take over and did not bring the question forward, as the campaigners had hoped.

The money remained unused until the Peace Association began thinking of other options as nothing was happening within the Government. By 1992, it is clear that the enthusiasts in the Åland Peace Association have grown tired of waiting. The Association began formulating a vision for its work. Robert Jansson got involved in the Peace Association around 1988, particularly within the Emmaus activities. He had moved back to Åland after his studies, and began participating in the discussions about a peace institute.

"We followed this discussion and investigation after investigation, and we saw that this will never lead to anything, very nice reports, very grand, there would be nice buildings and researchers and a lot of everything, and we thought that one has to start at a completely different scale if there's going to be anything." Robert Jansson: "So, we did our own little investigation, which I did and which built on the

previous investigations, and of course, was influenced by what I had studied in Gothenburg. [...] There, we tried to look more at organizational structure and activities and not from the start at many researchers and a big nice house".

In October 1991, a panel discussion was held under the title "Where did the peace institute go?" with a panel consisting of Nya Åland's Editor-in-Chief Hasse Svensson, Premier Sune Eriksson (Liberal), Members of the Åland Parliament Barbro Sundback (Social Democrat) and Olof Erland (Liberal), and Chair of the Peace Association Marlene Öhberg (Ålandstidningen 25.10.1991).

Svante Karlsson, peace researcher from Gothenburg University, gave a lecture on peace research. During the debate, Svensson said that it was actually Johan Galtung who put forward the idea of a peace institute on Åland at a meeting on Åland in the early 1980's. Öhberg was of the opinion that an institute could build knowledge about Ålandic identity, and make us "experts on our own status". Erland emphasized that an institute should focus on local conditions and so called 'everyday peace'. Naclér found it difficult to understand that Erland would conduct yet another investigation. Olof Erland said that in order for a peace institute to be established, an internationally known researcher would be required, along with a million Finnish marks per year (Nya Åland 26.10.1991). Naclér also said that the government failed to take her and her investigation seriously, because she is a woman and "therefore apparently does not have enough authority". Sundback brought up that a foundation should run the institute, not the Åland University of Applied Sciences.

After investigation upon investigation, the Peace Association had grown tired, says Sundback: "So in the 1990's we saw that this wasn't going to be anything, and so the Peace Association took the initiative." Marlene Öhberg was

Chair at the time, Sundback became the Chair of the Peace Institute, and Lindqvist Vice Chair for the campaign. Hasse and Miire Svensson also took part, remembers Sundback. "So we were maybe just ten people at this meeting that started." Nauc ler:

"I remember precisely [...] one time when Barbro Sundback said to me that now I've found a person who is suitable for this task and now we're getting started, and that [person] was Robert Jansson, and then she got started."

In September a proposal is made to start up an Ålandic peace institute the same autumn. The Peace Association proposes building a private foundation, which applies for support from the Åland government and an employment grant for a managing director (Nya Åland 1.9.1992). In Jansson's proposal, which largely builds on Nauc ler's investigation, a wish to combine peace research and peace work can be distinguished, as can a broad perception of what peace is. Jansson describes the research goals as :

"[...] reaching so called positive peace, that is, a fairer world with peaceful societal structures instead of structural violence" (Ålands Fredsinstitut: Uppbyggnad, verksamhet och organisation, 1992).

The researcher should not stand on the sidelines observing, but should have an ambition to improve the world with her research.

Jansson continues:

"There is an interaction between the peace research and the popular engagement, where both sides affect and develop each other".

The starting point for the Peace Institute highlighted in the report is "the insight about the need for international cooperation, internatio-

nal interaction, and interdependence", but also the specific context that Åland and Åland's status in international law represents. The goal of the research is described as "finding conflict-managing societal structures", and may be especially focused on conflict resolution mechanisms where Åland can function as a model. According to the report, activities can be initiated in October 1992.

Hasse Svensson writes that:

"[...] the Peace Association has with its concrete, low-cost proposal for the Åland Islands Peace Institute hopefully punctured ten years of apathy at the highest authorities of the autonomy" (3.9.1992, Nya Åland).

Svensson also writes that the application for financial contributions is humble, Jansson's report deserving, and that it would be difficult for "the autonomy government [of] Erlandsson to give this project a thumbs down". Also the finances appeared to be falling into place.

Robert Jansson tells:

"[...] and there was in the background this fundraising campaign that had been done, 'Peace Under Full Sail', to the benefit of the peace institute that was to be created, and that money was just laying in the bank waiting for someone to establishment that peace institute [...] We did this investigation in 1992, and got the government to support it, they thought it sounded sensible and approved a [financial] contribution."

Robert Jansson tells that together with the money from the campaign and some pieces of artwork, a basic fund was gathered as a security for the foundation. The statute of the Åland Islands Peace Institute Foundation mentions the artwork "utan titel 1988" ("no title 1988) by Johan Scott, and the artwork "4 juni 1989" (4th of June 1989) by Kjell Ekstr m.

In her speech on the 9th of June, Sundback said:

”From the beginning, the thought was that the activities of the institute would engage the Ålanders and, as far as possible, be occupied with research.”

