

'Sister Nations in Distress'

NTNU
Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet
Faculty of Humanities
Department of Historical Studies

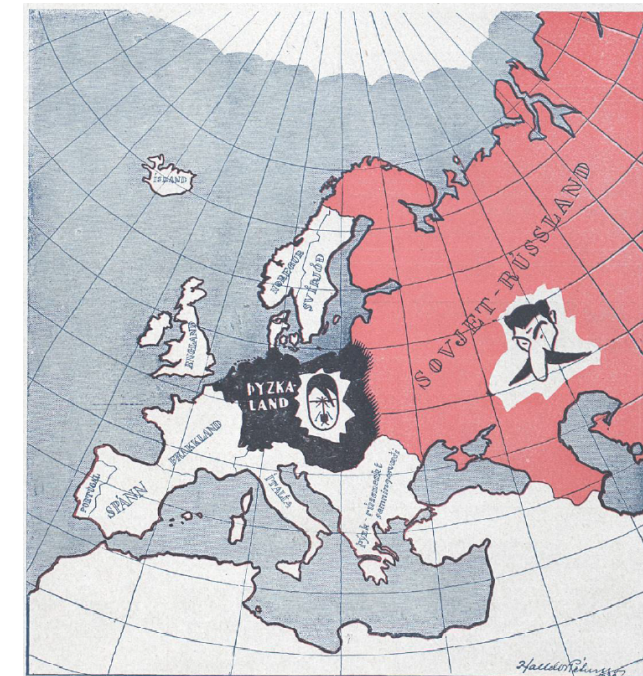
Andri Jónsson

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Icelandic Press Reactions to the Soviet and
German Invasions in Scandinavia 1939-1940

Masteroppgave i History

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Sister Nations in Distress – “Frændþjóðir í neyð”, April 1940:

And from the fire and destruction by the shells, and the oppression of the dominators, shall our sister nations rise, free and sovereign. And it will be their own inner civilization, which will carry them forward to that fortune. And it is the sympathy and help of the free peoples all over the world – direct and indirect – which gives them the strength and endurance to await that hour, unbroken, undefeated.^(a)

Hallgrímur Jónasson. “Frændþjóðir í neyð”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 24.04.1940, p. 3.

Cover image: Halldór Pétursson. [No title]. *Vikan*. 2:42 (1939), p. 1.

Foreword

The contemporaries in 1939-1940 are not the only ones guilty of finding the incredible black-and-white tales of heroes and villains during the Soviet Invasion of Finland fascinating. I for one have harboured such a fascination for a long time. My professional interest for the conflict in Finland began in the spring of 2012, during my undergraduate studies at the University of Iceland. In my BA thesis there, I laid the groundwork for this study, with an overview look into the Icelandic reactions to the invasion and an archival research into the Icelandic Finland Relief as well as portraying the four Icelandic volunteers who went to Finland.

What struck me then was the apparent heat of the Winter War discourse in the Icelandic press and I imagined that the anger and the judgements which characterised both the non-communist and the communist press regarding that particular subject must be a manifest of something in Icelandic society. Reading through the newspapers discussions around April 9, 1940, when the Germans invaded Denmark and Norway, I was, again, struck by the apparent ‘ease’ observable in the initial news stories. Thus, this study began with a hypothesis in mind. I set out to see if the heated reactions to the invasion of Finland in Iceland were based on anti-communism and Russophobia rather than sympathy and brotherhood with Finland. Over the course of this work, I came to change the focus of the research, although this basic observation; the difference of the two cases – the fervour of the Finnish case and the ease of the Norwegian case, has remained in the back of my head.

I want to give my thanks to Rakel, both for her support reading through this paper and for taking care of our two young children for the last few hectic days before the paper was finished.

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Chapter I

Introduction

The Icelanders observed the horrors of the Second World War isolated by the Atlantic Ocean and shielded by Allied military protection. The war years, nevertheless, became one of the most formative and consequential period in the modern history of Iceland. After years of depression, poverty and labour unrest, the Icelanders had become a wealthy and constitutionally independent nation by the end of the war; and an important ally of the Western Powers for decades to come. Such goes the typical narrative of the history of the Second World War in Iceland. This study takes place during the short period after the war began and before the country was drawn into it. That period was the unusually cold winter of 1939-1940 and the following spring, also known as the Phoney War period, when the young and defenceless Icelandic microstate held on to lingering hopes of remaining neutral.

The Phoney War period, from September 1939 until May 1940, was a time of great uncertainty for the neutral nations of Europe. People could only guess how long the world war would last, where it would be fought, by whom and who would come out on top. Some people envisioned a quick Allied victory over Germany and others feared that the unholy alliance of Hitler and Stalin, forged in the autumn of 1939, would have the consequences of bringing Europe under the two dictators. Much to their discontent, the neutral Nordic Countries were swiftly drawn into to the centre of the belligerents' focus. By the end of the Phoney War period, all of the Nordic Countries, except Sweden, had been invaded by each of the three belligerent great powers: First, Finland was invaded by the Soviet Union; then Denmark and Norway by Nazi-Germany and finally Iceland by Great Britain.

1.1 Subject and Problem

This goal of this research is to give a glimpse of Icelandic society during this last winter of the interwar era by delving into the Icelandic press and its reactions to the invasions listed above. The Soviet Invasion of Finland in November 1939 and the subsequent Winter War, which lasted until March 1940, caused loud reactions in Iceland. The Icelandic mass-media and the political elite displayed almost unanimous expression of sympathy with the Finnish nation and disapproval with the Soviet Union. The reactions to the Invasion of Denmark and Norway in

the following month were also of a sympathetic nature but even though these nations shared more cultural identities with the Icelanders (and a monarch, as did the Danes) the reactions here appear from a first glance less heated.

The research's aim is to describe, analyse and compare the Icelandic reactions to the German and Soviet invasions in Scandinavia. I have chosen to limit the research as much as possible to the cases of Finland and Norway only. There are primarily two reasons for this choice: First, due to the constitutional relationship of Denmark and Iceland, the occupation of Denmark had constitutional and domestic political consequences in Iceland, which cannot be addressed specifically in this study. Second, the invasions of Norway and Finland triggered battles that went on for an extended period of time. This offers plenty of source material from the contemporary press to work with and provides a suitable platform for comparison. However, because the initial invasion of Denmark on April 9, 1940 is in many ways the same historical subject as the invasion of Norway – and because the contemporaries in the sources often discuss the two cases simultaneously, the case of Denmark will be included *as long as it coincides* with the Norwegian case.

I would suggest there are three ways to define domestic reactions to foreign events. First, these are the official reactions and non-reactions; acts, views and opinions of a government. Second, the views and opinions expressed by the political and cultural elite in the mass-media, political press or other publications, and third; the collective views, actions and opinions of the wider public, i.e. the public opinion. The reactions and non-reactions of the Icelandic government before and during the world war are already a well-covered theme and it is problematic to make convincing conclusions about public opinion without sufficient statistical data on mass involvement such as, for example, public opinion polls. Therefore, I intend to limit the research to the examination of the second point; the opinions depicted in the printed press – i.e. the mainstream non-communist press. For the sake of limitation, and because the Icelandic communists' opinions cannot be said to represent a mainstream opinion at that particular time, their opinions are not included here as a main study matter.

By examining the Icelandic press from that period, I seek to shed light on the mentality of the Icelandic political elite on the eve of the greatest turning point in Icelandic history and reveal world-views and self-perceptions. Since the focus is on the opinions, I will not be dealing with general news content but with opinion pieces authored by Icelandic commentators. The aim here is to determine what idea they had about the conflicts and their belligerents, how they felt about them and why; with an emphasis on sympathies, apologies and criticism.

For that purpose, I have formulated three overarching research questions with a number of sub-questions, which will be addressed in this study:

1. How did the Icelandic press react to the invasions in Scandinavia and what were the newspaper discussions thereof about? The first question is a descriptive one where I seek to shed a light on the overall content of the newspaper discussions. What did the Icelandic commentators feel was most important about the foreign events? What kind of atmosphere does one experience when reading through the content? This will also be viewed in chronological terms: Did the discussion change over time? Are there examples of a shift in opinions?

2. What was similar and dissimilar in the discussions on the two foreign events and how did the various party-press newspapers approach the two events similarly or dissimilarly? This second question is comparative. I will compare the two cases up against each other and state the apparent differences in the writings of each newspaper. The main question here, however, is on the evident difference between the two cases which was mentioned in the beginning of this chapter: Did the invasion of Finland trigger more anger and shock in the Icelandic press than the Invasion of Norway? If so, why?

3. What ideas, world-views and opinions are apparent in the newspaper discussions on the two events and what does this tell us about the Icelanders themselves? Here, I will delve into the discourse and extract from it views and opinions. I will focus on the portrayals of the conflicts' belligerents with an emphasis on negative or positive presentation. How are the four actors of the two cases, Finland, Norway/Denmark, Nazi-Germany and the Soviet Union portrayed in the Icelandic press?¹ The goal here, of course, is not to learn about these parties but to draw up an image of the Icelandic commentators' construction of the external world and their associations with them. To that end, I will focus on apparent *us* and *them*-polarities. How is association between the *speaker* and the subjects observable in the texts?

1.2 Methodology

Although I do not intend to place this study into a complete theoretical framework, I will borrow certain theoretical concepts from the field of discursive and linguistic studies. These concepts are *discourse* and *discursive themes*, the latter of which will be defined in the next sub-chapter. The concepts are most often associated with the methodology of *discourse analysis*; which has been defined as a “detailed exploration of political, personal, media or academic” texts

¹ There are more actors in the Battle of Norway than only Norwegians and Germans. For the sake of limitation though, I will focus primarily on the aggressor and the victim.

“designed to reveal how knowledges are organized, carried and reproduced”.² This research shares the basic idea of discourse theory, although it is not considered a discourse analysis because of the large pool of source material it deals with. This approach carries with it an embodiment of social constructionism; the understanding that our way of writing and speaking, as well as acting and being, is a social practice, shaped by – and shaping – social structures, situations and institutions.³ Scholars within discursive studies have also seen the discourse in light of ideas about the relations between power, knowledge and language. Michel Foucault is perhaps the best known thinker to this regard. His understanding of the discourse is that social institutions of power decide what is *allowed* to express at each given time and that the discourse, which is a necessary tool for the execution of power, dictates what people perceive as the *truth*.⁴

The understanding of the *discourse* employed in this paper, is by the definition of it being “a set of thoughts, a pattern or a context in which to interpret the world”.^{5(a)} The discourse is treated as a manifest of social power and a reflection of society, and therefore I feel comfortable drawing conclusions on the mentality of the Icelandic elite by examining its discourse. Furthermore, this is a qualitative research. When remarks in my sources are determined, for example, as anti-communist or pro-Allied remarks; such a judgement is solely built upon the interpretation of the analyst. The same goes for the quantitative survey of editorials presented in Chapter V; all quantitative data from the newspapers is selected, categorised and presented according to my interpretation.

1.2.1 Method and Operation

For the operation of this research, I use a three-step method which consists of (1) a systematic data collection, (2) data processing and (3) analysis. A historical time frame was determined from November 30, 1939 until June 10, 1940.⁶ This frame of roughly six months covers the entire period of the Winter War and the Battle of Norway including the interim period in between and is divided into the four following sub-periods, henceforth called *research periods*:

² John Muncie. “Discourse Analysis”. *The SAGE Dictionary of Social Research Methods*. Ed.: Victor Jupp. Thousand Oaks, 2006, pp. 75-77, p. 75.

³ Yoosun Park. “Historical Discourse Analysis”. *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. Ed.: Lisa M. Given. Thousand Oaks, 2008, pp. 394-396; Yngve Benestad Hågvar. *Å forstå avisa. Innføring i praktisk presseanalyse*. Bergen, 2007, p. 18; N. Fairclough and R. Wodak. “Critical Discourse Analysis”. *Discourse as Social Interaction*. Ed.: T.A. van Dijk. London, 1997, pp. 258-284, p. 258.

⁴ Michel Foucault. “Two Lectures”. *Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews and other writings 1972-1977*. Ed.: Colin Gordon. New York, 1980, pp. 78-108, p. 93.

⁵ Hågvar. 2007, pp. 20.

⁶ In effect, the end date will be June 11 due to time lag.

First research period: November 30, 1939 – March 14, 1940: The Winter War.

Second research period: March 15 – April 9, 1940: The interim period between the conclusion of the Winter War and the German invasion of Denmark and Norway.

Third research period: April 10 – May 10, 1940: The Battle of Norway until the British Occupation of Iceland and the German Invasion of France.

Fourth research period: May 11, 1940 – June 11, 1940: The Battle of Norway until its conclusion, while Iceland was occupied by the British.

The reason for this division is not only it is appropriate for the purpose of processing the sources but also because at the beginning of this research I anticipated that there would be some sort of a shift between the third and fourth periods due to the change in status of Iceland *vis-à-vis* the belligerents of the world war.

The first step of my method was to collect primary sources from the given time frame. Opinion pieces were collected from certain newspapers, whose titles will be discussed in Chapter 1.3.1. An opinion piece is any writing in the press intentionally expressing opinion; typically an editorial article, submitted article or a column. A total of roughly 300 individual articles were collected and entered into a source registry. The source registry is a database with a sorting system, designed to make large amounts of opinion pieces both easily accessible and thematically categorised. The articles were assigned with content tags such as, for example, “anti-communist remarks”; “pro-German remarks”; “sympathy with Norway”, etc., followed by a title, date and comments. This is essential in order to give the long time period a detailed description and to keep track of the hundreds of articles that were collected.

The second step is the processing of the data from the source registry. The main goal of this study is the extraction of ideas, portrayals and opinions from the discourse. Therefore, I would suggest that a thematic presentation of the newspaper content is best suited to shed light on the research questions instead of, for example, a chronological narrative or a presentation by newspaper titles. This choice of presentation also reflects my approach towards the study matter; in order to draw attention to the ideas and opinions, I choose to bring the newspapers themselves into the background. To the same effect, I also choose to leave out individuals as much as possible from both description and analysis, even though some of the commentators writing in the Icelandic press at the time are known locally and even historical figures. I want the discourse to speak for itself.

To that end, I have borrowed the concept of *discursive themes*, as presented by Ingólfur

Ásgeir Jóhannesson in his six-step model for conducting historical discourse analysis⁷ Jóhannesson describes discursive themes as such:

Words and ideas, behaviour and practices are observed and identified as themes in the discourse, that is, discursive themes [...]. The discursive themes create patterns in the discourse, patterns that are shaped and reshaped in the social and political atmosphere of the past and the present. These patterns are historical and political legitimating principles that constitute the available means for the participants for what is appropriate or safe to say at certain moments or in certain places [...].⁸

In other words; *discursive themes* are an observable pattern in the discourse which makes up its main content – its plot, so to speak. In line with the Foucaultian theory of power relations, the discursive themes are determined by rules and social codes of what society has allowed to be said and written. Jóhannesson calls these social codes *legitimising principles*, and I shall stick with that terminology.

The third and final step is the analysis and comparison of the findings with the help of secondary literature. This is first and foremost threefold: (1) I compare the findings with one another (2) I discuss the findings in *context*, both international and domestic context as well as in historical context and (3) I seek Icelandic self-perceptions through apparent associations.

Placing the texts in context is one of the basic principles of discourse analysis. One definition of discourse is namely, *text in context*, and analysts have come up with contextual concepts to understand this, such as the *cultural context* and the *situational context*.⁹ Locating a press article in its cultural context reveals the historical situation of the newspaper itself and is thus reflective of the press' standing in the respective society; its readership, representation, prestige etc. The situational context reveals the specific news article or opinion piece in relation to others and is relevant for the comparative analysis of this study. So is the cultural context of my sources no less important to understand the views and opinions of the newspapers. Therefore, I make room for a historical overview of Iceland, Norway and Finland during the winter of 1939-1940 as well as of the Icelandic newspapers' standing in society; the respective political parties they represented and their overall stance towards the world war.

Even though the Icelanders did not participate in the conflicts, they inevitably placed themselves somewhere *vis-à-vis* the belligerents. Analysis of the Icelandic press' self-

⁷ Ingólfur Ásgeir Jóhannesson. "The Politics of Historical Discourse Analysis: a Qualitative Research Method?" *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*. 31:2 (2010), pp. 251-264. See also: Ingólfur Ásgeir Jóhannesson. "Leitað að mótsögnum - um verklag við orðræðugreiningu". *Fötlun. Hugmyndir og aðferðir á nýju fræðasviði*. Ed.: Rannveig Traustadóttir. Reykjavík, 2006, pp. 178-194.

⁸ Jóhannesson, I. 2010, p. 252.

⁹ Hågvar, 2007, 18 and 30-31.

perception and identity building through portrayal of the *other* can be traced by locating metaphors of *us* and *them* polarities. Stuart Hall has pointed out how *us* and *them* polarities are reflective of the identity of the *speaker*. To illustrate this, Hall takes examples from the perspective of various fields, such as the following example from the field of linguistics:

We know what *black* means [...] not because there is some essence of ‘blackness’ but because we can contrast it with its opposite – *white*.¹⁰

The relations between actors as portrayed by the media, can reveal ideologies and views within the society portraying them. Tatjana Felberg maintains that asking the question “who does what to whom in the world we construct” is unavoidable in order to illuminate this.¹¹ Taking sides with or against foreign belligerents is one of the most obvious signs of one’s own ideology or identity and therefore, I focus on the press’ construction of a *villain*, a *hero* and a *victim* in the discourse. These are portrayals carrying negative or positive moral presumptions which give way to sympathy and antipathy in the minds of the contemporaries.

1.2.2 Disposition

This paper is structured into four main chapters on a model of (1) setting and background, (2) study matter 1, (3) study matter 2, and (4) evaluation and analysis of (2) and (3).

Chapter II provides the important historical setting in which this study takes place. An account is given of the Nordic Countries’ involvement in the Second World War along with all relevant background information about Iceland in the 1930s with emphasis on the political landscape and the government’s relations with the great powers. Finally, the newspaper reactions are placed in context with an overview on Icelandic popular and political reactions to the invasions in Scandinavia.

Chapters III and IV house the empirical contents of this study. The findings from the source material are placed here and thematically presented as noted before. Chapter III deals with the Invasion of Finland and Chapter IV with the Invasion of Norway. I have noticed that the nature of the Battle of Norway discourse allows for a successful presentation using a different method than the thematic one. However, I decided to keep both chapters strictly identical in structure. That is because a parallel internal structure both provides excellent possibilities for comparison

¹⁰ Stuart Hall. “The Spectacle of the Other”. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Ed.: Stuart Hall, London, 1997, pp. 223-290, p. 234.

¹¹ Tatjana Felberg. *Brothers in arms? Discourse analysis of Serbian and Montenegrin identities and relations as constructed in Politika and Pobjeda front page articles during the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999*. Doctoral Thesis at the University of Oslo. 2008, p. 45-46.

and offers a better possibility for conclusions to be made based on generalisations and summaries from both cases. This is precisely what Chapter V, the analytical part of this study, consists of. The findings from Chapters III and IV are summarised, compared and discussed.

1.3 Sources

1.3.1 Introduction to the Primary Sources

The Icelandic printed press is the sole type of empirical evidence on which this research is based. Accessibility to these primary sources is outstanding. The newspaper titles in question, along with hundreds of other publications from the 19th and 20th centuries, have been digitalised by the National and University Library of Iceland and are accessible to anyone in a searchable digital database on the web.¹²

During most of the 20th century, the daily printed press in Iceland was closely intertwined with a political system dominated by four permanent political parties.¹³ The political system was developed during the 1910s and 1920s, and by the 1930s, three class-political parties – four including the Communist Party, had consolidated and climaxed their influence in society. A fully grown political press system had been developed in which each party was represented by a newspaper which generally served its party's political interests. Some papers were directly owned and run by the parties while others were independent but openly affiliated to a political party or ideology.¹⁴

I have chosen four newspapers in Reykjavík as the main source material of this study. These papers make up a complete list of the daily newspapers at the time and sum up the complete flora of the party-press, with the exception of the communist press. These publications are:

1. *Alþýðublaðið* ('The People's Paper'); a socialist newspaper and the party organ of the social-democratic Labour Party. The paper was founded by the party in 1919 and was one of the country's leading newspapers during the former half of the 20th century. In 1940, *Alþýðublaðið* was generally published every day but Sunday with an issue of four

¹² *Timarit.is. Landsbókasafn Íslands – Háskólabókasafn. www.timarit.is.*

¹³ The four main parties were: The Labour Party (i. Alþýðuflokkurinn) the Progressive Party (i. Framsóknarflokkurinn) – the Independence Party (i. Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn) – and the Socialist Unity Party – The Socialist Party (i. Sameiningarflokkur alþýðu – Sósíalístaflokkurinn). The last one did not become one of the four mainstream parties until after the Second World War. The political parties will be presented in more detail in Chapter II.

¹⁴ Guðjón Friðrikson. "Tímabil flokksfjölmíðla – ris og hnig". *Íslenska sögubíngið 28.-31. maí 1997. Ráðstefnurit I*. Reykjavík, 1998, pp. 305-316, pp. 307-309; Helgi Skúli Kjartansson. *Ísland á 20. öld*. Reykjavík, 2002, pp. 161-162. The following description of the Icelandic newspapers is based on these.

pages.

2. *Morgunblaðið* ('The Morning Paper'); an independent but market-liberal and conservative daily newspaper. Established in 1913, the paper was originally party-politically neutral, but from the 1930s on it was decisively placed as the party organ of the Independence Party. The paper was the largest printed media of the time; generally eight pages in length and came out every day but Monday.
3. *Tíminn* ('The Time'); a centrist newspaper and the party organ of the liberal-agrarian Progressive Party.¹⁵ The paper was established as a weekly newspaper by the party and the co-operative movement in 1917 and was indented for readers in the country as well as townspeople in Reykjavík. For that reason, it was not a daily newspaper. During the late 1930s, *Tíminn* came out every second day but Sunday, at the length of four pages.
4. *Vísir*; a conservative daily newspaper. Established in 1910 as the first daily newspaper in Iceland, *Vísir* was, like *Morgunblaðið*, originally neutral in party-politics but gradually became affiliated with the Independence Party political standpoint. During the 1940s, the paper competed with *Alþýðublaðið* for the status of being the second most distributed newspaper in Reykjavík, publishing an issue of four pages every day but Sunday.

These four papers consist of what I call the *non-communist press*. They were also political proponents and organs of the Icelandic government during this study's time frame and are in that context sometimes referred to as the *government press*. To the same effect, *Vísir* and *Morgunblaðið* are often collectively termed *the right-wing press* or the *centre-right press* with *Tíminn* included, and *Alþýðublaðið* is on occasions referred to as the *social-democratic press*. Although the *communist press* is not accounted for as a main source material, it is appropriate to introduce it as well due to its significance for this study:

5. *Þjóðviljinn* ("The Nation's Will"); a communist daily newspaper, and the party organ of the far-left Socialist Unity Party. The party's predecessor; the Communist Party of Iceland, established a weekly party organ in 1930, which from 1936 was published as the four-page *Þjóðviljinn*, every day but Monday.

1.3.2 The Source Value of the Icelandic Press

The press has been used as historical source since the 19th century and from the 1970s, we have

¹⁵ Although Jónas Jónsson, the leader of the Progressive Party, wrote many editorial articles in *Tíminn* during this study's time frame, he never really was the paper's editor. He served as chairman of the editorial board (i. *formaður blaðstjórnar*) but is nevertheless referred to as editor or co-editor in this study.

witnessed an extensive use of it within the fields of everyday social history, the new cultural history and not least, local history.¹⁶ For its detailed coverage of day-to-day society, the newspaper is a window into the past, almost like a still image of a daily setting which rarely can be found in the archives. But just like historical photographs, the source value of the press must be assessed and source criticism practised.

The newspaper is a typical textbook example of a source that can both be a secondary and a primary source at the same time. Contemporary events and activities, people and places within the social, political, cultural and international arena are reported in the news reports of the day. One must beware when using the press for historical information and bear in mind the golden rule of source criticism; *who wrote it, for whom* and *why*? This is especially true when dealing with the political press, as this research does. For the second part, the press can also be used for the analysis of the society in which it was produced. The paper can reflect society either through its own news reports or commentaries, as well as the submitted material from readers and active players in contemporary society. By answering the questions *who, for whom* and *why*, the historian can see the reflection of society in the press.

Even though the newspapers listed before are typical for their time and a symbol of the four-party system which characterised the 20th century in Icelandic politics, we must ask, whose opinions do they represent?¹⁷ Can they be considered representative of the general public? Helgi Skúli Kjartansson maintains that even though the larger papers tried to reach out to a wider public, most supporters of each party generally read only their party's paper. The papers were in fact “the party [itself] dressed in paper” and were considered by readers as “the voice of the party”.^{18(b)} Everything from news to advertisements was either conformed by party policies or at least did not go against them. In turn, those who did not affiliate with any of the four political parties could not find a place to promote their political opinions in the nation's largest papers.¹⁹ Thorstein Strømsøe, who has studied the opinions and discussions on the Winter War in Norway, points out that thanks to the authority enjoyed by a political party, the party press is generally

¹⁶ Hallvard Tjelmeland. “Aviser som historisk kilde”. *Pressehistoriske skrifter* 3:1, 2004, pp. 114-130, p. 115.

¹⁷ Friðriksson maintains that there never was a large enough market in Iceland for so many daily newspapers, and that the party press system was kept going by subsidies from the political parties and from the state (1998, p. 311). Only the bourgeois papers were privately run and the other papers were usually burdensome to their party's finances, especially the socialist press which could hardly compete with the others for advertisers (Kjartansson. 2002, p. 162). Only *Morgunblaðið* is still to this day published by its original name; *Vísir* joined with another newspaper in the 1980s and the class-party organs, *Alþýðublaðið*, *Tíminn* and *Þjóðviljinn*, all became extinct in the 1990s.

¹⁸ Kjartansson. 2002, p. 162.

¹⁹ *ibid*; Friðriksson. 1998, p. 309-311.

more opinion-shaping than other media.²⁰ The very purpose of a political press is to shape opinions and the Icelandic parties had indeed much authority. It should also be added that newspapers, especially the mainstream press, seldom expresses official opinions that collide head-on with the public opinion. Papers must publish what their readers want to read in order not to lose subscribers and I would suggest this applies particularly when dealing with sentimental issues regarding foreign events.

Yet, despite the party-press' authority, its opinion-shaping effects do have limits. Despite their dominant position, the three large non-communist parties in Iceland represented altogether roughly 60-75% of the electorate during the 1930s and besides that, elections cannot count as public opinion polls on every single policy – let alone opinions on foreign events.²¹ These considerations aside, Strømsøe argues that even though the press undoubtedly reaches parts of the population, the opinion-shaping effects are also affected by pre-determined and personal ideas, experiences, preferences and worries of individual members of the public. The public opinion is therefore neither monolithic nor is it easily shaped. Age, sex, social class and education are examples of variables that form individual opinions before the press does.²² I agree with this, and think it should be safe to conclude that the four Icelandic newspapers in question can offer a rough image of the Icelandic public opinion, although what they really represent is the opinions of the Icelandic political elite and that is how it will be treated in this study.

1.4 Secondary Literature and Historiography

This study is a first and foremost the subject of three fields: The history of Iceland during the Second World War, Icelandic press history and the history of Icelandic political culture. Additionally, this study touches upon the history of the Icelandic far-left movement, which, because of its controversial nature, shall be mentioned here in this historiographical overview. To my knowledge, there has not been published other specific studies on Icelandic press opinions regarding the conflicts of the Second World War.

1.4.1 The History of Iceland in the Second World War

The history of the Second World War in Iceland has only received a moderate amount of

²⁰ Thorstein Strømsøe. *Solidaritet eller nøytralitet? Norsk Finlands-politikk og opinionen under Vinterkrigen 1939-1940*. Volume 22 in series: *Skriftserie fra Historisk institutt*. Trondheim, 1997, pp. 318-319.

²¹ Election results from Kjartansson. 2002, pp. 536-537.

²² Strømsøe. 1997, pp. 306 and 319.

scholarly attention. Given the war's importance in modern Icelandic history, this lack of interest seems surprising. Unlike most other European countries, Icelandic war history has not become the field of historical debates and revisions. According to Guðmundur Hálfðanarson the “apparent disinterest” relates from a combination of factors. Apart from the obvious lack of specialists due to the limited size of the nation and its pool of historians, Iceland was from early on in the war decisively placed in the Allied camp, making debates on war guilt and Nazi collaboration non-existent in the history writing. Second, the war and its important domestic consequences for the nation's political and economic future, does not fit into the grand narrative of the traditional nationalist historiography, Hálfðanarson maintains, according to which the prosperous post-war society could only have been established through other, more idyllic, means than the economic and political aid of the Western great powers.²³

Interestingly, the traditional nationalist historiography Hálfðanarson is referring to, developed during the Icelandic ‘Struggle for Independence’ and has been the subject of huge revisions in the last decades of the 20th century. However, this revisionism has not affected the historiography of the Second World War.²⁴ History writing on Icelandic foreign affairs, including the war years, is a relatively young field, arriving at the scene within the history profession in the 1970s.²⁵ It is therefore perhaps safe to assume that this state of affairs is subject to change in the coming decades.

Most historical works on the Second World War appearing from the 1980s on have focused on the Allied occupation, relations between the people, the government and the occupation forces and/or operational history on, above and around the island. Relations between Icelandic women and Allied soldiers (generally termed 'The Situation' (i. *Ástandið*)) has also received a fair amount of attention in the literature.²⁶

As mentioned before, the small pool of Icelandic historians does not provide for great many specialists in each field. Professor Þór Whitehead has unquestionably dominated the field of

²³ Guðmundur Hálfðanarson. “The Beloved War’. The Second World War and the Icelandic National Narrative”. *Nordic Narratives of the Second World War. National Historiographies Revisited*. Eds.: Henrik Steinus, et al. Lund, 2011, pp. 79-100, pp. 79 and 80.

²⁴ *ibid.* p. 97.

²⁵ Valur Ingimundarson. “Saga utanríkismála á 20. öld”. *Saga*. 38:1 (2000), pp. 207-227, pp. 207.

²⁶ See for example: Tómas Þór Tómasson. *Heimssstyrjaldarárin á Íslandi 1939-1945*. Volume I and II. Reykjavík, 1983 and 1984; Magnús Þór Hafsteinsson. *Dauðinn í Dumbshafi. Íshafsskipalestirnar frá Hvalfirði og sjóhernaður í Norður-Íshafi 1940-1943* and *Návígi á Norðurslóðum. Íshafsskipalestirnar og ófriðurinn, 1942-1945*. Reykjavík, 2011 and 2012. On 'The Situation', see for example: Herdís Helgadóttir. *Úr fjötrum. Íslenskar konur og erlendir her*. Reykjavík, 2001; Bára Baldursdóttir. “Þær myndu fegnar skipta um þjóðerni' Ríkisafskipti af samböndum unglingsstúlkna og setuliðsmanna”. *Kvennaslóðir. Rit til heiðurs Sigríði Th. Erlendsdóttur sagnfræðingi*. Eds.: Anna Agnaradóttir et al. Reykjavík, 2001.

Icelandic Second World War studies for the last three decades. His book series, labelled *Ísland í síðari heimsstyrjöld* (e. “Iceland in the Second World War”), was launched in 1980 and is a cornerstone work in the field. Currently at the fourth volume, the series deal mainly with the relations between the Icelandic government and the great powers before the war, and the great powers' interests in the island's strategic location.²⁷ Whitehead's works are based on detailed research into Icelandic, German, British and American archives, which has earned him reverence among other historians and his style of writing is popular with the public consumer.²⁸

However, in light of Whitehead's historiographical approach, the apparent consensus by the academic community and the public on his analysis is interesting and quite unique. His dismissal of theories and strive for public accessibility describes Whitehead's intention to make the sources speak their language and write from it a history which, to quote one of his book reviews; “carries his opinions and delivers them”. Thus, he allows as himself “to judge people and subjects”.^{29(c)} In the introduction to the first volume of his series, Whitehead declares this historiographical approach as such:

I am not one of those historians who believe that they can stand above their own time and opinions, and deal with their subject from some undefined 'neutral' point of view. I adhere to certain principles, which it would be dishonest for me to hide. My goal is not to be 'neutral', but to search for a truth and explain it.^{30(d)}

This statement might sound frightful when put up against Whitehead's unconcealed pro-Independence Party and pro-American political standpoint.³¹ Indeed, Whitehead's sympathy with the Icelandic National Government of 1939-1942, his anti-fascist and pro-Allied approach is noticeable throughout his narrative. Yet his dismissal of neutrality has not really been a source of serious criticism in the case of his war history. His use of sources has been generally accepted and praised and his overall analysis and presentation of the “truth” has been received mostly uncontested.³² Again, this shows better than anything else how unbelievably consent the

²⁷ The four volumes published in 1980-1999; “A War Approaching”, “War Beyond the Coast”, “Between Hope and Fear” and “The British Arrive”, cover the period from the late 1930s until the summer of 1940. Whitehead has also published a book dealing specifically with German pre-war interests in Iceland; “Himmler's Icelandic Adventure”. (Þór Whitehead. *Ófriður í aðsigi*. Reykjavík, 1980, *Stríð fyrir ströndum*. Reykjavík, 1985, *Milli vonar og ótta*. Reykjavík, 1995, *Íslandsævintýri Himmlers*, 2.ed. Reykjavík, 1998 and *Bretarnir koma*. Reykjavík, 1999).

²⁸ Hálfðanarson. 2011, ppp. 86-87. See also: Ingimundarson. 2000, pp. 210-211; Stefán F. Hjartarson. “[Review:] Þór Whitehead. Milli vonar og ótta. Ísland í síðari heimsstyrjöld”. *Saga*. 34:1 (1996), p. 329-332; Helgi Skúli Kjartansson. “[Review:] Stórvirki í sögurannsókn”, *Helgarpósturinn*, December 19. 1980, p. 17.

²⁹ Hjartarson. 1996, p. 330.

³⁰ Whitehead. 1980, p. 8.

³¹ Hálfðanarson. 2011, p. 87.

³² *ibid*; Hjartarson. 1996, p. 330.

Icelandic academic and cultural community seems to be about the established historiography of that particular period in Icelandic history. If anything, critics of Whitehead's world war series have pointed out opinionated writings on the communists during the war.³³

Whitehead covers the Icelandic government's attitudes towards the great powers in great depth and his use of the Icelandic political press is also detailed and widespread. Whitehead's comprehensive construction of the winter of 1939-1940, especially in the second volume, *Milli vonar og ótta* (1995), is a valuable secondary literature for my study. I do for the most part not see my research and my conclusions in contradiction to Whitehead's analysis, although my perspective and focus is different from his.

1.4.2 The History of the Icelandic Far-left

Even though Whitehead's writings on the Second World War have gone mostly unchallenged, his version of the history of the Icelandic communist movement has been the subject of serious criticism and has become a centrepiece in a recent historical debate. With the opening of Russian archives in the early 1990s, much research has been done on the topic of Icelandic communist and socialist relations with the Soviet Union which has spawned what has been called the most controversial topic of modern Icelandic history.³⁴ The debate mostly deals with two questions: Weather or not the communists were violent and dangerous quislings and on what terms their relationship was with the Soviet authorities.

Jón Ólafsson has determined that historians and scholars generally adhere to two opposing theories within these studies; the so-called "obedience theory" (i. *hlýðnikeningin*); maintaining that communist actions and opinions were directed from Moscow, and the "self-control theory" (i. *sjálfstjórnarkeningin*); claiming they sought advice and example from Moscow but were not controlled from abroad.³⁵ No one denies that the Communist Party of Iceland and its successor; the Socialist Unity Party, kept close and friendly relations with the Soviet Union. The scale and importance of these relations, however, are debatable. Ólafsson's categorisation is reasonable, although historians of the latter category are harder to spot and define. The vast majority of scholars opposing the "obedience theory" agree to the client-patron relationship between Icelandic communists and Moscow but reject the obedience school's emphasis on the

³³ Hjartarson. 1996, p. 331; Kjartansson, 1980, p. 17.

³⁴ Skafti Ingimarsson. "Saga sigurvegaranna. Kommúnistahreyfingin á Íslandi og söguskoðun kalda stríðsins". *4. íslenska söguþingið 7-10 júní 2012. Ráðstefnurit*. Reykjavík, 2013, pp. 295-307, p. 295.

³⁵ Jón Ólafsson. "Komintern gegn klofningi. Viðbrögð Alþjóðasambands kommúnista við stofnun Sósíalistaflokksins", *Saga*. 45:1 (2007), pp. 93-111, p. 94.

communists' violent and dangerous nature.³⁶ Whitehead's books have, among others been categorised into the obedience-category; one of which; “Soviet-Iceland...” (2010), is referred to in this study.³⁷ These writers have criticised those who oppose them, Jón Ólafsson in particular, for belittling the communists' humbleness to the Soviet leadership and even to commit academic dishonesty to reach such conclusions.³⁸ Ólafsson, on the other hand, deems Whitehead's theories in his recent work “Soviet-Iceland” as “non-academic” and makes an argument claiming that Whitehead's sources are misinterpreted in order to reach prepared and politically opinionated conclusions.³⁹

What is interesting about this historiography is that many writers committing to the “obedience theory” are deserted communists themselves or scholars who are publicly known for their rightist political standpoint. In a similar manner, adherents of the self-control theory were often old communists writing their memoirs.⁴⁰ This point goes to show the political nature of the historiography of the communist movement; a historiographical tradition which Skafti Ingimarsson has called “Cold War historiography”.⁴¹ He calls for a new historiographical approach towards this history; one that is not coloured by the black-and-white mentality of the Cold War and one that does not focus so heavily on the relations with Moscow.⁴² Ragnheiður Kristjánsdóttir has also highlighted this point, whose work “New People...” (2008) has blown a fresh breeze into these studies by drawing attention to the nationalistic character of the Icelandic communist and socialist movement.⁴³

³⁶ See for example: Ingimarsson. 2013; Skafti Ingimarsson. “Fimmta herdeildin. Hugleiðingar um Sovét-Ísland, óskalandið”. *Saga*. 49:2 (2011), pp. 152-195; Jón Ólafsson. “Landráðakenning Þórs Whitehead. Nokkrar athugasemdir við ritið Sovét-Ísland óskalandið”. *Bifröst Journal of Social Science* 5-6 (2011-2012), pp. 47-72; Guðni Th. Jóhannesson. “Samhengi”. Seminar address at the Historians' Association of Iceland and the Reykjavik Academy, Nov. 23, 2011, labelled “Icelandic Left-Wing Radicalism: Idealistic Struggle or Treachery?” Retrieved: 21.11.2013 from: www.gudnith.is > Greinar og Erindi > Kalda stríðið > Samhengi (2011): http://gudnith.is/efni/samhengi_2011.

