

Abstract

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This is a study of Swedish merchant shipping and the merchant navy during the Second World War. Principally it deals with the economic and technical developments of merchant shipping, and its relations to the political framework and government regulations, which largely decided developments during the war years. A war economy replaced the market economy, because of interrupted trade connections, government regulations, military operations, and heavy tonnage losses, forced the merchant navy to operate under completely different conditions than had prevailed in peacetime. The profitability of shipping business – which normally follows the prevailing trade conditions – largely depended on the conditions that confronted the different shipping companies.

In the thesis, separate studies of three Swedish shipping companies were carried out. The focus was on economic and technical development in relation to the different conditions that confronted them during the war and the first post-war years.

Keywords: economic history, shipping history, merchant shipping, World War II, government regulations, emergency government institutions, the Skagerrak barrage, United Maritime Authority, Swedish trade, Stockholms Rederiaktiebolag Svea, Ångfartygsaktiebolaget Tirfing, Rederiaktiebolaget Transatlantic