I ask Robert Jansson how well rooted the idea of a peace institute was among the Ålanders when it was established.

”There had been quite a lot of discussion and debate, and people understood that something was being founded”.

But many people had the Peace Institute mixed up with the Peace Association. ”Everybody knew what the Peace Association was, it was a very rooted concept”. At the start, there was a thought that the Peace Association would engage in activism and advocacy, explains Robert Jansson, while the Peace Institute would work long-term with education and conflict management seminars: “but people wanted to build up something new, create the brand of the Åland Islands Peace Institute”. Barbro Sundback thinks that it was an explicit goal that the institute would not lose its popular anchorage, not become something ”half official, half academic, half political”. There was a will not to lose the popular aspect: ”It was very important for us that the Peace Institute would be rooted among the Ålanders and among youth.” I ask Marlene Öhberg, who took part in the founding of the institute, if people weren't tired of it all in 1992 when the institute was founded, of the political turns and such.

”But there's the thing that you've got to stick to the idea, and push it forward... eventually you'll win anyway. If you have a good idea, then that's how it is.”

Marlene Öhberg:

”This sort of small institutes, I think it's good that they're run a bit outside of some sort of official activities, I think they're kept more alive that way. I think they have to depend on individuals who step in and are able to cope with driving causes [...] for some questions, it's good if they're driven on a voluntary basis at the start...”

Then Member of the Finnish Parliament Gunnar Jansson says that the debate about a peace center and Åland as an example of peace during the 1980's was not particularly grounded among Ålanders in general, but that there also was no resistance to the plans.

”Surely it was a bit of a special activity for those familiar [with it] [...] when I met people this question wasn't on top of the agenda [...] one always ought to remember that the politics are local. [...] The work was not questioned, but did not inspire deep passion nor in-depth discussions. [...] a pragmatic stance, which was accepting.”

On Monday the 19th of October 1992, Ålandstidningen wrote that on the coming Sunday, a foundation and an institute were to be founded by the Åland Peace Association, and activities would get started in the premises of Kaptensgatan 18 in Mariehamn. The next summer, a camp for youth from Belfast would already be arranged. At the time of the foundation, the Association had 570 members. The day before, which is UN Day, the Peace Association arranges a seminar about Åland's demilitarization with, among others, international law expert Ove Bring from Stockholm. Through a change in the association's statutes the Association can now “realize its purpose by upholding the Åland Islands Peace Institute Foundation, which conducts and supports peace research and peace work” (Tidningen Åland 26.10.1992). The in-

terrim Board consists of Barbro Sundback and Leena Smeds from Åland, Thomas Wallgren, philosopher from Helsinki, Secretary Martin Holmberg from the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society, and Tuomas Hackman from the Finnish association for conscientious objectors to military service (Finska vapenvägrarförbundet, AKL). Deputy members were Marianne Laxén, Vice Chair of the Peace Union of Finland, Marlene Öhberg, Chair of the Peace Association, Eva Zillén of the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society, Samuel Reuter from educational association Folkets bildningsförbund in Helsinki, and Siv Ekström. Also a research council is appointed. In April 1993, the research council consists of Chairperson Elisabeth Nauclér, Pertti Joenniemi from Tampere Peace Research Institute, and Kjell-Åke Nordqvist from Uppsala University (Hbl 2.4.1993). The two main research directions of the institute are described by the Secretary of the Institute Robert Jansson as “placing the Åland model and the Ålandic tradition in a perspective of history of ideas, and in a future perspective” as well as analyzing developments in Europe and the Baltic region.

4. Official perspectives on Åland

Support from individual politicians for the plans for an Ålandic peace institute was important. But from the side of the Åland authorities, there was a certain apprehension towards supporting the plans. There is no single dominant explanation to the political indecision around the question of a peace institute on Åland. In the early 1980's, the peace question was associated with activism, and could be politically charged. Later, political prestige, indecision and hesitation were delaying the political process. But also the discussion about Åland's political authority in foreign policy matters, and the ways in which peace questions were related to it, needed some time.

By reason of the first proposition of an Ålandic peace center by the Peace Association to the Åland Parliament in 1986, the Speaker of Parliament and the Chairpersons of all parties in the Parliament turned to Premier Folke Woivalin with a request that the Premier for the Government would propose an investigation and appoint a reference group (Naucér's report, p. 6). Elisabeth Naucér explains why the report was commissioned:

"There were a lot of initiatives [...] the peace museum we had torpedoed, but the idea was there, and [Peace Under Full Sail] did de facto raise money."

In December 1986, the Åland government commissions a report with Elisabeth Naucér as investigator. The reference group for the investigation consists of Speaker Sune Carlsson, Chief Physician Anders Fagerlund, Members of the Åland Parliament Olof Jansson (Chair), Sven-Olof Lindfors, Barbro Sundback and Mirjam Öberg.

"I have only had this sort of technical role in it" – Naucér stresses that her role was that of a

government official, and that she hadn't participated in the campaigns for a house of peace, but that she launched herself as a volunteer for the investigative task.

"I guess I took it upon myself because I thought it was an interesting task [...] why I was interested of it I don't know, perhaps it had to do with Geneva and that I had worked with it within Nordic [cooperation], so I thought I was familiar with it."