³⁷ Þór Whitehead. *Sovét-Ísland, óskalandið. Aðdragandi byltingar sem aldrei varð, 1921-1946*. Reykjavík, 2010. See also: Þór Whitehead. *Kommúnistahreyfingin á Íslandi 1921-1934*. Volume. 5 in series: *Sagnfræðirannsóknir, Studia Historica*. Reykjavík, 1979; Arnór Hannibalsson. *Moskvulínan. Kommúnistaflokkur Íslands og Komintern. Halldór Laxness og Sovétríkin*. Reykjavík, 1999; Hannes Hólmsteinn Gissurarson. *Íslenskir kommúnistar 1918-1998*. Reykjavík, 2011.

³⁸ See for example: Whitehead. 2010, p. 152 (footnote); Hannes Hólmsteinn Gissurarson. “Furðulegar árásir á Þór Whitehead”. *Pressan*. 2011. Retrieved 21.11.2013 from: www.pressan.is > Pressupennar > Hannes Hólmsteinn Gissurarson: http://www.pressan.is/pressupennar/Lesa_Hannes/furdulegar-arasir-a-thor-whitehead.

³⁹ Ólafsson. 2011-2012, pp. 50-51.

⁴⁰ Ólafsson. 2007, p. 95. On veteran communists leaders maintaining the “self-control theory”, see for example: Einar Olgeirsson. *Ísland í skugga heimsvaldastefnunnar* and *Kraftaverk einnar kynslóðar*. Prepared by Jón Guðnason. Reykjavík, 1980 and 1983; Brynjólfur Bjarnason. *Brynjólfur Bjarnason, pólitísk ævisaga. Viðtöl Einars Ólafssonar ásamt inngangi*. Reykjavík, 1989.

⁴¹ Ingimarsson. 2012, pp. 295-296.

⁴² *ibid.* pp. 305-307.

⁴³ Ragnheiður Kristjánsdóttir. *Nýtt Fólk. Þjóðerni og íslensk verkalyðsstjórnsmál 1901-1944*. Reykjavík. 2008; Ragnheiður Kristjánsdóttir. “Má biðja um annað sjónarhorn?” Seminar address at the Historians' Association of

It is important for the reader to understand the state of affairs in the historiography of this topic as he or she reads through this work. Although I do not consider this research a direct contribution to the debate, communism and anti-communism is a central theme throughout the Icelandic newspaper discourse of the Winter War and the Battle of Norway. The anti-communist contemporaries' claim that they serve foreign interests and pose a danger to the Icelandic state is widespread. In the following chapter, we will cover the history of the Icelandic far-left movement during the winter of 1939-1940, in addition to other historical settings relating to the empirical study of the Icelandic press reactions to the German and Soviet invasions in Scandinavia.

Iceland and the Reykjavik Academy, Nov. 23, 2011, labelled "Icelandic Left-Wing Radicalism: Idealistic Struggle or Treachery?" Retrieved: 21.11.2013 from www.sagnfraedingafelag.net > Hádegisfyrirlestrar > Hlaðvarp: Vinstri róttækni > Link to audio file: <http://vefir.mh.is/kaj/Vinstri.mp3>.

Chapter II

Finland, Norway and Iceland

1939-1940

Scandinavia's involvement in the Second World War was – as Richard Overy puts it: “the product of geopolitical chance”, more than anything else.¹ Situated between the United Kingdom, Germany and the Soviet Union, the flanks of Scandinavia was of strategic significance for them all. In the east, the southern coast of Finland loomed over the Baltic entrance into Russia and the Finnish-Soviet borders in Karelia lay only 40 km from the second city of the Soviet Union; Leningrad. In the west, Norway was situated in a way that in the event of war, both Britain and Germany would consider stationing navies there in order to strike at each other in the North Sea or the Baltic Sea. In addition, Norwegian waters served as an important life-line for the German industry since Swedish iron, indispensable to the Germans in wartime, was shipped from the Norwegian port of Narvik to Germany when the Gulf of Bothnia was frozen.²

Having signed a joint declaration of neutrality in 1938, the Nordic countries went great lengths to stay out of the war. They all had solid democratic traditions and parliamentary institutions which, unlike in most other European minor states, had survived the economic depression of the 1930s. Extreme political movements, like fascism and communism, were marginal in all of the Nordic countries. Norway enjoyed political association with Great Britain and the democratic West, whose traditions were in a sharp contrast to German political thought. Political relations between Norway and Germany increasingly deteriorated after the rise of national socialism in Germany and the country became the target of heavy criticism by the influential liberal and socialist movements in Norway.³ Although the Norwegian government

¹ Richard Overy. “Scandinavia in the Second World War”. *Hitler's Scandinavian Legacy. The Consequences of the German Invasion for the Scandinavian Countries, Then and Now*. Eds.: John Gilmour and Jill Stephenson. London, 2013, pp. 13-37, p. 15.

² Tom Kristiansen. “Closing a Long Chapter: German-Norwegian Relations 1939-45. Norway and the Third Reich”. *Hitler's Scandinavian Legacy. The Consequences of the German Invasion for the Scandinavian Countries, Then and Now*. Eds.: John Gilmour and Jill Stephenson. London, 2013, pp. 73-99, p. 77; Olav Riste. “War Comes to Norway”. *Norway in the Second World War*. 5th edition. Ed. Olav Riste. [Oslo], 1996, pp. 9-55, pp. 29-31.

³ Kristiansen. 2013, pp. 73, 77 and 81-83.

held firmly on to the politics of neutrality after the outbreak of war in September 1939, it was apparent that if it was forced to take sides, it would consider siding with the British in the conflict rather than the Germans. In either case, the Norwegian neutrality strategy counted on the Royal Navy as a safeguard in the unlikely event of a German invasion. It was, in fact, the Soviet Union - not Nazi-Germany, which was regarded the biggest threat to Norwegian security during the winter of 1939-1940.⁴

If the Norwegians feared the Soviet Union they must not have envied the position of their other eastern neighbours; the Finns. Finland was among the Russian imperial lands that departed the empire after the Great War and Revolution of 1917. The Republic of Finland was established with a great white terror after the White Guards, aided by Imperial Germany, were victorious over communists in the Finnish Civil War. In light of these experiences, Finnish interwar society was characterised by anti-communism, Russophobia and Germanophilia, although the Finns gradually abandoned martial radicalism and expansionism and oriented towards Scandinavian and Western European culture and thought.⁵ Yet, sharing a border with the Soviet Union kept Finland, as Oula Silvennoinen put it: “an eastern European country with eastern European problems” in the geopolitical sense.⁶ Relations with the giant in the east were characterised by fear and mutual mistrust throughout the interwar period and therefore, Finnish foreign policy sought international cooperation focused on Soviet containment.⁷ This policy did not bear fruit and in November 1939, the Scandinavian theatre of the Second World War opened with a realisation of the Finns’ worst fear: A Soviet invasion of an isolated Finland.

2.1 The Soviet Invasion of Finland 1939-1940

Having failed to reach an agreement about border adjustments at the Fenno-Soviet borders, the Soviet Air Force launched an air strike on Helsinki in the morning hours of November 30, concurring with a land invasion of 450.000 heavily equipped soldiers. The Finnish Army had a defensive force of 250.000 men at its disposal, with little air and armour support.⁸ Thus began the Winter War that lasted until March 14, 1940. The undeclared war on the neutral minor state

⁴ *ibid.* pp. 87-89; Ola Svein Stugu. *Velstandslandet. Norsk historie etter 1905*. Oslo, 2012, p. 113.

⁵ Henrik Meinander. “Finland and the Great Powers in World War II. Ideologies, Geopolitics, Diplomacy”. *Finland in World War II. History, Memory, Interpretations*. Eds.: Tiina Kinnunen and Ville Kivimäki. Leiden, 2012, pp. 93-139, pp. 51-56; Oula Silvennoinen. “Janus of the North? Finland 1940-44. Finland’s Road into Alliance with Hitler”. *Hitler’s Scandinavian Legacy. The Consequences of the German Invasion for the Scandinavian Countries, Then and Now*. Eds.: John Gilmour and Jill Stephenson. London, 2013, pp. 129-144, pp. 130.

⁶ Silvennoinen. 2013, p. 133.

⁷ *ibid.* p. 134.

⁸ Meinander. 2012, p. 59.

by the Russian great power caused heated reactions across the globe, for it was perceived by many in the West as an act of unmasked aggression. Ousted by the international community, the Soviet Union was expelled from the League of Nations and the United States declared a “moral embargo” against it.⁹ How did this come to be?

2.1.1 Motivation and Aims

Stalin’s motivation for attacking Finland, and the question whether or not the Winter War could have been avoided, has been asked ever since its outbreak. Carl Van Dyke stated in 1997 that the invasion of Finland remained “a significant lacuna in Soviet history”, even after the opening of Russian archives.¹⁰ No documents have been found that prove that Stalin aimed at annexing Finland.¹¹ However, there are implications supporting the argument, most obviously the apparent fate of the Baltic States in 1940 after having agreed to treaties and terms similar to those offered to Finland before the invasion. The Baltic States gradually lost their sovereignty and eventually became soviet republics of the USSR. Furthermore, the creation and purpose of the Finnish puppet government in the Soviet-occupied Finnish border town of Terijoki, headed by the exiled Finnish communist and a client of Stalin, Otto Wille Kuusinen, points to the same direction.

Stalin maintained the Terijoki government was the legitimate government of Finland, refusing to negotiate with the actual government in Helsinki until his hand was forced in March 1940.¹² The original purpose of the Terijoki government was thus intended to be, as Kimmo Rentola put it; “a government-in-waiting”.¹³ Additionally, some recent Winter War literature assumes that in the grand scheme of things, Stalin aimed in 1939 for a restoration of the Russian imperial borders of 1914.¹⁴ Others claim the Soviet leadership preferred an autonomous but cooperative neighbour and that the goal to politically subjugate Finland through the means of the Terijoki government was an opportunistic goal set as a consequence of – not a prerequisite for – the breakout of war.¹⁵

⁹ H. Shukman. “Introduction”. *Stalin and the Soviet-Finnish War 1939-1940*. In series: *Cass Series on the Soviet (Russian) Study of War*. Ed.: H. Shukman et al. London, 2002, pp. xix-xxvi, p. xxii.

¹⁰ Carl Van Dyke. *The Soviet Invasion of Finland 1939-1940*. London, 1997, p. xi.

¹¹ A. O. Chubaryan. „Foreword“. *Stalin and the Soviet-Finnish War 1939-1940*. In series: *Cass Series on the Soviet (Russian) Study of War*. Ed.: H. Shukman et al. London, 2002, pp. xv-xviii, p. xvi.

¹² Kimmo Rentola. “The Finnish Communists and the Winter War”. *Journal of Contemporary History*. 33:4 (1998), pp. 591-607, p. 600

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ Robert Edwards. *Hvid død*. Trsl.: Roger Ødegaard and Morten Sand Andersen. Oslo, 2008, p. 23; Meinander. 2012, p. 58.

¹⁵ Van Dyke. 1997, p. 190; Overy. 2013, p. 24.

However, most scholars are in agreement that the prime motivation for the invasion, and the most urgent one, was the preservation of Soviet national security in the wake of the Second World War.¹⁶ After the rise of Hitler in Germany, the Marxist-Leninist regime in Moscow based its interwar diplomacy on the ideological assumption that Nazi-Germany was the most likely of the capitalist states to stage an invasion in an inevitable second world war. Soviet military planners were convinced that such an attack was most probable through Poland, the Baltic States and Finland. Therefore, Soviet foreign policy in the 1930s focused on preventing German influence in the Baltic region.¹⁷ Having failed to isolate Germany through the means of treaties and collective security in cooperation with the Western Allies due to mutual mistrust, Stalin concluded the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact with Hitler in August 1939, stunning the world communist movement and German sympathisers alike.¹⁸ Unlike the Western Allies, Hitler was willing to give him a free hand in the Baltic region. Isolated and under heavy pressure from the Soviets, the Baltic States agreed to said treaties of mutual assistance in the autumn, giving the Soviet Union military access and political influence.

Similar negotiations with Finland, however, did not yield any results. Finnish-Soviet negotiations went on from 1938 until the final days before the outbreak of war and they failed because of mutual misconceptions and mistrust. Moscow insisted that Finland was bound to succumb, willingly or forcibly, to Nazi-Germany in the event of a German-Soviet war. Moscow offered protection and cooperation and suggested seemingly generous territorial concessions in Russian Eastern Karelia in exchange for a slight adjustment of the Soviet-Finnish borders on the Karelian Isthmus and limited military access. The Finnish authorities, however, saw the Soviet Union as a much bigger threat than Germany and firmly rejected all such proposals. They believed that Soviet threats of military actions were empty and that military access would only lead to a gradual Soviet takeover. Likewise, fully aware of Finnish-German contacts, Stalin did not trust the Finnish guarantees of neutrality. He based his decision to invade the country on the ideologically charged misconception that Finnish society was deeply divided by class conflict and thus unwilling and unable to withstand an invasion.¹⁹

2.1.2 The Campaign

Stalin was struck with a far different reality in December 1939. The main thrust of the Soviet

¹⁶ Van Dyke. 1997, pp. 221-222; Meinander. 2012, pp. 57-58; Overy. 2013, pp. 22-23.

¹⁷ Van Dyke. 1997, pp. xii and 1.

¹⁸ Henry Kissinger. *Diplomacy*. New York, 1994, pp. 335-336; Meinander. 2012, p. 57; Van Dyke. 1997, p. 8.

¹⁹ Meinander. 2012, p. 58-59; Van Dyke. 1997, p. 222; Silvennoinen. 2013, p. 134.

attack was directed at the tight Karelian Isthmus, where it was projected to break through to Helsinki in two weeks and occupy Finland in a month.²⁰ This was where the Finns concentrated their defence with land fortifications, most prominent of which was the so-called Mannerheim Line. In Eastern and Northern Finland, the Finns primarily deployed small parties of ski troops, which engaged in small-scale guerrilla tactics. The Soviet advance north of Lake Ladoga and at the Mannerheim Line was halted already in the first weeks of fighting, where the Red Army suffered heavy casualties despite the numerical advantage. The Soviets also struggled in Eastern and Northern Finland, where whole divisions were encircled by small parties of Finnish mobile troops at isolated roads leading into the woodlands.²¹

The Finns enjoyed the advantage of an unusually cold winter, for which they were well equipped, and the ability to exploit the difficult terrain. Contrary to Soviet pre-war considerations, Finland's cohesion and fighting spirit was high – and it was decisively raised by the successful defensive operations at the front. Equally important for determining the initial poor performance of the Soviets was the circumstantial and general state of the Red Army. From the top levels, weakened by the Great Purges in the preceding years, down to platoon commanders and regular soldiers, the Red Army was deficient in all fields.²² The troops were poorly prepared for winter warfare and the upper levels of the army suffered from poor planning and confusion.

Despite all this, logic dictated that the greatly outnumbered Finns were unable to win the Winter War in the long term. The Finnish strategy was therefore to hold out long enough until foreign powers would come to their aid or help negotiate for peace.²³ The Finns enjoyed great sympathy in the West. A number of countries sent economic and humanitarian aid to Finland as well as volunteers, although only the 8.000 strong Swedish volunteer corps arrived in time to see combat.²⁴ The Western Allies developed interest for a military intervention early in the Winter War, as a moral justification for a strike against Germany. Public opinion in both Britain and France opted for aiding Finland and the French government was very keen on diverting the

²⁰ David Kirby. *A Concise History of Finland*. 4. edition. Cambridge, 2009, p. 208.

²¹ Meinander. 2012, p. 60.

²² H. Shukman. 2002, p. xxii; Kirby. 2009, p. 210.

²³ Kirby. 2009, p. 211.

²⁴ The Swedish Volunteer Corps (s. *Svenska Frivilligkåren*) included 8260 Swedish and 727 Norwegian volunteers fighting at the front in Finland. A group of 985 Danish volunteers entered the country but never saw combat. Among these groups were four ethnic Icelandic volunteers, three of whom lived in Iceland before and after the war. (Thorstein Strømsøe. *Frivilligbevegelsen. De Finlandsfrivilliges organisering, kjennetegn og innsats under Vinterkrigen 1939-1940*. Volume 33 in series: *Skrifterie fra Historisk institutt*. Trondheim, 2000, p. 257; Andri Jónsson. "Nú logar Finnland! Samúð Íslendinga með Finnum í Vetrarstríðinu 1939-1940". *Sagnir – Tímarit um söguleg efni*. 30:1 (2013), pp. 146-161, p. 147).

world war from its borders. Even though the British leadership was uncertain and divided about the subject, it was eventually decided to carry out the ostensible moral intervention in Finland to stop the flow of Swedish iron to Nazi-Germany.²⁵ Allied operational plans involving landings in Norway, occupation of the Swedish iron mines and an expedition to Finland were developed and approved in February 1940. The intervention was never realised because of a firm opposition by the Norwegians and the Swedes who would not risk provoking a preventive or retaliatory attack from Germany.²⁶

Reorganisation of the Red Army leadership and increased superiority in numbers and armaments changed the situation at the front from February on. The Mannerheim Line was finally broken by the Soviet troops who reached the city of Vyborg in early March. The Finnish army was exhausted, its resources depleted and the prospects of a Franco-British intervention was dwindling. However, the existence of the intervention plan put pressure on Stalin, who eventually decided not to occupy Finland and rather to negotiate peace in mid-March 1940.²⁷ The Finns were forced to agree to peace terms similar to – but more disadvantageous, than the Soviet demands put forward in the pre-war negotiations. The Red Army and the Soviet Union, however, had suffered a huge blow of prestige and the effects of the invasion of Finland had spilled over to Allied-German conflict.

2.2 The German Invasion of Norway 1940

“Norwegian history is international history”, wrote Magne Skodvin in the preface to his book on Norway in the Second World War.^{28(a)} Whereas the Winter War was a conflict between the Finns and the Russians, the Norwegian Campaign was a multinational battle and, hence the name, one of the campaigns of the Second World War. Unlike the British and French, the Germans were silent during the Winter War in obligation to the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. However, the Soviet advance into Finland and the knowledge of Allied plans involving occupation of parts of Scandinavia caused alarm in Berlin as much as it did in Oslo and Stockholm.²⁹ The Nordic countries’ fears of a pre-emptive attack by Germany were, in fact, not far off reality. Roughly a month after the Winter War’s conclusion, Hitler launched *Operation Weserübung* – a massive combined operation with the aim of conquering Denmark and Norway

²⁵ Francois Kersaudy. *Norway 1940*. London, 1991, pp. 18-20 and 27; Riste. 1996, p 21.

²⁶ Overy. 2013, p.18-19.

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ Magne Skodvin. *Krig og okkupasjon*. In series: *Norsk historie 1939-1945*. Oslo, 1991, p. 9.

²⁹ Overy. 2013, p. 18.

in a risky, but decisive blow.

2.2.1 Motivation and Aims

Because of its successful operation, and due to the fact that Germany became the grand loser of the Second World War, the Invasion of Norway is a less speculative theme in historiography than the Invasion of Finland. Surely, nazification and/or subjugation of Norway existed in Hitler's vision of a future 'New Order' in Europe, as much as the world revolution did in Stalin's. However, this was not the primary motivation nor the immediate goal for the German attack on April 9, 1940.³⁰ In his planning for *Weserübung*, Hitler aimed for a peaceful occupation where, in an ideal scenario, the political administration of Denmark and Norway was not taken over by the Germans. This was successful in the case of Denmark.³¹

Hitler did not have any actual plans for conquering Norway before December 1939.³² His focus was on defeating France in a head-on assault on the continent. However, as the offensive was repeatedly postponed during the Winter War months in 1939-1940, his attention gradually turned to the north. It was of utmost importance to the Germans that the *status quo* in Norway and Sweden was preserved and the Nordic Countries remained neutral. British control of Norway would indeed have had severe consequences for the Germans, not only the loss of indispensable Swedish iron ore, but it would also mean British access to the Baltic Sea – an area where Berlin and the heartland of Germany lay poorly defended.³³ Additionally, a German controlled Norway was perceived an excellent position for the German armed forces to stage a counter-blockade and siege of Great Britain.

During the Winter War, Norwegian territorial waters became an international arena for determining whether or not Britain could enforce its blockade of Germany by keeping German vessels out of international waters. If the Norwegians were able to hinder German and British breach of neutrality in their territorial waters, they could escape the situation of being squeezed between the warring powers.³⁴ Nevertheless, tensions over Norwegian neutrality raised constantly and reached a climax in February 1940, during and after the so-called *Altmark* incident. *Altmark* was a German Navy auxiliary ship, carrying 299 British sailors as prisoners, *en route* to Germany through Norwegian waters on February 16 when the British destroyer

³⁰ *ibid.* pp. 22-23 and 25.

³¹ Kersaudy. 1991, pp. 48-49; Skodvin. 1991, pp. 48-49.

³² Kersaudy. 1991, p. 38.

³³ *ibid.* p. 45-46.

³⁴ Stugu. 2012, p. 111.

Cossack, following a short skirmish, captured it. The incident was a blatant breach of Norwegian neutrality and prompted an urgent realisation in Berlin, and indeed in Oslo, that the Norwegians were unable to patrol their neutral waters. Furthermore, the incident confirmed to Hitler that Norwegian authorities would not resist British landings, and urged him to carry out an invasion.³⁵ Following the end of the Winter War in March 1940, the Western Allies cancelled the invasion plan for Scandinavia, relieving the prepared forces to the Western Front while the Germans sped up their preparation for an invasion of Norway. Freed from the risk of a conflict with the Soviet Union, the British leadership proceeded in early April with a ‘minor plan’ against the Norwegian iron route; the deployment of mines in Norwegian waters, backed by a military expedition to counter possible German retaliation.³⁶ The British were too late, however, and by surprise, the ‘minor plan’ was made redundant on April 9 by the German attack.

German propaganda, thus, claimed the motivation behind the invasion of Norway was purely pre-emptive; a first strike in a race with Great Britain. This explanation lived on in historiography for decades.³⁷ However, modern studies maintain that since the Norwegian government and people were pro-British and anti-German, no Allied landings would have taken place without the government’s consent or without an evidence that a German attack was imminent. Furthermore, such a landing would only be limited to strategic locations. Recent historiography also claims that even if an Allied landing had taken place without Norwegian and Swedish approval, the Scandinavians would not have put up a real fight. The German invasion on the other hand, was fully prepared to use force if needed be and was carefully planned as a complete occupation of the whole country.³⁸ It is thus widely viewed as – not a pre-emptive action, but, to use Olav Riste’s words: A “plain aggressive exercise in power politics”.³⁹

2.2.2 The Campaign

German troops disembarked their ships at various locations on the Norwegian coast from Oslo to Narvik on April 9, 1940. Although the invasion hit the Norwegians mentally and physically unprepared, the king and the government refused to cooperate in a peaceful occupation. Instead,

³⁵ Kersaudy. 1991, pp. 42-43; Stugu. 2012, p. 112.

³⁶ Skodvin. 1991. pp. 40-42.

³⁷ Olav Riste. “Norvegr om 9. april 1940: Attersyn med ei historieforfalsking”. *Historisk tidsskrift*. 91:3 (2012), pp. 441-447, pp. 442-444.

³⁸ May-Brith Ohman Nielsen. “Ser du spøkelser, Olav Riste? - et annet perspektiv på historieforfalskning”. *Historisk tidsskrift*. 91:4 (2012), pp. 597-606, pp. 599-600; Riste. 1996, p. 25-26; Riste; 2012, p. 445-446; Stugu. 2012, p. 113.

³⁹ Riste. 1996, p. 55.

they offered resistance and waited for Allied assistance, which was promised to them immediately once the invasion was launched. While the king fled the German onslaught, a German sympathiser, Vidkun Quisling, aimed to collaborate with the Germans and staged a self-initiated coup in Oslo. Quisling was a major in the Norwegian army and a former Norwegian minister of defence who founded the fascist-inspired, far-right political party *Nasjonal Samling* in 1933. The party enjoyed microscopic support from the Norwegian population and received little interest from the Germans until he was granted an audience with Hitler in December 1939, during which he shall have agitated for an invasion of Norway. Soon after his coup, the Germans dismissed Quisling's government for it seemed to have a negative effect on their effort in Norway.⁴⁰

Allied forces landed in Norway less than a week after *Weserübung* commenced, aiming to reinforce the Norwegian defence in central Norway and march on southwards. The Germans, however, enjoying the benefit of air superiority, drove out the inexperienced Allied expedition and managed to gain control over most of Southern Norway by late April, leaving the exhausted Norwegians to a determined struggle in isolated pockets. At the month's end, Norwegian and Allied forces evacuated from the whole of Southern Norway. German air superiority did not reach Northern Norway where the defenders held a more favourable position. The Norwegian army in the north was fully mobilised and went on the offensive along with British and French troops against German-held Narvik. On May 10, 1940, however, Hitler finally ordered the long-awaited invasion of France, which naturally directed British and French priorities towards the Western Front. The British decided to evacuate Norway in early June and the Norwegian king and the government, who had resettled in Tromsø, followed suit and left for Britain, from where they would continue the war in exile. On June 10, all remaining Norwegian forces capitulated to the Germans and the country remained occupied until 1945.

2.3 The Icelandic Political Environment in 1939

2.3.1 The National Government

The Kingdom of Iceland was established with the Act of Union with Denmark in 1918. This meant that Iceland and Denmark were separate sovereign constitutional monarchies in a personal union, although the Danish government was obliged to handle Icelandic matters of defence and foreign affairs. Fairly modernised by 1940, and with a population of c. 120.000

⁴⁰ Kersaudy, 1991, p. 41-42; Skodvin, 1991, p. 50-51.

inhabitants, Iceland was by majority an urban society with a significant rural population.⁴¹

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the interwar era had developed a class-political system where virtually all power was consolidated amongst three mainstream political parties: The Independence Party (i. *Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn*), the Progressive Party (i. *Framsóknarflokkurinn*) and the Labour Party (i. *Alþýðuflokkurinn*). Despite the economic hardships of the 1930s and an omnipresent nationalist culture, the Icelanders shared the Nordic model of rooted parliamentarianism and solid democratic institutions. Political extremism the likes of which was popular in Central and Eastern Europe was scarce in Iceland. The ideological aspects of National Socialism enjoyed some appeal among middle-class anti-communists and nationalists in the 1930s. A political party was formed in 1934 by radical young men of the conservative right; the Nationalist Party (i. *flokkur þjóðernissinna*), which gradually faded out from 1938 on. By 1939, it was “well and securely dead” and the number of vocal members of the national socialist movement had declined into a few dozen at most.⁴² German-friendly elements in Iceland at that time thus consisted mostly of “respected citizens” on the right-wing, whose home was in the mainstream Independence Party.⁴³

By far the largest party in the Althing, the Icelandic parliament, was the right-wing Independence Party, formed by a merger in 1929. Represented by *Vísir* and *Morgunblaðið* in the press, this party of employers and entrepreneurs contained a mixture of liberal and conservative bourgeois elements. The party also aspired to establish itself in resistance of the horizontal class division of politics, which delivered it support from the “average nationalistic and even ‘non-political’” voter in addition to the upper classes.⁴⁴ The Independence Party thus enjoyed the wide support of 41-48% of the electorate during the 1930s.⁴⁵

The Progressive Party, owner of *Tíminn*, was an agrarian-liberal party formed in 1917, largely representing the interests of the prominent rural society. An additional source of influence was the party’s connections with the cooperative movement, which was a growing rural organisation and soon-to-be trading empire. Due to flaws in the electoral system, the Progressive Party was usually overrepresented in the parliament and very powerful and

⁴¹ *Statistics Iceland*. Retrieved 26.06.2014 from www.static.is > Population > Overview > Population - Key Figures 1703-2014; Gunnar Karlsson. *The History of Iceland*. Minneapolis, 2000, pp. 292-293.

⁴² Hrafn Jökulsson and Illugi Jökulsson. *Íslenskir nasistar*. Reykjavík, 1988, pp. 298, 293 and 296-299; Kjartansson. 2002, p. 136. See also: Ásgeir Guðmundsson. “Nazismi á Íslandi. Saga þjóðernishreyfingar Íslendinga og Flokks þjóðernissinna”. *Saga*. 14:1 (1976), pp. 5-69.

⁴³ Whitehead. 1995, p. 38-39.

⁴⁴ Karlsson. 2000, p. 304.

⁴⁵ Kjartansson. 2002, p. 536-537. Parliamentary election results 1931, 1933, 1934 and 1937.

influential. During the 1930s, the party received between 22 and 36 per cent of the votes.⁴⁶

The Labour Party, represented in the press by *Alþýðublaðið*, was a social democratic party formed in 1916, which enjoyed strong ties with the social-democratic sister parties in Scandinavia. The party functioned as the political arm of the Icelandic Confederation of Labour (i. *Alþýðusamband Íslands*), i.e. the organised labour movement. With this link, the party enjoyed significant influence among the working classes, although its grip on the labour movement was constantly challenged from both the left and the right. The Labour Party had the support of 16-22% of the voting population in the decade before the Second World War.⁴⁷

The three mainstream parties took turns occupying government cabinets in various coalitions throughout the 1930s, usually lead by the Progressive Party. Despite their differences, they generally shared a common animosity towards the Icelandic communists, whose ideology was considered alien and dangerous.⁴⁸ In the spring of 1939, a Progressive-Labour government was joined by the Independence Party to form a three-party coalition for the first time. This was a measure to cope better with the economic hardships, the endangering international situation and the rise of communist influence.⁴⁹ The coalition was termed the ‘National Government’ (i. *Þjóðstjórnin*); a name that emphasised its focus on national unity, but simultaneously alienated the three Socialist Party MPs remaining in opposition. The first priority of the National Government was to maintain Icelandic neutrality in the war and try to keep continued trade with both Germany and Britain. Trade with Germany was seen as equally important to British trade because increased trade with Germany in the late 1930s had softened the economic effects of the loss of Spanish fish export markets following the Spanish Civil War.⁵⁰

2.3.2 The Socialist Party

It was mentioned before that far-right extremism was scarce in Iceland before the war. The radical left, however, had a relatively strong support among the Icelandic working classes. Although usually dominated by the Labour Party, the labour movement was greatly influenced by the communists who enjoyed relatively more influence in the labour movement than their sister parties did in the other Nordic Countries.⁵¹ Formed in 1930, the Communist Party of

⁴⁶ Karlsson. 2000, p. 303; Kjartansson. 2002, p. 536.

⁴⁷ *Stefnuskrá Alþýðuflokksins. Samþykkt á 14. þingi Alþýðusambands Íslands 16. nóv. 1937*. Reykjavík, 1938, pp. 3-4; Kjartansson. 2002, p. 536.

⁴⁸ Kjartansson. 2002, pp. 138 and 231.

⁴⁹ Stefania Óskarsdóttir. “List hins mögulega: Myndun ríkisstjórna 1917-2009”. *Þingræði á Íslandi. Samtíð og saga*. Eds: Ragnhildur Helgadóttir et al. Reykjavík, 2011, pp. 259-293, pp. 266-267; Kjartansson. 2002, p. 231.

⁵⁰ Pétur J. Thorsteinsson. *Utanríkisþjónusta Íslands og utanríkismál. 1. Sögulegt Yfirlit*. Reykjavík, 1992, p. 156.

⁵¹ Ingimarsson. 2012, p. 304.

Iceland was a revolutionary vanguard party, which operated in cooperation with the Communist International.⁵² In 1938, the party merged with a splinter group from the Labour Party to form the People's Unity Party – The Socialist Party (i. *Sameiningarflokkur Alþýðu – Sósíalístaflokkurinn*). It has been described as becoming a “radical mass movement” with the merger and was by definition a democratic socialist party and a non-member of the Comintern.⁵³ The far-left gained increasing support during the 1930s, gaining from 3 to 9 per cent of the electoral votes. This was the largest share of parliamentary votes received by any pro-Soviet far-left party in Scandinavia.⁵⁴

With the Socialist Party leadership consisting predominantly of communists after the merger in 1938, it was unmistakably aligned with Moscow in these years. The leadership was in contact with the Soviets and in the party's official manifest, the leadership ensured that the revolutionary way preserved as an option for a final push to power.⁵⁵ Some scholars maintain that even though it was a mass movement, the Socialist Party of the 1940s was still bent on stealing power in Iceland with or without the aid of the Soviet Union.⁵⁶

2.4 Iceland during the Phoney War

Even though the creation of the National Government in the spring of 1939 may have had something to do with rising communist influence, it was primarily an attempt to steer the country securely through the windy waters of depression and the upcoming Second World War. Upon gaining sovereignty in the Act of Union Treaty with Denmark in 1918, Iceland declared “perpetual neutrality” (i. *ævarandi hlutleysi*). This was part of the Icelanders' nationalist ideal for living free and autonomous on their island.⁵⁷ With war approaching, the declaration was stressed along with the Nordic Countries in Stockholm in 1938, and again after the outbreak of war a year later. In effect, these Icelandic neutrality declarations were nothing more than empty statements. The declaration of 1918 had no legal authority, unlike the perpetual neutrality of Switzerland for example, which was a legally binding contract.⁵⁸ Furthermore, unlike the other

⁵² Whitehead. 1979. pp. 101-110.

⁵³ Ingimarsson. 2012, p. 305; ; Guðni Th. Jóhannesson. *Óvinir ríkisins. Ógnir og innra öryggi í kalda stríðinu á Íslandi*. Reykjavík, 2006, p. 113.

⁵⁴ Kjartansson. 2002, p. 536; R.Neal Tannahill. *The Communist Parties of Western Europe. A Comparative Study*. London, 1978, pp. 251-262; The Danish, Norwegian and Swedish communist parties had the support of 0.6-3.5% of their respective electorates in the 1930s. The Finnish party was outlawed.

⁵⁵ Jóhannesson, G. 2006, p. 47.

⁵⁶ See for examle: Whitehead. 2010, pp.348-349 and 425 and 429.

⁵⁷ Whitehead. 1980, p. 49.

⁵⁸ Hannes Jónsson. “Íslensk hlutleysisstefna. Fræðilega hlutleysið 1918-1941”. *Andvari* 11:1 (1989), pp. 203-224, pp. 205-206.

Nordic Countries, Icelandic neutrality would not be enforced since there existed no army to defend it. After the outbreak of war in September 1939, the National Government went great lengths to maintain the neutrality policy, for example by taking equal measures when German and British sea- and airmen found themselves stranded on the island. Additionally, the government tried to talk itself past the British blockade in order to continue trading with Germany.⁵⁹

Despite all this talk of neutrality, the position of Iceland at the outbreak of war was in ways similar to that of Norway discussed before. According to Whitehead, the Icelandic government favoured the Western Allies above the Germans and it based its neutrality policy on the belief that Iceland was – and had been since the Napoleonic Wars – established within the British sphere of influence and already protected, without a garrison, by the Royal Navy roaming the North Atlantic.⁶⁰ Despite Icelandic protests, trade with Germany was ceased already by November 1939, and in January 1940, secret Icelandic-British trade negotiations had secured Icelandic exports to Britain.⁶¹ Icelandic officials even recognised that the British were “fighting for law and order in Europe and for the rights of minor nations, including the Icelanders, to live in peace” and the authorities made arrangements after the Invasion of Denmark and Norway so that aid could be called in from Britain if the Germans attempted landings in Iceland.⁶² All this, of course, was top secret. On the outside, Iceland was supposed to look completely neutral – and there were few voices in government circles who wanted to change that.

2.4.1 The Non-communist Press and the World War

When the Second World War broke out in September 1939, the political organs of the National Government addressed their readers in a rather paternalistic manner, preparing the public for a long period of sacrifice, isolation and shortages of imported goods. There was a universal understanding in the papers that the outbreak of war was a terrible and unwelcome tragedy and that the official neutrality policy of the country should be maintained at all cost.⁶³ The complete non-communist press was undoubtedly more aligned with the Western Allies than Nazi-Germany in terms of politics. Additionally, Whitehead points out that the British enjoyed the

⁵⁹ *ibid.* p. 208.

⁶⁰ Whitehead. 1980, pp. 47-50.

⁶¹ Thorsteinsson. 1992, p. 157-159; Whitehead. 1995, p. 179.

⁶² Whitehead. 1995, p. 156. and 362.