But Naucér says that it was enthusiasts like Barbro Sundback and Leena Smeds who were really pushing this issue.

Also Naucér's perception of the possibilities of a peace institution on Åland changed with the task of investigating the issue:

"I wasn't that convinced that a peace museum was a good idea to start with, but I became completely convinced of it [...] and you know already what I concluded, that it would be part research, it wouldn't be a research institute only, because, we would never have been able to compete with the big research institutes [...] but then there would also be a popular part, that people would be engaged."

Today, Naucér says of the combination of theory and practice:

"One isn't a serious colleague for other research institutes if one only works with popular matters, but on the other hand you won't change the world if you don't work with popular [activities]."

In May 1988, Naucér's report is presented. Naucér is of the opinion that a working group ought to be appointed, and ought to initiate the work as soon as possible in a more humble format than "what [one] wants to achieve in the long term" (Ålandstidningen 31.5.1988). In the report, Naucér reaches the conclusion that "The

preconditions for the establishment of a peace center on Åland appear good". As a reason for the fact that a peace center on Åland has been under discussion since 1983 she points out that

"Åland's status as demilitarized region, and that Åland is an example for the fact that international conflicts can be solved by peaceful means and has therefore been considered able to serve as a model for other contexts" (the Naucér report, p. 2).

Naucér's report consisted of about 50 survey responses from different institutions working with peace issues in the Nordic countries and in Europe. Naucér concludes that there is a great need for research about East-West relations and arms control, but that these areas of research do not have much to do with the starting point for an institute on Åland, that is, the historical backdrop.

"However, many have suggested more adjacent areas [of research] such as demilitarization, conflict resolution in the Third World, regional conflict resolution, the role of small nations in international contexts, Baltic Sea issues, sea issues, and issues regarding island societies."

Naucér also writes that it's not just the conflict resolution model that can be highlighted, but also what followed the League of Nations decision (p. 14). Naucér also brings up the more popular, non-academic aspect:

"For an Ålandic peace institute, however, there would be good preconditions for succeeding with arrangements directed towards the broader public" (p. 15).

This, according to Naucér, is partially due to Åland's geographical position in the center of the Nordic region, the many tourists and the good connections, and the work done by the Åland Peace Association, which is "a very vigo-

rous association" which had already organized internationally notable conferences.

The purpose of a peace institution on Åland would, according to Naucér's report, be to use Åland's historical background and geographical location, as well as to present Åland as an example for conflict resolution, and also to "add yet another dimension to the ongoing peace work". At the same time, Naucér writes, "it naturally gives Åland an opportunity to strengthen its position and make itself more internationally known" (p. 35).

"So, I think it has become precisely what I then imagined, but it wasn't me, I was a technical person, an investigator", says Naucér today.

In 1989, also Olle Holm, then Rector of the Åland University for Applied Sciences, pushes the question of an Ålandic center for peace, environment, and science, where research could be coordinated (Nya Åland 21.11.1989).

Barbro Sundback tells about the reports:

"In that respect, investigation after investigation was conducted but it perhaps didn't have any popular rootedness.[...] And then time had passed so long that this peace movement, already in the late 1980's, this strong international movement was quite weakened, because these missiles positions that people had struggled against, so people gave up, and then these environmental issues came in and investigations began about whether it would be peace and environment and so on."

Sundback says that the many reports were a way for the authorities to show interest, but without making any decisions:

"Those were this type of bureaucratic political investigations: not killing the issue, but not doing anything either."

On January 30th, 1991, Barbro Sundback writes to the Speaker of the Åland Parliament with a question for the Premier: Sundback points out that the working group and the parliamentary reference group for a peace institute on Åland, which was appointed in 1989 to substantiate the Naucclér report, seemed unable to complete their task: the reference group had not held a single meeting, and “the working group appears to have difficulties completing their task”. Sundback asks what the Premier will do to speed up the implementation of the working group’s mission. Premier Sune Eriksson responds that the work is largely finished. But Eriksson also expresses a wish that a minority institute rather than a peace institute is founded on Åland.

”The question, now, is whether a peace institute can run meaningful activities on Åland. Personally, I would rather see a minority institute be founded here since we have gained a certain experience in that area” (Tidningen Åland 7.3.1991).

On June 18th, 1991, the government’s proposal is presented; this after Olle Holm had first been part of and then left the working group to be replaced by Bjarne Lindström. The proposal builds on Naucclér’s report, but what is new is that the institute should focus on “the border zone between peace and minority issues”, according to Ålandstidningen on June 18th 1991. Member of Parliament Gunnar Jansson emphasized the importance of the institute not becoming a bureaucratic organization: the government will serve as guarantor, and the Åland University of Applied Sciences will manage the administration. The founders, in the working group’s opinion, should be all the Ålandic municipalities and the Åland Peace Association, in order to guarantee popular support. Financing will be solved by the Åland government, municipalities, and the Peace Association contributing to the initial capital, whereafter the running of the institute will be finan-

ced through project grants, donations, and gifts, according to the group. Some division exists in the reference group for the investigation. Sven-Olof Lindfors of the party Frisinnad Samverkan (since 2011 Moderaterna Åland), thinks that the idea is not mature enough to be realized. But nothing happened. The working group Jansson, Carlsson och Naucclér “achieved nothing”, says Naucclér.

In June 1991, Olof Erland presents his investigation about an “institute for regional minorities” in a text directed to the Åland Government. The Åland University of Applied Sciences has initiated the investigation, to be presented in April 1992. The starting points for the investigation are as follows: the foci of the institute will be limited to “regional or geographical minorities (that is, not ethnic, linguistic, etc. [minorities], not peace and conflict research)” and different models of autonomy, but not primarily with Åland as model, it will be led by an experienced researcher, and will be connected with Nordic universities and institutions. In August 1992, the report ‘Research on regional minorities – proposal for activities’ at the University of Applied Sciences is presented by Olof Erland. The report is revised one more time in November 1992. Erland describes in the introduction the reasons that he does not discuss in more detail peace and conflict research in the report: there is already a basis is the government wants to build a peace institute, and the university delegation is more interested in an orientation towards minorities. A minority institute ought instead to

“[...] shed light on how minority groups [...] within a region can build and develop societal institutions which benefit the specificity and development of the region and [its] people” (Erland’s report, p. 6).

A large part of Erland’s work has been to organize a cooperation between Nordic business schools for a course on Åland about “societal in-

stitutions, markets, and business development”. Erland brings up the aforementioned course about ”research and education based on the Ålandic model of society” which should be coordinated by the Åland University and supported by the Åland government. He also proposes an “Institute for minority and autonomy research on Åland” in the Gustaf Eriksson building in Mariehamn within the framework of the Åland University, which is to be successively constructed. The Åland Peace Association ought to, should the Government choose not to invest in a peace institute, be given resources for a journal, an exhibition, and school camps.

The work on the report has been criticized. The report was delayed, it should have been presented at the University of Applied Sciences on the last day of March, but all that reached

the University delegation was “an outline”, according to Chair of the University Board Henrik Beckman (Tidningen Åland 6.7.1992). For this reason, the proposal could not be considered for the University budget for 1993. At the same time, Erland says that he would advise against starting an institute for minority issues, because it would be too expensive. Instead, he thinks that a shorter research project should be started on the theme of regional minorities (Tidningen Åland 6.7.1992). The report, and the previous investigations, are commented upon in an editorial by Ray Söderholm (10.8.1992, Tidningen Åland). Söderholm writes that the problem for the public is the lack of concrete results: ”now, something more tangible is required if the work is to progress”. 1992 was also the year of the 70th anniversary of the Åland autonomy, Söder-

Plan för fredscentrum klar före årets slut!

Uppdrag att förbereda ett fredscentrum ånda fram till förelag om att anställa en chef har de här tre till av lördagskvällen, följande väntar förelag uttillsmanen Sune Carlsson, utredaren Elisabeth Nauclér och riksdagsmannen Gunnar Jansson. Uppdraget är inte problemfritt. (Foto: Stefan Öhberg)

Före årets slut ska arbetsgruppen för ett mänskligt fredscentrum lägga fram en plan för projektet med förhoppningen att en anspråkslös start bör kunna ske ganska snart efter det. Det beredningsföretaget fick 73 deltagare i Mariehamns stadshuset när insamlingen "Fred för fulla segel" avslutades på söndagen. Arbetsgruppen Elisabeth Nauclér, utredare i den mänskliga delegationen i Nordiska rådet, har gjort grundläggande studier och utredningar om ett fredscentrum. (Foto: Stefan Öhberg)

Konstnärerna som sjöng för freden i stadslovet. Fria väntar Ann-Katrin Engblom, Per Nordberg, Johanna Nordman och Lena Smells. (Foto: Stefan Öhberg)

Rolf Lindqvist (bildens) har arbetat i kampanjgruppen "Fred för fulla segel" tillsammans med Folke Lampén, Kaj-Erik Smuhar, Lars Ingemar Johansson, Göran Fagerlund, Gösta Johansson och Lena Smells. Naama Backas har skrivit bokserien och alla penningsförr.

Tredje Johanna Jansson från Hammarland sjöng för freden.

— Det är ingen vanlig början för ett sådant här projekt, betonas Lindqvist. Blir det inget lus så får Ålands fredsöverstyrelse besluta om hur de insamlade pengarna ska användas. Kampanjens Lena Smells bidrog till donationer, som var förhållandevis små. — Nordlands egen tanka är att ett fredscentrum kunde förskä i vad man kan kalla den internationella utrygghet.

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Clipping from newspaper Nya Åland 4.4.1989. The conclusions of Nauclér’s evaluation are presented and the campaign Peace Under Full Sail is closed. The pictures are featuring the Speaker of the Åland Parliament Sune Carlsson, Elisabeth Nauclér, Member of Parliament Gunnar Jansson and the chairman of the campaign Rolf Lindqvist.

holm points out, and certainly many people had thought it a suitable year for showing something concrete. But no institute for regional minorities comes into being. Instead, the Peace Association takes matters in their own hands and founds a peace institute in October 1992.