⁶³ See for example: “Heimurinn og við”. *Vísir*. 04.09.1939, p. 2; “Dimmasti dagurinn”. *Morgunblaðið*. 04.09.1939, p. 3; Jónas Jónsson. “Svo hafa forlög fært þeim dóm að höndum”. *Tíminn*. 05.09.1939, p. 406; “Stríðsviðbúnaður Íslendinga”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 04.09.1939, p. 3.

upper hand in a “propaganda war” which took place in in all Icelandic media. This fact apparently outraged the German consul in Iceland who complained about an unequal representation of Germany in the Icelandic newspapers.⁶⁴

Even though the social-democratic *Alþýðublaðið* was advocate of the official Icelandic neutrality, it was the only paper to take an explicit anti-German and pro-Allied stance when referring to outside the war itself. In early September 1939, the paper was in no doubt as to who was to blame for the great conflict. The Second World war was considered an “unscrupulous” and deliberate, cold-blooded war of “German Nazism”, as declared by the editor on September 5, who underlined that the Western powers had only gone to war to put an end to German “aggression” and “violence”.⁶⁵ Such explicitly pro-Allied remarks were seldom released in the centre-right press before April-May 1940, although *Tíminn* occasionally gave the impression during the Phoney War that its commentators disliked German actions in direct relation to the German-British conflict.⁶⁶ Otherwise, the right-wing press was careful to maintain the utmost neutrality towards the Germans in its writings, at least before the British Occupation of Iceland. After the occupation and the escalation of the world war in Europe in May and June 1940, there is a marked increase in pro-Allied remarks appearing in all of the centre-right papers.⁶⁷

The Soviet Union was fiercely castigated in the non-communist press across titles, and especially in relation to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. *Alþýðublaðið* went by far the furthest in interpreting the pact as an alliance of cooperation. Quite a few opinion pieces published in the Labour Party organ during the winter of 1939-1940 onwards depicted the world war in that period as a jointly devised conspiracy by the two dictators in Germany and Russia.⁶⁸

Pro-German remarks are rare and almost non-existent. The very few opinion pieces carrying pro-German sentiments are mostly articles from German sources published in *Visir* and *Morgunblaðið* in January and February 1940, promoting the German point of view regarding the heated situation of the Nordic Countries.⁶⁹ Comparing Hitler and Stalin in February 1940,

⁶⁴ Whitehead. 1995, p. 192-194. See for example: “Breska þingið á ófriðartímum”. *Morgunblaðið*. 07.02.1940, p. 5.

⁶⁵ “Hínir seku”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 05.09.1939, p. 3.

⁶⁶ See for example: “Yfir landamærin”. *Tíminn*. 23.03.1940, p. 132; “Áróður kommúnista”. *Tíminn*. 25.01.1940, p. 39.

⁶⁷ See for example: “Sóknin mikla”. *Visir*. 11.05.1940, p. 2; Jónas Jónsson. “Hið breytta viðhorf”. *Tíminn*. 16.05.1940, p. 206.

⁶⁸ See for example: “Varnarstríð(!)” *Alþýðublaðið*. 15.12.1940, p. 3; Sigurður Einarsson. “Þreifað til meðalkaflans”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 09.02.1940, p. 2; “Örlagastund Norðurlanda”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 09.03.1940, p. 3; “Uppgjöf Finna”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 14.03.1940, p. 3; “Auðvaldsstyrjöld?”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 22.05.1940, p. 3.

⁶⁹ “Hótanir Þýskalands í garð Norðurlanda”. *Visir*: 08.01.1940, p. 2; “Hættan, sem Norður-Evrópu stafar úr Austri”. *Morgunblaðið*. 23.01.1940, p. 5; ““Altmark”-atvikið”. *Morgunblaðið*. 20.02.1940, p. 4.

Morgunblaðið's columnist presented Hitler and the Nazi state in an unusually positive light.⁷⁰ This article is probably the only explicitly pro-German opinion piece written by an Icelandic journalist during the Phoney War period.⁷¹

2.4.2 Political and Popular Reactions to the Invasions of Scandinavia

Sovereignty Day, December 1, was the national holiday of the Kingdom of Iceland. It was the day Iceland became a sovereign state in 1918, the same year an array of other minor nations became independent, including Finland. Sovereignty Day in 1939, however, the first day of the Winter War, was not engulfed in celebrations of freedom, but sympathy and grief. With the Icelandic and Finnish national flags flying at the front, the traditional Sovereignty Day student parade in



Image 1: The gathering outside the Finnish consulate in Reykjavik on December 1, 1939. The Icelandic and Finnish national flags can be seen in the foreground. *Morgunblaðið* claimed the crowd numbered 8.000-10.000 people. Source: *Morgunblaðið*. 02.12.1939.

Reykjavik was transformed into a “walk of solidarity”. A crowd, claimed by the papers to be the largest gathering in Reykjavik since 1918, assembled outside the Finnish consulate where the “condolences of students and the Icelandic nation” were ceremonially delivered to the consul, followed by Reykjavik City Band’s performance of the Icelandic and Finnish national anthems.⁷² Sovereignty Day celebrations and gatherings were also cancelled elsewhere, or had their agendas changed as to include the payment of respect to the Finns.⁷³

Although the Icelandic government did not issue any official statements about the Soviet invasion of Finland in November 1939, its members expressed their pro-Finnish and anti-Soviet standpoint decisively both in words and actions. Virtually every prominent member of the government, along with members of the intelligentsia and government agencies, signed an address of sympathy and good wishes to the Finns, issued by the Nordic Association in Iceland on December 1.⁷⁴ The address was broadcast over state radio and published in all the major

⁷⁰ “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 04.02.1940, p. 5.

⁷¹ See also: Whitehead. 1995, 192.

⁷² “Samúðarvottur stúdenta...” *Morgunblaðið*. 02.12.1939, p. 3.

⁷³ Jónsson, A. 2013, p. 149-150.

⁷⁴ The Nordic Association (n. *Foreningen Norden*) was, and is, a pan-Nordic organisation working towards increased Nordic cooperation and friendship.

newspapers in Reykjavík before it was sent to the government in Finland.⁷⁵ Three days later, the parliament took a more formal and decisive stance with the Finnish cause at a parliament session. Having resigned from the idea to ban the Socialist Party, whose communist leadership refused to condemn the invasion, the Speaker of the parliament read out a declaration, signed by all MPs except the Socialists and three absent members:

In light of the position that the communist party, which operates here under the name Socialist Unity Party – the Socialist Party –, its MPs and party organs, have established towards the freedom, rights and democracy of the minor nations in the last weeks, and especially regarding the case of Finland, the undersigned MPs declare that they consider the dignity of the Althing outraged by the presence of representatives of such a party in the parliament.^{76(b)}

A few weeks later, all non-Socialist members of the parliament also demonstrated their support of Finland by collectively donating one week of their pay to the Icelandic Finland Relief program.⁷⁷

The Finland Relief (i. *Finnlandssöfnunin*) was launched on December 10, 1939; the so-called “Finland Day” in Reykjavík. The Icelandic Red Cross and the Nordic Association in Iceland organised the event which included entertainment and public speeches in order to raise money for Finns in need. The success of the day led to a nation-wide fund-raising which lasted throughout the Winter War and beyond. Markedly, the Finland Relief became the largest and most far-reaching fund-raising ever held in Iceland at the time. The Red Cross received money donations from firms and individuals; apparently from all walks of life, as well as gifts of knitted clothing and other wares. The Red Cross packed and sent supplies to Finland in the form of clothing and cheques of money.⁷⁸ In addition, the Icelandic Red Cross was in contact with the sister association in Finland and other actors during the Winter War, offering to mediate evacuated Finnish children to care in Icelandic families. According to *Tíminn*, at least 40 families volunteered to the undertaking but the Finnish Red Cross declined the offer in January 1940 due to the distance and risky transport.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ “Ávarp frá Íslendingum til finnsku þjóðarinnar”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 01.12.1939, p. 1. Among the total of 42 signatories to the address were all four ministers of the government, all three Speakers of the Althing, the leaders of the three mainstream political parties, the Mayor of Reykjavík, the Bishop of Iceland, the rectors of the University of Iceland and Reykjavík Gymnasium, editors of the largest non-communist newspapers and the leadership of the National Broadcasting Services.

⁷⁶ *Alþingistíðindi*. 1939, B-D, p. 1341.

⁷⁷ Jónsson, A. 2013, p. 153.

⁷⁸ *ibid.* p. 152-153. See also: “Finnlandssöfnunin”. *Vísir*. 22.12.1939, p. 6, where a comprehensive list of donors is published. The Icelandic Finland Relief collected money and wares amounting for a total of 175.000 ISK, which was a significant sum at the time. In today's values (2012), this amounts to c. 33 million ISK.

⁷⁹ *ibid.* p. 151-152.

The storms of the concluded Winter War had just begun to settle on April 9, 1940, when the news of the German Invasion of Norway and union-member Denmark reached Iceland. A historic moment presented itself with Denmark occupied and the king of Iceland imprisoned in his palace. During an extraordinary parliament session in the evening of April 9, MPs agreed to a parliament resolution which released the king's constitutional duties over to the Icelandic government and with a stroke of pen, the 700 year reign of foreign kings was, "for the time being", put to an end.⁸⁰ The government and non-Socialist MPs also made the decision that day not to plead for British military protection in light of the events in Denmark, but to remain neutral. Protection had already been offered by the British in December 1939 and January 1940 and the future British prime minister Winston Churchill publicly declared after *Operation Weserübung* that he would not allow for a German occupation of Iceland.⁸¹

There was no walk of solidarity through the streets of Reykjavík on April 9, 1940, nor a public conveyance of condolences at the consulates. Instead, a crowd of people gathered in town until past darkness, monitoring the latest news updates from Scandinavia. News leaflets were spread out and homemade news panels were flung from the windows of *Morgunblaðið's* headquarters, which were lit up with spotlights in the evening. *Alþýðublaðið* followed suit and exhibited the latest news written on boards in the windows of the paper's offices. The events in Denmark had brought the war closer to the Icelanders; they even woke up the day after the invasion to false news reports that Germany was at war with them.⁸²

In May, however, the Norwegians fighting for their homeland did receive a resemblance of the mass-gatherings previously undertaken for the support of Finland. The Labour Party and the Confederation of Labour decided to dedicate their Labour Day celebrations this year to the "brethren-nations in the Nordic countries", as a token of support for the international social democratic movement and the international struggle against fascism. The workers' holiday thus became, as *Alþýðublaðið* claimed: "a mighty declaration of sympathy", especially for Norway.^{83(c)} The parade marched through town with the Nordic national flags at the front, making stops for Reykjavík City Band to play the national anthems of Denmark and Norway at their respective consulates. Meanwhile, pins were sold in the streets with the label of the day;

⁸⁰ The 1918 Act of Union was legally due for reconsideration in 1943 when the extraordinary events in Denmark forced an early separation. Iceland was proclaimed a republic in 1944 with the recognition of the Western Allies while Denmark was still occupied by Germany.

⁸¹ Whitehead. 1995, p. 268-270 and 280-281.

⁸² Guðjón Friðriksson. *Nýjustu fréttir! Saga fjölmiðlunar á Íslandi frá upphafi til vorra daga*. Reykjavík, 2000, p.168; "Frjettastarfsemi *Morgunblaðsins*". *Morgunblaðið*. 10.04.1940, pp. 5-6; Whitehead. 1995, p. 276.

⁸³ "1. maí undir merkjum verkalýðshreyfingarinnar..." *Alþýðublaðið*. 27.04.1940, p. 1.

the Nordic flags on a shield with a red ribbon.⁸⁴ The number of people gathered on this day is uncertain, although, it is safe to assume that the Labour Party's agenda was the most widely attended that day. The right-wing paper *Vísir* stated in protest that people had not joined Labour's parade out of sympathy for the party, but for "other kind of sympathy" - that towards the neighbours at war.⁸⁵

Even though the Labour Party may have played on people's sympathies to attract them to their celebrations on May 1, it were generally members and associates of the party who organised and/or appeared in the events demonstrating sympathy and brotherhood with Norway and Finland. During the Winter War, there are reported two such meetings being held with arrangements for cultural enlightenment and entertainment whilst raising money for the Finland Relief. The Reykjavík Labour Party Society (i. *Alþýðuflokksfélag Reykjavíkur*) included such an arrangement at one of its political meetings in December 1939 and shortly after the invasion of Norway, the association held the only reported educational meeting dedicated to Norway and Denmark with reference to the invasion.⁸⁶

The Nordic Association in Iceland, whose president was the Labour minister and party leader Stefán Jóh. Stefánsson, was the standard-bearer of sympathy with Norway and Finland.⁸⁷ Having co-organised the successful Finland Relief, the Nordic Association proceeded with a new fund-raising along with the Norwegian Society in Iceland (n. *Nordmannslaget*) on the Norwegian Constitution Day, May 17, 1940. This was intended for a handful of Norwegian refugees who fled the German onslaught on fishing boats. According to news reports, the first boat arrived in Seyðisfjörður from Molde on May 7, carrying ten fishermen followed by a second fishing boat in Akureyri a week later, carrying 16 people from Ålesund.⁸⁸ May 17 was far different from the "Finland Day" spectacle in December which triggered the Finland Relief. Followed by a Norwegian service in Reykjavík Cathedral, members of the Nordic Association sold pins in the streets of Reykjavík, Akureyri and Hafnarfjörður while the state radio broadcast

⁸⁴ "1. maí hátíðahöld 1940". *Alþýðublaðið*. 01.05.1940, p. 2; "Áhrifamikil hátíðahöld verkalýðsins..." *Alþýðublaðið*. 03.05.1940, p. 1.

⁸⁵ "Vorpróf Alþýðuflokksins". *Vísir*. 03.05.1940, p. 2.

⁸⁶ "Andúðin gegn höggorminum vaxandi". *Alþýðublaðið*. 13.12.1939, p. 1 and 4, p. 4; "VI. Fræðslukvöld Alþýðuflokksfélagsins". *Alþýðublaðið*. 13.04.1940, p.2; "Á krossgötum". *Tíminn*. 30.01.1940, p. 45. Three of these meetings took place in Reykjavík and one in Grindavík. The main speakers in all of them were known supporters or members of the Labour Party including Stefán Jóh. Stefánsson, Einar Kr. Einarsson, Ólafur Hansson and Sigður Einarsson.

⁸⁷ Stefánsson's presidential post in the Nordic Association was primarily formal. It was mainly the secretary of the association, Guðlaugur Rósinkranz, a known supporter of the Progressive Party, who headed its activities in the period.

⁸⁸ "Flóttamenn frá Noregi..." *Alþýðublaðið*. 09.05.1940, p. 1; "Norsk fiskiskip..." *Morgunblaðið*. 15.05.1940, p.3.

a message followed by a performance of Norwegian music. Compared to the profits of the “Finland Day” which produced c. 11.000 ISK on the first day, the fund-raising on May 17 collected slightly over 6.000 ISK.⁸⁹ No further fund-raising was conducted for the Norwegians in this period.⁹⁰

2.4.3 The Socialist Party and the Invasions in Scandinavia

Despite its relative strength, the Socialist Party experienced a historical low-point already one year after its formation in 1938. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the Soviet Invasion of Eastern Poland in the autumn of 1939 tested the Icelandic communists’ loyalty to Stalin. The party leadership confusingly tried to explain and apologise the controversial foreign policy of the Soviet Union, even though the party was no longer an official part of the Comintern and its newspaper officially claimed a neutral standpoint in these affairs.⁹¹

The Socialist Party was hard hit by the Soviet invasion of Finland and its isolation reached new heights. The communists themselves coined the term *Finnagaldur* (‘Finnish-trick’), which has stuck in historiography, describing the wave of internal and external disfavour with the Socialist Party during that year. Many members left the party, including the non-Soviet-aligned arm of the leadership, which had joined the communists in the merger one year earlier. Among them was the party boss himself, Héðinn Valdimarsson who ended his political carrier there and then.⁹² *Þjóðviljinn* entered financial disarray, not only due to the lack of advertisement revenue but also because the paper lost nearly half of its subscribers.⁹³ Additionally, party members were denied from renting rooms and locales for their meetings and arrangements and Socialist MPs were largely ignored in the parliament throughout the rest of the year. The situation even reached such heights that it came to physical clashes between the Socialist party leader and the prime minister in March 1940.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ “Þjóðhátíðardagur Norðmanna er í dag”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 17.05.1940, p. 2; “Fjársofnun vegan norskra flóttamanna”. *Vísir*. 18.05.1940, p. 2; “Rúmlega 6 þúsund krónur söfnuðust...” *Morgunblaðið*. 19.05.1940, p. 7.

⁹⁰ The Red Cross and the Nordic Association coordinated the Norway Relief (i. *Noregssöfnunin*) in 1942 which lasted throughout the occupation of Norway. After the German capitulation in 1945, the Icelandic government organised a short-term but far-reaching fund-raising to aid Norwegians and Danes in their time of need (Margrét Guðmundsdóttir. *Í þágu mannúðar. Saga Rauða kross Íslands 1924-1999*. Reykjavík, 2000, p. 118-123).

⁹¹ Whitehead. 1995, p. 63.

⁹² Chairman of the Socialist Party for one year, Valdimarsson had optimistically lead his supporters from the Labour Party into the merger with the Communist Party of Iceland in 1938. The split was the straw which broke the camel’s back in a series of disagreements between Valdimarsson and the communists within the party leadership. (Whitehead. 1995, p. 67).

⁹³ Whitehead. 2010, p. 359-360; Friðriksson. 2000, p. 177.

⁹⁴ Whitehead. 1995, p. 69 and 268; For details of Prime Minister Hermann Jónasson’s and Socialist Party leader Brynjólfur Bjarnasson’s physical clash, see footnote 15 in Chapter III.

The Icelandic *Finnagaldur* had its parallels in other democracies during the winter of 1939-1940. A similar advertisement boycott was employed against the communist newspapers in Norway and Denmark while some of the Swedish communist press was the subject of terrorism and government confiscations.⁹⁵ In France, communists were ousted or arrested throughout the country and in March-April 1940, French communist MPs were tried and sentenced for treason.⁹⁶ Around that same time, in late March and early April, a parliament resolution was suggested at the Icelandic parliament, presented by three government MPs. Inspired by the Winter War discourse, it was directed against those persons who aspired to “overturn the societal order with violence and deliver Iceland under a foreign state”⁹⁷ In its original form, the resolution would have restricted these persons from holding offices for the Icelandic state, but its final and passed version was merely an indecisive confirmation of the government parties’ fears and suspicion towards communists and other political extremists.⁹⁸

As for opinions and portrayals of the foreign events, the communist press echoed the Socialist Party leadership’s claim that the Soviet Union was not at war with “the Finnish nation” - only with the Finnish government, which *Þjóðviljinn* tirelessly criticised for being an imperialist and oppressive regime of reaction during the winter of 1939-1940. Personified in the former leader of the White Guard in the Finnish Civil War, Carl Emil Mannerheim, who now was the chief of the Finnish defence during the Winter War, the supposedly illegitimate and militaristic ‘Mannerheim-government’ was presented by the paper as an enemy of the people.⁹⁹ Thus, *Þjóðviljinn* celebrated the prospects of a communist liberation of the Finnish people, just as it had celebrated the sovietization of Eastern Poland and the Baltic states.¹⁰⁰ In addition, the communist press maintained the Soviet argumentations of a pre-emptive strike. The Finnish government is said to have conspired with both Nazi-Germany and the Western Allies against the Soviet Union and engaged in an excessive military build-up.¹⁰¹ In light of this

⁹⁵ Strømsøe. 1997, p. 350.

⁹⁶ Geoff Eley. *Forging Democracy. The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000*. Oxford, 2002, p. 279.

⁹⁷ *Alþingistiðindi*. 1940, A, p. 250.

⁹⁸ Whitehead. 1995, p. 197.

⁹⁹ Brynjólfur Bjarnasson. “Finnagaldur þjóðstjórnarihaldsins”. *Þjóðviljinn*. 07.12.1939, p. 3; Ársæll Sigurðsson, Brynjólfur Bjarnasson, et al. “Sex-menningunum svarað”. *Þjóðviljinn*. 13.12.1939, pp. 2; Einar Olgeirsson. “*Morgunblaðið* svívirðir Jón Sigurðsson”. *Þjóðviljinn*. 27.01.1940, p. 3; “Frelsisbarátta finnsku alþýðunnar [VI]”. *Þjóðviljinn*. 01.03.1940, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰ Ársæll Sigurðsson, Brynjólfur Bjarnasson, et al. “Sex-menningunum svarað”. *Þjóðviljinn*. 13.12.1939, pp. 2; “Sovétstjórnin í Vestur-Hvítarússlandi....” *Þjóðviljinn*. 20.12.1939, p. 3; “Um víða veröld”. *Þjóðviljinn*. 09.01.1940, p. 3.

¹⁰¹ Brynjólfur Bjarnasson. “Finnagaldur þjóðstjórnarihaldsins”. *Þjóðviljinn*. 07.12.1939, p. 3; “Frelsisbarátta finnsku alþýðunnar [VI]”. *Þjóðviljinn*. 01.03.1940, p. 2; “Svissneska sósíalístaðlaðið...” *Þjóðviljinn*. 05.01.1940, p. 2; “Um víða veröld”. *Þjóðviljinn*. 15.12.1939, p. 3.

believe, the communist press claimed that the war was purely a “defensive war” with the benefits of a socialist liberation as a positive side-effect.¹⁰²

Þjóðviljinn presented an interpretation of the Second World War according to the latest line from Moscow. The effect of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact on the activities of the communist parties in Europe was that criticism relating to the war was directed from an anti-fascist standpoint into a general anti-imperialist standpoint. Germany was now considered no worse an imperialist power than the Western Allies.¹⁰³ This line is reflected in the writings of *Þjóðviljinn* during the Phoney War period, whose OP writers softened their view of Nazi-Germany and bashed relentlessly on the British.¹⁰⁴ *Þjóðviljinn's* opinion on the German Invasion of Norway and Denmark was in line with this anti-imperialist perspective. The paper declared its sincere condolences with the Norwegian and Danish peoples for being dragged into the imperialist war.¹⁰⁵

Þjóðviljinn opposed the Allied intervention in the Norwegian Campaign as well.¹⁰⁶ The paper criticised the Allies heavily for mine laying in Norwegian waters, even claiming that the Germans were “lured” into performing the invasion by the British. Even though the paper maintained that the Allies were illegitimately fighting the war on Norwegian ground, it still accused them of “betrayal” when the British evacuated Norway in early May 1940, for giving the Norwegians false hopes that they cared for them.¹⁰⁷ The communist press’ hostile attitude towards the British continued into the British Occupation of Iceland, against which *Þjóðviljinn* fought fiercely in its writings, eventually earning the hostility of the occupation authorities who banned the paper in April 1941 and moved its editors as prisoners to Britain.¹⁰⁸

2.5 Epilogue

Such was the mind set of those in Icelandic government circles when they decided to decline British offers of protection after the invasion of Denmark and Norway, that they regarded such offers “double-edged” and a threat to the nation’s independence, even though most of them

¹⁰² Brynjólfur Bjarnasson. “Finnagaldur þjóðstjórnaríhaldsins”. *Þjóðviljinn*. 07.12.1939, p. 3.

¹⁰³ Robert Conquest. *Comrades. Communism: A World History*. London, 2007, pp. 214-215.

¹⁰⁴ “Um hvað er barizt á vígvöllum Evrópu”. *Þjóðviljinn*. 18.05.1940, p. 2.

¹⁰⁵ “Hrammur stórveldastyrjaldarinnar...” *Þjóðviljinn*. 01.04.1940, p. 2; “Fórnarlömb stórveldanna”. *Þjóðviljinn*. 12.04.1940, p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ “Fórnarlömb stórveldanna”. *Þjóðviljinn*. 12.04.1940, p. 3; “Gegn auðvaldi fyrir friði”. *Þjóðviljinn*. 13.04.1940, p. 2.

¹⁰⁷ “Hugleiðingar Örvarodds”. *Þjóðviljinn*. 17.04.1940, p. 3; “Hvar svíkja þeir næst?” *Þjóðviljinn*. 05.05.1940, p. 2.

¹⁰⁸ Whitehead. 2010, p. 374.

considered a German occupation “the worst curse that could be brought over the country”.^{109(d)} Norway and Iceland thus shared the common attribute of being politically aligned with the Allies and preferring an indirect protection by the Royal Navy as a means of staying on the “right side”, to quote Norwegian foreign minister Halvdan Koht’s words, while officially preserving neutrality.¹¹⁰

The Icelandic political and popular reactions to the invasions of Norway and Finland resemble the winter of 1939-1940 as a period of uncertainty. The battle between communism, fascism and democracy was in its starting phase without a winner emergent. They display a decisive feeling of solidarity, although its form of expression seems to have been dictated by proximity and urgency – the Finnish case receiving more symbolic reactions and the Norwegian-Danish case generating more serious reactions of real danger. In the next chapter, we will see how the Icelandic press reacted to the Invasion of Finland.

¹⁰⁹ Whitehead. 1995, p. 269.

¹¹⁰ Stugu. 2012, p. 113.

Chapter III

The Soviet Invasion of Finland in the Icelandic Non-Communist Press

All four newspapers this research is based on, decisively and openly took sides with Finland and against the Soviet Union during the Winter War. *Visir*, *Morgunblaðið*, *Tíminn* and *Alþýðublaðið* maintained the widely-held opinion that the Soviet invasion was an act of illegitimate violence. In this chapter, the discursive themes that were identified in the Icelandic Winter War discourse will be presented, along with quotes and references to the Icelandic newspapers. We shall reveal if, and how, the discourse evolved over time and eventual dissimilarities between newspaper titles. Six discursive themes were identified in the source material, and are categorised into three groups, appearing here in order of significance:

1. Domestic Anti-Communism: Themes about the expression of anti-communism relating to the Winter War.
2. Portrayals of the Winter War Belligerents: Themes about the portrayals of the Finns and the Soviets in relation to the day-to-day conflict on the battlefield.
3. The Frontier-Metaphors: Themes about the wider significance of the Winter War in Europe.

3.1 Domestic Anti-Communism

Domestic anti-communism during the Winter War is the most obvious characteristic of the whole Winter War discourse. Winter War anti-communism appears principally as a reaction to the writings of communist press; *Þjóðviljinn*, and the opinions of Socialist Party leaders. These actors are accused of failing to denounce the invasion of Finland, celebrating the Soviet attack, rejoicing over Finnish calamities and legitimising Soviet violence by disguising it as a liberation.¹ The discourse is largely uniform and is usually structured in a way as if the four papers repeat one after another, in diverse forms, the following five points: (1) It is unbelievable that there are people in this country who apologise an act such as the Invasion of Finland. (2) Such people have willingly resigned from this society and their allegiance lies abroad. (3) This

¹ See for example: “Fullveldisdagurinn í ár”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 01.12.1939. p. 3; “Fyrirlitnir menn”. *Visir*. 02.12.1939, p. 2.

is something we, the anti-communist elements, already knew, but is now exposed to the whole nation. (4) They would form a puppet-government here too, if the Red Army came to Iceland and (5) it is therefore important to exclude them from society. Let us now review the anti-communist discursive themes deriving from this train of thought:

1. “The *Kuusinens*” and the *Drop of the Mask*: The idea that the Soviet Invasion of Finland had dispelled a myth about the Soviet Union and communists being peaceful and non-aggressive. Functioning as fifth column for an aggressive power, domestic communist are proved treacherous.
2. Call for Excommunication: The idea that Icelandic communists must be politically excluded from society because of their standpoint towards the Invasion of Finland and the argumentation for their danger described above.

3.1.1 “The *Kuusinens*” and the *Drop of the Mask*

““The Protector of the Minor Nations” fully reveals itself”, declared *Tíminn's* front page headline on December 1, 1939, the day after the Soviet Invasion of Finland began.^{2(a)} This exact term; “protector of the minor nations” (i. *verndari smáþjóðanna*), usually within quotation marks, appears frequently in the non-communist press to denote and mock the Soviet Union, whose leaders had posed as the defenders of the minor nations against Nazi-Germany.³ The Invasion of Finland illustrated to these papers that the Soviet Union was an enemy of the minor nations, not their defender. Many opinion pieces, especially during the Winter War's opening weeks, thus describe the invasion as a *drop of the mask* (i. *grímufall*). The term was used to metaphorically to describe an exposure of a concealed real intent of the Soviet Union and of the Icelandic communists.⁴ The social-democratic *Alþýðublaðið* wrote on December 6, quite alarmingly, as if to wake up those among its working class readership who perhaps still harboured warm feelings towards the Soviet Union, that “what people had previously believed in” was now betrayed.^{5(b)} The invasion dispelled “once and for all” the illusion that Russia was a “worker's and peasant's state.”^{6(c)}

To the hardened anti-communist commentators who were no amateurs in the debate with

² ““Verndari smáþjóðanna” afhjúpar sig til fullnustu”. *Tíminn*. 01.12.1939, p. 553.

³ See for example: “Fyrirlitnir menn”. *Vísir*. 02.12.1939, p. 2; “Landráðaskrif kommúnista”. *Vísir*. 27.01.1940, p. 4; “Verndari smáþjóðanna að verki” [image]. *Tíminn*. 30.12.1939, p. 597.

⁴ See for example: “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 31.12.1939, p. 5; “Hvað verður um kommúnistana?”. *Vísir*. 07.12.1939, p. 2; Jónas Guðmundsson. “Kommúnistar heima og erlendis.” *Alþýðublaðið*. 10.02.1940, p. 3; Sr. Brynjólfur Magnússon. “Friðarríkið í austri og Finnlandsstyrjöldin”. *Tíminn*. 09.03.1940, p. 110.

⁵ “Verið á verði”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 06.12.1939, p. 2.

⁶ “Rússneskir verkamenn og bændur”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 21.12.1939, p. 3.

communists, the drop of the mask was no surprise. The discourse is, on the other hand, directed at the greater public, made to illustrate to previous non-believers or believers of the opposite cause that those pointing the finger had been right all along. In late January 1940, an author of a *Vísir* article pointed out that the latest international events were the variable which made Winter War anti-communism different from classic anti-communism:

Each and every true Icelander despises the activities, the mentality and the mental wretchedness of these men [the communists]. Most people has viewed them as lacking a fatherland, but harmless upstarts. But the eyes of the nation are now opening to that they can be very harmful in these ongoing dangerous times.^{7(d)}

Morgunblaðið boasted over the fact that now that the Invasion of Finland had “opened the eyes of the nation”, the Independence Party could proudly remind that it had always fought valiantly against communism in years past and its proponents had foreseen something like this coming.⁸ To the same effect, it was also commonplace for OP writers to list highlights from the history of the Icelandic Communist Party - often with quotes from their leaders or publications, leading up to the autumn of 1939 and the invasion of Finland proving the point that anti-communists had been right all along.⁹ As much as the invasion appalled and displeased these writers, the suggested final exposure of the communists must therefore have been a positive side effect for the non-communist press.

The Soviet Invasion of Finland was supposed to have proven the real nature of Icelandic communists regarding three points: First, their violent and aggressive nature; that they could and would use violence to advance to power. “[He] who defends the murderers cause”, wrote *Vísir's* editor, poetically describing Icelandic communists, has the “victim's blood on his guilty hands”.^{10(e)} Second, the communists are accused of being hypocritical in their stance towards national freedom and the rights of minor nations and third, the dropped mask represents the communists' own patriotic and democratic rhetoric which the non-communist press claimed was now proven as being lies and disguise. Of course, this was no new anti-communist propaganda. What caused alarm for the authorities and established anti-communists at that particular time was the perceived aggressiveness of the Soviet Union and the example set by Finnish communist Otto Ville Kuusinen and his puppet government set up in Soviet occupied

⁷ “Hvað á að gera við föðurlandssvikaranna?” *Vísir*. 29.01.1940, p. 2.

⁸ “Níðingsverkið”. *Morgunblaðið*. 06.12.1939, p. 5.

⁹ See for example: “Föðurlandssvikarar”. *Morgunblaðið*. 03.12.1939, p. 5; Jónas Jónsson. “Gríman fellur af kommúnistum”, *Tíminn*. 05.12.1939, p. 562; Jakob Ó. Pétursson. “Kommúnisminn”. *Vísir*, 10.02.1940, p. 2.

¹⁰ “Burt með kommúnistana”. *Vísir*. 17.12.1939, p. 2.

Finland.

Alþýðublaðið stated in early December that there was one thing “even more disgusting” than the Red Army invading Finland and that was the “demeanour of the Finnish traitors”. Furthermore, their conduct was seen as having exposed how “completely unscrupulous” communists around the globe, including the Icelandic counterparts, in fact were.¹¹ Based on this argument, Icelandic communists are deemed treacherous on the grounds of their Finnish counterparts' judgements.

[The Icelandic communists] declare their contempt for the people who express their sympathies with those who want to own their homeland for themselves. They send their regards to other people; the bullies, who have betrayed their homeland and joined the enemies, the Finnish traitors, who shout with a crazed zeal: Finland for Russians!^{12(f)}

Here, a *Vísir* editorial titled “Iceland for Russians” displays a separation of *us* and *them* based on direct support for each side in the conflict. Icelandic communists are alienated on the grounds of sympathy with the Finnish “traitors” and “bullies”. Afterwards, he goes on to show that this is what the Icelandic counterparts are capable of and eventually they will cry out “Iceland for Russians!”¹³

There was not much talk about Kuusinen himself and the Terijoki-government in the Icelandic press after the opening days of the Winter War in December 1939. The topic disappeared quickly from Soviet news reports after a few days when it became apparent that the war would prolong. However, Kuusinen's name came to represent the stereotype of the arch-traitor and this stereotype was repeatedly attached to the Icelandic communists throughout the Winter War. Even after the war's conclusion in March 1940, *Tíminn's* editor pointed out to its readers that Kuusinen's name must not be forgotten, but live on “as some sort of a reminder to the nation, whose errands [the communists] serve”.^{14(g)} The most obvious example of this metaphor is the made-up noun “kuusinen”, or “the kuusinens” (i. *Kuusinarinir*), used when referring to Icelandic communists. This mock-term was used in the non-communist press and

¹¹ “Verið á verði”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 06.12.1939, p. 2.

¹² “Ísland fyrir Rússa!”. *Vísir*. 06.12.1939, p. 2.

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ Þórarinn Þórarinnsson. “Eftirmæli um jarlsdóm Kuusinens og “alþýðustjórnina í Terejoki”” *Tíminn*. 16.03.1940, p. 122. This article is equally important for it being the only OP in the non-communist press that exploits the fact that Otto Ville Kuusinen had been known among Icelandic communists before the Winter War made him a household name. During the 1930s, when Kuusinen was secretary of the Executive Committee of the Comintern and overseer of the Nordic communist parties, the Communist Party of Iceland had occasionally had its cases sent to him for consultation (Whitehead. 1995, p. 195).

is also recorded to have appeared within the halls of the parliament.¹⁵ *Morgunblaðið* coined the term in an editorial in January 1940 titled “The Icelandic Kuusinen”:

These men are the communists, or the Kuusinen, which is now their rightful name because they are waiting for the opportunity to betray their country and nation, just like Kuusinen, the Finnish communist [...]. How long must we tolerate the Kuusinen's activities in our society? Must we wait for them to plea to the dictator in Moscow for a similar “protection” as Kuusinen did? Must we wait until the Red Army arrives here, summoned by the traitors?^{16(h)}

The latter questions posed by the author brings us to the next point: The anti-communist discourse during the Winter War months up until the German Invasion of Denmark and Norway is characterised not only by mockery and hostility but also of what appears an expression of danger and alarm. There is a clear link in the anti-communist discourse between the *drop-of-the-mask* metaphor and an increased threat of a communist coup. These writers made it very clear to their readers that the Icelandic communists were considered likely to follow Kuusinen's footsteps if the Red Army were suddenly to arrive in the port of Reykjavík.¹⁷

A *Morgunblaðið* columnist wrote after the outbreak of war in Finland that Icelandic communists had begun “whispering” that “the long-awaited hour [was] approaching, when the Red Army comes and “liberates” the Icelandic people”.¹⁸⁽ⁱ⁾ *Vísir's* editor declared that “the events of the last few days” had convinced him that the communists would “sell out their people without hesitation” if Stalin was out to “conquer” it.^{19(j)} In that case, *Tíminn* suggested they would “celebrate the Russians with a torch parade” and establish a Soviet puppet regime.^{20(k)} The distance between Iceland and Russia and the historical trajectory of the Second World War might make these ideas seem irrational from today's perspective. However, as we shall see in Chapter 3.3, the fear of the Russians and the Soviet Union appears very real in the winter of 1939-1940.

¹⁵At the time of the Winter War's conclusion, rumours reached Iceland with the newspapers that Kuusinen had been shot on the orders of Stalin. According to *Tíminn*, Prime Minister Hermann Jónasson is said to have mockingly suggested to some MPs off-session on March 14, 1940, that Socialist Party MPs should be referred with “-Kuusinen” attached behind their names, such as “Brynjólfur Bjarnason Kuusinen”. The prime minister made the remarks having pointed out that death was a suitable fate for traitors. Socialist Party leader Brynjólfur Bjarnason overheard the conversation, confronted the prime minister and “groped” him, resulting in the prime minister striking Bjarnason with a flat palm (“Brynjólfur Bjarnason fékk kinnhest...” *Tíminn*. 16.03.1940, p. 121).

¹⁶“Kuusinarnir íslensku”. *Morgunblaðið*. 17.01.1940, p. 5. See also: “Kuusinarnir tala um Quislinga!”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 11.05.1940, p. 3.

¹⁷See for example: “Ísland fyrir Rússa!” *Vísir*. 06.12.1939, p. 2; Jakob O. Pétursson. “Kommúnisminn”. *Vísir*. 10.02.1940, p. 2; “Fullveldisdagurinn í ár”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 01.12.1939, p. 3.

¹⁸“Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 03.12.1939, p. 5.

¹⁹““Það hendir okkur aldrei””. *Vísir*. 04.12.1939, p. 2.

²⁰“Þeir, sem vijla gefa Grímsey”. *Tíminn*. 18.01.1940, p. 27.