A politically coloured question

”There were a lot of political manouvers”, says Elisabeth Nauc ler about why it took so long and why so many different reports were commissioned:

” [...] there was a tension, people sort of took sides, Sune Carlsson and Olof Jansson were on the right-wing side [...] it was experienced as an internal political game, but [...] I just wanted to do a good job”.

Nauc ler thinks in retrospect that the report was solid and good, and that the proposition was good: ”all that was [mentioned in the report] exists today”. As soon as a proposal came that far, it was brought down, she says. ”That report [Nauc ler’s own] was there, why would it then be shot down?”. There was also some suspicion against the agendas of others.

”I remember that very many people asked, people always believe there’s a hidden agenda, so many people asked if I’d thought that I’d become the Director of this institute [...] but I was convinced from the very start that I wouldn’t, that was not why I was going to be doing this [report].”

In almost every party there was someone who was enthusiastic about peace issues. Olof Jansson, Center Party, became an enthusiast of the project of a peace institute on Åland. Nauc ler and Jansson worked very close to each other.

”I don’t know why he became [an enthusiast], but I guess he thought it was good for Åland and so... and of course there was, and there still is, some of this right-wing-

left-wing in this, and then the Center Party wasn’t exactly standing on the barricades for this, so he was an exception [...] It doesn’t surprise me at all that he, he was a free spirit, that he embraced this”.

Also Barbro Sundback remembers Olof Jansson’s enthusiasm:

”At the level of decision-making during the 1980’s there was a discussion about this, but it died out every now and then. But the one who held on to this all along was [...] Olof Jansson from K kar, and the other men made quite a lot of fun of him, but at the same time they respected him in some way.”

Jansson was also knowledgeable about the Åland solution.

”He understood this agreement too, he said to me that Barbro, here you’ll see that this applies always and in all conditions.”

Rolf Lindqvist thinks that the left-right scale which also characterized the world made the issue sensitive, and that it was too bad that there was not simply focus on dialogue between different parties:

”It brings to mind this Finland-Soviet Union association which people were very scared of too, it was left and right, and surely it may have been like that in part, but it is the conversation that is to lead somewhere, that’s why it is so sad when people politicize [matters] instead of creating peace and making the world a better place”.

Others were Nato-friendly and did not put much faith in peace work. ”There was a mistrust among politicians towards daring to take the step towards peace work”, says Rolf Lindqvist. Barbro Sundback has a similar perception of the attitude towards peace work.

"It was in the logic of the Cold War that all this took place, and because the Soviet Union at least outwardly had a peace profile this connection became something that was emphasized from the right-wing side."

But it was also harder to use a broader concept of peace and focus more on peace in the immediate surroundings, as was done in the campaign "Peace Under Full Sail". It was perhaps difficult for some to accept a view of peace that built on having to change something about oneself, and where concepts like justice and solidarity are used.

Leena Lindqvist:

"[...] but it was very much like this [with] the popular education too, that every time we did something, there was someone who talked about peace and negative peace and what was peace, and is there peace on Åland, and no you can't say that because people act stupidly and there are people who suffer from violence and so on. [...] For me, it's always been that peace starts within me, and it starts here and it is exercised".

Rolf Lindqvist thinks that when an investigator and a reference group (the Nauclér report) was appointed, it was because the politicians wanted to keep track of where the project was going:

"[...] people were scared about where is this headed [...] they wanted to have control over it, while at the same time many were against it."

Due to the sensitivity of the issue, it was important to find broad political support. Leena Lindqvist tells that at first a meeting was held for all political parties in Strandnäs school. But it was not all that easy to find political support for the project. "There was barely anyone who was really negative, but many were questioning [it]". Then, there was support from Karl Erik Smulter,

Frisinnad Samverkan, and also Secretary of the Parliament Lars Ingemar Johansson was there as support. Sune Carlsson of the Center Party was there protecting the project. At the time of the start of 'Peace Under Full Sail', Barbro Sundback was Chair. Rolf Lindqvist describes the fact that the campaign was for "some form of peace center" as a formulation that shows an effort to entail all suggestions and political directions that were there, in order to gather everybody. A too clear vision might exclude somebody, and lead to polarization.

Åland's competence in foreign affairs

At the start, there appears to have been concern from the official side of Åland that the planning of a peace institute would overstep the area of authority that Åland has through its autonomy, and thus enter into Finland's authority in matters concerning foreign affairs (Premier Folke Woivalin in Hbl 19.12.1986). Ambassador Björn Ekblom wrote a critical text about the possibilities for a peace institute on Åland in February 1987 (Ålandstidningen 14.2.1987). Ekblom thought that the need for this type of institutes in the Nordic region has been met, and that an investment in "exchange of views for the like-minded" would hardly "pay off in proportion to the costs". What remains, general information activities, is something the Åland Peace Association can work with. Ekblom wrote that some had implied the institute would comment and influence international issues of peace and security, and is of the opinion that Åland would be wise to "avoid policy profiling it self in foreign policy matters" which "creates irritation in different directions" and thus puts at risk Åland's role as 'islands of peace', as well as Finland's neutrality. International peace and security, Ekblom hopes, will be safeguarded by the major powers in their own interest. Other critics worry about involvement of other states:

” [...] let a POTENTIAL peace center become a concern for the people of Åland, without fire support from socialists whether in the East or West.” (Håkan Lindroos, Jomala, letter to Nya Åland 24.3.1987, Fredscentrum är farligare än kanoner).

And that thought appears to have lived on in the debate. Robert Jansson believes that one reason that the authorities of the Åland autonomy did not start a peace institute may be that activities relating to visits from abroad could be politically sensitive.

“And then the Åland government didn’t dare to be the host of such groups, because it was more sensitive then, Åland shouldn’t get involved in foreign politics [...] if a group from some conflict area was received, and it was a group from one party to the conflict, it could be seen as taking positions in an international issue”.

But at the same time the visits, the international interest, and not the least some actor who would formulate the specific about Ålandic autonomy, were wanted.

”So there was a need, from the official side on Åland, for an actor like this who could receive anyone, to respond to this need, but also investigate what the demilitarization and the autonomy entail, the whole package solution, so that was also an important reason why the government joined in and wanted to contribute.[...] There were double motives to why [the government] did not start [the peace institute], in part the plans were too grand, in part they wanted something independent.”

The interest for the peace movement waivered in the late 1980’s, says Robert Jansson.

”And then it was actually good that the peace institute came about, the activist element could be kept, but still the ideas about research and analysis and study visits and so on could be further built on.”

Gunnar Jansson was Member of the Finnish Parliament between 1983 and 2003, and is able to tell more about how peace work on Åland and the work for a peace institute was viewed from the Finnish side. Through the persons who were active, the connections to the official Åland were strong, says Gunnar Jansson. Great care was taken in order not to get into the competencies that were reserved for the state of Finland: foreign and security policy. Therefore it was important to keep a distinction between the voluntary peace work and the political appointments., says Gunnar Jansson, regarding his and Sune Carlsson’s involvement.

”We were very careful to keep a distance to the autonomy arrangement. What we did had nothing to do with the autonomy, and neither should it.” When we went to conferences and discussed nuclear issues we never represented the public authorities of Åland.”

Gunnar Jansson remembers critical voices from the state level context, but says Pertti Joenniemi was of great help.

”Sure, we heard many times that okay, but these questions are beyond the competence of the autonomy. But then I said that this is no agency of the autonomy. This is not part of my mission as Member of Parliament that I deal with these questions at home. This is an NGO.”

But in Finland, possibilities with highlighting Åland as an example of peaceful conflict resolution were also seen. In a response to a question from Member of Parliament Gunnar Jansson in November 1986 about the usage of the Åland

Example, Foreign Minister Paavo Väyrynen said that the solution of the Åland question had given international attention, influenced Finland's international activities, and that part of the foundations of Finnish foreign policy is to support "peaceful and realizable solutions" (the Naucér report, p. 33). Väyrynen's statement is brought up in support of the argument that an institute also would be of benefit to Finland's interests.

Gunnar Jansson does not remember that the question of a peace institute on Åland was particularly conflictual, but rather remembers different practical, juridical, and organizational factors as the main reasons that it took a long time to found a peace institute, and the hesitation of the Åland authorities.

"I have the memory that the interest from the official side on Åland for this type of activity was very strong, and that what kept the Åland authorities from starting something was the absence of a college or university, where it would happen, it couldn't really be an authorities' exercise, and the other thing was probably this competency questions in the Autonomy law, peace issues, foreign policy matters, security policy matters were reserved for the state agencies [...] and the third was perhaps this monotonous economy of benefits up until 1993, the Åland Parliament got to use money in their budget only for the autonomy and only in relation to what the state invested in the respective areas in [Finland] [...] it meant that it was not possible to use public funds for an activity which dealt with an area where the Åland government did not have authority." "Åland has, parallel to this, had its own work on the example [at the official level]"

Jansson remembers work with the Åland Example together with Tarja Halonen, Kalevi Sorsa and Harri Holkeri, but also Åland as meeting place.

"The Peace Institute and the Peace Association have been able to [speed things up],

and the official Åland [has been able to] act within the framework of what is possible. A quite healthy symbiosis and interaction between NGO and authorities which may be quite unique."

Jansson is careful to emphasize the distinction between the public and the civil sector needs to be maintained in order to maintain credibility.

"This is not part of the autonomy [authorities], all these peace activists are NGO activists, and will remain so, I was hoping."

5. Reflections and summary

The direct reason for Åland today having a peace institute is the decision to start a foundation which was made by enthusiasts in the Åland Peace Association during autumn 1992. But the discussion, the debate, and the process which went on during the 1980's affected significantly more people, and contributed to shaping the image of Åland as a potential example of peace and a place for dialogues and meetings. One should also not underestimate the importance of the many events that took place in the early 1980's, and which most interviewees emphasized as important for the development. Altogether, this led to a realization on Åland that it was possible to implement this type of work by relatively modest means, and to new inspiration and input as well as support from many directions.