3.1.2 Call for Excommunication

In a direct continuation of these accusations, the anti-communist Winter War discourse typically includes remarks suggesting social exclusion of Icelandic communists. This discursive theme is threefold: First, it evolves around passive social ostracism usually engulfed in highly nationalistic language and second, it contains instances where writers try to plant anti-communism in society by actively encouraging social exclusion among the public.

This rhetoric typically begins with a general referral to the alleged disdain harboured by the population of Iceland towards the communists because of the Winter War. They are ostracised in the discourse for being anti-national, pro-foreign and potential traitors to the motherland. The communists' repeated violent and anti-national conduct that is said to have culminated in their support for the Invasion of Finland has made them *cease being Icelanders* – in a nationalist-romantic vision of what it means to bear that title. These writers are aware that the communists may not necessarily have broken any laws yet, but imply that certain social codes have been broken for which they must be excommunicated. A *Visir* editorial titled “Despised Men” claimed that this widespread exclusion from “the company of those who know patriotism and love for the motherland” was a “punishment” for their conduct.^{21(l)} A similar standpoint could be read in *Tíminn* immediately after the invasion: “The [Icelandic] nation will deliver to those who [...] plan for her the same fate as the Finns, the payment they deserve”, suggesting social excommunication based on a transgression.^{22(m)}

Some OPs take a step a bit further by directly promoting and encouraging social exclusion of communists to their readers. In January 1940, a *Tíminn* columnist proudly reported an example of the effects of *Finnagaldur* out in society where a Socialist gathering in town was ignored and bypassed by people. “Such disrespect should be shown to the communists everywhere”, declared the columnist, “and they should be made feel lonely and deserted” as long as they undemocratically oppose the “freedom of the minor nations” (i.e. Finland). The example for such an exclusion was set quite early on in the Winter War, on December 4, 1939, by the Icelandic parliament (see Chapter II). *Tíminn's* news coverage of the parliament declaration that triggered the Althing's circumvention of Socialist MPs was concluded with an applause and an agitation for the effort to be extended to society:

²¹ “Fyrirlitnir menn”. *Visir*. 02.12.1939, p. 2.

²² “Starfshættir kommúnista”. *Tíminn*. 02.12.1939, p. 558.

[The parliament having set the example], it is now the responsibility of the general public to act on this policy and show communists in all places the animosity and contempt that their activities deserve. [...] They should sense that [...] they have forfeit their right to affect Icelandic matters. With such a joint effort by the public, a perfect lack of communist influence will be secured.²³⁽ⁿ⁾

The thought that the parliament had set a course, or “policy”, suggesting social exclusion of a certain group of citizens, on which the common people was encouraged to act, is interesting since the non-communist press was effectively equivalent to official government press.²⁴ Even though the parliament eventually refrained from restricting access to important positions based on political convictions in April 1940 (see Chapter II), the discussion on whether or not such restrictions should be enforced, socially or politically, did take place in the Icelandic press following the Invasion of Finland. In the quote above, Jónas Jónsson, the leader of the Progressive Party and co-editor of the prime minister’s party organ was calling for a social enforcement of such restrictions.

In a submitted *Vísir* article titled “What to do with the Traitors?” in January 1940, the author claimed that now, two months into the Winter War, it was about time the communists realised that the widespread antipathy displayed against them on all fronts was no longer sufficient for the Icelandic people. “If the state won’t do what’s needed the nation will have to do it by herself”, the author threatened; the people “will now see to it that they [the communists] cease posing a threat to her independence and culture”.^{25(o)} Another article in the same paper rejoiced over the anti-communist wave in society but urged it must rise “higher and higher” until “public opinion has expelled them [communists] from the legislature, from town councils, from local governments” and elementary institutions across the country.²⁶

Undoubtedly, many loyal members of the Socialist Party were employed in posts such as these. However, it was in the labour movement and among the working class where the party enjoyed the most influence. “This has to change”, declared *Vísir’s* editor in December 1939, worrying about the high amounts of money laying in the hands of communist union bosses, before making a plea to “each individual who is loyal to his nation” to follow the Althing’s example and eliminate communist influences in the labour movement.²⁷ This argumentation was fiercely employed during the campaign leading up to the January 1940 board elections in

²³ “Þingseta kommúnista...”. *Tíminn*. 05.12.1939, p. 561.

²⁴ See also similar suggestions in: “Burt með kommúnistana”. *Vísir*. 17.12.1939, p. 2.

²⁵ “Hvað á að gera við föðurlandssvikaranna?” *Vísir*. 29.01.1940, p. 2.

²⁶ Jakob O. Pétursson. “Kommúnisminn”. *Vísir*. 10.02.1940, p. 2-3, p. 3.

²⁷ “Burt með kommúnistana”. *Vísir*. 17.12.1939, p. 2.

Dagsbrún; the largest labour union in Iceland, in which the communists lost the vote. *Morgunblaðið* declared on the eve of the election that it was the first step in the operation of “excommunicating the mercenaries from Moscow from all positions of responsibility in this society”.^{28(p)} Suggestions such as these go hand in hand with the commonplace argument mentioned above, that the communists had not broken any law with their opinions regarding the Invasion of Finland and could not be punished by the state, but they could – and should, be punished by social ostracism. Likewise, if state-sponsored political persecutions were unconstitutional, the ‘Icelandic people’ would have to remove communists from places of influence.

3.2 Portrayals of Winter War Belligerents

Moving on to the discussion in the Icelandic press about the Invasion of Finland itself, the next two discursive themes we shall be dealing with are portrayals of the belligerents, focusing on their armies and the construction of the Winter War through the use of stereotypes. The heat of the Winter War and its sharp contrasts, its narratives of good and evil, deeds and misdeeds make the conflict appear fantastical and remind the reader of classical tales like David and Goliath and the Persian Wars. These discursive themes are:

3. The Red Army: Forces of Violence: Portrayals of the Red Army as incompetent, replaceable and at the same time, a frightening and cruel force.
4. Finland: The “Hero-Nation”: Portrayals of the Finnish soldier as heroic, individualistic and backed by a united nation but destined for defeat.

3.2.1 The Red Army: Forces of Violence:

“Violence” (i. *ofbeldi*) is a prevalent word and a central theme in the Winter War discourse. The usage of the word as a means to denote the Invasion of Finland carries with it a sense of moral judgement aside from political considerations. The non-communist press failed to see any motive behind Stalin's decision to attack Finland but blatant aggression, expansionism and imperialism²⁹ *Morgunblaðið* began its first front page coverage of the war by referring to this unconcealed hostility and pointing out the absurd size ratio of the belligerents:

Yesterday morning, the Russians, a nation of 180 million people, attacked the 4 million strong Finns [...]. Almost the entire educated world believes that never before has such a totally unreasonable

²⁸ “Úrslitastundin”. *Morgunblaðið*. 19.01.1940, p. 5.

²⁹ See for example: “Fyrirlitnir menn”. *Visir*. 02.12.1939, p. 2; *Alþýðublaðið*. “Varnarstríð (!)” 15.12.1939, p. 3.

attack been launched, with so little effort to camouflage it.^{30(q)}

The violent nature of the invasion was thus seen both in a lack of *casus belli* and in its bully-like outlook due to disproportional size ratios. *Vísir* metaphorically compared the invasion to a grown person's "mutilation" of a child and *Tíminn* called it "the most disgraceful action in the history of the world".^{31(r)}

A third aspect of this rhetoric can be seen in the construction of the Soviet armed forces as the forces of violence. "The Red Army is spreading fire and death across the country", was stated in a submitted article in *Alþýðublaðið*, while "cities are burned and defenceless villages are razed".^{32(s)} There were repeated rumours that Soviet pilots chased civilians on the ground and shot them down with machine guns.³³ Soviet-dominated air combat was especially linked to this image of terror in Finland, and this includes the bombing of cities and alleged atrocities performed from the air against civilians. Newspaper headlines repeatedly announce terror bombings and air attacks on civilian targets that re-appear in the OPs discussions of the violent nature of the attack and attacker. *Morgunblaðið's* columnist asserted that "air raids, bombardments, incendiary bombs [and] Russian pilots chasing women and children with machine gun fire", were among the "daily" ordeals imposed by the Soviet Air Force against the civilians in Finland.^{34(t)}

Despite the portrayed ferocity and cruelty of the Soviet Air Force, the common Soviet soldier is not presented as a terrifying figure at all. On the contrary, he is portrayed as both incompetent and expendable. Day after day, newspaper headlines reported Finnish land victories in which tens of thousands of Soviets soldiers were taken prisoners. Typical photographs of Soviet soldiers appearing in the papers are those of Soviet prisoners, often with captions describing how well they were being treated in Finnish captivity as opposed to the maltreatment of their own officers.³⁵

³⁰ "Finska stjórnin segir af sjer..." *Morgunblaðið*. 01.12.1939, p. 2.

³¹ "Fyrirlitnir menn". *Vísir*. 02.12.1939, p. 2; "'Verndari smáþjóðanna" afhjúpar sig til fullnustu". *Tíminn*. 01.12.1939, p. 553.

³² "Verið á verði". *Alþýðublaðið*. 06.12.1939, p. 2.

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ "Reykjavíkurbjef". *Morgunblaðið*. 04.02.1940, p. 5. See also: "Yfir Landamærin". *Tíminn*. 23.03.1940, p. 132.

³⁵ See for example: "Stríðsmenn Stalins [image]". *Morgunblaðið*. 17.01.1940, p. 5; "Rússneskir fangar í finnsku baði [image]". *Morgunblaðið*. 23.02.1940, p. 4.



Image 2: Morgunblaðið's front page on December 22, 1939 demonstrates the appearance of successful Finnish forces versus incompetent and cruel invaders. Frame 1 depicts Soviet armoured vehicles under the caption: “**Russian tanks sitting stuck in the snow**”. The tanks represent the brute force of the Red Army and the caption portrays their unfitnes. Frame 2 shows the main news story of the day which bears the title: “**Finnish counter-attack in North-Finland**”, continuing to the sub-headline appearing beside a figure of a pointing hand, “**but Stalin has bombs rain over hospitals**”. In the centre, Frame 3 has a rather small news story, made look important by the location and size of its title, reading: “**Hitler sends his regards to Stalin**”. It tells of birthday regards but the headline obviously gives the impression of a Soviet-German alliance. *Source:* Morgunblaðið. 22. 12.1939, p. 2.

Despite the incompetence of Red Army soldiers, their expandability makes the Finnish Army fated for defeat in almost every commentary published in the non-communist press. This argumentation is often followed by an acknowledgement by the Icelandic commentators that if the Finns are to stand a chance of winning they must receive more aid from the Western Allies.³⁶ *Alþýðublaðið* stated in an editorial that no matter how bravely the Finns fought, Stalin could always renew the “myriad of the Red Army” by “sending in new [...] thousands of slaves to their deaths”.^{37(u)} Not only does this language contain a bitter acceptance of the Soviet advantage and the eventual victory, but also pity with the common Soviet soldier who often appears in the non-communist press as unwilling victim of a tyrant regime. Soviet soldiers are pitied for the poor conditions at the front and they are also victimised for being sent to an

³⁶ See for example: “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 17.12.1939, p. 5; “Syrting að”. *Morgunblaðið*. 18.02.1940, p. 5; “Rísi á brauðfötum”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 27.12.1939, p. 3; “Eftir sex mánaða stríð”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 04.03.1940, p. 3;

³⁷ “Hver hefir Finnans metið móð?” *Alþýðublaðið*. 06.12.1939, p. 3.

aggressive war on the grounds of propaganda and lies.³⁸

3.2.2 Finland: The “Hero-Nation”:

“Today, the whole world observes the valiant Finnish defence with wonderment and admiration”, wrote the editor of *Alþýðublaðið* in early December 1939.^{39(v)} The Icelandic press did not retract the fanfare displayed in the international press over the striking defensive abilities of the numerically inferior Finns. In his description of the Finnish war effort, *Alþýðublaðið's* editor used phrases such as “unbelievable endurance”, “altruistic and tenacious struggle” and “admirable” sacrifice by “valour and fortitude”.⁴⁰ The Finnish soldiers’ heroism seems to have been understood as being a solid fact. Even the most sober news commentaries or the few non-political opinion pieces take Finnish heroism for a fact. One such article in *Alþýðublaðið* calmly pointed out in January 1940 when describing the world conflict from the most neutral perspective, that “individual enthusiasm” of the Finns fighting “for the freedom of their fatherland”, weighted out the superior leadership and numbers of the Soviets.⁴¹

[A news reporter in Finland] arrived at a barrack where a [Finnish] soldier was giving one of his comrades a haircut [...] [Barbering] was obviously not his daily profession. The journalist thus asked what his main profession was. “I shoot Russians”, the Finn replied.^{42(w)}

This comic anecdote from *Morgunblaðið* illustrates the sharp contrast in the belligerents’ appearance in the Icelandic press. As opposed to the “myriad of the Red Army”, the Finnish soldier is often portrayed as an individual, appearing mobile athletic, daring and cunning. Especially, the Finnish ski-troops provided stories of individual heroism which became a basis for the stereotypical Finnish soldier as an elite commando.⁴³ A *Morgunblaðið* article said the Winter War was the kind of conflict in which the “achievement of the individuals” was the most crucial factor. The Finnish individuality was personified by the paper in a cool and confident athlete and ski-trooper, Pekka Niemi who stated in an interview: “[W]e are [not] in a race [...]

³⁸ See for example: Tor Gjesdal. “Einn dagur á vígstöðvunum á Kyrjálanesi”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 29.12.1939, p. 3; “Rússneskir verkamenn og bændur”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 21.12.1939, p. 3; Bjarni Benediktsson. “Um hvað er barist í Dagsbrún?” *Morgunblaðið*. 18.01.1940, p. 3; “Bréf að heiman”. *Vísir*. 06.03.1940, p. 2; Jón Eyþórsson. “Hverju “Þjóðviljinn” reiddist”. *Tíminn*. 16.01.1940, p. 22.

³⁹ “Hver hefir Finnans metið móð?” *Alþýðublaðið*. 06.12.1939, p. 3.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ “Fyrstu fjórir mánuðir stríðsins”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 06.01.1940, p. 4.

⁴² “Úr daglega lífinu”. *Morgunblaðið*. 18.01.1940, p. 6.

⁴³ See for example: “Murmanskbrautin rofin...” *Morgunblaðið*. 05.01.1940, p. 2; “Með morgunkaffinu”. *Morgunblaðið*. 19.01.1940, p. 8; “Íþróttir eftir Vivax”. *Morgunblaðið*. 22.02.1940, p. 4; “Molar”. *Tíminn*. 27.01.1940, p. 42.

of minutes and seconds but for Finland's freedom".^{44(x)} These remarks are typical for the image of the Finnish exemplar soldier; courageous and cool, living a healthy lifestyle while defending his country.

Image 3 proposes an example of the individualisation of the Finnish forces not through the stereotype of the elite troops described above. The depicted photograph and column are attached to a news story (not shown) covering the siege of Vyborg in March 1940. The text reports of massive Finnish casualties; a topic given special attention for its rarity, and is presented, along with the picture, in a way as to appear a tragedy. The Finnish soldier is individualised by giving him a face and a special commemoration for his and his comrades' tragic but supposedly noble deaths.



Image 3: A photograph and a column in *Morgunblaðið* on March 5, 1940. The caption reads: “This picture shows a young Finnish soldier. The look on his face is calm and stoical. This young Finn’s image is symbolic for the 17 thousand Finns, who have lost their lives at the Mannerheim Line during the last few days defending their country against the invasion of the red communist-army.” Source: *Morgunblaðið*. 05.03.1940, p. 2.

Where did this “hero-nation” (i. *hetjuþjóð*) find the ability to pose the “most admirable defence in history” in the eyes of the press?⁴⁵ Finland appears a very successful young republic in the non-communist press during the winter of 1939-1940.⁴⁶ During the last 20 years, the Finns are said to have witnessed great cultural, industrial and financial progress as well as worldwide attention for achievements in arts and athletics. *Morgunblaðið* claimed that during these years the Finnish nation had also managed to rid itself of ethnic conflicts and even been “cured of the pest of communism”.⁴⁷ *Alþýðublaðið* said Finland excelled others in culture, both “mental and physical” and *Tíminn* described the Finns having for twenty years built up a society

⁴⁴ Tage Christiansen. “Skíðamenn í styrjöld”. *Morgunblaðið*. 17.02.1940, p. 5.

⁴⁵ “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 04.02.1940, p. 5; “Hin hetjulega sjálfstæðisvörn Finna...” *Tíminn*. 14.03.1940, p.117.

⁴⁶ See for example: “Hver hefir Finnans metið móð?” *Alþýðublaðið*. 06.12.1939, p. 3; “Frelsi og sjálfstæði”. *Tíminn*. 20.02.1940, p. 78; “Örlög Finna”. *Vísir*. 14.03.1940, p. 2; Jón N. Jónsson. “Þjóðir og þjóðmenning”. *Vísir*. 29.03.1940, pp. 2-3, p.3; Christian Gierlöff. “Finnlandsbrjef: Frelsi og framfarir Finnlands í 20 ár.” *Morgunblaðið*. 02.12.1939, p. 5; Christian Gierloff. “Olympiuleikar í Helsingfors?” *Morgunblaðið*, 31.01.1940, p. 5.

⁴⁷ “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 14.01.1940, p. 5.

of hard work, patriotism and honesty where young people were raised “in a Spartan manner”.⁴⁸

All of these references are examples of Icelandic observers explaining how the Finnish defenders could hold out for so long against the numerically superior Red Army. They all agreed that the success of the independent Finnish Republic described above had created an atmosphere of patriotism and an appreciation of freedom for which the whole nation united in protection and sacrificed their blood. The Finnish nation is described having merged into an “unbreakable unit”, where the soldiers, the leaders and the housewives, are all seen working together as a “single soul” towards a single goal.⁴⁹

3.3 The *Frontier* Metaphors

The final group of Winter War discursive themes is the *Frontier* Metaphor, so-called because these indicate the idea that the Russo-Finnish borders make up sort of a frontier between *us* and *them*, and that Finland is an outpost – or an obstacle, in between. These ideas reflect the world-view of the non-communist press from a cultural and political perspective and at the same time, the uncertainties of the Phoney War period. These discursive themes are:

5. *The Military Frontier*: The idea that the Soviet Union was a primary aggressor in the ongoing world conflict and that the Invasion of Finland was one step towards a Soviet conquest of Scandinavia.
6. *The Civilisation Frontier*: The idea that the Winter War was a confrontation of two distinct societies on the opposite ends of a developmental hierarchy, portraying Finland as “civilised” *Europe* and the Soviet Union as “uncivilised” *Asia*.

While the anti-communist discourse dominated the first month of the Winter War, the *Frontier* idea becomes increasingly prominent as the war dragged on.

3.3.1 The *Military Frontier*

Most commentators of the Winter War in the Icelandic non-communist press shared the fear that Stalin did not intend to make his armies “halt at the Gulf of Bothnia”, or that he at least posed a significant threat to the lands west of that gulf.⁵⁰ The defence of Finland was thus seen

⁴⁸ “Ánægð þjóð og nægjusöm...” *Alþýðublaðið*. 07.12.1939, p. 3; Jónas Jónsson. “Maráþon í norðurátt”. *Tíminn*. 16.03.1940, p. 122.

⁴⁹ “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 04.02.1940, p. 5. See also: “Í Viborg þegar innrás Rússa hófst”. *Vísir*. 04.01.1940, p. 2; “Úr daglega lífinu”. *Morgunblaðið*. 16.01.1940, p. 6; “Finnnska konan fórnar sér fyrir ættland sitt”. *Morgunblaðið*. 24.01.1940, p. 4. Ida Holmboe Mönsterhjelm. „Mæður Finnlands“. *Vísir*. 08.02.1940, p. 2.

⁵⁰ “Þeir eru glaðir”. *Morgunblaðið*. 22.02.1940, p. 5 See also: Skúli Skúlason. “Norðurlönd í hættu”. *Morgunblaðið*.

by many as the defence of Scandinavia – hence the idea of Finland as a Scandinavian *military frontier*. There are two approaches to this train of thought: First, a pragmatic look from the perspective of the other Nordic Countries, namely Norway and Sweden, where some people and politicians felt the Winter War was a real threat due to the proximity of the conflict. This perspective in the Icelandic press might be partly influenced by the interventionist movement in Norway and Sweden which used the threat as an argument for intervention. There are examples where the Icelandic papers published articles, letters and addresses, presumably made as interventionist propaganda from Scandinavia and/or Finland.⁵¹ The second approach was based on a classic Russophobic distrust of the great power in the east.

In February 1940, *Alþýðublaðið* published an article by the foremost commentator on the Winter War in Iceland who declared that Soviet “hostility” towards Norway and Sweden in relation to their material support for Finland was evidence for Soviet designs against these countries. This “looming danger”, the author explained, was the reason why certain Norwegian and Swedish politicians wanted a more active support for Finland.⁵² As the Soviet advance grew more steadfast in late February, some OP writers seem to foresee the end of Finland. *Vísir's* editor speculated over the consequences of an occupied Finland declaring that “no one knows where the Russian divisions stop when they have reached the borders of Sweden and Norway.”^{53(y)} “Isn’t Sweden next in line and Norway thereafter?” asked *Morgunblaðið's* editor when Finland's defeat was evident, extending the thought by asking: “And wouldn’t it then be a short way over to us, Icelanders?”^{54(z)}

The idea that the Soviet Union had strategic interests in the Norwegian coast, particularly Narvik, and that these interests were linked with the Invasion of Finland, is frequent in the Winter War discourse.⁵⁵ It is first mentioned in a *Morgunblaðið* front page news story on December 10, 1939, stating it was “feared, that sooner or later the [...] ice-free ports of Northern Norway” would, along with Swedish iron, “tempt” the Soviets to carry on westwards.^{56(aa)} *Vísir* even claimed as late as April 1940 that it was still “feared” that the “Russian bear” aimed

08.02.1940, p.5; “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 28.01.1940, p. 5; “Hvers vegna Svíum...” *Vísir*. 03.01.1940, p. 2.

⁵¹ See for example: Ida Holmboe Mönsterhjelm. „Mæður Finnlands“. *Vísir*. 08.02.1940, p. 2-3; “Úr daglega lífinu”. *Morgunblaðið*. 17.01.1940, p. 6; “Verkalýðsfélög Finnlands...” *Alþýðublaðið*. 19.01.1940, p. 2.

⁵² Sigurður Einarsson. “Þreifað til meðalkaflans”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 09.02.1940, p. 2.

⁵³ “Ef Finnland bíður ósigur”. *Vísir*. 17.02.1940, p. 2.

⁵⁴ “Þeir eru glaðir”. *Morgunblaðið*. 22.02.1940, p. 5.

⁵⁵ See for example: “Kvaddir heim”. *Vísir*. 28.03.1940, p. 2; “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 28.01.1940, p. 5; Skúli Skúlaon. “Norðurlönd í hættu”. *Morgunblaðið*. 08.02.1940, p.5.

⁵⁶ “Átök í Svíþjóð”. *Morgunblaðið*. 10.12.1939, p.2.

towards the Atlantic.⁵⁷ Although a common claim, the idea of Soviet Atlantic interests is rarely supported with arguments and usually appears as a recurrent rumour, often following phrases like “isn’t it said that...” or “it is feared that...” etc. Therefore, these claims reflect a more general fear of Russian expansionism and mistrust in the Soviet government, which represents the second approach to the *Military Frontier* idea.

All of the non-communist press saw the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact as an alliance and understood that Eastern Europe had been divided between Hitler and Stalin. *Alþýðublaðið*, the social-democratic paper that never concealed its opposition to Nazi-Germany saw Stalin and Hitler as brothers in crime with the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Thus, *Alþýðublaðið*’s argumentation for Stalin’s war responsibility was his association with Nazi-Germany – which was already considered the main villain of the war. Many OP writers on the right-wing, however, had independent reasons to fear Stalin and the Russians. *Tíminn* and the right-wing press usually left Germany out of the equation for the sake of neutrality and focused on Stalin’s aggressions and the danger posed by the Soviet Union without reference to the Germans; effectively sheltering Hitler from the burden of war responsibility for the time being.

This view is sometimes expressed in a way that it carries a feeling of disappointment that Germany and the Western Powers are letting the Soviet Union run loose and pose a threat to Scandinavia. Some journalists in the right-wing press downplay the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, maintaining the interpretation that Stalin was getting out of Hitler’s control and rightfully point out that Soviet domination of Scandinavia could not be in Germany’s best interest. *Morgunblaðið*’s columnist evens seems to have given some hope that the Winter War would bring an end to Hitler’s strange pact with the Soviets and come to the defence of Finland.⁵⁸ In January 1940, *Morgunblaðið* went as far as to publish an article from a German source from the time before the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Under the subtitle “The Real Opinion of the Germans?” the article declared German support for a Nordic Alliance given the presentation of the Nordic Countries as Europe’s northernmost bulwark against expanding Soviet barbarism.⁵⁹

In March 1940, *Tíminn* published an address delivered at one of the fund-raising arrangements for the Finland Relief held in January in which Soviet-Russian great power ambitions were described as such:

They [the Russians] have sought for centuries to move their dominance westwards, preferably all

⁵⁷ “Hlutleysi Íslands”. *Vísir*. 11.04.1940, p. 2.

⁵⁸ “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 10.12.1939, p. 5. See also: “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 17.12.1939, p. 5; Skúli Skúlason. “Norðurlönd í hættu”. *Morgunblaðið*. 08.02.1940, p.5.

⁵⁹ “Hættan, sem Norður-Evrópu stafar úr Austri”. *Morgunblaðið*. 23.01.1940, p. 5.

the way to the Atlantic. And now, they saw a particularly good opportunity present itself, as the Western nations, England and Germany, were engaged in a conflict and could not turn to an opposition against their plans. That is why the minor state Finland was attacked, which stands in the way toward the ocean.^{60(bb)}

The author makes the assumption that the Soviet Invasion of Finland was only a stepping stone towards a grander conquest of Scandinavia, Norway included. The view that the attack is being performed while the great powers are not watching isolates Stalin as the prime villain of the war. To a similar effect, *Morgunblaðið's* editor wrote in February that it terrified him knowing that the “world's most civilized nations”; Great Britain, France and Germany were “facilitating” the advance of “savage communism” in the Nordic Countries by fighting each other instead of helping the Finns.^{61(cc)}

3.3.2 The *Civilisation Frontier*

This interesting antitheses put forward in the quote above, between “civilized” Britain, France and Germany and the “savage” Soviet-Russia, brings up the commonplace interpretation that the Russo-Finnish conflict was a battle between civilisation and savagery – between *Europe* and *Asia*. In January 1940, *Morgunblaðið* published a front-page article where the author expressed the following interpretation of the Soviet Union and the Winter War:

Alone among the rulers of white people's countries, they [Soviet communists] have administered their country so poorly, that there has raged famine upon famine, killing millions upon millions of people. And they were no more fortunate when they began the attack against the free, courageous Finnish nation, who now carries the fight of civilisation against the Mongolian pest.^{62(dd)}

The effect of this language is not only a positive portrayal of the Finnish army as the force of “civilisation” but also an alienation of the Red Army by depicting it as non-European and pestilent. Referring to the Soviet “pest” as Mongolian, the author reminds the reader of the medieval Mongol Invasion of Europe, recognised in Western collective memory as violent, barbaric and uncivilized. Thus, the author draws up a symbolic metaphor for the idea of a European/Asian *civilisation-frontier* at the Russo-Finnish borders. This Eurocentric and racist language is not uncommon in the Winter War discourse, and the fact that the author of this article is none other than Professor Bjarni Benediktsson shows that it was not considered

⁶⁰ Brynjólfur Magnússon. “Friðarríkið í austri og Finnlandsstýrjöldin”. *Tíminn*. 09.03.1940, p. 112.

⁶¹ “Þeir eru glaðir”. *Morgunblaðið*. 22.02.1940, p. 5.

⁶² Bjarni Benediktsson. “Um hvað er barist í Dagsbrún?” *Morgunblaðið*. 18.01.1940, p. 3.

marginal or inappropriate. A central figure in the Independence Party, Benediktsson would soon become one of the most prominent leaders of the country holding posts such as mayor of Reykjavík, cabinet minister and eventually prime minister.

In fact, *Morgunblaðið* frequently referred to “The Asian Nation” and “The Asian Power” (i. *Asíuveldið*) when degrading the Soviet Union.⁶³ The paper also referred to the Red Army as “the Asiatic pest” and determined the intention of Invasion of Finland as being “to force upon the Nordic Countries an Asiatic killer-regime” (i. *asiatisk böðulstjórn*).⁶⁴ Although mostly confined to *Morgunblaðið*, such a language was also used in the other papers. An author of an article in *Timinn* claimed the Russians were “still the oriental, half-civilized nomads”, they used to be and *Alþýðublaðið* referred to the Russian leadership in past and present as “half-Asiatic tyrants” and “uncultured Asiatic tyrants” (i. *asiatiskir menningarsnauðir harðstjórar*).⁶⁵

Simultaneously as the press portrayed the Russian invaders as *Asiatic*, it placed the Finnish defenders into a group of *European* and *civilized, cultured* or *educated* nations.⁶⁶ *Vísir* stated that Finland had “taken its place among the most civilized nations” since gaining independence from Russia in 1918, and was now the easternmost outpost of Nordic culture.⁶⁷ Similarly, *Morgunblaðið* published an article in which the Finns were termed “the guardians of civilisation's easternmost outpost”.⁶⁸ (i. *útverðir menningarinnar í austri*) Such remarks express an understanding that the Russo-Finnish borders mark a significant *civilisation frontier*. When *Morgunblaðið's* columnist compared the two separate conflicts of the world war; the Allied-German war and the Russo-Finnish war, he concluded that “neutrality of the mind” was required for the former, and not for the latter, because the Western Front was a battle “between [two] European nations”, both of whom have demonstrated companionship with Icelanders.⁶⁹ Here, the author placed Iceland, Finland, the Western Allies and Nazi-Germany under the same “European” hat while illustrating the otherness of the Soviet Union. As the Soviet breakthrough of the Mannerheim Line began in February 1940, the paper placed Finland into the group of civilized and educated nations by delivering the responsibility of its survival to a European

⁶³“Á landamærunum”. *Morgunblaðið*. 02.12.1939, p. 5. See also: “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 17.12.1939, p. 5; “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 14.01.1940, p. 5.

⁶⁴“Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 25.02.1940, p. 5; “Rauði krossinn”. *Morgunblaðið*. 10.02.1940, p. 5. See also: “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 18.02.1940, p. 5.

⁶⁵ Brynjólfur Magnússon. “Friðarríkið í austri og Finnlandsstýrjöldin”. *Timinn*. 09.03.1940, p. 112; “Viborg”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 02.03.1940, p. 3; “Elsprengjur yfir alþýðubústaði”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 02.12.1939, p. 3.

⁶⁶ The term *menning* or *menningarþjóð*, is translated here either as a cultured, educated or civilized nation, depending on context.

⁶⁷ “Samúð með Finnum”. *Vísir*. 10.12.1939, p. 2.

⁶⁸ Christian Gierloff. “Olympiuleikar í Helsingfors?” *Morgunblaðið*, 31.01.1940, p. 5.

⁶⁹ “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 18.02.1940, p. 5.

collective, claiming it would be an “eternal stigma on every civilized nation in the world” if the Western intervention failed to save the Finns in the Winter War. Because then, the “valiant and decent” Finnish nation would be duntrodden by “tyranny and savagery”^{70(ee)}

Finally, building on the roots of Western/European civilisation and rhyming with the portrayal of the Russians as “Asiatic”, the non-communist press occasionally likened the Finns – “the Nordic Spartans”, to the ancient Greeks, either for their ‘Athenian’ level of civilisation or their ‘Spartan’ fighting spirit.⁷¹ In late February 1940, *Alþýðublaðið* published a translated article titled “Barbarians and Hellenes” in which the author referred to the Persian Wars to metaphorically describe the Winter War as a *civilisation frontier* between Europe and Asia. Re-reading Herodotus' accounts, the author felt he saw a 2000 year old struggle between the “civilised Greek nation and the Asians” reappearing in a modern scenario:

[Those who sacrifice themselves today (i.e. the Finns)] to prevent the Asians' savage empire of blood from spreading out over the civilised world, perform the same historical deed that once was performed in Thermopylae Pass.^{72(ff)}

3.4 Chronology and Newspaper Titles

With all of the discursive themes taken together we can see that the discussion is principally concentrated on the alienation of the aggressor and of its supporters in Iceland. Domestic anti-communism seems to have been the first reaction of non-communist journalists upon hearing the news from Finland.⁷³ Although the discussion on Icelandic communists is continuous throughout the three-month period, it is most concentrated in December 1939. It constitutes of two discursive themes and it has roughly an equal representation in all four non-communist newspapers, although *Vísir* and *Tíminn* seem to focus more on this aspect of the discourse than other themes. Even though sympathy with Finland is declared in all papers from the outbreak of war, there is an observable increase in pro-Finnish heroisation sentiments in January and February 1940 resulting from the unexpected Finnish defence apparent in late December and

⁷⁰ “Þrjú mánuðir”. *Morgunblaðið*. 01.03.1940, p. 5.

⁷¹ “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 31.03.1940, p. 5. See also: Jónas Jónsson. “Frelsi og sjálfstæði”. *Tíminn*. 20.02.1940, p. 78; Jónas Jónsson. “Maráþon í norðurátt”. *Tíminn*. 16.03.1940, p. 122; Christian Gierloff. “Olympiuleikar í Helsingfors?” *Morgunblaðið*, 31.01.1940, p. 5.

⁷² Z. Huglund. “Barbarar og Hellenar”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 19.02.1940, p. 19.

⁷³ This statement is not only a qualitative interpretation by the analyst, it can also be verified by a quantitative survey of editorials: In December 1939, the Soviet Invasion of Finland was the subject of 10 editorial articles in *Vísir* out of which 8 were primarily about domestic anti-communism. For the other non-communist papers, the ratio is as follows: *Morgunblaðið*: 4 out of 7, *Tíminn*: 2 out of 2, *Alþýðublaðið*: 3 out of 9. The bulk of these editorials appear during the first 10 days of the conflict.

in January. Whereas sympathy with Finland is universal among the non-communist press, heroisation of the Finns is by far the most obvious in *Morgunblaðið*.

There are a total of three anti-Soviet discursive themes apparent in the Icelandic non-communist press. The perception of the invasion in general as illegitimate violence, bullying and terror is apparent in all papers and appears consistently from December 1939 until March 1940. The *Frontier* Metaphors, which contain traditional East-West polarity, are most heavily concentrated in *Morgunblaðið*, especially the *Civilisation Frontier* Metaphor which was mostly discussed in the late Winter War period; February and March. The *Military Frontier* Metaphor has more equal distribution among the papers and appears most often in February 1940 when the eventual defeat of Finland was apparent following the successful advance of the Red Army on the Karelian Isthmus.

Chapter IV

The German Invasion of Norway in the Icelandic Non-Communist Press

The Invasion and Battle of Norway prompted quite different reactions in the Icelandic newspapers than did the Invasion of Finland four months earlier. *Morgunblaðið*, the paper which had fronted the harsh vocal opposition to Stalin's aggression and violence now soberly reviewed the events in Denmark and Norway with caution, maintaining the strictest "neutrality of the mind". *Alþýðublaðið* and, to a less obvious degree, *Tíminn*, had a more definite standpoint in the conflict by decisively condemning the invasion with references to anti-fascism. *Vísir* fluctuated between the neutral and the anti-German approaches and like *Tíminn*, the paper concentrated on the domestic constitutional affairs which resulted from the invasion. In this chapter we shall sum up the ideas and portrayals presented in the discourse on the Invasion of Norway and clarify its chronological evolution. Six discursive themes were identified, which are categorised into three groups, appearing here in order of significance:

1. Dangerous Times: Themes involving the fact that the German Invasion of Norway provided examples that threatened both the internal and external security of Iceland.
2. Two Approaches towards Nazi-Germany: The two main approaches towards the portrayal of Germany in the role of the attacker.
3. The Most Innocent Victims: The portrayal the Norwegians and the Danes during the Battle of Norway.

4.1 Dangerous Times

The invasion of Norway and Denmark was perceived by the Icelandic newspapers as the most important event in the World War so-far as Iceland was isolated from the rest of Scandinavia and the war was brought significantly closer. In addition, Vidkun Quisling's treason in Norway provided a lesson which kept life in the ongoing discussion on state security and the anti-communist witch-hunt which had reached a climax during the Winter War. These discursive themes are:

1. Between Hope and Fear: The fact that the world war had been brought closer to Iceland and that Icelandic neutrality and security was in danger.

2. Quisling and the Treason: The idea that the downfall of Norway was largely a result of an internal betrayal, and that Icelandic authorities should be on the guard for traitors inside the country.

4.1.1 Between Hope and Fear:

“People are still waiting between hope and fear”, wrote an *Alþýðublaðið* columnist on April 12, 1940 describing the intensive atmosphere in Reykjavík during the initial days of *Operation Weserübung*.^{1(a)} *Alþýðublaðið* wondered whether or not the Germans could manage to conquer Norway and if perhaps this first clash between the Allies and the Germans would conclude the world war there and then. *Tíminn*'s initial response to the invasion was the expression of worries about trade and the economic isolation which followed the loss of contact with almost entire Scandinavia.² Most uncertainty, however, revolved around the question of security and neutrality. The cynical and hopeless attitude towards the great powers and their uneven relationship with the minor nations in wartime, which had developed in the Icelandic papers during the Winter War, intensified with these latest events.