There are many and complex reasons that the public authorities did not create a peace institution. It is apparent that it is not only the Ålandic society that has formed a peace institute: the work with formulating, reformulating, criticizing and debating a peace center on Åland has also contributed to the creation of our picture of Åland as an example of peace. That the Peace Institute so quickly has become a well-known institution in the Ålandic society may be understood by adding to the 20-year history of the Institute another 10 years of popular education and debate. Ålanders had already gotten used to the ideas which have been more sharply formulated and processed within the walls of the Peace Institute. During the process which led to a peace institute, concepts such as demilitarization and neutralization appear to have gained new content for many Ålanders. What "was in the blood" became awareness, and new life was brought to old words. Sundback says that the interest for demilitarization was small, but that it grew over time:

"But then Ålanders became involved, started contacting media when they saw something, and so on".

In the early 1990's an increased awareness of and an increased interest for demilitarization could be noted. After protest actions against visits of the Finnish marines to Åland, when military vessels lay anchored in the Western harbour of Mariehamn, Ålanders and Ålandic media became more active in monitoring, reporting, and discussing military presence on Åland. Civil society itself began maintaining the demilitarization, says Barbro Sundback.

"I can see it clearly, from that 'it was in the blood' to that it became more of a political thought and a question of identity for Ålanders."

Today, the idea of Åland as an example of peace is relatively well known in the Ålandic society.

"At an emotional level I think Ålanders believe that working with peace, even if at an abstract level, that it is important. People don't want that rattling of weapons."

But in the early 1990's the partition of the Åland solution in autonomy, demilitarization, and neutralization was specified, by the work of among others Peter Lindbäck, then head of office of the Åland Parliament, as part of the statement on the politics of the Åland autonomy which was adopted for the EU negotiations, says Sundback.

In John Granlund's study (2010) on why Ålandic politicians want to highlight the Åland Example, the author concludes that there are two main motives for highlighting the Åland Example internationally: altruism, and political ambition (p. 11). The study is based on interviews with central actors in Ålandic politics. Granlund also points out that the contact group for the Åland Government and the Finnish Foreign Ministry has as an explicit goal to identi-

fy regions which could use the Åland Example. Granlund writes that Åland here works as a norm entrepreneur – but actually this can be viewed as a sign that also Finnish actors have wanted to highlight Åland (p. 14). The same model of explanation can be used, to some extent, to understand the mechanisms behind peace work on Åland in general.

Idealism is, according to Granlund, one reason that the Åland Example is highlighted.

”The conviction on the level of ideas that Åland has something to teach the outside world appears relatively strong, and by informing about the Åland Example there is hope that recipients in need are able to embrace those parts of the Åland Example that may be of benefit.”(p. 14).

In the same way, idealism is an important factor behind the founding of a peace institute on Åland. Part of the driving forces behind the peace movement on Åland during the 1980’s were idealism and a will to make the world better – but also the wish to highlight the specific Åland solution. This thought was developed and became more defined during the 1980’s, the interviewees of this report have confirmed, and the foundation of the Peace Institute is also a way of institutionalizing the work with the Åland Example. One of the ÅIPI’s most important tasks today is conducting research on autonomy, minority rights, and the Åland Example. Granlund writes:

”The third phase of norm entrepreneurship includes creating an organizational home for the norm in question with the purpose of making the norm in question institutionalized and self-sufficient”.

This is precisely what has happened – along with increasing focus and increasing attention to Åland’s special status, the Peace Institute as an organization has become more and more es-

tablished in Ålandic society. When the Åland authorities no longer sufficed, the civil society continued formulating and defining the Åland Example – with financial support from the Åland government.

But Granlund also finds that one motive for highlighting the Åland Example internationally is that international interest for the specific situation of Åland strengthens the Åland autonomy, by improving the negotiating position in relation to Finland (p. 16). The interest for Åland strengthens Åland’s role as an actor in its own right and with its own negotiating position. Thus, argues Granlund, the Åland Example involves some self-interest too. And, whether consciously or not, the development during the 1980’s probably led to Åland being made visible as a resource for the Finnish state – and strengthened the Ålanders’ position. Perhaps this would not have been possible had the Peace Association, and later the Peace Institute, been too strongly connected to the Åland authorities. Now, the Peace Association and the Peace Institute have instead served as a power from the outside, which can also take a critical stance towards the Åland authorities. But also a more direct will to advertize Åland can be noted in the stories of the interviewees. There is pride over Åland and a will to show the Åland solution, and there is talk of ’benefits for Åland’, international attention may be beneficial for the Ålanders.

Differing perceptions of the relationship between civil society and authorities are reflected in the narratives of the interviewees and in the old newspaper clippings. There are different ideas about in what way a peace institute would be tied to public bodies. While some saw it as a good idea, others believed, and still believe, that the separation between the official and the civil is immensely important to maintain. This becomes especially important when taking into consideration Åland’s special relationship to the Finnish State, and the limitations that exist with

regard to what the authorities of the autonomy can do. It is also obvious that the creation of a peace institute is a process that has been driven by civil society agents. Among politicians and investigators, a wish can be discerned that a peace institute would build on grass roots engagement, and not on direction by authorities – even if a university and official financial support was at times seen as a precondition for a peace institute. That the civil society and the official instances have affected each other in the process is apparent. Perhaps the reports can be understood as showing the limitations of the official side of Åland: financial, political, and juridical. At the same time there was a will to highlight Åland as an example for conflict resolution, and to attempt to profile Åland as "Islands of Peace".

Barbro Sundback:

"In sum, there's an interplay to be seen between the development of the Peace Institute and the development of Åland's society, which then again always reflects the development in the world surrounding us. [...] One can see that the Peace Institute mirrors and reflects, but it is also influential."

But the story of the Åland Islands Peace Institute also shows different perceptions of what the institutions of civil society should be doing. Many have emphasized the role as source of knowledge, and space for research has been an important part of all the proposals that existed during the 1980's. The Peace Institute has, by means of knowledge about the special conditions of demilitarization, de facto also been able to act as a watchdog which has made the public and authorities aware of for example military aircraft flying over Åland. The Peace Institute has provided a deepened knowledge of Åland's special status, and a sign of this competence being valued is that the Director of the Peace Institute is now member of the contact group for Åland and the Foreign Ministry of Finland. It has also been pointed out that the

Peace Institute, as a representative of civil society, has the possibility to and ought to perform activities that the official side of Åland cannot or will not do. Examples of this is the many visits that the Peace Institute has hosted during the years for which it has been important to provide a relaxed, impartial meeting place for international guests, the youth work that has been conducted, and the projects aimed at highlighting gender and equality issues that have been implemented by the Institute. But also within cooperation at the international level, where international organizations and civil society are important, the Peace Institute can participate in contexts where perhaps politicians and officials cannot. Also a third role can be distinguished in the narratives of the interviewees, if not as clearly: civil society as an influencer. This is most clearly expressed by Gunnar Jansson: "The main task of an NGO is to keep the government alive". And maybe the Peace Institute, as Niklas Lampi wrote in *Ålandstidningen* May 21st 2012, has been able to push so strongly for demilitarization, precisely because it has managed to create a place and activities for keeping alive the debate that began in the early 1980's. But also others point to the importance of broad advocacy, which goes hand in hand with the educational activities and knowledge-building.

Several of the interviewees also contrast the civil society with the official side of Åland in another way worth mentioning. Civil society is described as dynamic, in movement, and willing to change. Several of the interviewees stress that it is important that the Peace Institute does not stagnate, and that it is good that new projects and new people are brought in and change things. This is not a completely unproblematic view on how civil society ought to work – movement and change may have a downside. There is a risk that civil society, and thereby the Åland Islands Peace Institute, which today, in contrast to public authorities, does not have the same possibilities to run long-term projects, cannot fulfill its mission as a sour-

ce of knowledge should the possibility to create a so-called institutional memory be undermined by short-sighted financing and short-term projects.

But the most important factor for the initiators and something that is also reflected in the process leading to a peace institute, as well as in the final design of the Institute, is the popular connection. In the Åland Islands Peace Institute's activity statement of 2011, it reads that the Peace Institute shall "work practically as well as theoretically for promoting and securing peace". This builds on a formulation that has been part of the Statutes of the Peace Institute since 1992. But also the concept of empowerment permeates and dominates the value statement of 2011. Peace entails, according to the document, "absence of violence and possibilities for individuals to develop to their full potential. In that sense, peace is always to be seen as an instrument for human empowerment." Empowerment is described both as a goal in its own right, and as a process. The value statement echoes the motives and arguments of the initiators for working for peace. There was a will to provide an alternative, get people to feel that they could do something themselves, discussing peace and broadening perceptions. In the practical work with

for example the campaign Peace Under Full Sail, the idea of having a message and problematizing the idea of what peace is was always present. The focus on youth work and exchanges is another example of how the Institute early worked for empowering individuals, who in turn will empower others. This type of building bridges and the will to equip people with new tools for understanding their surrounding world shows that empowerment is something that has characterized the process towards a peace institute. But also individual persons who worked with, fought for, and took initiatives are examples of the consequence of the individual power, the possibility to realize one's potential. That young people and a small Peace Association achieved so much can in itself show the importance of empowering individuals in order to strengthen civil society. In the end, the Peace Institute is still a product of strong and goal-oriented work of civil society for raising support for and realizing ideas. Advocacy work that has today been institutionalized, and lives its own life – still with a broad idea of what peace can be, and still balancing the tension between popular, outward-looking activities, and scientific, analytical work.



Information leaflet from the launch of the campaign Peace for Full Sails. The campaign logo, the sailing ship, was the winning contribution in a competition, designed by Bror Erik Elfsberg

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- Security
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RAPPORT FRÅN ÅLANDS FREDSINSTITUT REPORT FROM THE ÅLAND ISLANDS PEACE INSTITUTE

Published by the Åland Islands Peace Institute
PB 85, AX-22101 Mariehamn, Åland, Finland
peace@peace.ax www.peace.ax

*A Peace Institute on Åland.
Processes, motives and arguments 1981-1992*
Martha Hannus

ISSN 1797-1845 (Print)

ISSN 1797-1853 (Online)

ISBN 978-952-5265-69-9 (Print)

ISBN 978-952-5265-70-5 (Online)

ISBN 978-952-5265-69-9



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