For the commentators in the Icelandic press, this was a terrifying example of the failure of the neutral cause. The Scandinavian declarations of neutrality and non-aggression pacts that were meant to protect the Nordic Countries from being dragged into the war had utterly failed. Most commentators expressed a mixture of surprise and disappointment with this fact. “[T]he most unbelievable [event] has happened”, stated *Morgunblaðið*'s editor surprised on April 10, ever so convinced that the “rights of the minor nations [no longer] exist”.^{3(b)} He was acting under the impression that the Nordic Countries should have just slipped pass the world war when the Winter War took an end a half a month earlier. *Alþýðublaðið* explained that the shock of the invasion was so deeply felt by the Icelanders because they based their policy of neutrality on the same principles as the Nordic Countries:

[T]hese events have had deep effects on the minds of people in this country. We Icelanders have, like many other minor nations, not believed that the minor nations' neutrality would be severed and non-aggression pacts would be broken. But now we have to believe it, the events [in Denmark and Norway cannot be ignored.]^{4(c)}

The apparently frightful fact that the great powers did not respect neutrality declarations created

¹ “Um daginn og veginn...”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 12.04.1940, p. 2.

² *ibid*; Jónas Jónsson. “Sagan endurtekur sig”. *Tíminn*. 11.04.1940, p. 158.

³ “Ørlagastundin”. *Morgunblaðið*. 10.04.1940, p. 5.

⁴ “Oft var þörf en nú er nauðsyn”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 15.04.1940, p.3.

much discussion during the weeks until Iceland itself was occupied. *Vísir* reacted quite dramatically to the events in this regard and declared that the Icelanders were “more touched by the current events” than ever before in the war:

Now we see that the neighbour’s wall is burning. We know this means that our own house is in danger. [...] Even though we Icelanders are remote and distanced from the main routes, we should not forget that forest fires or brush fires do not follow any cairns. [...] It is therefore most important that we are prepared for everything.^{5(d)}

The sense of emergency expressed in the editor’s rhetoric even suggests that he was expecting the Germans to invade Iceland and impose a Nazi regime. “We shall expect the worst [and] hope for the best”, he wrote, “and even though it darkens for a while, we shall never lose the hope of a bright [and] peaceful future”.^{6(e)} The day after the invasion, *Vísir* revisited the subject, claiming it would be “naive” to think an invasion of Iceland by either faction of the world war was avoidable and encouraged his readers to stand up in protest whenever such an invasion happened.⁷

Tíminn was less dramatic in its analysis although it followed the others by declaring its – and the Icelandic people’s – discontent with the great powers’ “way of thinking”. Ignoring the minor nations’ “rights and existence”, the paper claimed, was undermining Icelandic plans for independence.⁸ On April 13, *Tíminn*’s front page columnist dismissed rumours that the Germans were on the way to occupy Iceland and rejected all talk that Great Britain – or even the United States and Canada, had begun operations aimed against Icelandic neutrality. The author issued a warning against all such “unconfirmed slander” and declared it was most important that everyone kept calm and stood together.⁹

In numerous editorial articles, the four papers representing the government agreed that Iceland must retain its neutrality and repeatedly stressed the urgency to stand together and practice national cohesion.¹⁰ *Alþýðublaðið* and *Morgunblaðið* used the National Government – a symbol of cross-political cooperation during extraordinary times as an example, as well as the Finnish fighting spirit. In an editorial titled “A Single-Minded Nation”, *Morgunblaðið* sought

⁵ “Hvað skeður?” *Vísir*. 09.04.1940, p. 2.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ “Hlutleysi Íslands”. *Vísir*. 11.04.1940, p. 2.

⁸ Þórarinn Þórarinnsson. “Kuusinen og Quisling”. *Tíminn*. 16.04.1940, p. 166.

⁹ “Á víðavangi”. *Tíminn*. 13.04.1940, p. 161. *Alþýðublaðið* also warned people not to spread unconfirmed rumours, claiming it could be damaging. (“Um daginn og veginn”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 18.04.1940, p. 2.)

¹⁰ See for example: “Hlutleysi Íslands”. *Vísir*. 10.04.1940, p. 2; “Einhuga þjóð”. *Morgunblaðið*. 14.04.1940, p. 5; “Á víðavangi”. *Tíminn*. 13.04.1940, p. 164; “Oft var þörf en nú er nauðsyn”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 15.04.1940, p.3.

an ideal in the Norwegian parliament on the dramatic afternoon on April 9, when suddenly, “there existed no [political parties] anymore.”¹¹ It is perhaps for that reason that Vidkun Quisling – the man who replaced Kuusinen as the stereotypical arch-traitor, and the atmosphere of betrayal and treason bore such a heavy weight in the Icelandic discourse during the intensive month of April 1940.

4.1.2 Quisling and the Treason

Over the course of the Battle of Norway, some Icelandic commentators, most prominently in *Tíminn* and *Alþýðublaðið*, developed an understanding of the invasion and downfall of the Norwegian state as an unprecedented story of treason and betrayal from within. A *Tíminn* news source described the German capture of Oslo and other cities as “the single most magnificent wile and treachery” committed against any nation in documented history.^{12(f)} *Tíminn*'s editor even called the Battle of Norway “an internal war”, brought upon the Norwegian people by “a few, sick extremists”.^{13(g)} By late May, the betrayal of Norway had become some sort of a legend; a series of submitted articles in *Alþýðublaðið* conceptualised the use of a foreign fifth column as “Hitler’s New Weapon”:

[...] [E]veryone can agree to that Hitler has not yet brought any new decisive [secret] weapons [to the table in this war.] [It] is also certain that he has, in the current conflict, used with better results than all his predecessors in the history of the world, a weapon which is as old as warfare itself, [...]. This weapon is **organised treason** [sic] among the enemies”.^{14 (h)}

In other words, Norwegian plotters were perceived by some of the Icelandic press to have played an essential role in the success of the German invasion. In addition to the anti-communist hype in relation to Kuusinen, the pro-government press now stepped up the discussion on the necessity to look out for traitors at home. “The names Kuusinen and Quisling have been burned into our conscience”, declared *Tíminn*'s editor in this regard. Echoing the language of December 1939, he asked if there weren't people in this country who were “ready to follow the footsteps of Kuusinen and Quisling?”¹⁵⁽ⁱ⁾ *Alþýðublaðið*'s columnist stressed the need to survey foreign sailors and reminded that “every nation has its Kuusinens and Quislings” who could be just as

¹¹ “Einhuga þjóð”. *Morgunblaðið*. 14.04.1940, p. 5.

¹² “Hernám Oslóborgar”. *Tíminn*. 23.05.1940, p. 218. p. 178; See also: “Hvernig Olsó var svikin í hendur Þjóðverjum”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 08.05.1940, p. 3; Jónas Guðmundsson. “Landráðin í Noregi”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 18.04.1940, p. 2.

¹³ Jónas Jónsson. “Forusta Alþingis”. *Tíminn*. 23.04.1940, p. 178.

¹⁴ Jónas Guðmundsson. “Hið nýja vopn Hitlers [Part I]”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 28.05.1940, p. 3.

¹⁵ Þórarinn Þórarinsson. “Kuusinen og Quisling”. *Tíminn*. 16.04.1940, p. 166.

dangerous as foreigners.¹⁶ Even after the British occupation of Iceland, *Morgunblaðið* said that it was important to remain “well on the guard in the future” and not “be so blind as to think there are no Kuusinens or Quislings here”.^{17(j)}

This discourse needs little introduction because we know it well from the Winter War. But who were the *quislings* and the *kuusinens* whom the ‘nation’ had to beware of? In some cases, generally in *Morgunblaðið*, the OP writers refrained from pointing fingers and spoke generally towards the potential traitors. In addition to *kuusinens* and *quislings* which had become commonplace terms for a traitor, they used terms such as “enemies of the democracy” and those who advocate the suppression of the minor nations.¹⁸ The editors of the government organs *Tíminn* and *Morgunblaðið* sent a message into society reminding the readers, as citizens, to keep their loyalty to the state and oppose anti-national sentiments.¹⁹ In an early May editorial, *Morgunblaðið* appealed to the national identity and conscience of the public and asked its readers to look within themselves and examine their own state of mind towards the establishment:

Isn't there someone amongst us who is ready to perform the same misdeed against the motherland that the traitors did in Finland, Denmark and Norway? The question is posed here, so that each individual can look at his own state of mind. Perhaps the events in the Nordic Countries could remind people of their duty to the motherland – their civil duties.^{20(k)}

Icelandic Nazis were virtually non-existent on the pages of the Icelandic newspapers during the winter of 1939-1940. After Quisling's treason, however, they were occasionally mentioned in *Tíminn* and *Alþýðublaðið* in relation to national security, although these mentions are almost only made on general terms; such as during a listing of potentially dangerous groups, alongside communists and nameless figures.

One commentator in *Alþýðublaðið* speculated if the disestablishment of the former farm-



Image 4: A *Morgunblaðið* news headline on April 10, 1940, utilized the mock-term “kuusinens” when referring to Quisling's treason in Norway. **Source:** *Morgunblaðið*.10.04.1940, p.2.

¹⁶ “Um daginn og veginn”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 18.04.1940, p. 2.

¹⁷ Jón Kjartansson. “Verndun lýðræðisins og öryggis ríkisins”. *Morgunblaðið*. 31.05.1940, p. 5.

¹⁸ Jón Kjartansson. “Verndun lýðræðisins og öryggis ríkisins”. *Morgunblaðið*. 31.05.1940, p. 5; Þórarinn Þórarinnsson. “Kuusinens og Quisling”. *Tíminn*. 16.04.1940, p. 166; “Þegnskapur”. *Morgunblaðið*. 05.05.1940, p. 5.

¹⁹ Þórarinn Þórarinnsson. “Kuusinens og Quisling”. *Tíminn*. 16.04.1940, p. 166.

²⁰ “Þegnskapur”. *Morgunblaðið*. 05.05.1940, p. 5.

right Icelandic Nationalist Party (see Chapter II), which had been a small and “despised” group, had merely been a strategy and if its members weren’t waiting underground and plotting, as Quisling’s party had done.²¹ *Tíminn*’s columnist wrote in early May that careful attention should be kept on both Nazis and communists. He applauded the fact that the Nazis did not show themselves in the Labour Day parades like they usually did, but reminded that communists and Nazis still posed a threat to national security.²²⁽¹⁾ *Tíminn*’s editor more cautiously mentioned that there were “various influential figures who have looked approvingly” towards Icelandic parties similar to that of Quisling’s, when suggesting Icelandic groups that could replay the events in Norway.^{23(m)} Judging from the wording, the author may be referring to German-friendly members of the Independence Party rather than the few vocal Nazis, although it is highly doubtful that the editor of the Progressive Party organ actually believed this to be of any threat. More aggressive were the paper’s references to the Icelandic communists in this connection.

4.1.3 ‘Kuusinens’ and ‘Quislings’

Tíminn’s co-editor and leader of the Progressive Party declared in late April that one of the lessons from the Norwegian tragedy was how correct and profound it had been when the Icelandic parliament, on December 4, 1939, initiated *Finnagaldur* in society by ignoring Socialist MPs at the Althing. He maintained the Finns had made such precautions against the internal communist threat in Finland and for this reason they managed to keep their head in Winter War. The Norwegians on the other hand failed to eliminate their internal threat, with the apparent result.²⁴ At the end of the article, he suggested that more anti-communism in action was the key to avoid a replay of the Norwegian experience in Iceland. Again, the party leader agitated for the social exclusion of Icelandic communists, as he had done in December 1939:

The Althing has marked a clear line in these matters. [...] Patriotic people in this country can now follow the leadership of the Althing [...] by actively isolating [from public trust] those Icelanders [...] who work towards the same goal as the unfortunate people who opened Norway to a foreign nation.²⁵⁽ⁿ⁾

Anti-communism in relation to the Winter War was still a hot topic in all titles of the non-communist press when Quisling performed his treason. Even though Nazi-Germany was now

²¹ Jónas Guðmundsson. “Landráðin í Noregi”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 18.04.1940, p. 3.

²² “Á viðavangi”. *Tíminn*. 04.05.1940, p. 189.

²³ Þórarinn Þórarinsson. “Kuusinen og Quisling”. *Tíminn*. 16.04.1940, p. 166.

²⁴ Jónas Jónsson. “Forusta Alþingis”. *Tíminn*. 23.04.1940, p. 178. See also: Jón Kjartansson. “Verndun lýðræðisins og öryggis ríkisins”. *Morgunblaðið*. 31.05.1940, p. 5.

²⁵ *ibid.*

the perpetrator, elements of the non-communist press still focused on the Icelandic communists as the main threat to the establishment. It was particularly *Alþýðublaðið* who used Quisling and the invasion of Norway as a platform from which to bash on their communist opponents. An *Alþýðublaðið* editorial in late April accused them of “direct service to German Nazism” by criticising the Western Powers instead of Germany in its writings on *Operation Weserübung*.²⁶ By May this understanding had reached new heights. A rather comprehensive smear campaign was conducted by the paper in the latter months of the Battle of Norway against the Icelandic communists based on an association *Alþýðublaðið* and its foreign sources constructed between Norwegian communists and the German invaders.

On May 6, *Alþýðublaðið* published a BBC news story which claimed that the German authorities in Oslo had not outlawed the Norwegian communist newspaper *Arbeideren* when the city was occupied, as had been the case with other non-Nazi papers such as *Aftenposten*, *Arbeiderbladet* and *Tidenes Tegn*. The report also supposed that Norwegian communists had been given “a role” by the Germans; namely, the reorganisation of the Norwegian labour movement. In other words “to disintegrate it and bend it into obedience to the Nazi authorities”.²⁷ The claims were later confirmed in an article by an American reporter in Norway titled “The Norwegian Communists in the Service of the Nazi-Army”, published in *Alþýðublaðið* in late May. Norwegian communists were seen as “humble servants” of the German invaders, working “under their protection”.²⁸

A number of opinion pieces in *Alþýðublaðið* followed up on this rumour and others presenting an image of European communists as Hitler’s number one fifth column abroad.²⁹ The paper’s editor maintained in late May that European communists had been working actively for “the defeat” of the Allies, Norway and all “who fight for freedom and democracy” against Germany and the Soviet Union. “They have bent their knees before Hitler”, he declared, “and become his quislings”.^{30(o)} And just like Kuusinen’s attributes were seen in the Icelandic counterparts during the Winter War, so was idea that the “kuusinens” were indeed quislings, as

²⁶ “Verið á verði um 1. maí!” *Alþýðublaðið*. 27.04.1940, p. 3.

²⁷ “Norsku kommúnistarnir í þjónustu innrásarhersins Þýzka”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 06.05.1940, p. 1.

²⁸ The article refers to the American journals *New Leader* and *Daily Worker* and an account by *The Christian Science Monitor* reporter Edmund Stevens who fled to Sweden having been stationed in occupied Oslo for some days. Stevens, also referred to by *Timinn* in footnote 12, was among the few neutral reporters stationed in Norway on April 9, 1940, and provided a first hand account of the occupation (Cheryl Heckler. *Accidental Journalist. The Adventures of Edmund Stevens 1934-1945*. Columbia/London, 2007, p. 86-92).

²⁹ See for example: “Auðvaldsstyrjöld?”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 22.05.1940, p. 3; Jónas Guðmundsson. “Hið nýja vopn Hitlers [Part II]”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 29.05.1940, p. 3.

³⁰ “Auðvaldsstyrjöld?”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 22.05.1940, p. 3.

an author of a submitted article suggested in in late May:

These men [the communists] are best suited to wield the only “new weapons” Hitler has so far put to the table in the ongoing conflict – organised treason. [...] If someone thinks that the communists and Nazis here [are any different than elsewhere] he has the wrong idea of things. What these parties have done elsewhere, they will also do here [...].^{31(p)}

On May 16, *Alþýðublaðið*'s editor claimed that *Þjóðviljinn* would not have protested a German invasion of Iceland, and would most probably had received the same “honour”, that *Arbeideren* had acquired in Norway for to its “official alliance with Quisling”^{32(q)} Four days later, he went on calling Icelandic communists “the Quislings of Iceland” and even accused them of having wished that the Germans would occupy the country before the British, in which event they would, “like in Norway”, have eliminated their opponents “under the protection of a German authority”.^{33(r)}

Although mostly concentrated in *Alþýðublaðið*, the rumour of German-communist cooperation in Norway, and its use in anti-communist discourse, is also mentioned in two editorial articles in the right-wing press in early June 1940.³⁴

4.2 Two Approaches towards Nazi-Germany

It is safe to suggest that there was a universal understanding among all of the Icelandic papers that the Norwegian Campaign was not an isolated conflict but merely a single battle of the world war between Germany and the Allies. *Morgunblaðið* and other journalists of the right-wing press refused to pass judgements on the Invasion of Norway whereas others saw no difference between the invasion of Norway and that of Finland. These discursive themes are:

3. The Neutral Approach: Portrayals of the Norwegian Campaign as a disaster for which neither belligerent party is held properly accounted. Focus on neutral analysis and pacifist opinions.
4. The Anti-German Approach: Portrayals of the invasion of Norway as a violent and illegitimate act of aggression, for which Germany is solely responsible.

³¹ Jónas Guðmundsson. “Hið nýja vopn Hitlers [Part II]”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 29.05.1940, pp. 3-4.

³² “Með hvaða rétti”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 16.05.1940, p. 3.

³³ “Óttinn við loftárás”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 20.05.1940, p. 3. See also: “Með hvaða rétti”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 16.05.1940, p. 3.

³⁴ “Hverjum til gagns?” *Morgunblaðið*. 06.06.1940, p. 5; “Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn og lýðræðið”. *Vísir*. 08.06.1940, p. 2.

4.2.1 The Neutral Approach

“Of course, no judgement will be passed here on the belligerents’ actions”, wrote *Morgunblaðið*’s editor in late April 1940: “History will judge the German Invasion of Norway and the occupation of Denmark”.^{35(s)} Whereas the Winter War discourse is decisively focused on the *villain*, a significant part of the Icelandic discussion on the Battle of Norway is conducted in an absence of such a figure – or at least a very vague presence of one. The outlook is mostly concentrated in *Morgunblaðið*, whose number of opinion pieces on the Battle of Norway exceeds the other papers by far. Commentators of the neutral approach strove to minimise the responsibility of the attacker in their analysis of the Battle of Norway and presented an understanding that Norway was only a chosen battlefield of the great powers for a limited time. The paper interpreted the Phoney War period as a six month period of “search for battlefields”, which the great powers had finally found: The great powers “found Norway.”^{36(t)} Reflecting this standpoint, *Morgunblaðið*’s editor described the invasion on the day after the events as such:

[...] Denmark and Norway have become the scene of the bloody great power war. [Denmark] has been forced to submit herself to the command of one of the belligerent, who has placed an army in [the country] [...] and from now on, Danish land will be used in the purpose of waging war, as long as the war lasts.^{37(u)}

Contrasting the paper’s reactions on the day after the invasion of Finland, and the reactions of other papers on that very day, the article is completely rid of accusations of illegal conquest or violence. The editor pointed out that the Nordic Countries would from now on be “the scene of the [world] war against their will” - a phrase which depersonalises the attacker and implies that its purposes were purely of a temporary military nature. Additionally, usage of the typical anonymous word “belligerent” gives the impression it was *the world war*, who invaded.^{38(v)} *Morgunblaðið*’s editorial article on April 10 was also the only OP in the initial days of the invasion who pointed out in all fairness that the Germans said they had no intention of severing the independence of the Nordic Countries.³⁹ Two weeks into the conflict, Germany saw that the Norwegians were not accepting German military protection and formally declared war upon Norway. *Morgunblaðið*’s columnist’s comment on this new situation on April 28 was simply

³⁵ “Friður”. *Morgunblaðið*. 24.04.1940, 5.

³⁶ “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 28.04.1940, p. 5.

³⁷ “Ørlagastundin”. *Morgunblaðið*. 10.04.1940, p.5.

³⁸ *ibid.*

³⁹ *ibid.*

that “dealings between nations take peculiar forms these days.”^{40(w)}

The neutral approach should not be mistaken for a pro-German apologetics. Neutral analysis of the Norwegian Campaign was also equally neutral towards Allied actions. Typical articles and columns dealing with the battle are characterised by an objective digest of the latest operational proceedings in Norway, giving equal weight to both belligerent parties.⁴¹ However, even though the neutral approach lacks a defined *villain*, it is the nameless *world war* and the unnamed *great powers in their struggle*, which the neutral commentators seem fitting to denounce. In other words, these writer did not take sides with or against either Germany or the Allies, but with the neutral powers in Scandinavia. For example, on April 16, *Morgunblaðið* published a lengthy and detailed article by a Swedish politician about the Swedish iron production and trade with the Germans, who concluded that the importance of said trade was highly overrated by the Allies. Unfortunately for Sweden, the author distressingly pointed out, this “widespread misunderstanding” was quite threatening to the country’s neutrality.⁴²

The *Altmark* incident in February 1940 provides another example of this aspect although it was not devoted much space in the Icelandic papers overall. *Morgunblaðið* published one of the very few unmistakably pro-German and anti-Allied opinion pieces in the Icelandic non-communist press on the subject of *Altmark*. It was an announcement from the German government heavily criticising British actions in neutral Norwegian waters and deeming them an inhumane “act of piracy”.⁴³ The fact that *Morgunblaðið* was willing to publish such an announcement goes to show how far the paper was ready to go in order to stay neutral and fair towards both belligerents. In a commentary after the incident, *Morgunblaðið*’s columnist explained the crisis to his readers both from the perspective of the Germans and the British, but his conclusion was in line with Scandinavian protests:

The great powers are not disputing what is right and wrong towards international rights here. Because in these [...] times, the belligerents assume the right thing to do is what best complies with their interests. This is the [moral] which dictates the world today [and] which the powerless and weak minor nations are forced to accept.^{44(x)}

Similarly, *Morgunblaðið* described the British mine laying in neutral Norwegian waters preceding the invasion on April 9, 1940, rather critically of both belligerents. The British are

⁴⁰ “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 28.04.1940, p. 5.

⁴¹ “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 07.04.1940, p. 5; “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 28.04.1940, p. 5.

⁴² “Málmgrýtið í Narvik...”. *Morgunblaðið*. 16.04.1940, p. 5-6.

⁴³ ““Altmark”-atvikið”. *Morgunblaðið*. 20.02.1940, p. 4.

⁴⁴ “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 25.02.1940, p. 5.

said to have “intervened terribly” over Norwegian authority and the Germans are accused of sinking neutral vessels. Typically, the author concluded that such a situation “demonstrates how small the right of minor nations” is, “when the great powers are at war”.⁴⁵ Neither the British nor the Germans are defined as a *villain*. In fact, the danger and the gathering storm clouds are seen as coming from the world war itself, which is described as closing in on the Nordic countries like some sort of a natural disaster. When discussing the probabilities of an invasion of Iceland on the eve of the *Operation Weserübung*, *Visir* compared the world war quite literally to a natural disaster: “We cannot manage” such an invasion “rather than an earthquake, sea ice or an eruption of *Katla*,” the editor wrote; world events “happen to us” and are “unmanageable, like the elements themselves.”⁴⁶ Such a description illustrates an immense inferiority and passivity apparently experienced by the Icelanders *vis-à-vis* the great powers of the Second World War – which again is reflected in the way neutral OP writers approached the Invasion of Norway.

In late April 1940, *Morgunblaðið* cautiously took the first step away from the neutral approach towards a more critical standpoint that would be openly expressed under the British occupation. An editorial article promoting peace and neutrality cautiously criticised the Germans for the secret attack on Norway and for promoting false peace in the occupied country.⁴⁷ However, the author quickly turned away from Nazi-Germany specifically and towards a more general criticism of the world war and the great powers of Europe:

The question that people will be considering [...] is this [:] Is the attack on Norway, whatever it's real causes [were] or from where they originated, the final fruit of the civil life of European nations? Are the methods which are in use [in Norway], characteristic for the new and upcoming times? Is this weapon-culture going to swarm the whole continent [...]?^{48(y)}

Unfortunately for the minor nations, the editor went on, the answer is most probably yes, although the Icelanders will not adopt to these new times “gladly”. *Morgunblaðið* pointed out on April 17 how symbolic it was that wherever this ‘weapon-culture’ reached, there followed a blackout of cities. First Denmark, and now “the darkness of war” had reached the Faroe Islands, which were occupied by the British a few days earlier.⁴⁹ “In our complete neutrality, we look at the cruel attacks of the belligerents”, the editor concluded, and are “convinced that whoever

⁴⁵ “Norðurlönd”. *Morgunblaðið*. 09.04.1940, p. 5.

⁴⁶ “Hvað skeður”. *Visir*. 09.04.1940, p. 2.

⁴⁷ “Friður”. *Morgunblaðið*. 24.04.1940, p. 5.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ “Myrkvun”. *Morgunblaðið*. 17.04.1940, p. 5.

shall win, can never build up a newer and better world for humanity” until the weapons have been laid down and the lights turned on.^{50(z)} Such a pacifist and cynical opinion, critical of both parties as if they had both gone mad, is typical for the Icelandic neutral approach.

4.2.2 The Anti-German Approach

Tíminn had hitherto also been careful in its writings about Nazi-Germany during the Phoney War. On April 11, 1940, however, *Tíminn*'s columnist dismissed the neutral approach, claiming that such a way of thinking was an unnecessary servility to the Germans and that it was contradicting the neutral nations' freedom of expression. “Neutrality [should] not restrain people's opinions”, the columnist wrote; that's why it was “perfectly in order to condemn the Russians' attack on the Finns and [...] in the same way, we are allowed to criticise the Germans for their conduct in Denmark”. However, the editor reminded, “it goes without saying, [that one should] use moderate language about foreign events.”^{51(aa)} *Alþýðublaðið* chimed in about freedom of expression, claiming that fear of German threats was undermining “normal and righteous criticism” of the invasion of Norway as well as the people's natural expression of sympathy with the ‘sister nations’.⁵²

However, *Alþýðublaðið*'s editor and other commentators in the paper did not spare the Germans with the “moderate language” suggested by *Tíminn*. The Germans and the Soviets received the same treatment when it came to rhetoric in *Alþýðublaðið*, where anger and blame was among the first reactions to *Operation Weserübung*. “A more unfair and more unprovoked attack has never been made” against any country but perhaps the one against Finland, the editor declared the day after the invasion. The illegitimacy and aggressiveness of the invasion of Finland was still in fresh memory and *Alþýðublaðið*'s editor pointed out the parallels:

Just like Russia broke [its] non-aggression pact with Finland, so broke Germany its non-aggression pact with the small and completely defenceless Denmark. And to [make the two cases identical,] Germany has now also made an example out of Russia's puppet government in Terijoki [...] [by] establishing a German puppet government in Oslo. The tools are the same, although one calls itself communist and the other Nazi [...].^{53(bb)}

Even though *Alþýðublaðið*'s commentators seem to have had quite an up-to-date understanding

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁵¹ “Á viðavangi”. *Tíminn*. 11.04.1940, p. 157.

⁵² “Fölsun hlutleysishugtaksins”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 12.04.1940, p. 3.

⁵³ “Eldraun Norðurlanda”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 10.04.1940, p. 3. See also: Jónas Guðmundsson. “Landráðin í Noregi”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 18.04.1940, p. 2.

of the Norwegian Campaign as a scenario in the struggle between Germany and the Allies, the idea that two attacks on Finland and Norway were derived from the same source; the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and were thus intertwined with each other.⁵⁴ Just like the move against Poland, the Baltics and Finland, the editor maintained in an article bashing Icelandic communists for hypocrisy regarding their coverage of the events, the invasion of Norway was a direct result of the “alliance between Nazism and Moscow-communism”.⁵⁵

Running parallel to the Winter War discourse, commentators of the anti-German approach criticised the Invasion of Norway with references to violence and illegitimacy, as well as oppressiveness of the subsequent occupation. *Alþýðublaðið* claimed in late April that the Danes were unjustifiably forced “under the oppression of a Nazi tyranny for an unspecified time” and that the Norwegians sacrificed their lives on a daily basis defending their “country and freedom from a similar attempt of oppression.”^{56(cc)} Wielding a typical nationalistic rhetoric on April 16, *Tíminn* interpreted the “cruel and unprovoked attacks” in a similar way:

The Icelandic people generally wishes that the sister nations, who have undergone the unrestrained violence, will as soon as possible be able to cut themselves loose from the shackles of oppression and make it back among the ranks of free and sovereign nations.^{57(dd)}

An additional feature of the Invasion of Norway noted by the anti-German commentators which had not characterised the Winter War discourse was the apparent insidiousness of the attack. Comparing the two attacks on Scandinavia three weeks into the conflict, *Tíminn* deemed the Invasion of Norway “even more reprehensible” than the Invasion of Finland because the Finns had at least received two months of negotiations and managed to mobilise their army, whereas the Norwegians received no warning beforehand.⁵⁸ Similarly, submitted articles in *Alþýðublaðið* expressed both shock and disdain with the back-stabbing and deal-breaking behaviour of the Germans, sneaking an army into the Denmark and Norway in the cover of darkness to take the innocent neutrals by surprise. One author said the attack was “so insidiously prepared” and made with such an immeasurable “contempt for rights [and] for given promises” that people observing were left without words.^{59(ee)} The operation is said to have been devised

⁵⁴ See for example: “Eins og á tímum Nelsons”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 13.04.1940, p. 3; “Örþrífásókn Hitlers”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 14.05.1940, p. 3.

⁵⁵ “Krókódílstár”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 18.04.1940, p. 3.

⁵⁶ “Fyrsti maí í ár”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 23.04.1940, p. 3.

⁵⁷ Þórarinn Þórarinsson. “Kuusinen og Quisling”. *Tíminn*. 16.04.1940, p. 166.

⁵⁸ “Eftir þriggja vikna styrjöld í Noregi”. *Tíminn*. 30.04.1940, p. 185.

⁵⁹ Hallgrímur Jónasson. “Frændþjóðir í neyð”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 24.04.1940, p. 3.

for a long time “in one of the most insidious and dishonourable way imaginable.”^{60(ff)} Even *Morgunblaðið* delivered a carefully worded criticism of the brutal and secretive way in which Norway was subjugated by Germany.⁶¹

4.2.3 In to the Allied Camp

What about the actions of the Allies in and around Norway during the spring of 1940? By condemning the Germans’ behaviour in Norway, were the anti-German papers simultaneously applauding or apologising the British? In fact, Allied involvement in the Norwegian Campaign seems not to have been the subject of any particular opinion beyond declared neutrality in the Icelandic non-communist press. The fact that the Norwegian campaign was first and foremost a scenario in the world war and that the Norwegians willingly became a member of the Western military alliance immediately after the attack seems to have been taken for granted in a way that it was neither criticised nor applauded specifically.

German propaganda perpetually suggested the Invasion of Norway was an answer to British breach of Norwegian neutrality. *Alþýðublaðið* did not excuse British mine laying in Norwegian Waters but it did, however, make an explicit statement in an editorial article immediately after the invasion by dismissing the German *casus belli*:

It is useless for Germany to go ahead and excuse this shameful attack with Britain’s mine laying off the Western Coast of Norway, even though that was definitely a breach of neutrality. [...] And isn’t it clear to everyone that Germany’s attack has been prepared long before Britain had the mines laid [...] and [the invasion] had even begun before that time [...]?^{62(ss)}

Up against this relatively little breach by the British, *Alþýðublaðið* counted a number of incidents where the Germans had breached the neutrality of both Norway, Sweden and Denmark before the invasion, emphasising that their hostile behaviour leading up to the operation was overwhelming.⁶³

Approaching the fourth period of this study’s time frame by early May, 1940, one can observe a shift in the opinions of *Morgunblaðið*, *Vísir* and *Tíminn* in the direction of a more solid pro-Allied sentiments. On May 4, the *Morgunblaðið*’s editor reflected over news of the

⁶⁰ Jónas Guðmundsson. “Landráðin í Noregi”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 18.04.1940, p. 3.

⁶¹ “Friður”. *Morgunblaðið*. 24.04.1940, p. 5.

⁶² “Eldraun Norðurlanda”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 10.04.1940, p. 3.

⁶³ “Eldraun Norðurlanda”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 10.04.1940, p. 3. See also: Guðlaugur Rósinkranz. “Árásin á Norðurlönd”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 15.04.1940, p. 3; Jónas Guðmundsson. “Landráðin í Noregi”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 18.04.1940, p. 2.

Allied withdrawal from Norway, acknowledging his commiseration with the Norwegian people's "unhappiness" relating from it. Simultaneously, the paper's columnist stated that the foreseeable surrender of the Norwegian Army "set people silent".⁶⁴ Six days later, the paper viewed the act as having triggered "disappointment in neutral countries across the entire world" – now echoing the anti-German view which had been presented by *Alþýðublaðið* the day before.⁶⁵ Given the fact that *Morgunblaðið* certainly considered Iceland belonging to this group of nations, the author was surely giving the impression that his countrymen were among the disappointed neutrals. The statement makes Britain appear the protector of the neutral minor nations; a title which the Soviet Union was mockingly said to have claimed before the Invasion of Finland.

All four pro-government papers reacted to the British Occupation of Iceland on May 10, 1940 with protest but politely promoting cooperation with the British.⁶⁶ As the Icelandic press felt more comfortable displaying pro-Allied sentiments, *Tíminn*'s anti-German language had, by the end of the month, sharpened from the beginnings of April: "[O]ne minor nation after the other", stated *Tíminn*'s columnist on May 21 – the very same who urged his readers on April 11 to "use moderate language" about foreign events – is "deprived of its independence, its human rights and freedom by [Stalin's] new friend, Hitler."^{67(hh)} Already on the day after the British Invasion of Iceland, the editor of *Morgunblaðið* revealed his preference to the Allied occupation over the German one experienced by the 'sister nations':

It must [...] be admitted that an occupation by the hand of a friendly nation of honour [the British] [...] should not be much of a worrying matter compared to the fate of many other minor nations [...] [such as] the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, not to forget our most friendly sister nations [Denmark and Norway].⁶⁸⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

This view became quite common in the centre-right press during this study's fourth period.⁶⁹ In early June, 1940, *Morgunblaðið* declared that of the three Nordic minor nations who were occupied against their wishes; Iceland, Denmark and Norway, the situation was worse in Scandinavia under the Germans. *Vísir* chimed in on the discussion two days later, adding that

⁶⁴ "Noregur". *Morgunblaðið*. 04.05.1940, p. 5; "Reykjavíkurbjef". *Morgunblaðið*. 05.05.1940, p. 5.

⁶⁵ "Eftir eldraunina". *Morgunblaðið*. 10.05.1940, p. 5; "Pyrrhusarsigur Hitlers". *Alþýðublaðið*. 04.05.1940, p. 3.

⁶⁶ "Hernámið". *Vísir*. 10.05.1940, p.2. "Hernámið". *Morgunblaðið*. 11.05.1940, p.5; "Jónas Jónsson. "Ísland og heimsstyrjöldin". *Tíminn*. 11.05.1940, p. 202; "Viðburðirnir í nótt og í morgun". *Alþýðublaðið*. 11.05.1940, p. 3.

⁶⁷ "Á víðavangi". *Tíminn*. 21.05.1940, p. 213.

⁶⁸ "Hernámið". *Morgunblaðið*. 11.05.1940, p.5.

⁶⁹ See also: "Tíðindin". *Morgunblaðið*. 24.05.1940, p. 5; "17. maí". *Vísir*. 17.05.1940, p. 2.

even though the Icelanders had been the subject of “diminished freedom”, this was nothing compared to the brutal dictatorship that had been established in Norway.⁷⁰ *Tíminn* concluded in this direction too, no matter “how repulsive to the [Icelandic] nation” the paper considered the British occupation to be.⁷¹⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

At the end of the day, the Icelandic press always saw the ‘sister nations’ as victims of the war and this outlook prevailed even though the Icelanders themselves had also been occupied against their will. Late in May, *Morgunblaðið* urged that total official neutrality was still the cornerstone of Icelandic policy and independence aspirations. Despite that, the paper now acknowledged people’s rights to have “opinions on the methods of the belligerent nations” and reminded that people “can” and indeed, “must”, carry deep sadness in their hearts over “our sister nations’ fates”.^{72(kk)}

4.3 The Most Innocent Victims

The Icelandic press had great respect for the Nordic nations and undoubtedly counted them among their closest friends in the international arena. The portrayal of these nations in the discourse of the Battle of Norway is twofold: First, there was a widespread expression of sympathy and condolences with them in the form of *victimisation* – be it victims of Nazi oppression or the victims of circumstance. Second, there was a fair amount of *glorification* of Nordic society which was now under attack by totalitarianism and imperialist war. The discursive theme is:

5. The Most Innocent Victims: Expressions of condolences and commiseration with the Nordic nations for being the victims of a terrible tragedy and simultaneously glorification of their fallen neutral, civilized and/or socialist society.

4.3.1 Victimisation

The Nordics in general – Denmark, Norway and sometimes Finland in particular, were perceived by the Icelandic press during the Battle of Norway as some sort of champions – and martyrs even, of neutrality and peace. During the Winter War and the events leading up to *Operation Weserübung*, the papers had maintained the understanding that the Norwegian and Swedish governments made great sacrifices to stay out of the world war by denying the Allies

⁷⁰ “Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn og lýðræðið”. *Vísir*. 08.05.1940, p. 2.

⁷¹ “Á víðavangi”. *Tíminn*. 21.05.1940, p. 213. See also: Jónas Jónsson. “Hið breytta viðhorf”. *Tíminn*. 16.05.1940, p. 206-207.

⁷² “Hvað vill *Alþýðublaðið*?” *Morgunblaðið*. 23.05.1940, p. 5.

military access – and thus abandoning the Finnish cause in the Winter War.⁷³ Still, despite “their sincere peaceful intent” and “both material and mental” sacrifices to the neutral cause, Denmark and Norway were invaded.⁷⁴(ll) The Icelandic papers thus presented an understanding that the Nordic Countries were among the most innocent victims of the war one could find.

All of the five newspapers in Reykjavík, *Þjóðviljinn* included, devoted space in their first-reaction editorials after April 9, 1940 to deliver their condolences to the Norwegian and Danish nations. Sympathies with the ‘sister nations’ was not concealed by the neutral approach towards Germany. In fact, these same authors who refrained from criticising Germany saw the Nordics as victims of a terrible tragedy. *Morgunblaðið* reminded on April 12 that even though the “declared everlasting neutrality” of the Icelanders must be kept at “every footstep” and during “every activity”, they cannot ignore that fact that “our sympathy with the ‘sister nations’ [...] is sincere and everlasting”.⁷⁵(mm) *Vísir*, referring to the ongoing Icelandic Struggle for Independence, declared that “the Icelanders have more sympathy with the Danish nation” than ever before and had there been “any vestiges of old animosities” these had surely disappeared the moment the “act of violence” was committed.⁷⁶(nn)

The fact that that there seemed less hype in Icelandic society during April 1940 than it did in December 1939 when Finland was attacked was noticed by the contemporaries themselves. A reader of *Alþýðublaðið* wrote to a columnist questioning that people were out dancing and drinking “even though two other neighbouring states have received similar fate as Finland.”⁷⁷ *Þjóðviljinn* was quick to point out that less anger with the German invasion proved the communists’ argumentation that the “Finland exacerbations” last winter had merely been a form

⁷³ The view that Norway and Sweden had unjustifiably abandoned Finland and effectively forced the Finns to accept humiliating peace terms after the Winter War was widespread among interventionists and Finland Aid activists in Scandinavia. “*Finlands sæk var ikke vår*”; “The Finnish cause was not ours”, stated the headline of the Swedish Volunteer Corps’ publication on the day of the ceasefire in Finland. (Göran Andolf. *Svenska frivilligkåren*. Part of series: *Svenska frivilliga i Finland 1939-1944*, Stockholm, 1989, p. 146). *Tíminn* seems to have been the only Icelandic paper to admit to this opinion. The paper’s sub-headline on March 14, 1940 attributed full responsibility of the Finns’ forced “surrender” to the Nordic Countries’ refusal of military access. (“Hin hetjulega sjálfstæðisvörn Finna...”. *Tíminn*. 14.03.1940, p. 117). The paper accused the Norwegian and Swedish governments of indirectly aiding the Soviets and criticised them for selling Finland out in a selfish pursuit of their own security. (Þórarinn Þórarinnsson “Styrjöldin í Finnlandi og “norraen samvinna””. *Tíminn*. 05.03.1940; pp. 101; “Hlutleysi Noregs”. *Tíminn*. 20.02.1940, p. 77). *Alþýðublaðið* and *Morgunblaðið*, on the other hand, did not share this opinion and defended the Norwegian and Swedish governments’ decision with understanding, although they agreed that a sacrifice had been made. (See. for example: Guðlaugur Rósinkranz: “Afstaða Norðurlanda”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 29.02.1940, p. 3; “Hvað vill *Tíminn*...”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 09.03.1940, p. 2; “Uppgjöf Finna”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 14.03.1940, p. 3; “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 17.03.1940, p. 5; “Reykjavíkurbjef”. 31.03.1940, p. 5.).

⁷⁴ “Eldraun Norðurlanda”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 10.04.1940, p. 3.

⁷⁵ “Með stillingu”. *Morgunblaðið*. 12.04.1940, p. 5.

⁷⁶ “Helgasta skyldan.” *Vísir*. 16.04.1940, p. 2.

⁷⁷ “Um daginn og veginn...”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 09.05.1940, p. 4.

of international and domestic persecutions against communists.⁷⁸ These remarks became the subject of discussions in which the non-communist press was eager to declare that the Icelanders inhibited no less sympathy towards the ‘sister nations’ in Norway and Denmark than they did towards the Finns. On April 15, *Visir* dismissed all such talk in an editorial article titled “The Sympathy of the Icelanders”:

These speculations are both ignorant and dishonourable. [...] We are talking about the nations with whom we have experienced [good things and bad] throughout the ages. The bonds of friendship and culture will never be severed by our initiative.^{79(oo)}

Tíminn suggested that less expression of sympathy with the Danes than with the Finns was partly the result of the neutral approach towards Nazi-Germany and partly because of the surprise and rapidness of *Operation Weserübung*.⁸⁰ Employing a nationalist rhetoric, *Morgunblaðið* explained the observable “ease” among the Icelandic people as some sort of a reaction to imminent danger; a national attribute which was normally conducted by Icelandic seamen who lived all their lives at “the limits of life and death”.⁸¹ Such kind of “ease” and even more, the editor suggested, was required if and when the day came that Iceland was attacked. The ease at which people observed the tragic events abroad was explained as a more sincere form of expression of sympathy and condolences, than anger and accusations. To exclaim the amount of fellow feeling shown in Iceland, an *Alþýðublaðið* article even listed quotes to all the non-communist newspapers who declared sympathy with Norway and Denmark. The author then explained the apparent difference from the Soviet attack on Finland from the standpoint of anxiety and emergency:

The attack on Finland was the first [attack] on the Nordic Countries. Now, the dangerous events have moved closer to us, the danger is more impending for ourselves – and everything happens so unexpectedly. The most terrible news often silences people, they lack words to describe the pain.^{82(pp)}

The reactions to the events in Norway and Denmark are dramatically described here as reactions

⁷⁸ “Hugleiðingar Örvarodds”. *Þjóðviljinn*. 13.04.1940, p. 2. See also: “Stéttareðli stríðsins...”. *Þjóðviljinn*. 14.04.1940, p. 2; “Virðing þingsins”. *Þjóðviljinn*. 16.04.1940, p. 2.

⁷⁹ “Samúð Íslendinga”. *Visir*. 15.04.1940, p. 2.

⁸⁰ “Á viðavangi”. *Tíminn*. 11.04.1940, p. 157.

⁸¹ “Með stillingu”. *Morgunblaðið*. 12.04.1940, p. 5.

⁸² Guðlaugur Rósinkranz. “Árásin á Norðurlönd”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 15.04.1940, p. 3. Rósinkranz was among the foremost supporters of Nordic cooperation in Iceland. He was the secretary of the Nordic Association in Iceland during the war years and in cooperation with the Icelandic Red Cross, he organised both the Finland Relief of 1939-1940 and the Norway Relief in 1942-1944. During these acts, Rósinkranz often appeared in the papers as a spokesperson for the relief programs.

to a tragic death of a loved one. Another commentator in the paper wrote to a similar effect that people became “stupor” and “sad” upon learning the news from Scandinavia: “It is perhaps this silence, this heaviness [and] silent coolness”, he went on, which best describes the “empathy with the brother-nations”.⁸³ These views underline the fact that the victimised portrayal of the Nordic Countries in the Icelandic press after *Operation Weserübung* was the result of sombre sympathy of commiseration and sorrow.

4.3.2 Glorification

The apparently tragic attack on the Nordic countries also prompted some commentators in the Icelandic press to react with a glorification of Nordic society and a construction of the Nordic Countries as exemplar and some sort of champions of the neutral/pacifist or social-democratic cause. The outlook is most prominent in the anti-German *Alþýðublaðið* but is also observable in other papers. On April 18, 1940, *Vísir* published a short article loaded with Nordic extolment and pacifism. The peculiar article depicts the world war as a battle between life and death; not between the democratic Allies and the fascist Axis powers, but of peaceful and educated minor nations such as the Nordics against the great powers’ destructive “anti-life policy” (i. *helstefna*). The author maintained the Nordic nations were the “vanguard of humanity” (i. *fylkingarbrjóst mannkynsins*), at par with great minor nations like the Greeks and the Jews in terms of contributions to human civilization.⁸⁴

Morgunblaðið praised the Nordic Countries for being the vanguard of a “healthy and true” democracy and *Alþýðublaðið* described Denmark and Norway somewhat similarly to the young and successful Finnish Republic during the Winter War; an exemplar society of peace, progress and social democracy.⁸⁵ An *Alþýðublaðið* article in late April stated that the Nordic nations had used their energies, funds and intellect on “mental and material” activities which had placed them “among the most civilized nations in the world”.⁸⁶ *Vísir* listed the names Norwegians who had contributed to world culture: Björnson, Ibsen, Nansen, Amundsen, Grieg, “just to name a few”, and pointed out that wherever the Norwegians and their great merchant fleet went, a “refreshing gust of diligence and manhood” followed.^{87(qq)} To the same effect, *Tíminn* and *Vísir* described the Danes as a “peaceful and non-interfering” minor nation which had built “the most

⁸³ Hallgrímur Jónasson. “Frændþjóðir í neyð”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 24.04.1940, p. 3.

⁸⁴ Helgi Pjetursson. “Saga og framtíð Norðurlanda”. *Vísir*. 18.04.1940, p. 4.

⁸⁵ “Þegnskapur”. *Morgunblaðið*. 05.05.1940, p. 5.

⁸⁶ Hallgrímur Jónasson. “Frændþjóðir í neyð”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 24.04.1940, p. 3.

⁸⁷ “17. maí”. *Vísir*. 17.04.1940, p. 2.

civilized society” through “labour, diligence and attentiveness”. The fruit of said innocent labour, *Visir* declared, was suddenly cast “before the feet of an attacker-nation”, giving the impression of a martyrdom.^{88(rr)}

As Image 5 suggests, *Alþýðublaðið* urged the workers of Reykjavík to turn the Labour Day celebrations on May 1, 1940 into a demonstration of “sympathy and respect” in honour of the Danes and Norwegians. The paper added that Nordic society was perceived leading upholding the ideals of “the labour movement, socialism and internationalism”, thus, praising the Nordics on the international day of labour was seen as only logical. In addition, *Alþýðublaðið*’s editor pointed out, these countries were no longer able to celebrate Labour Day at home because of the occupation. The Norwegians were at that very moment fighting a real war, he continued, “for the ideals to which the first of May is dedicated”.⁸⁹

Such portrayal of martyrdom was also apparent in some opinion pieces on the Norwegian Constitution Day on May 17, 1940, as seen here from *Alþýðublaðið*:

And with a growing sense of democracy, the Norwegians have [...] enjoyed peace with every nation and internal freedom for more than 125 years [...] and have become what they are today: The freest, the most enterprising and the most civilized nation in the world.^{90(ss)}

And for 125 years, the Norwegians have celebrated said freedom on May 17, the author goes on, until now, as the “bloody oppressors” prohibit them to play their national anthem and raise



Image 5: *Alþýðublaðið*’s front page was devoted to the Nordic Countries on Labour Day, May 1, 1940. The headline in frame 1 reads: “*Show the brother-nations in the Nordic Countries our sympathy and respect today.*” Frame 2 and 3 depict photographs of the prime ministers of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden and the four leaders of the Danish, Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish labour movements. Source: *Alþýðublaðið*. 01.05.1940, p.1.

⁸⁸ “Helgasta skyldan”. *Visir*. 16.04.1940, p. 2. See also: “Á viðavangi”. *Tíminn*. 11.04.1940, p. 157.

⁸⁹ “Fyrsti maí í ár”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 23.04.1940, p. 3.

⁹⁰ “Þjóðhátíðardagur Norðmanna”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 17.05.1940, p. 3.

their flag all the way from Oslo to Trondheim.⁹¹ Both *Alþýðublaðið* and *Vísir* presented in their May 17 editorials an appraisal of the Norwegian people, like the Finns, as a nation for which freedom was a national virtue. *Vísir*'s article was mostly rid of criticism of the Germans, but focused on an appraisal of the Norwegian people and its free spirit.⁹² Furthermore, there are even occasional remarks to be found in Icelandic OPs of a heroisation of the Norwegian army during the Battle of Norway. Although uncommon, such a view did further fuel the idea of the Norwegians as a nation devoted to her national freedom – like the Finns.⁹³

4.4 Chronology and Newspaper Titles

The heterogeneous discourse of the Invasion of Norway and Denmark and its subsequent campaign in the Icelandic non-communist press is foremost characterised by anxiety and distress. Furthermore, the discourse reflects the highest foreign policy values of the National Government; neutrality, independence and friendly relations with the non-communist great powers. The two approaches towards Germany give an interesting picture of the mind set of those writing for *Morgunblaðið* and *Alþýðublaðið* respectively. One approach is careful and, it seems, responsible during times of utmost alert, while the other is more reckless but stands for its ideals and beliefs – solid anti-fascism and association with the Nordic Countries in the case of *Alþýðublaðið*, and Icelandic nationalism in the case of *Tíminn*.

The Battle of Norway can be divided into two periods: The third and fourth research periods of this study's time frame; from April 9, 1940 to May 10, and from May 10 until the surrender of Norway on June 10. The newspaper discourse is overall heavily concentrated in the third period before other more important domestic and international events overshadowed the Battle of Norway. Sympathy with the Norwegians and Danes is evenly distributed among newspaper titles although glorification of the Nordics is most apparent in *Alþýðublaðið*.

Discussions on internal and external national security also appeared consistently in all four non-communist papers in April although *Alþýðublaðið* and *Tíminn* are the only papers where Quisling's betrayal constitutes as a discursive theme. As anticipated, there is a clear shift in the Battle of Norway discourse after May 10, 1940, be it for the effects of the British occupation, or the German assault into France and the Benelux Countries – or both. *Morgunblaðið* observably moves away from the strict neutrality policy towards Germany and *Alþýðublaðið*'s

⁹¹ *ibid.*

⁹² “17. maí”. *Vísir*. 17.05.1940, p. 2.

⁹³ See for example: Jónas Jónsson. “Frjáls þjóð í frjálsu landi”. *Tíminn*. 30.04.1940, p. 186; “Noregur”. *Morgunblaðið*. 11.06.1940, p. 5.

CHAPTER IV

discourse becomes increasingly focused on anti-communism. Interestingly, this second wave of anti-communism is briefly mentioned in two opinion pieces in *Morgunblaðið* and *Vísir*, but is otherwise a sole preoccupation of the social-democratic press.

Chapter V

Comparison and Discussion

Having laid out the discursive themes of both the Winter War and the Battle of Norway, we shall now delve deeper into the two cases, compare them and try to shed light on our research questions. I will address the two domestic themes that were extracted from both cases and revolve around neutrality and anti-communism. Then, the press' portrayals of the aggressors and the defenders of the two invasions will be compared. Furthermore, the ideas and world views reflected by these portrayals will be presented and discussed.

5.1 Direct Comparison

In order to address the situational context of the compared cases, all editorial articles published in the Icelandic press over the durations of the two conflicts were registered and categorised by topics, providing data for a quantitative survey.¹ Table 1 (see Appendix 1) lists a collection of the most common editorial topics in the Winter War period from December 1, 1939, until March 14, 1940. Among the top five topics on the list, the Winter War appears to be as much discussed as the typical day-to-day topics like labour issues, the state budget and parliament activities. As the table illustrates, Winter War-related editorials are twofold: First, there are articles portraying opinion about the Winter War in general: Its belligerents, legitimacy, course etc. Second, there are articles made up of an anti-communist discourse aimed primarily at the Icelandic communists, as a *direct response* to the events in Finland.² Table 1 shows that domestic anti-communism relating to the Winter War is more frequent than discussion on the Winter War itself and taken together, we can see that the conflict was by far the most discussed topic of the period.

Table 2 (see Appendix 1) reveals that the Battle of Norway is also the most commonly appearing topic overall during the period from April 9, 1940 until June 11, 1940. However,

¹ Editorials, also known as leading articles or leaders, are easily measurable and relevant, not only because of their prominence being a newspaper's leading and official opinion piece, but also because an editorial article was included, with very few exceptions, in every published issue of the newspapers in question. Note, however, that such a categorisation can only give a rough overview of the most discussed topics during the time period in question because some editorials deal with multiple themes. This survey also counts editorials in *Þjóðviljinn*, thus grasping all of the party press and all daily newspapers in Reykjavík.

² Responses to Winter War anti-communism in *Þjóðviljinn's* editorials are also accounted for in the tables.

whereas the Winter War was largely an isolated conflict between two single parties, only touching upon the – nevertheless important, domestic issue of anti-communism, the Battle of Norway is intertwined with other huge topics associated with *Operation Weserübung*. These connected topics include the Occupation of Denmark and the subsequent dissolution of the personal union between Iceland and Denmark, the loss of markets and communication with Scandinavia and the overall course of the war between Germany and the Allies. In addition, articles labelled as “The Battle of Norway” sometimes also contain discussions about some of these other topics. This fact undermines the significance of our topic being on the top of the list, as opposed to the Winter War topic which thrones a list of non-related domestic issues, but nevertheless shows that it was part of a larger issue with much greater significance than the Winter War or any other topics.

This last point illustrates the most obvious difference between the two cases which is the uniformity of the Winter War discourse, and the diversity of the Battle of Norway discourse. Table 3 lists all the discursive themes that were presented in the two previous. The Winter War discussion largely takes on only three clearly defined forms: Anti-communism, anti-Soviet remarks and sympathy with Finland. The four non-communist and pro-government newspapers employed similar vocabulary and there is a general consensus among them on the anti-Soviet and pro-Finnish opinions which they all claim is representing the ‘whole nation’.

THE WINTER WAR	THE BATTLE OF NORWAY
1. <u>The Drop of the Mask</u> (anti-communism)	1. <u>Between Hope and Fear</u> (threat)
2. <u>Call for Excommunication</u> (anti-communism)	2. <u>Quisling and the Treason</u> (threat/anti-communism)
3. <u>Forces of Violence</u> (anti-Soviet remarks)	3. <u>The Neutral Approach</u> (neutrality towards Germany)
4. <u>The “Hero-Nation”</u> (sympathy with the Finns)	4. <u>The Anti-Fascist Approach</u> (anti-German remarks)
5. <u>The Military Frontier</u> (anti-Soviet remarks)	5. <u>The Most Innocent Victims</u> (sympathy with Nor/Den)
6. <u>The Civilization Frontier</u> (anti-Soviet remarks/sympathy with the Finns)	

Table 3: A complete list of the discursive themes presented in Chapter III and IV.

The discussion during the Norwegian Campaign is more diverse and disordered. Apart from the issues of national security and sympathy with the Nordic nations, lines are more unclear and discursive themes less conveniently spotted. It is obvious that the OP writers themselves saw the Invasion of Norway and Denmark as a more complicated matter than the Winter War.

The seriousness of the situation is apparent in all discursive themes. It is apparent from our findings in Chapter IV that the newspaper discussion during the Battle of Norway was characterised by fear and insecurity. In opposition to this serious discourse, the monolithic

Winter War discourse is on the other hand undoubtedly associated with anger and judgements. Decisively focused on the *villain* of the conflict, the Winter War discussion is aggressive and accusing towards the Soviet Union and Icelandic communists. While certain OP writers clearly made a *villain* out of the aggressor during the Battle of Norway, it is safe to suggest that the latter discourse is overall much less aggressive in terms of language and accusations.

What do the two cases have in common? A common theme throughout the discussions on both conflicts, is the Icelandic papers' sympathy with the Finns and the Norwegians/Danes as victims of war and aggression. Furthermore, great power suspicion and a denunciation of violence is a universal theme, as well as domestic anti-communism.

The 11 discursive themes that were identified in Chapter III and IV can be sorted into two main categories: (1) Domestic issues, dealing with Icelandic parties and the Icelandic situation as a direct result of the foreign events and (2) foreign issues, dealing with opinionated portrayals of the belligerents in the foreign events. We shall now discuss these factors, beginning with the apparently pressing domestic issues.

5.2 The Threat

The Icelandic non-communist press expressed concerns of a purposed security threat following both invasions in Scandinavia. This perceived threat is twofold: First, it is an external threat posed to the vulnerable Icelandic state by the great power war. Second, the non-communist press announces the existence of an internal threat which is brought up in relation to the treason of Kuusinen in Finland and of Quisling in Norway.

5.2.1 The External Threat and the Neutral Approach towards Germany

The external threat to Iceland during the two cases is obviously posed by the two aggressors of the Norwegian and Finnish Campaigns. Although there was no real threat of a Soviet invasion of Iceland during and following the Winter War, it is clear that the Icelandic press rightfully feared that the event was the beginning of a dark fate for the Nordic Countries. It was also a matter of principles; if the great powers were to be allowed to attack neutral minor nations, what would happen to Iceland? The German Invasion of Denmark and Norway, however, brought the war closer to Iceland in all aspects. What is peculiar in our findings is the neutral approach towards Nazi-Germany which obviously characterises the Icelandic press discussions on the invasion. Why did *Morgunblaðið*, the largest newspaper in Iceland, representing the largest and perhaps the most mainstream political party, engage in such a lenient stance towards

Germany during the Invasion of Norway?

It is worth repeating that the neutral approach as it appears in *Morgunblaðið* should not be mistaken for an attempt to apologise the attack on Norway. It was literally an expression of neutrality. *Morgunblaðið* not only viewed neutral opinion regarding the war in Europe to be an extension of the “natural and declared neutrality of the nation”, but also a necessary virtue in times of extreme danger. Furthermore, the paper maintained that if people refrained from taking sides in the conflict, it would be easier to keep the nation united.³ Breaking down the ideology behind the neutral approach we can see that it is based primarily on two notions which are disconnected from any pro-German sentiment: First, pacifist remarks, objecting to the destructiveness of the war and the aggressiveness of *both* great powers towards the minor nations. Second, it is based on the idea that *both* Germany and Great Britain are respectful and friendly nations to the Icelanders and that the Icelanders wish nothing more than an end of hostilities and a resume of normal relations. Total neutrality was thus seen as essential in order to save Icelandic ships from being sunk in the Atlantic and in order to keep up foreign trade with both great powers.

The neutral approach towards Germany began as an extension of the official neutral standpoint of the National Government and was apparent in all three centre-right newspapers in September 1939 when the Second World War broke out. Neither *Vísir* nor *Morgunblaðið* made opinionated comments on the German Invasion of Poland in early September, stressing only the importance of neutrality and national unity.⁴ Giving an equal representation of the claims of both Chamberlain and Hitler in *Morgunblaðið*'s editorial on September 4, the editor openly declared his unwillingness to take sides in the conflict.⁵ *Tíminn* reminded its readers to show respect for the great powers' “sufferings” by exercising “moderation and honour” in discussions on them. These “most civilized nations in the world”, the editor claimed, were no natural enemies and should not really be at war.⁶ Only the Soviet Union was made feel the disapproval of the centre-right press. In his New Year's editorial address in December 1939, *Tíminn*'s editor stated that the causes of the world war originated in the lack of freedom and democracy, which pertained certain countries of Europe; a system that he denounced and declared was alien to all Icelanders. He directed his criticism against the Soviet Union, its aggressiveness and oppressiveness in Finland and Eastern Europe, as well as against the

³ “Hvað vill *Alþýðublaðið*?” *Morgunblaðið*. 23.05.1940, p. 5.

⁴ “Fjöreggið”. *Vísir*. 06.09.1939, p. 4; “Hlutleysið”. *Morgunblaðið*. 03.09.1939, p. 5.

⁵ “Dimmasti dagurinn”. *Morgunblaðið*. 04.09.1939, p. 3.

⁶ Jónas Jónsson. “Svo hafa forlög fært þeim dóm að höndum”. *Tíminn*. 05.09.1939, p. 406.

Icelandic communists for supporting it – but there was no mentioning of Nazi-Germany whatsoever.⁷ Similarly, *Morgunblaðið*'s editor did on at least one occasion in September 1939 suggest that the Invasion of Poland was an unjustifiable act of aggression but directed the blame completely on Stalin and the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact while bashing on the opinions of Icelandic communists.⁸

While it was permissible to castigate the Soviet Union almost beyond limits on paper, it is obvious that the centre-right press was holding back on its writings on Germany. As we have seen, *Tíminn* gradually abandoned the neutral approach and after the Invasion of Denmark and Norway, the paper largely joined *Alþýðublaðið* in criticising Germany. The fact that *Morgunblaðið* allowed itself to criticise Germany only after the fourth research period had begun is evidential to that the neutral approach was an attempt to avoid the provocation of Germany. But why?

Whitehead has shown that the Icelandic press was the subject of interventions by the Icelandic and German authorities from 1938 on. The German consul in Reykjavík, Werner Gerlach, was very observant of the Icelandic newspapers, which he read and commented on in weekly reports sent to Berlin. He had hoped that the right-wing papers could become an advocate for Germany in Iceland, but was disappointed in late 1939 to learn that this was not the case. Gerlach is said to have put heavy pressure on the two right-wing editors, summoning them to his office to complain about their writings and giving them German propaganda material to publish.⁹ Furthermore, Whitehead maintains that Gerlach was so “arrogant” and “bad tempered” that he managed, with threats of economic sanctions, to scare the government of Iceland into tightening censorship on anti-German publications.¹⁰ Thus, from 1938 until the British Occupation in May 1940, the foreign affairs department of the Icelandic Government Office monitored the Icelandic newspapers and exhorted them if their writings could contradict Icelandic trade interests.¹¹

Whitehead's sources suggest that *Morgunblaðið*'s editor, Valtýr Stefánsson, was intimidated by the German consul's threats, which, if true, may have affected the paper's policies. But Stefánsson was also no stranger to the inner circles of the Independence Party and the National Government. Whitehead claims that *Morgunblaðið*'s editor had such solid connections in the

⁷ Þórarinn Þórarinnsson. “Um áramótin”. *Tíminn*. 30.01.1939, p. 598.

⁸ “Illgresið”. *Morgunblaðið*. 10.09.1939, p. 5.

⁹ Whitehead. 1995, pp. 36-37.

¹⁰ *ibid.* p. 38 and 32-33.

¹¹ Thorsteinsson. 1992, p. 154.

party and in the top levels of the government that he must have known that the government was acting neutral while cooperating with the British behind the scenes.¹² The editor's attitude was thus coordinated with the government: It was a front, designed by the government and its confidants, among them the editor of *Morgunblaðið*, in order not to provoke the Germans into sinking Icelandic vessels.¹³

While this may be the case, let us not forget that the right-wing press had displayed sympathies for Hitler in the 1930s and the few pro-German opinion pieces in the period of this study appeared in these papers.¹⁴ Furthermore, if the neutral approach was only a play, *Morgunblaðið*'s editor solely took the voluntary decision to play it. Even though the Icelandic government had warned the newspaper editors previously during the Phoney War, the other papers did not act out a neutral approach towards Germany after the Invasion of Norway. *Tíminn* was the very organ of the prime minister and its co-editor was none other than the leader of the Progressive Party. *Alþýðublaðið* represented the Labour Party whose government minister was responsible for foreign affairs and the censorship which the German consul shall have pressed forward.¹⁵ Neither of these papers felt the need to write against their political commitments once German aggression began to appal them. It would thus be safe to assume that even though *Morgunblaðið* may have been acting out of responsibility and duty, the paper nevertheless still harboured enough respect for the Germans that it willingly allowed them to enjoy the benefit of doubt.

5.2.2 The Internal Threat and Domestic Anti-Communism

Throughout this study's time frame, the Icelandic communists remain an unbearable thorn in the eyes of the pro-government press which constantly tried to flock the nation behind the National Government under the banner of neutrality and national unity. Not only did the

¹² Whitehead. 1995, p. 187.

¹³ *ibid.* p. 278-279.

¹⁴ *ibid.* p. 38-39. *Alþýðublaðið* did at times accuse these papers of pro-German sentiments during the Battle of Norway, even as late as late May 1940, when *Morgunblaðið* was called, "Göbbels' local branch" in Reykjavík. *Alþýðublaðið* claimed *Morgunblaðið* had always been one-sided in its news coverage of the war and delivered only news from German sources. These accusations were dismissed as an unnecessary imputation by *Morgunblaðið*. ("Hvað vill útí búbú Göbbels í austurstræti?" *Alþýðublaðið*. 22.05.1940, p. 4; "Hvað vill *Alþýðublaðið*?" *Morgunblaðið*. 23.05.1940, p. 5). One month previously, in April, *Alþýðublaðið* accused *Vísir* of lacking sympathy with the 'sister nations' by agitating against the Labour Party's pro-Nordic Labour Day celebrations on the grounds that *Vísir* had previously "laid flat before Hitler". Naturally, *Vísir* dismissed the accusations and reminded that unlike *Alþýðublaðið*, the paper covered the war from a neutral standpoint. ("Verið á verði um 1. maí". *Alþýðublaðið*. 27.04.1940, p. 3; "Hlutleysi". *Vísir*. 29.04.1940, p. 2).

¹⁵ Werner Gerlach's complaints about newspaper coverage were directed to the foreign affairs department of the Government Offices which answered to the Labour minister Stefán Jóh. Stefánsson (Whitehead. 1995, p. 34-35).

communist press outrage the other papers with its support for the invasion of Finland, it worked against the government's great power policies with its anti-Allied stance.¹⁶

The anti-communist discourse in the non-communist press thus constructed two opposing fronts during and following the Winter War, consisting of the larger 'Icelandic nation' represented by the National Government and the pro-government press against the communists and the communist press. The fact that more than half of the editorial articles touching upon the Winter War in Finland in the Icelandic press during that particular conflict were about domestic anti-communism tells a lot about the mind-set of the non-communist newspaper editors. Moreover, Winter War anti-communism is the second most common topic of all related and unrelated topics during that winter, which goes to show just how large of an issue the alleged communist menace was in the eyes of their opponents. How can we explain these strong reactions? Was there a real threat posed by the Icelandic "kuusinens" during the Winter War?

According to Whitehead, the need for national unity was high during the winter of 1939-1940. Even though the authorities thought they could depend on the British for external defence, the young Icelandic state "could not have been any weaker" during the interwar era.¹⁷ Unlike the neighbouring countries, Whitehead claims, the state was unable to maintain law and order if and when an organised opposition employed physical force against it.¹⁸ This had been apparent during the great labour unrest of the 1920s and 1930s which caused a headache for the non-socialist authorities. Police authorities were even physically defeated by communists and a working class mob in the largest of these clashes, the so-called *Gúttó*-fight of 1932.¹⁹ National socialists, communists and even social democrats established gangs to defend their respective causes in street fights and the question whether or not to strengthen the police force was a constant issue among politicians of all parties in the decade before the war.²⁰

Whitehead's claim (see Chapter I) that the Socialist Party was a significant threat to the establishment throughout the 1940s goes hand in hand with the arguments employed by the anti-communist Winter War discourse. The Icelandic government undoubtedly maintained that

¹⁶ In late January 1940, *Þjóðviljinn* published a news story on the secret Icelandic-British trade talks; a supposed leak of information that was aimed at exposing the fact that the Icelandic government was not neutral but a puppet of Britain. ("Útanríkisverzlun Íslands..." *Þjóðviljinn*. 25.01.1940, p. 1). The story was dismissed by the government press as poisoned lies and was perceived as potentially threatening to the country's neutrality since it could be seen as a provocation by the Germans ("Landráðaskrif kommúnistablaðsins..." *Alþýðublaðið*. 25.01.1940, p. 1; "Ljótur verknaður". *Morgunblaðið*. 28.01.1940, p. 5). *Þjóðviljinn's* writings caused an embarrassment for the government in relation to the German consul. (Whitehead. 1995, p. 188-191).

¹⁷ Whitehead. 2010, p. 426.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ Jóhannesson, G. 2006, pp. 34-37.

²⁰ *ibid.* pp. 38-44.

the communists were the greatest internal threat at the time and not Icelandic Nazis or other domestic elements. There is little wonder Icelandic Nazis are seldom mentioned as possible quislings after April 9, 1940 because vocal Nazis were virtually non-existent and German-friendly individuals were not seen as aggressive or dangerous.

However, the parliament resolution which was proposed in late March 1940 against ‘anti-democratic individuals’ was never accepted in a form that could obstruct communist influence and the non-communist papers themselves directly stated during the Winter War that the communists’ alleged transgression was not illegal or constituted a ‘real’ treason. The transgression was purely a disobedience towards the mainstream opinion, i.e. the *legitimising principles* of the discourse. Therefore, I suggest that *Finnagaldur* in the Icelandic press was not a reaction to a real threat at the time but a discursive punishment. Anti-communist elements were appalled by the communists’ opinions because they went directly against their ideology, which was the ruling ideology of the political elite; namely, unconditional sympathy with the minor nations and national unity. We shall return to this factor in Chapter 5.5.

The anti-communist discourse does not really indicate danger and insecurity; on the contrary, it was a loud, triumphalist boast by victorious anti-communist commentators who rejoiced over the fact how unpopular the communists were among the public. This is further illustrated by the government press’ reactions when a real threat presented itself following the Invasion of Denmark and Norway and the apparent arch-treason was conducted by Quisling. As pointed out by Whitehead, the Icelandic authorities were concerned about the possibility that a few hundred ethnic Germans situated in the country would perform an attack from within following April 9. The Icelandic prime minister ordered arrangements to be made to prevent this: A limited curfew on foreign sailors was initiated, the German consulate in Reykjavík was kept under constant surveillance and a specially trained armed police was kept at hand ready to meet a gang of German fifth column fighters in the case of a German invasion.²¹ The question whether or not the editors of the pro-government newspapers knew this, suspected it, or could have guessed it, remains unclear. We know, however, for a fact that it was almost completely left out of the public discussions in the government press. Germans positioned in Iceland were never mentioned as a possible threat in these papers with the exception of a single remark by

²¹ Whitehead. 1995, p. 296-300 and 309. Some of these fears were fuelled by the presence of 62 German sailors who had been stranded in Iceland since January 1940. One non-government-related commentator feared that there were almost 200 Germans in Iceland, some of whom had close relations with the Nazi Party and were even trained members of the SA and SS.

Alþýðublaðið's columnist.²²

What makes Winter War anti-communism in the Icelandic papers different from typical anti-communism was the fact that the communists now met opposition from society at large. Their apologetism for the Invasion of Finland made them appear, not only as enemies of the establishment, but also the enemies of the minor nations – of the Nordic nations and of Icelandic well-being. According to the non-communist papers' testament, 'everybody' was appalled by the violence in Finland; the violence the communists were said to worship. Since the communists had not broken any laws, the practical goal of *Finnagaldur* in the Icelandic press was thus to exploit negative public reception of the Invasion of Finland, expose to the readers the communists' alleged real intent and exclude them on moral grounds. Even though the communists generated the opposition themselves, it was a joint effort of all the non-communist political elements to grasp the opportunity and rid Icelandic society of the menace of communism – and this was probably the period in the long history of Icelandic communism and anti-communism where they came the closest to reaching that goal.

Lastly, how can we explain the anti-communist remarks following Quisling's coup? Someone had to be pointed at in the papers and there is no reason to doubt that the anti-communist commentators really believed the communists would commit treason if that far-fetched scenario of a Soviet invasion would present itself. Furthermore, *Alþýðublaðið's* second wave of anti-communism in May and June 1940 was based on rumours of Nazi-communist cooperation in German-occupied Norway. Since *Alþýðublaðið* tended to view the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact as an alliance, the discussion may have been based on an actual fear of treason relating to a possible German invasion of Iceland – as the paper itself suggested. However, given the fact that the smear campaign took place well into the British occupation it could have been an attempt by the Labour Party organ's editor to get *Þjóðviljinn* banned by the British occupation authorities, but these, of course, are only speculations.

At the end of the day, the discussions on both internal and external security was the subject of a similar type of rhetoric in the Icelandic non-communist press; careful, serious and secretive towards Germany and the quislings, while unconstrained and heated towards the Soviet Union and the Icelandic communists. This can be understood in the light that Nazi-Germany and ethnic Germans in Iceland constituted a real threat during the winter of 1939-1940, whereas the far-away Soviet Union and the Icelandic communists were not.

²² "Um daginn og veginn". *Alþýðublaðið*. 18.04.1940, p. 2.

5.3 Portrayals of the Aggressors

In the two following sub-chapters, the Icelandic press' portrayals of the two sets of aggressors and defenders of the two cases will be compared and discussed. These portrayals make up the press' construction of the external world and will reveal underlying ideas and world-views. The contents of Chapters 5.3.1 and 5.4.1 are illustrated by Tables 4 and 5 in Appendix 1.

5.3.1 Comparison

Even though there is a marked difference in the Icelandic press' portrayals of Nazi-Germany and the Soviet Union and the perceived operation and intent of the two invasions, they do share a number of mutual attributes; mainly their association with *violence* and *betrayal*. Commentators of all four newspapers noted in one way or another the perceived oppressive occupation by the Germans in Norway and Denmark and the Soviet leadership's oppression of civilians and its own soldiers during the Winter War. Furthermore, both invasions are perceived as illegitimate acts by all the Icelandic papers with reference to 'the rights of the minor nations'; i.e. the right to remain neutral and sovereign. As a result of that we can observe a universal denunciation of the use of force against the neutral minor nations. Both the aggressive powers are also criticised for breaking deals and betraying causes. Finally, the opinion towards Quisling and Kuusinen for their exercises in the field of national treason is altogether universally negative to say the very least. Interestingly, Kuusinen's actions are usually referred to in the Icelandic press as 'treason' (i. *landráð*); illustrating the perception that the Finnish communist undermined his homeland and worked against it in collaboration with a national enemy. Quisling's actions in Norway, however, are generally referred to as 'betrayal' (i. *svik*), which frames him as a trusted figure who unexpectedly stabbed his countrymen in the back.

A notable difference in the portrayals of the two aggressors is the alleged cruelty of the one in Finland, i.e. on the scale of day-to-day military operations, which is not present in the Battle of Norway discourse. The Icelandic papers make little mention of German attacks on civilians or uneven air combat. The bombing of cities is not a markedly important theme in opinion pieces during the Norwegian campaign. The reason for this difference in outlook is the perception that the Germans were first and foremost fighting the Allies in Norway. The press' universal understanding of the Norwegian Campaign as a scenario in the world war limits their notion of the invasion as an attack on the Norwegian people. The emphasis on air combat and especially terror bombing as the Soviet's main source of violence during the campaign in Finland is easily understood from the perspective of the day, when aerial bombing was a

relatively recent and unconventional concept. Air combat was also the most uneven front of the Winter War due to Finnish vulnerability. This fact further magnified the bully-like aspect of the conflict in Finland which intensified the reactions in the Icelandic papers.

Although the German invasion of Norway was not overall seen as blatantly aggressive as the Soviet Invasion of Finland, this case is, on the other hand, more characterised in the Icelandic press by insidiousness and cunning use of ‘organised treason’. This is seen in a negative light across newspaper titles, even in *Morgunblaðið*. It is thus safe to suggest that negative reception of both invasions was to a large extent based on moral grounds – resentment of *violence* and fellow feeling with the little man in the case of Finland and distaste of insidious *betrayal* in the Norwegian case.

Finally, the main difference in the portrayals of these two powers lies in the *Frontier Metaphors* presented in Chapter III. There are two main opinions in the Icelandic press regarding responsibility of the world war and the two conflicts: First, *Alþýðublaðið*’s view that Nazi-Germany was the main perpetrator of the war and that Soviet war guilt derived from its association with Germany. Second, *Morgunblaðið*’s neutral view towards the world war, and the view that the Soviet Union was the main aggressor of the war. Interestingly, as there was a universal understanding from the beginning of hostilities in Finland that Stalin’s aim was a bloody conquest of that country, the belief that Germany aimed for a long-term conquest of Denmark, Norway or Sweden seems non-existent in this discourse during the first month of the Norwegian Campaign, even in the anti-German press. The neutral press presented the invasion purely as a military operation which is only said to last throughout the world war.

Despite a general disassociation with the Nazi regime, the Germans are seen in the Icelandic centre-right press as, a European “friendly nation”.²³ The Russians, on the other hand, are perceived as a stranger nation during the Winter War and throughout the period. The Germans are repeatedly treated as a *menningarþjóð* in the centre-right papers: A civilized, educated or cultured nation, whose history of economic and cultural ties with Iceland is noted.²⁴ The term is one of the most frequently used concepts in the Icelandic press to describe other nations of high esteem and it carries with it a strong relation to a Eurocentric standard for civilization. Nations attributed the term during the period in question are typically the British, French, Germans and the Nordic nations. In some pacifist opinion pieces, French, British, German,

²³ “Ljótur verknaður”. *Morgunblaðið*. 28.01.1940, p. 5.

²⁴ See for example: “Ørlagastundin”. *Morgunblaðið*. 10.04.1940, p. 5; “Þeir eru glaðir”. *Morgunblaðið*. 22.02.1940, p. 5; “Út af ófriðarsvæðinu”. *Vísir*. 15.03.1940, p. 2.

Norwegian and Finnish soldiers and civilians are simultaneously treated either in terms of self-sacrifice or as victims of war and violence.²⁵ No mention is made of the Soviets in this regard; only as victims of the Stalinist regime during the bloodiest days of the Winter War are Soviet soldiers viewed in a somewhat comparable light.

5.3.2 *Euro-Orientalism and Suspicion of Russia*

The Icelandic non-communist press' alienation of the Soviet Union in almost every aspect is perhaps the most obvious example of *us-them* polarities this study has to offer. The idea that Russia is a strange and alien country is not restricted to the Icelandic press, nor was it a new conception attached solely to Bolshevik Russia. Oula Silvennoinen maintains that to the Finns, the Russians had been considered a "hereditary, implacable enemy of Finland", and constituted the "culturally and ethnically alien 'other', whom first the Catholic and then the Lutheran" Swedes had fought to keep out of Finland.²⁶ On this subject, Max Jakobson wrote in his classic work on the Winter War:

The Eastern border of Finland became the boundary between Byzantium and Rome [during Swedish rule]; it also became the frontier of Western cultural and economic standards. [...] To the great majority of Finns – Lutheran, literate, egalitarian, industrious – Russia stood for Asiatic barbarism which they had learned to resist.²⁷

It is apparent that elements of the Icelandic non-communist press, which associated with Finland and repeatedly touched upon this piece of Swedish-Finnish history when constructing the *frontier* in its analysis of the Winter War, shared the view described above.²⁸ Terms like *Asian, Asiatic, half-asiatic, uncivilized, nomads* and *oriental* are meant to alienate the Russian great power as something foreign, non-European, fearful and backward. Such a language is an example of a classic Eurocentric – or *Euro-Orientalist* approach, as suggested by Ezequiel Adamovsky. He maintains that the idea of the superiority of Western liberal society in the 19th and 20th centuries was partly formed by defining the East as its backward other due to the lack of western ingredients. Russia was considered Western Europe's antithesis before the revolution of 1917; a notion which was only to be aggressively intensified by both parties during Soviet

²⁵ Sigurður Einarsson. "Jól". *Alþýðublaðið*. 23.12.1939, p. 3; "Hermenn Íslands..." *Tíminn*. 04.05.1940, p. 190.

²⁶ Silvennoinen. 2013, p. 130.

²⁷ Max Jakobson. *The Diplomacy of the Winter War. An Account of the Russo-Finnish War, 1939-1940*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1961, pp. 6 and 7.

²⁸ See for example: "Hver hefir Finnans metið móð?" *Alþýðublaðið*. 06.12.1939, p. 3; "Viborg". *Alþýðublaðið*. 02.13.1940, p. 3.

times, culminating in the Cold War.²⁹ Adamovsky's Euro-Orientalism is based on the concept of *binary oppositions*, which are contrasting attributes between the Eurocentric perception of the progressive West and the perceived backward others, in this case, Russia.³⁰ Similarly, György Péteri proposes that the portraying of geographic regions on an axis of development termed *developmental hierarchies* is a central aspect of such mental mapping. The extremes of said axis, Péteri proposes, is usually *civilisation, modern and Europe*, versus *barbarism, backwardness and Asia*.³¹

This categorisation is typical for the Icelandic press portrayal of Finland and Russia during the Winter War and the sharp contrasts presented in Chapter III rhyme strikingly with Péteri's and Adamovsky's concepts. Table 6 (see Appendix 1) lists the findings in the Icelandic press of contrasting attributes during the Winter War compared to Adamovsky's "main sociohistorical" and "cultural binary oppositions in Euro-Orientalist discourse", as presented in the appendix of his study.

The emphasis on culture and civilization derives from the fact that the Icelanders considered themselves educated, civilized and cultured too. The period of Icelandic home rule and sovereignty (1904-1944) was characterised with the optimism and ambition of a young nation state. Kjartansson maintains that no contemporary Icelanders would have placed the country among the under-developed colonies of the non-European world, despite the relative under-development and poverty of the interwar era. Rather, the Icelanders fully identified themselves with the Christian, 'civilized' world of the white man.³² Hálfðanarsson points out that the maintenance of this image was important for Icelandic opinion makers in the 19th and early 20th centuries, who even "orientalised" the Faroese and the Greenlandic Inuit to define themselves as modern Europeans.³³ In search of confidence, some even viewed the nation as the pinnacle of the white race, being the 'purest' of the Germanic nations and best connected with the ancient Nordic roots.³⁴

The Soviet Union was not only considered the devil of the Finnish campaign, it was also

²⁹ Ezequiel Adamovsky. "Euro-Orientalism and the Making of the Concept of Eastern Europe in France, 1810-1880". *The Journal of Modern History*. 77:3 (2005), pp. 591-628, pp. 591 and 620.

³⁰ *ibid.* p. 613-615.

³¹ György Péteri. "Introduction: The Oblique Coordinate Systems of Modern Identity". *Imaging the West in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*. Ed.: György Péteri. Pittsburgh, 2010, pp. 1-12, p. 3.

³² Kjartansson. 2002, pp. 143-144.

³³ Guðmundur Hálfðanarson. "Iceland Perceived: Nordic, European or a Colonial Other?" *The Postcolonial North Atlantic. Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands*. Volume 20 in series: *Berliner Beiträge zur Skandinavistik*. Eds.: Lill-Ann Körber and Ebbe Valquardsen. Berlin, 2014, p 60 and 56-59.

³⁴ Kjartansson. 2002, pp. 143-144.

seen by many as a major threat to Europe. The *Military Frontier Metaphor* is a rhetoric of suspicion towards the alien other in the East. During the bulk of the interwar era in Europe, Bolshevik Russia was the power which was most widely feared would disrupt the established international order. With the advent of Nazi aggression in the late 1930s, however, the democracies in Europe not directly bordering the Soviet Union shifted their defensive focus towards Germany.³⁵ We can see that this shift is somewhat absent in the Icelandic papers of 1939-1940, with the notable exception of *Alþýðublaðið*, due to the neutral approach towards Germany. The Winter War appears usually in a larger context of Stalin’s alleged imperialist aspirations, who, in addition to Scandinavia, is seen threatening the Balkans and Turkey.³⁶ *Vísir*’s headline and subtitle in Frame 1 of Image 6 are examples of such a portrayals. It is suggested that the Invasion of Finland, along with alleged Soviet designs on the Balkans has triggered an international wakeup call against the “red danger”. This illustrates how the Soviet Union was portrayed as a common European threat.



Image 6: The headlines in Frame 1 read: “The War’s Foreplay over and the First Act of the Tragedy Beginning? - **The Consortium of Nations Against Communism Toughens.** - Italian Pilots Fight with the Finns – Russian Claims on Bessarabia Unite the Balkan Nations Against the Red Danger”. The headline in Frame 2 agitates for the Icelandic Finland Relief: “**Support Finland in the Struggle** – Finland-day on Sunday”. *Source:* *Vísir*. 07.12.1939, p. 1.

Additionally, in Frame 2 *Vísir* encourages its readers to “support Finland in the struggle” by donating to the Finland Relief. This shows a direct association with Finland and it illustrates *Vísir*’s vision how the Icelanders could be a part of the “consortium of nations” against the Soviet Union while the Finns defended Nordic and Western civilization at the frontier. Such an association also appeared in some of the

³⁵ Silvennoinen. 2013, p. 133.

³⁶ See for example: “Reykjavíkurbjef”. *Morgunblaðið*. 10.12.1939, p. 5; “Rússar hóta Afghanistan...” *Vísir*. 03.01.1940, p. 2; “Rússland og Balkanríkin”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 11.01.1940, p. 2.

in early December 1939, as *Vísir*'s example shows:

Today we show our sympathy to the Finnish sister nation, sympathy which will make a little difference, but attests though, that we Icelanders are considered among civilized nations, [and we will do our share], despite little capacity.^{37(a)}

5.4. Portrayals of the Defenders

5.4.1 Comparison

The Icelandic press' portrayal of the defenders of the two cases is relatively uniform. Translated here as *sister nation*, the Icelandic term *frændþjóð* (n. *broderfolk*. s. *frändefolk*), is frequently used during both cases to underline the cultural association shared by the Icelanders on the one hand and the Nordic nations on the other. Glorification of the Nordic Countries goes hand in hand with the unquestioned sympathy with these nations. We can see that the Icelandic newspapers presented the Danes, Norwegians and Finns in the winter of 1939-1940 as exceptionally successful and progressive peoples. Common attributes attached to all of the Nordic Countries during the two conflicts is the notion of 'mental and material' progress in the field of culture, education, arts and athletics, as well as the Nordic Countries' remarked interest for neutrality and peace in the international arena.

Interestingly, the Icelandic press counts Finland unconditionally as a member of the Nordic brotherhood. Some scholars have pointed out that not everyone identified Finland as being a fully Nordic country before the Second World War.³⁸ Henrik S. Nissen suggests that this changed with the Soviet Invasion of Finland and that the Winter War discourse in Denmark and Norway was fuelled by Nordic nationalism which made the Norwegians and Danes approach the Finns for the first time as a Nordic nation.³⁹ Strømsøe, on the other hand, maintains that Nordic cooperation in the interwar era had reached such heights that Finland was already in 1939 considered an unquestioned part of the Nordic community. Attack on Finland was therefore seen as an attack on Scandinavia.⁴⁰

The findings in the Icelandic press clearly support Strømsøe's point of view. Sympathy with

³⁷ "Samúð með Finnum". *Vísir*. 10.12.1939, p. 2. See also: "Finland". *Morgunblaðið*. 10.12.1939, p. 5; "Þjóðarmetnaður Íslendinga..." *Alþýðublaðið*. 09.12.1939, p. 1.

³⁸ See for example: Uffe Østergård. "Nordic Identity between "Norden" and Europe". *European Peripheries in Interaction. The Nordic Countries and the Iberian Peninsula*. Eds.: Luis Beltrán, et al. [Place of publishing not specified], 2002, pp. 151-203, p. 154; Henrik S. Nissen. "Det nationale og demokratiet". *Norden under 2. Verdenskrig*. Copenhagen, 1979, pp. 205-222, p. 207.

³⁹ Nissen. 1979, p. 207.

⁴⁰ Strømsøe. 1997, p. 399.

the Finns in the press was securely built upon the precondition that the Icelanders were related to them through Nordic or Scandinavian links and they are repeatedly categorised among the Danes and Norwegians as a *frændþjóð*. The Sympathy Address to Finland, signed in early December 1939 (see Chapter II), described the Icelanders and Finns sharing the attribute of being “the utmost outrider[s] [or outposts] of Nordic culture” in the west and in the east respectively.^{41(b)}

In February 1940, *Þjóðviljinn*, criticised what the communists regarded as exaggerated sympathy with the Finns among the non-communist press. The Finns were not at all a ‘sister nation’ of the Icelanders, the paper claimed, but equally unrelated to them as “Congo-Negroes”.⁴² *Alþýðublaðið* saw such assertions as insulting to the Finns – stating that the Finns had become “so Swedish”, that they should be placed nowhere but among the Nordic Nations.⁴³ A local scholar joined in on the discussion in *Alþýðublaðið*, concluding that the Finns should neither be equated with Negroes nor Mongols, but were indeed closely related to the “Nordic race”.⁴⁴ Thus, even though the Icelanders had very insignificant contact with the Finns before the war, the Icelandic non-communist press considered them a part of the Nordic whole along with Denmark, Norway and Sweden during the Winter War.⁴⁵

Unsurprisingly, the point of divergence in the portrayal of Finland on the one hand and Norway/Denmark on the other is related to the military aspect of the two conflicts. As we have seen, portrayal of the Finns is foremost characterised with a *heroisation*, whereas the Norwegians and Danes are the subject of *victimisation* in the Icelandic press. This has everything to do with the defenders’ dissimilar roles on their respective fronts during the conflicts – in the same way as was mentioned earlier regarding Germany and the Soviet Union in the role of the aggressors. The Icelandic papers featured daily headlines from London and Copenhagen reporting astonishing Finnish victories at the front. The apparently spectacular Finnish defence against the largest army in the world earned the Finns a worldwide reputation of heroism. Thirty years after the Winter War’s conclusion, Allen F. Chew evoked the journalistic myth reported to the Western media by foreign correspondents in Finland during

⁴¹ “Ávarp frá Íslendingum...” *Vísir*. 01.12.1939, p. 1.

⁴² “Brjálun hugsunarinnar...” *Þjóðviljinn*. 06.02.1940, p. 2.

⁴³ “Finnum líkt við Kongonegra!” *Alþýðublaðið*. 07.02.1940, p. 3.

⁴⁴ Ólafur Hansson. “Uppruni Finna”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 09.02.1940, p. 2-4. p. 4.

⁴⁵ The Finns and Icelanders had little to do with the each other before the war. The Finns were a great minority among other foreigners in Iceland during the interwar era of whom the vast majority were Danes, Norwegians and Swedes. Nevertheless, publications from the interwar era suggests that the Finns were indeed considered part of the Nordic whole. In some interwar writings on the Finnish Civil War, one can even find rhetoric similar to that of the Winter War (Jónsson, A. 2013, p. 156).

the conflict:

Those who recall the journalistic coverage of the “Winter War” of 1939-1940 are familiar with the myth that the Finns were superhuman, fearless, deadly efficient defenders of Western civilization against a brutal, godless, blundering communist horde which outnumbered them fifty to one [...]. Like most myths, this one contains elements of both fact and fantasy.⁴⁶

Evaluation of the accuracy of these foreign reports is not the goal of this study. However, Chew’s description matches the glorified and heroised, black-and-white portrayal of the Finns which is apparent in the Icelandic press – and this earned them respect and admiration from the newspaper commentators beyond proportions.⁴⁷

The Norwegians on the other hand, even though they refused to give in to German dominance on April 9, 1940, were in most cases not perceived as heroic fighters at all. Discussions on the Norwegian Army at the front is next to non-existent. The Norwegians are occasionally given credit for the

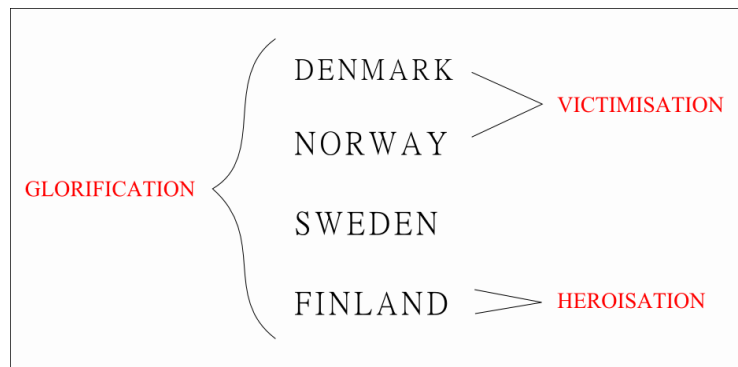


Image 7: The overall presentation of the Nordic Countries in the Icelandic press during the invasions of Finland and Norway/Denmark.

decision to stand up and fight, but this notion is an occasionally mentioned fact and far from constituting a discursive theme. The fact that the Battle of Norway was a campaign of the Second World War seems to have taken the Norwegians into the background and left them victimised for being swept up into the world war against their will. They are empathised for the unfortunate fate of being situated between the two warring great powers and in the anti-fascist press for being downtrodden by the Germans.

Even the demonised images of Kuusinen and Quisling are made with these portrayals of victimisation and heroisation in mind. The Norwegian people is seen as the victim of Quisling and his gang.⁴⁸ The Finns, on the other hand, are said to have successfully fought communism during and following the Finnish Civil War, and successfully cleansed their society of the

⁴⁶ Allen F. Chew. *The White Death. The Epic of the Soviet-Finnish Winter War*. East Lansing, 1971, p. vii.

⁴⁷ Strømsøe points out that the reports from Finland were subject to censorship by the Finnish authorities and were far from being accurate objective observations. As foreign public opinion was deemed important for the Finnish war effort, foreign reports became an integrated part of Finnish propaganda. (1997, p. 266-270).

⁴⁸ See for example: “Þegnaskapur”. *Morgunblaðið*. 05.05.1940, p. 5.

communist threat.⁴⁹

5.4.2 Brotherhood with the Nordic Nations

Association with Finland and Norway/Denmark is omnipresent in the portrayals of these parties. As we have seen, the *Frontier* Metaphors during the Winter War illustrates an association with Finland as the defender of Scandinavia. It is hardly unreasonable that Icelandic commentators suggested this when the Finnish soldiers were seen as the only obstacle from, to quote *Morgunblaðið*'s columnist in January 1940, Stalin's "destruction of [the] Nordic nations [and of] Nordic culture".^{50(c)} Strømsøe points out that even though there were different approaches towards Finland among the pro-Finnish activists, i.e. interventionists, in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, there were three things they all had in common: A certain degree of traditional 'scandinavianist' fellow-felling, anti-communism and Russophobia.⁵¹

Apparently, pro-Finnish sentiments in the Icelandic press are also built upon these themes, although we can safely suggest that Nordic companionship was by far the strongest in *Alþýðublaðið*. The official address from the Icelandic Finland Relief declared that "the other Nordic nations" had begun a fund-raising and it would not be fitting that the Icelanders stood by "alone".⁵² The official press discourse also suggests an association with the Nordic Countries in relation to neutrality. The neutral commentators, as we have seen, flagged the official standpoint of the National Government, which was Nordic neutrality and even took sides with Norway in the heated prequel to *Operation Weserübung*. The invasions of Finland, Norway and Denmark demonstrated that the peaceful intent of the Nordic Countries, their non-aggression pacts and declarations of neutrality – like that of Iceland itself – had failed.

Why is there such a widespread glorification of the Nordic countries in the Icelandic press? Glorification of the defenders is presented in a way that it decisively separates them from the aggressors, even from the perspectives of all three approaches. Thus, glorification of Finland and Norway becomes an antithesis to the demonisation of the *villain*. From the universal anti-Soviet approach, Icelandic commentators keep a significant distance between a glorified Finland and an alienated Soviet Union. From the anti-German approach a distance is kept from the fascist and aggressive Nazi-Germany with presentation of the victims as innocent champions of national freedom, peace and socialism. From the neutral approach, commentators

⁴⁹ See for example: Jónas Jónsson. "Forusta Alþingis". *Tíminn*. 23.04.1940, p. 178.

⁵⁰ "Reykjavíkurbjef". *Morgunblaðið*. 27.01.1940, p. 5.

⁵¹ Strømsøe, pp. 408-409.

⁵² "Þjóðarmetnaður Íslendinga..." *Alþýðublaðið*. 09.12.1940, p. 1-4, p. 4.

clearly separate a glorified Nordic society of peace and progress from the violence and barbarism of the anonymous world war.

These considerations aside, Uffe Østergård suggests that glorification of Nordic society is a common practice amongst Nordic commentators. Usage of the word *Norden* is typically loaded with a positive understanding of Northern Europe as something exceptional and “different from the rest of Europe”⁵³ It consist of an additional set of positively defined attributes which unite the nations in question as something more than merely a geographical region but a transnational entity of common history. Ole Wæver suggests that Nordic people perceive *Norden* as being “better than Europe”, based on the attribute of a model society through welfare, peace and humanitarianism.⁵⁴ Although such a Nordic identity was primarily constructed in the post-war era, we can see that the Icelandic newspaper commentators applied it already in the winter of 1939-1940. In fact, the attributes from the press is similar to those suggested by Østergård are typically carried with the term *Norden* in Nordic self-perception:

Norden is perceived as something non-European, non-Catholic, anti-Rome, anti-imperialist, non-colonial, non-exploitative, peaceful, small and social democratic. In short, the Nordic peoples have perceived themselves as having no responsibility for Europe’s exploitation of the rest of the world [...].⁵⁵

Finally, to state the obvious, although the Icelandic elite largely tried to distance itself from the Danes up until the 1930s, with the exception of the social-democrats, the Icelanders undoubtedly considered themselves part of the Nordic community.⁵⁶ However, being considered an equal part of said community is also typical for the Icelandic mind-set of the interwar era, for it was part of an identity building in the nationalist spirit. The Icelandic elite wanted the nation to remain sovereign and establish itself as independent, and thus co-equals of the Nordic nations.⁵⁷ Furthermore, they looked to the big ‘sister nations’ as role models. The vast majority of the Icelandic political elite was educated in the Nordic Countries, usually Denmark, before the war and it goes without saying that Iceland and Denmark had enjoyed a

⁵³ Østergård. 2002, p. 154.

⁵⁴ Ole Wæver. “Nordic Nostalgia: Northern Europe after the Cold War”. *International Affairs*. 68:1 (1992), pp. 77-102, p. 84.

⁵⁵ Østergård. 2002, p. 154.

⁵⁶ Gestur Guðmundsson. “Er Ísland hluti Norðurlanda?” *Íslenska söguþingið*. 28.-31. maí 1997. *Ráðstefnurit I*. Reykjavík, 1998, pp. 254-267, p. 256.

⁵⁷ This view is apparent in publications from the early 20th century. See for example: “Samvinna Norðurlanda”. *Morgunblaðið*. 10.12.1919, p. 1. “Heima og erlendis”. *Skinfaxi*. 6:10 (1915), pp. 107-108; Steinþór Guðmundsson. “Ræða”. *Skinfaxi*. 6:10 (1915), pp. 110-111; Einar Benediktsson. “Norræn menning”. *Eimreiðin*. 38:1 (1932), pp. 72-74; Sveinn Sigurðsson. “Norræn samvinna”. *Eimreiðin*. 42:4 (1936), pp. 355-361.

close patron-client relations for centuries.⁵⁸ Ingi Sigurðsson has shown that the Icelandic cultural elite of the late 19th and early 20th centuries had high esteem of Norway and the Norwegians and he points out that in this period, Norway was considered by many as providing an economic and political example for the young Icelandic state.⁵⁹

5.5 Icelandic Self-Perception

In the preceding analysis, we have encountered a number of attributes positively and negatively attributed to all parties of the 1939-1940 invasions of Scandinavia. The opinion-loaded representation of foreign actors reveals the values of the commentators themselves and their perception of their place in the world. György Péteri calls such mental mapping *symbolic geographies*. Accordingly, people define themselves by drawing “boundaries of social spaces where they are *within*, and relating themselves and their spaces to *others*”.⁶⁰ Furthermore, Péteri suggests that mental mapping is a process of building identities:

What makes these socially and historically situated processes really important is their intimate relationship to the formation of identities and, indeed, to identity politics (including the regular attempts in all kinds of modern political regimes to manage identities through the projection of images about themselves and the others).⁶¹

I would suggest that the newspaper discourse during these two dramatic events reveals a good deal of identity formation; namely that of the Icelandic nation state, which was still in its formative period during the winter of 1939-1940 and aiming for full independence in the coming years.

5.5.1 Icelandic Nationalism

It has been discussed how glorification of Finland, Norway and Denmark not only reflects the Icelandic commentators’ *association with* the ‘sister nations’, but also their own identity in a *disassociation from* them, in the form of a wish to be accepted as the fifth independent Nordic nation. Nationalism was still a very widespread ideology in Icelandic cultural and political society during the interwar years. Guðmundur Jónsson has pointed out that nationalism

⁵⁸ Gunnar Helgi Kristinsson. “Íslenskir valdamenn og Evrópa á tuttugustu öld”. *Íslenska sögubíngið*. 28.-31. maí 1997. *Ráðstefnurit I*. Reykjavík, 1998, pp. 217-230, pp. 228-229.

⁵⁹ Ingi Sigurðsson. “Íslendingenes holdninger til Norge og nordmennene fra 1814 fram til den andre verdenskrigen”. *Historisk tidsskrift*. 88:2, (2009), pp. 251-277, pp. 276-277.

⁶⁰ Péteri. 2010, p. 2.

⁶¹ *ibid.*

appeared not as a solid ideology but an omnipresent paradigm, which blended into other ideologies such as socialism or liberalism.⁶² This description fits well into the nationalist aspect of the newspaper discussions during the winter of 1939-1940, for Icelandic nationalism is frequently to be found underlying in the discussions on the events in Scandinavia. Phrases like *foreign oppression* or *foreign great powers* are often employed during both of our cases, not to mention terms like *freedom*, *independence*, *sovereignty*, *patriotism*, *treason*, *betrayal* and *traitors*.

Although universal, such a language is more flamboyant during the Winter War. Admiration of the Finns is partly based on common attributes with them by the Icelanders above the other Nordic nations. This is the apparently admirable example set by the freedom loving Finns in terms of nationalist fervour and their fight for independence against the former oppressor. The commentators referred to supposed Icelandic suffering under centuries of foreign oppression and thus felt that they in particular – that is, the Icelanders as a nation, could relate to the conflict in Finland. One of *Vísir's* commentators in January 1940 maintained that sympathy with the little man was “grown into the nature of the Icelander”, as he explained the Icelandic sympathy with Finland as an outburst of righteous anger. He concluded that “old wounds bleed when people tearfully think of a little sister nation struggling for her life and freedom”. This sympathy, he concluded, “illustrates that the Icelandic blood is long-retentive” on foreign subjugation and constraint.⁶³ Although all papers share this admiration, *Tíminn's* writings seem more characterised by nationalist references than the others.⁶⁴

As was regularly pointed out by the Icelandic papers, the Finns and Icelanders had much in common in relation to national freedom. The Finns gained independence in the same year that the Icelanders received their sovereign state and in the period since, the papers present a picture of the Finnish Republic as a model society. The Finns are presented as a nation for which national unity and patriotism is of the highest value. They are praised for their exemplar “national-upbringing”; a patriotic education system that is said to deliver popular education and

⁶² Guðmundur Jónsson. “Þjóðernisstefna, hagþróun og sjálfstæðisbarátta”. *Skírnir*. 169:1 (1995), pp. 65-93, p. 66.

⁶³ “Hvað á að gera við föðurlandssvikarana?” *Vísir*. 29.01.1940, p. 2.

⁶⁴ As an example, in January 1940, *Tíminn* compared the Soviet territorial claims on Finland and the communists' support for these claims with an Icelandic textbook saga from the 11th century, in which Norwegian King Ólafur Haraldsson (St. Olaf) demands that the Icelanders cede to him Grimsey Island. An Icelandic hero, Einar Þveræingur, defeats the king as well as his fellow Icelanders who want to give in to the demands. The point of the saga was to illustrate the inequality of Soviet demands, the admirable nationalist fervour of the Finns and the anti-national nature of the Icelandic communists by using a metaphor which people could relate to. The communists are equated to those Icelanders who wished to cede Grimsey Island to a foreign power (“Þeir, sem vilja gefa Grímsey”. *Tíminn*. 18.01.1940, p. 27).

national unity. For the sake of this healthy system, some OP writers maintain, the Finnish nation was prepared and able to withstand the unequal match with the Red Army.⁶⁵ Reflecting over the Icelandic sympathy with the Finns, *Vísir's* editor noted in March 1940:

[Our sympathy] is natural. The Finns [are] our coevals in sovereignty. They had, like us, used their given freedom energetically. Cultural and vocational progress was very frequent. Their popular education had reached a high level. [...] They appreciated the freedom and the values it had brought them. That's why they sacrificed their blood to protect it.^{66(d)}

Furthermore, the heroic steadfastness of the Finns towards national freedom is seen as providing an example for the Icelanders in their own struggle for independence, which was apparently felt by some to have lost its fervour. Jónas Jónsson, the leader of the Progressive Party and co-editor of *Tíminn* claimed in February 1940 that the nationalist dedication of the Icelanders had dampened in the recent years, but added that sympathy with the Finns had shown that people still harboured a living love for freedom. The donations to the Finland Relief and the pro-Finnish gatherings proved that the 'nation' was ready to take on the project of independence and defend it.⁶⁷ Using the Winter War as a platform from which to protest the current constitutional position of Iceland in a personal union with Denmark, *Tíminn's* editor pointed out how the Winter War had gone differently if the Finns had had the same relationship with Russia as Iceland had with Denmark at the time.⁶⁸

The message from all this is clear: Using the Finnish Republic and Finnish/Norwegian national unity as examples, the press is legitimising the ruling ideology of the Icelandic elite; namely, Icelandic nationalism and independence aspirations. Positive comparison between the successes of the Icelandic and Finnish states since receiving "freedom" glorifies and legitimises the idea of an independent Icelandic nation state. Additionally, the non-communist papers praise the Finnish Republic's success from their unique class-political perspective, further legitimising their vision of how to use the national freedom. For example, the bourgeois press mentioned individual entrepreneurship and national unity as well as anti-communism as the Finns' main achievements since 1918 whereas *Alþýðublaðið* praised Finnish social-democrats and the

⁶⁵ See for example: Jónas Jónsson. "Frelsi og sjálfstæði". *Tíminn*. 20.02.1940, p. 78; Jón N. Jónsson. "Þjóðir og þjóðmenning". *Vísir*. 29.03.1940, p. 2.

⁶⁶ "Örlög Finna". *Vísir*. 14.03.1940, p. 2.

⁶⁷ Jónas Jónsson. "Frelsi og sjálfstæði". *Tíminn*. 20.02.1940, p. 78; Jónas Jónsson. "Áramótahugleiðingar". *Tíminn*. 30.12.1939, p. 598 Jónsson also made similar remarks about the Norwegians roughly four months later maintaining the Icelanders were lagging behind the Norwegians, who "sacrifice everything they have" in order to "make their country free again". (Jónas Jónsson. "Frjáls þjóð í frjálsu landi". *Tíminn*. 30.04.1940, p. 186).

⁶⁸ Jónas Jónsson. "Frelsi og sjálfstæði". *Tíminn*. 20.02.1940, p. 78.

Finnish labour movement for achievements in labour issues.⁶⁹

Domestic anti-communism in relation to the Winter War was no less engulfed in a nationalist language. As pointed out by Guðmundur Hálfðanarson, Icelandic nationalism was not considered a political ideology in the interwar years, nor was it observed as a historical phenomenon; rather, nationalism was understood as the “core of human nature”. He who renounced the motherland and its people, Hálfðanarson maintains, was seen as “renouncing himself”.⁷⁰ The Icelandic communists did just that in the eyes of their adversaries. They are ostracised in the non-communist press for having anti-national opinions regarding the Winter War and thus they are decisively placed into the *other-category* along with the Kuusinen, Quisling and the invading Soviets and Germans.

By denouncing the ‘rights of the minor nations’, the communists were said to be denouncing Icelandic right of independence and thus had completely resigned from Icelandic society. This is, in fact, the main embodiment of *legitimising principles* in the discourse. The discursive themes dictate what is allowed to say in public and what not and the opinions of the communists went head-on against the mainstream opinion which demanded unconditional sympathy with Finland and a condemnation of the attack on moral grounds. As the Finnish cause was made into an Icelandic cause, the non-communist press saw the communist opinion as a resignation from the Icelandic national cause and thus from Icelandic society.

5.5.2 *Us vs. Them*

To sum up the analysis of the press portrayals of foreign actors, let us return to the construction of symbolic geographies in the Icelandic press. We have seen that the overall content of Chapter III and IV reveals a significant division of “social spaces” between the *speaker*, i.e. *us*, and the *others*. In this case, the *speakers* are the commentators of the Icelandic press, representing the ideologies of the National Government and the Icelandic political elite. As we have seen, there are slightly different categorisations in the Icelandic press and these differ between newspaper titles and periods. Therefore, based on the observation in Chapter III and IV, I would suggest

⁶⁹ See for example: “Varnarstríð (!)” *Alþýðublaðið*. 15.12.1939, p. 3. *Alþýðublaðið* also employed its own social-democratic character when criticising the Soviet Union. Reflective of the fact that the paper's editor, Stefán Pjetursson, was once a pro-Soviet communist before turning against Stalin, the paper often published opinion pieces during the Winter War which deemed Stalin's pact with Hitler and his invasion of Finland a betrayal of international communism, the labour movement and the true principles of the Russian Revolution. See for example: “Sviknar hugsjónir”. *Alþýðublaðið*. 24.01.1940, p. 3; “Hvað hefði Lenín sagt...” *Alþýðublaðið*. 21.02.1940, p. 3; Charles Rappoport. “Gamall byltingarmaður...” *Alþýðublaðið*. 22.02.1940, p. 2.

⁷⁰ Guðmundur Hálfðanarson. “Þjóð og minningar”. *Íslenska söguþingið*. 28.-31. maí 1997. *Ráðstefnurit I*. Reykjavík, 1998, pp. 354-365, p. 356.

that the Icelandic non-communist press reveals a three-layered mental map of the surrounding world during the troubled winter of 1939-1940. Although these maps are mostly confined to certain newspapers, they are applied by them all at some point throughout the whole period.



Image 8: A three-layered map depicting the us and them associations apparent in the Icelandic non-communist press during the winter of 1939-1940. Note that the map is only meant to give a general overview of the world-views.

First, during the Winter War, some commentators of the Icelandic press present a perception of the external world through goggles of the *Civilization Frontier* Metaphor. Here, Iceland is seen belonging to *Europe*, along with the Western Allies and Nazi-Germany, against *Asiatic* Bolshevik Russia. Second, through the lens of the neutral approach, some commentators constructed a vision of a world divided by *us*; the neutral and peaceful minor nations, prominently the Nordics, and *them*; the violent world war of the great powers. Finally, during the latter half of the Phoney War period, an understanding of the external world is reached by adding the belligerent Western Allies into the second equation, thus promoting an image of the forces of democracy and freedom versus dictatorship and totalitarianism. As we have seen, *Alþýðublaðið* and *Tíminn* did at times suggest this world-view before the fourth research period and it is safe to conclude that it had become dominant in all papers by the end of this study's period in June 1940.

A complete set of *speakers*, actors and attributes positively attached to *us* and negatively attached to *them*, is listed in Table 7 in Appendix 1.

Conclusion

The Soviet Invasion of Finland in November 1939 and the German Invasion of Norway four months later in April 1940 prompted wide-ranging reactions in Iceland. The events provoked responses by the Icelandic government, the Icelandic public and, not least, the Icelandic mainstream political press. This study has covered roughly six months of newspaper content from the four most prominent non-communist newspapers in Iceland. An image has been drawn of the mind-set of the Icelandic political elite during the last winter of the interwar era and it has been placed both into an international and domestic context. The main results of this study are the reflections made of Icelandic political culture at the time; the political elite's emphasis on national unity and anti-communism; its association with the Western world and the Nordic Countries and disassociation with the warring great powers, most obviously the Soviet Union. Additionally, the two discourses illustrate an apparent sense of helplessness and defencelessness *vis-à-vis* the great power belligerents by the Icelanders themselves and on behalf of other minor nations.

The Icelandic press reacted overall badly to the two invasions in Scandinavia; commentators expressed a sense of anger, judgement, accusations, and call for social exclusion; danger, fear, insecurity, and sorrow. All of these negative expressions are counterweighted by one positive notion; admiration of the Finnish fighting spirit during the Winter War, which appears as some sort of a light in a seemingly dark atmosphere. On the one hand, the newspaper content is about domestic elements and the Icelandic situation as a direct result of the two invasions and foreign subjects on the other, dealing with opinionated portrayals of the belligerents. Interestingly, the Icelandic papers used more space discussing the internal affairs than the events themselves. Of the domestic issues, which focus on the search for – and defence against an internal threat and how to cope with the external threat, domestic anti-communism is the most overarching and far-reaching topic of them all. It is a dominating discourse during the Winter War and has an underlying presence in the non-communist press throughout the remaining three research periods of study's time frame. Discussions on the invasions themselves and their actors are confined to three approaches: (1) An anti-Soviet approach during the Winter War, (2) an anti-German approach and (3) a neutral approach during the Battle of Norway. What all approaches

have in common is a universal condemnation of violence, both in the form of interstate aggression and fifth column treason, and a universal sympathy with the Nordic nations.

In the introduction to this study, the question was posed whether or not the Invasion of Finland triggered more anger and shock in the Icelandic press than the Invasion of Norway. The direct answer is yes: The Invasion of Finland was undoubtedly more shocking and more appalling in the eyes of the contemporaries and it generated observably more heated discussions in the papers – and that is excluding the widespread popular reactions in the real world outside of the discourse. The discussion is aggressive, excessive, feisty, and accusing; it is a discourse of repulsion and detestation towards communists in Iceland, Finland and in the Soviet Union. Furthermore, it is almost completely monolithic, where all of the non-communist papers share the same view and employ the same arguments in denunciations of *them*, the villain and in admiration of *us* and the hero.

However, this is not to say that the Icelanders cared less about the Invasion of Norway or had less sympathy with the Norwegians than with the Finns. In fact, the two discourses are different in scope but not in scale. Both events became the most discussed topics in the Icelandic press for the durations of the campaigns. The discussion around the Battle of Norway is far from monolithic. Here, there are two opposing approaches towards the aggressor and there is even a marked difference in the use of language among the anti-German papers. The heterogeneous discourse is characterised by sadness instead of admiration and insecurity and anxiety instead of anger and accusations – with the notable exception of *Alþýðublaðið*'s fierce anti-German stance. The contemporaries themselves saw the events of April 9, 1940 as a more serious matter than the Winter War and that is why the discourse is less heated and excessive. Furthermore, my conclusion is that unlike the Finnish case, the Invasion of Norway and Denmark triggered a real alert in Icelandic government circles. This time, the authorities suspected an actual internal danger, which was neither Icelandic Nazis nor communists as the newspapers suggested, but ethnic Germans stationed in Iceland. The silence of the press and the neutral approach towards Germany supports this conclusion.

Four prominent ideologies were extracted from the two discourses. First, there is anti-communism and anti-Soviet sentiments. Second, the pacifist-like opposition to the great powers and their destructive world war and a moral belief in the rights of the minor nations of neutrality and sovereignty. Third, an opposition to dictatorship and fascism. Finally, the papers express a Eurocentrist glorification of Western civilization, mostly through the alienation of its perceived Bolshevik Russian antithesis – and more specifically; glorification of the Nordic Countries,

including Finland. These ideas and opinions are reflected in the papers' portrayals of the actors of the two conflicts.

The aggressors; Nazi-Germany and the Soviet Union, are seen sharing the identity of oppressive dictatorships who broke promises and illegitimately imposed violence upon innocent minor nations. The Soviet Union is universally despised in the non-communist press and the *Frontier* Metaphors illustrate the idea of the Soviet Union as an uncivilized/uncultured/uneducated society, which is alien to the Icelanders and threatening to European civilisation and world peace. The portrayal of Nazi-Germany is twofold. Commentators of the anti-German approach perceive Germany as the main villain of the world war in association with the Soviet Union. As such, the Germans are seen bearing full responsibility of the Norwegian Campaign and the world war in general. Commentators of the neutral approach towards Germany, on the other hand, do not identify the Germans specifically as villains; they speak uncritically of them and even associate with them within the boundaries of Germany being a cultured and civilized nation with good, friendly ties to Iceland. In criticism of the two invasions, the former operation is characterised by Soviet cruelty and violence and the latter by German insidiousness and betrayal.

The defenders; Norway and Finland, are seen as part of a Nordic community – and as such, are glorified as exemplar societies; progressive, successful, nationalist, anti-communist and social-democratic. Furthermore, the innocence of the Nordic Countries is drawn to the foreground by emphasising their strive for peace and neutrality. Finland is placed unconditionally into this equation during the Winter War. When it comes to defining the two actors in reference to the conflicts, their portrayals are contrasting. The Norwegians are victimised for the apparently tragic fate of ending up caught in the storm between the great powers or, in the anti-German press, they are victimised for being violated and betrayed by the Germans. The Finns, on the other hand, while surely being victimised in the first days of the campaign, overall became the subjects of heroisation and praise for their admirable fighting spirit. Sympathy with Finland is thus based on esteem and admiration, whereas sympathy with the Norwegians is built on grief and condolences.

Comparison of the various party-press titles reveals a pattern where the right-wing *Morgunblaðið* and the left-wing *Alþýðublaðið* seem to form opposing poles and the other papers somewhat fluctuate in between. Apart from the different approaches towards Germany, the non-communist papers largely agreed upon the major principles listed before but applied a varying focus and weight to them. Even though the neutral approach was a tactical move to hold on to

Icelandic neutrality, the right-wing press undoubtedly still harboured respect for the Germans; at least enough to let them enjoy the benefit of doubt throughout the first three periods of this study's time frame. In relation to the Soviet Union, the right-wing press is particularly focused on the *Civilization Frontier* Metaphor and these papers usually associate with the non-communist West rather than the Nordic Countries specifically. *Tíminn*, characterised by nationalist rhetoric, was less concerned about the foreign events than the other papers but focused on domestic issues. *Tíminn* shared the neutral approach towards Germany up until *Operation Weserübung*, but did, along with *Alþýðublaðið*, occasionally display pro-Allied remarks. *Alþýðublaðið*, on the other hand, is characterised by its unconcealed opposition to Nazi-Germany throughout all four research periods of this study, and its repeated tendency to associate Hitler with Stalin and communists with Nazis. *Alþýðublaðið* is also the paper which associates the most with the Nordic Countries.

As for chronological evolution of the discourses, we have seen that the initial response to the Invasion of Finland was disappointment with the Soviet Union and domestic anti-communism. As the Winter War dragged on, the Icelandic commentators directed the attention towards the Finnish defence, although anti-communism always remained on the agenda. More importantly, we can see a clear shift in the Battle of Norway discourse as it approached and entered the fourth research period; i.e. from May 10, 1940, on. *Morgunblaðið* gradually abandoned its neutral stance towards Germany and there is a marked increase in pro-Allied remarks in the press. We can also observe an increased return to anti-communism from early May onwards, when *Alþýðublaðið* launched a smear campaign against *Þjóðviljinn* with references to alleged communist collaboration in occupied Norway.

We have seen how opinionated portrayals of foreign belligerents reveals three-layered *us* and *them* associations in the press. These are an association with the non-communist *Europe* against communist *Asia*; an association with the Nordic Countries against the great powers and the world war and an association with the democratic Western Allies against the autocratic signatories of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Furthermore, we can see how, to a certain extent, elements of the government press, namely the centre-right papers, with their connections with the government was utilised to deliver the official policy of the Icelandic government and even act out rigged opinions and portrayals in order to keep face towards Nazi-Germany. Furthermore, there is an underlying nationalist rhetoric in the two discourses, particularly during the Winter War, which serves to legitimise the ruling ideology of the Icelandic political elite at the time; namely Icelandic nationalism. The rhetoric legitimises the idea of Icelandic

sovereignty and independence aspirations and de-legitimises treason and anti-national elements.

The communists are seen as perpetrators in the discourse for their opinions which illustrates their breach of the discourse's legitimising principles and its obvious power relations. Their opinion went against the mainstream opinion which demanded unconditional sympathy with Finland based on undeniable rights of the minor nations. Furthermore, communist opinions and discourse went against the established neutrality of Iceland. The anti-communist discourse constructed a solid internal division of *us* and *them* by repeatedly and constantly placing the Icelandic communists among the foreign *others*; not only Kuusinen and the Soviet invaders of Finland, but even Quisling and the German occupiers of Norway. To that end, the government press employed nationalist rhetoric and spoke on behalf of 'the Icelandic nation' when it stressed the communists' allegedly self-initiated resignation from Icelandic society. The anti-communist discourse in relation to the Winter War does not contain many new arguments in itself. My conclusion is thus that *Finnagaldur* in the press was an exploitation of the opposition met by the communists in society and was meant to demonstrate to the readers, i.e. the Icelandic people, that traditional anti-communist arguments had been right all along.

The Icelandic newspapers in 1939-1940 reflect a small society whose leaders strive to steer away from the storms of war and keep united and sovereign at all costs. They construct an image of the world in which their nation is sovereign and equal to the big 'sister nations' in Scandinavia and Europe. They commiserate with their sufferings and wish for an end of hostilities in Europe. Furthermore, in their constructed world, their main adversaries; communists and other alleged anti-national elements, are not welcome. *Morgunblaðið's* columnist summed the situation up quite nicely shortly after the Invasion of Denmark and Norway, and illustrated the hopes and fears of the Icelandic political elite during that troublesome winter:

These are difficult days for the minor nations. Which of the three sister nations has the best prospects of surviving: The one without arms and did not defend herself; the one who is currently defending herself; or the one who is now armed, surrounded and waiting? The only hope for life for the minor nations during these times is that from the depths of the tragedies will rise a concentrated national mind, vigour and unity like what was apparent among the Finns.

In these times, a divided minor nation will be wiped out.^{1(a)}

¹ "Reykjavíkurbjef". *Morgunblaðið*. 14.04.1940, p. 5. For the purpose of convenient translation, this quote has been markedly rephrased.

This research has been a contribution to the history of Iceland during the Second World War and the political culture of the late interwar era, using solely the perspective of the press. The approach and method applied in this research is fresh and welcome in the field and I would suggest that further research of the mind-set of the Icelandic political elite based on press analysis and discourse analysis was interesting to see. Furthermore, there are aspects of the 1939-1940 invasions in Scandinavia that this study has not covered in detail and might deserve further research, such as the press' approach towards the dissolution of union with Denmark and the press portrayals of Great Britain and the Western Allies before the Occupation of Iceland. I would suggest that a closer look at the Icelandic press during the Phoney War from the perspective of Allied-German relations could contribute to paint up a more wholesale picture of the subject than has been done here.

Additionally, I think it would be interesting to see the findings of this research in an international perspective. A press analysis of reactions in other neutral minor states of Europe would provide an interesting possibility for an international context, for example Sweden, which observed both the Winter War and the Battle of Norway from a close distance, or Ireland which might have enjoyed somewhat comparable issues *vis-à-vis* the great power belligerents to that which was concluded here.

Finally, this study has given a detailed look into the Icelandic anti-communist political culture at the end of the interwar era. Further studies on communism and anti-communism could benefit from a thorough look at the non-communist press discourse and its maintenance of power relations. Even though Icelandic communists have been regarded a great threat to the establishment and a source of violence during the interwar era, we have seen here, through the perspective and method of this study, how this group was completely ostracised and excommunicated in the discourse during that particular period. The findings do not pose a convincing argument for the communists' threat during that particular winter, even though the anti-communist contemporaries continuously claim so. However, for the ongoing debate on the Icelandic far-left, the question remains: Was rhetorical anti-communism a reaction to dangerous communist opinions or was it a pro-action designed to smear their image?

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Appendix 1

Tables

Editorial Topics during the Winter War	No. Articles
The Labour Movement	36
The Winter War: Anti-communism	34
The Parliament and its Work	33
The Winter War in General	28
The State Budget	28
Inter-government Party Debates	25
Prices and Inflation	18
The Parties and their Work	17
Wages	16
The Government and its Work	15
Class Conflict	13
Anti-communism (non-Winter War)	10
Criticism of the Government	8
The World War in General	7
Employment	6
Foreign Trade	6
Currency	5
Iceland and the World War	5
Reykjavík Town Budget	4
Energy	4
Taxation	4
Other/diverse	62
Total	384

Table 1: The most common subjects of the five main newspapers in Reykjavík during the Winter War period. The table has the Winter War topic split into general discussions about the war and articles expressing domestic anti-communism referring to the Invasion of Finland.

Editorial Topics during the Battle of Norway	No. Articles
The Battle of Norway	28
Iceland and the World War	20
The World War	18
The Labour Movement	14
The Occupation of Iceland	13
Employment	10
Anti-Communism	9
The Parliament and its Work	9
The Union with Denmark (occup.)	9
Wages	9
Inter-government Party Debates	8
Taxation	8
Class Conflict	5
Foreign Trade	5
Reykjavík Town Budget	5
The Government and its Work	5
Journalism of the World War	4
About <i>Eimskip</i>	4
Other/diverse	49
Total	232

Table 2: The most common subjects of the five main newspapers in Reykjavík during the Norwegian Campaign, April-June 1940.

Source: *Visir*, *Morgunblaðið*, *Tíminn*, *Alþýðublaðið* and *Þjóðviljinn*. December 1939-June 1940.

	THE SOVIET UNION AS A PARTICIPANT OF THE INVASION OF FINLAND	NAZI-GERMANY AS A PARTICIPANT OF THE INVASION OF NORWAY
Common attributes	The attacker is a dictatorship whose oppression of subjects is noted	
	Illegality of the invasion and a denunciation of the use of force against peaceful nations	
	Criticism for breaking deals and promises	
	The invasion is seen as a threat to the security of Iceland in one way or another	
	The use of fifth column traitors is seen as unprecedented and is universally despised	
Differing attributes	Focus on the cruelty of the Red Army during the campaign	Focus on the insidiousness and cunningness of the attack
	Harshly worded one-sided presentation of the campaign	Sober two-sided military reports during the campaign
	The attacker is said to be aiming for a complete conquest of Finland, followed by an advance into Scandinavia.	The attacker is said to be occupying Norway and Denmark for military purposes for as long as the world war lasts.
	The attacker is seen as a backward nation who is alien and threatening.	The attacker is seen as a cultured and civilized nation who is unfortunately at war.

Table 4: Common and contrasting attributes of the aggressive actors of the invasions of Norway and Finland as presented by the Icelandic non-communist press.

	FINLAND AS A PARTICIPANT OF THE INVASION OF FINLAND	NORWAY/DENMARK AS A PARTICIPANT OF THE INVASION OF NORWAY/DENMARK
Common attributes	Successful states through progress, nationalism and/or socialism	
	Neutral minor nations whose only wish is to live in peace	
	Both receive sympathy for being the subject of aggression	
Differing attributes	Heroisation: Sympathy based on admiration and esteem	Victimisation: Sympathy based on condolences and sorrow
	Focus on Finnish military deeds during the campaign	Absence of the Norwegian army during the campaign

Table 5: Common and contrasting attributes of the defensive actors of the invasions of Norway and Finland as presented by the Icelandic non-communist press.

(Jónsson, 2015)	
Finland	The Soviet Union
<u>The People and State</u>	
<i>Europe</i>	<i>Asia</i>
<i>civilized/educated /cultured</i>	<i>uncivilized/uneducated /uncultured</i>
<i>democracy</i>	<i>dictatorship</i>
<i>freedom</i>	<i>oppression</i>
<i>national freedom</i>	<i>'prison-house of nations'</i>
<u>The Winter War</u>	
<i>minor nation</i>	<i>great power</i>
<i>neutrality</i>	<i>expansionism</i>
<i>patriotism</i>	<i>treason (Kuusinen)</i>
<i>valour and heroism</i>	<i>massacres and terror bombings</i>
<i>individualist commandos</i>	<i>expendable 'slaves'</i>

(Adamovsky, 2005)	
The West	Russia or Eastern Europe
<u>(A1): Main Socio-historical Binary Oppositions</u>	
<i>civilization</i>	<i>barbarity</i>
<i>modernity, development, progress</i>	<i>tradition, underdevelopment, stagnation</i>
<i>liberalism</i>	<i>communism</i>
<i>freedom</i>	<i>despotism or totalitarianism</i>
<i>pluralism or "diversity"</i>	<i>homogeneity</i>
<i>individuals</i>	<i>masses</i>
<u>(A2): Main Cultural Binary Oppositions</u>	
<i>education ("civilization")</i>	<i>cultural handicaps</i>
<i>normal</i>	<i>deviant</i>
<i>rational</i>	<i>irrational</i>
<i>capable</i>	<i>incapable</i>

Table 6: To the left (Jónsson, 2015): Contrasting attributes found in the Icelandic non-communist press describing the two belligerents of the Winter War. To the right (Adamovsky, 2005): Excerpts from Adamovsky's tables of binary oppositions in Euro-Orientalist discourse. Note that some of Adamovsky's concepts are left out in this table for the sake of convenience. Source: Ezequiel Adamovsky. "Euro-Orientalism and the Making of the Concept of Eastern Europe in France, 1810-1880". *The Journal of Modern History*. 77:3 (2005), pp. 591-628, pp. 626-627.

	Concepts and attributes positively attached to <i>us</i>	Concepts and attributes negatively attached to <i>them</i>
AT HOME the <i>speaker</i>	Iceland the Icelandic nation the National Government	the parliamentary opposition Icelandic communists Icelandic Nazis
ABROAD the actors in the conflicts	the 'Nordic Countries'* Finland (the Western Allies)	the Soviet Union Kuusinen and Quisling (Nazi-Germany)
ATTRIBUTES attached to both the speaker at home and the actors abroad	<i>Europe</i> civilization/education/culture democracy freedom national [-freedom] peace neutrality minor nations patriotism heroism individuality enterprise industriousness	<i>Asia</i> (USSR only) uncivilized (USSR only) dictatorship oppression foreign [-occupation] world war expansionism great powers treason cowardice masses cruelty insidiousness

Table 7: A complete list of *speakers*, actors and attributes distributed into *us*-and *them*-categories, as seen in Chapters III and IV. * Norway and Denmark.

Appendix 2

Original Texts of Foreign Language Quotes

Title Page

^a Original text: “*Og upp af eldi og totrímingu sprengikúlnanna og kúgun yfirdrottunarinnar eiga bræðraþjóðir okkar eftir að rísa, frjálssar og fullvalda. Og það verður þeirra eigin innri siðmenning, sem ber þær fram til þeirrar giftu. Og það er samúð og hjálp hins frjálssborna fólks hvarvetna í heiminum – bein og óbein – er gefur þeim þreklund og þol til að bíða þeirrar stundar óbrotnum, ósigruðum.*”

Chapter I - Introduction

^a Original text: “*En diskurs representerer dermed et tankesett, et mønster eller en sammenheng å fortolke verden innenfor.*”

^b Original text: “[...] *málgagníð var flokkurinn pappír klæddur og litið á skrif þess öll [...] sem rödd flokksins.*”

^c Original text: “*Markmið Þórs er að skrifa aðgengilegan texta sem ber uppi skoðanir hans [...] Þór lítur svo á að hann hafi rétt til að segja sína skoðun og fella dóma um menn og málefni.*”

^d Original text: “*Ég er ekki í hópi þeirra sagnfræðinga, sem trúa því, að þeir geti hafið sig ofar samtíð sinni og skoðunum og fjallað um málin af óskilgreindu „hlutleysi“. Ég hef ákveðin viðmið, sem ég tel óheidarlegt að leyna. Takmark mitt er ekki að vera „hlutlaus“, heldur leita að sannleika og skýra hann.*”

Chapter II – Finland, Norway and Iceland 1939-1940

^a Original text: “*Norsk historie er internasjonal historie, slik den kom til å arta seg her i landet, i møtet med dei særnorske føresetnader.*”

^b Original text: “*Vegna þeirrar afstöðu, er kommúnistaflokkurinn, sem hjer starfar undir nafninu Sameiningarflokkur alþýðu – sósíalístaflokkurinn –, þingmenn þess flokks og málgögn hafa markað sér til frelsis, réttinda og lýðræðis smáþjóðanna síðustu vikurnar, og alveg sérstaklega viðvíkjandi málefnum Finnlands, lýsa undirritaðir alþingismenn yfir því, að þeir telja virðingu Alþingis misboðið með þingsetu fulltrúa slíks flokks.*”

^c Original text: “[...] *og geri þar með daginn að voldugri samúðaryfirlýsingu með frændþjóðum okkar og þeirra góða málstað gegn ofbeldinu.*”

^d Original text: “*Í augum ráðherra voru verndaryfirlýsingar Breta því tveggjaðar. Í þeim fólst hætta fyrir sjálfstæði og hlutleysi þjóðarinnar, en jafnframt trygging gegn þýsku hernámi, sem allir ráðherrarnir og þorri þingmanna taldi mestu bölvun sem yfir landið gæti gengið.*”

Chapter III – The Soviet Invasion of Finland in the Icelandic Press

^a Original text: “*“Verndari smáþjóðanna” afhjúpar sig til fullnustu*”

^b Original text: “*Það sem menn áður trúðu á, hefir nú brugðist allra vonum, samningar eru rofnir, sett grið virt að vettugi [...].*”

^c Original text: “*Þar fellur fyrir fullt og allt sú blekking, að Rússland sé ríki verkamanna og bænda.*”

-
- ^d Original text: “Hver einasti sannur Íslendingur fyrirlítur starfsemi, hugarfar og andlegan vesaldóm þessara manna. Flestir hafa lítið á þá sem föðurlandslausa en óskaðlega uppskafninga. En augu þjóðarinnar eru nú að opnast fyrir því að þeir geta verið stórkaðlegir á þeim viðsjártímum, sem nú standa yfir.”
- ^e Original text: “[...] hver, sem ver morðingjanna málstað “hins myrta dreyra á sekum höndum ber.”
- ^f Original text: “Kommúnistarnir taka ekki undir þær kveðjur. Þeir lýsa fyrirlitningu sinni á þeim mönnum, sem láta í ljósi samúð með þeim, sem vilja sjálfir eiga ættjörð sína. Þeir senda öðrum mönnum kvðejur sínar, niðingunum, sem svikið hafa ættjörð sína og gengið óvinunum á hönd, finnsku landráðamönnunum, sem hrópa af brjáluðu ofstæki: Finnland fyrir Rússa!”
- ^g Original text: “Nafn hans þarf að lifa eins og nokkurskonar áminning til þjóðarinnar um það, hverra erinda flokksbrot kommúnista gengur hér á landi”
- ^h Original text: “Þessir menn eru kommúnistarnir, eða Kuusin-arnir, sem er þeirra rjettnefni nú, því að þeir biða eftir tækifæri til að svikja sitt land og sína þjóð, eins og Kuusinen, finnski kommúnistinn [...] Hvað á að þola starfsemi Kuusinanna í okkar þjóðfjlagi? Á að biða eftir því, að þeir biði einræðisherrann í Moskva um samskonar “vernd” og Kuusinen hinn finnski gerði? Á að biða eftir það rauði herinn komi hingað, til kvaddur af landráðamönnunum?”
- ⁱ Original text: “Þeir eru og farnir að hvísla því, að vísu lágt ennþá, íslensku kommúnistarnir, að nú sje sú langþráða stund að nálgast, að rauði herinn komi og “frelsi” íslensku þjóðina!”.
- ^j Original text: “Nú loksins höfum við hrokkið við. Atburði hinna síðustu daga hafa sannfært okkur um að kommúnistar eru til alls vísir. [...] Ef Stalin teldi sig þurfa á Íslandi að halda, og hefði tækifæri til að leggja það undir sig, myndu dýrkendur hans hiklaust ofurselja landið.”
- ^k Original text: “[...] Kommúnistaflokkurinn hér myndi fagna Rússum með blysför, ef þeir kæmu hingað sömu erinda og til Finnlands [...].
- ^l Original text: “Þeir verða að sætta sig við að vera útskúfaðir úr félagsskap þeirra, sem vita hvað þjóðrækni og ættjarðarást er. Þeir liggja fyrir fyrirlitningu allra ærlegra manna á Íslandi. Það er sú refsing, sem þeim er búin [...]“
- ^m Original text: “Þjóðin mun veita þeim, er setja á svikráðum við frelsi hennar og ætla henni sama hlutskipti og Finnum, þau laun, er þeir verðskulda”.
- ⁿ Original text: “En nú er það almennings að framfylgja þessari stefnu í verki, og sýna kommúnistum í hvívetna þá andúð og fyrirlitningu, sem starfshættir þeirra verðskulda. [...] Þeir eiga að finna til þess að með [stuðningi við Sovétríkin og samúðarleysi með smáþjóðunum] hafa þeir fyrirgert rétti sínum til áhrifa á íslensk mál. Með slikum samtökum almennings verður fullkomið áhrifaleysi þeirra bezt tryggt [...]”
- ^o Original text: “En þetta verður ekki þolað lengur. Ef ríkisvaldið tekur ekki í taumana, þá verður þjóðin sjálf að gera það. [...] Það er kominn tími til að þeim sé gert ljóst, að þjóðin mun ekki láta sér nægja að fyrirlíta þá. Hún mun nú sjá um að þeir verði ekki lengur hættulegir sjálfstæði hennar og menningu.”.
- ^p Original text: “Þessvegna er það skylda allra sannra Íslendinga að gera leigubýin frá Mosvka útlæg frá öllum trúnaðarstöðum í þjóðfjlaginu. Fyrstu átökin í þessa átt eru nú háð hjer í Reykjavík [...]”
- ^q Original text: “Í gærmorgun rjeðst 180 miljón manna þjóðin, Rússar, á 4 miljón manna þjóðina, Finna, undir því yfirskyni, að rússneska “öreigaríkinu” stafaði hætta af Finnum. Um nær allan hinn mentaða heim er lítið svo á, að aldrei hafi verið hafin jafn gjörsamlega ástæðulaus árás, sem gert hefir verið eins lítið til að grimuklæða og þessa árás Rússa.”
- ^r Original text: “Einn svívirðilegasti verknaður veraldarsögunnar átti sér stað í gærmorgun.”.
- ^s Original text: “Rauði herinn dreifir eldi og dauða yfir landið. Borgir eru brenndar, varnarlaus þorp jöfnuð við jörðu [...]”

- ^t Original text: “Ófriðurinn, loftárásirnar, sprengjuárásirnar, ikveikjusprengjurnar, eltingaleikur rússneskra flugmanna með vjelbysskothrið á konur og börn, allt er þetta að verða daglegt brauð hjá þessari hetjuþjóð [...]”.
- ^u Original text: “Og á móti mýgrút rauða hersins, sem harðstjórinn í Moskva getur alltaf endurnýjað með því að senda inn nýjar og nýjar þúsundir af þrælum sínum út í dauðann, eru Finnar of fáir.”
- ^v Original text: “Allur heimurinn horfir í dag með undrun og aðdáun á hina frækilegu vörn Finna gegn ofureflinu”.
- ^w Original text: “Frjettaritari einn í Norður-Finnlandi segir m.a. frá því, að hann kom inn í hermannaskála, þar sem hermaður var að klippa einn fjelaga sinn. [...] hárskurður var auðsjáanlega ekki hans daglega iðja. Blaðamaður spurði því, hver væri aðalatvinna hans. “Jeg skýt Rússa”, sagði Finninn.”
- ^x Original text: “Nú erum við í keppi, þar sem ekki er barist um mínútur og sekúndur, heldur um frelsi Finnlands [...] Því í þessari styrjöld er það afrek einstaklinganna sem mest veldur á, og sem stur kapp í menn”.
- ^y Original text: “[...] enginn veit hvar hersveitir Rússa nema staðar þegar þær hafa náð að komast að landamærum Svíþjóðar og Noregs.”
- ^z Original text: “Kemur ekki röðin næst að Svíþjóð og þar næst að Noregi? [...] Og yrði þá ekki skamt yfir til okkar Íslendinga?”
- ^{aa} Original text: “Það sem óttast er, er að fyr eða síðar hljóti svo að fara, að hin málmauðugu hjeruð í Norður-Svíþjóð og íslausu hafnirnar í Norður-Noregi freisti Rússa til þess að halda áfram vestur á bóginn.”
- ^{bb} Original text: “Þeir hafa alltaf um aldaðir, leitast við að færa út yfirráð sín vestur á bóginn, helzt alla leið vestur að Atlanishafi. Og þeir hugsðu nú sérstaklega gott tækifæri gefast, er vesturþjóðirnar, England og Þýskalaland, voru komnar í ófrið saman og gátu eigi við snúizt að veita mótstöðu gegn fyrirætlunum þeirra.”
- ^{cc} Original text: “Það er hörmulegt til þess að vita, að mestu menningarþjóðir heims, sem nú berast á banaspjót, skuli verða þess valdandi, að villimenska kommúnismans brjótist til valda á hinum friðsömu Norðurlöndum.”.
- ^{dd} Original text: “Einir allra valdhafa í þeim löndum, sem hvítir menn byggja, hafa þeir á vorum dögum stjórnað landi sínu svo illa, að þar hefir geysað hver hungursneyðin eftir aðra, sem hefir orðið miljón ofan á miljón manna að fjörtjóni. Og eigi fór betur fyrir þeim, þegar þeir hófu árásina gegn hinni frjálsu, dugmiklu finsku þjóð, sem nú heldur uppi baráttu menningarinnar gegn hinni mongólsku pest.”
- ^{ee} Original text: “[...] enda yrði það ævarandi smánarblettur á öllum menningarþjóðum heims“ ef aðstoð Vesturveldanna kæmi of seint og Finnland tapaði Vetrarstríðinu.
- ^{ff} Original text: “Þegar við lesum upp aftur hinar dásamleg lýsingar Herodotos [...] á mismuninum á Hellenum og barbörum, mismuninn á hinni grísku menningarþjóð og Asíu mönnunum og baráttunni milli þeirra, sem lauk með sigri Hellena á hinni asiatisku harðstjórn, þá er það eins og hinn ömurlegi harmleikur, sem leikinn var fyrir meir en 2000 árum, sé enn þá á leiksviðinu fyrir augum okkar. [...] Barátta mannkynsins [...] er hin sama nú sem þá, og þeir, sem í dag falla í baráttunni fyrir því að hindra það, að hið villimannlega blóðveldi Asíumannanna nái að breiðast út yfir hinn menntaða heim, vinna sams konar sögulega hetjudáð eins og þá, sem einu sinni var unnin í Permopyle-skarðinu.”

Chapter IV – The German Invasion of Norway in the Icelandic Press

- ^a Original text: “Menn bíða enn milli vonar og ótta [...]”.
- ^b Original text: “Það ótrulegasta hefir skeð [...] Rjettur smáþjóðanna er ekki til, þegar stórveldin eiga í stríði [...]”.
- ^c Original text: “Allir þessir atburðir hafa haft djúptæk áhrif á hugi manna hér á landi. Við Íslendingar höfum [...] ekki viljað trúá því, að hlutleysi smáþjóðanna yrði skert og griðasáttmálar á þeim rofnir. En nú verðum við að trúá því, atburðirnir, sem gerzt hafa, verða ekki véfengdir.”.
- ^d Original text: “Nú sjáum við, að veggur náungans brennur. Við vitum, að þegar svo er, er okkar eigin húsi hætt.

[...] Þótt við Íslendingar séum afskektir og fjarri alfaraleiðum, þá skulum við ekki gleyma því, að skógarbrunnar eða sinueldar fylgja engum vörðum. [...] Þess vegna er okkur það um fram alt nauðsynlegt að vera við öllu búinir.”

^e Original text: “Við skulum búast við því versta, vona hið góða, [...] Þótt að syrti í bili, skulum við aldrei glata voninni um hjarta, friðsamlega framtíð [...]”.

^f Original text: “[...] einu stórkostlegasta vélabragði og landráðastarfsemi, sem veraldarsagan greinir frá.”

^g Original text: “nokkrir sjúkir öfgamenn”

^h Original text: “En eins og allir geta orðið sammála um, að Hitler hafi enn ekki komið með neitt nýtt vopn, er sérstaklega skiftir máli í hernaðinum, eins víst er það, að hann hefir í þeim ófriði, sem nú stendur yfir; notað með betri árangri en allir fyrirrennarar hans í veraldarsögunni, vopn, sem er hernaðinum jafngamalt [...] - Það vopn er skipulögð landráðastarfsemi á meðan andstæðinganna.”

ⁱ Original text: “[Eru hér menn] sem myndu reiðubúinir að feta í fótspor Kuusinen eða Quislings [...]?”

^j Original text: “[...] að vera á verði í framtíðinni. Við skulum ekki vera svo blindir að halda, að hjer finnist engir Kuusinar eða Quislingar [...]”.

^k Original text: “Er enginn hjer meðal okkar, sem er reiðubúinn að vinna sama niðingsverkið á ættlandinu og fjöðurlandssvikararnir gerðu í Finnlandi, Danmörku og Noregi? Spurningunni er varpað hjer fram, til þess að hver einstaklingur athugi sitt eigið hugarfar. Ef til vill gætu atburðirnir á Norðurlöndum orðið til þess, að minna menn á skylduna við fösturjörðina [...]”.

^l Original text: “[...] vaxandi andúð á ofbeldisflokkum [...] Þess vegna þarf að gefa þeim fyllstu gætur og fylgjast vel með baktjaldastarfi þeirra.”

^m Original text: “[...] ýmsir áhrifamenn hafa litið með velþóknun til svipaðrar flokksstarfsemi hér og þeirrar, sem Quisling veitti forystu í Noregi.”

ⁿ Original text: “Alþingi hefir markað glögga línu í þessum efnum. [...] Þjóðhollir menn í landinu geta nú fylgt forustu Alþingis í þessu máli, með því að einangra í verki frá opinberum og almennan trúnaði þjóðfélagsins þá Íslendinga, sem starfa í sömu átt og þeir ógæfumenn, sem opnuðu Noreg fyrir framandi þjóð.”

^o Original text: “Þeir hafa beygt kné sín fyrir Hitler og gerzt Quislingar hans [...]”.

^p Original text: “Hér úti á Íslandi starfa þessir umboðsmenn einræðisins frjálst og óhindrað [gegn Þjóðstjórninni]. Hverjir væru líklegri til þess að takast á hendur hlutverk svikarans en þeir, ef slíkt tækifæri byðist? [...] Þessir menn eru því allra bezt til þess fallnir að fara með hin einu “nýju vopn”, sem Hitler hefir enn teft fram í yfirstandandi styrjöld – skipulagða landráðastarfsemi. [...] Ef einhver skyldi halda, að í kommúnistunum og nazistunum hér sé einhver annar efniviður en í kommúnistum og nazistum annarra þjóða, þá hefir hann ranga hugmynd um hlutina. Það, sem þessir flokkar hafa gert annars staðar, munu þeir einnig gera hér [...]”.

^q Original text: “Sá flokkur, sem nú er í opinberu bandalagi við Quisling í Noregi [...]”.

^r Original text: “[Íslenskir nasistar og kommúnistar] gerðu sér vonir um það, að geta eins og í Noregi svalað skapi sínu á pólitískum andstæðingum sínum hér í skjóli þýzkra yfirráða [...]”.

^s Original text: “Að sjálfsögðu verður hjer enginn dómur lagður á aðgerðir ófriðaraðila [...] Sagan dæmir um innrás Þjóðverja í Noreg og hertöku Danmerkur [...]”.

^t Original text: “Eftir 6 mánaða “leit að vígvöllum” [...] hafa stórveldin sem eigast við, fundið sjer Noreg.”

^u Original text: “[...] Danmörk og Noregur, eru orðin vettvangur hinnar blóðugu stórvelda-styrjaldar. [Danmörk] hefir neyðst til að lúta valdboði annars styrjaldaraðilans, sem hefir sett her [í landið] og verður danskt land hjer eftir notað til ófriðaraðgerða, meðan styrjöldin stendur.”

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- ^v Original text: “[Hver verða örlög Norðurlandanna] *sem eru nú nauðug orðin vettvangur styrjaldarinnar.*”
- ^w Original text: “*Viðskipti þjóðanna taka á sig einkennilegar myndir á þessum dögum.*”
- ^x Original text: “*Hjer deila stórveldin ekki um það, hvað er rjett eða rangt gagnvart alþjóðarjetti. Því á hinum síðustu og verstu tímum telja ófriðarþjóðir það rjett, sem samræmist best þeirra eigin hagsmunum. Þetta er síðalærdómurinn, sem ræður í heiminum í dag, og sem máttlausar og vanmegnugar smáþjóðir verða að sætta sig við.*”
- ^y Original text: “*Vafamálið, sem menn hugleidda á næstunni [...] verður þetta. Er árásin á Noreg, hver sem hin raunverulegu upptök hennar eru, og hvaðan sem þau eru sprottin, hinn endanlegi ávöxtur af menningarlífi Evrópuþjóða?*”
- ^z Original text: “*Í algerðu hlutleysi okkar horfum við á hinar grimmu aðfarir ófriðaraðila, og getum með sjálfum okkur verið sannfærðir um, að hver sem sigra kan, getur aldrei byggt upp nýrri og betri heim fyrir mannkynið [...] fyrri en vopnin verða lögð niður, og ljósin kveikt [...].*”
- ^{aa} Original text: “*Hlutleysið leggur ekki nein bönd á skoðanir manna. [...] Þess vegna var okkur [...] fullkomlega leyfilegt að fordæma árás Rússa á Finna [...]. Alveg á sama hátt er okkur leyfilegt að gagnrýna Þjóðverja fyrir atferli þeirra í Danmörku [...]. Hitt er náttúrulega sjálfsagt, að gæta hóflegs orðbragðs um erlenda atburði.*”
- ^{bb} Original text: “*Á sama hátt og Rússland rauf gerðan griðasamning á Finnlandi, rauf Þýzkaland griðasamning sinn við hina litlu og gersamlega varnarlausu Danmörku. Og til þess að ekkert vantaði á samlíkinguna hefir Þýzkaland nú einnig tekið sér leppstjórn Rússlands í Terijoki [...] [með því að] stofna þýzka leppstjórn í Oslo. Verkferin eru hvert sem annað, þótt annað kalli sig kommúnista og hitt nazista, enda málstaðurinn sá sami [...].*”
- ^{cc} Original text: “[Landið er] *beygt undir ok nazistiskrar harðstjórnar um ófyrirsjáanlegan tíma. Norðmenn verða nú daglega að leggja líf sitt í sölurnar til þess að verja land sitt og frelsi fyrir sams konar kúgunartilraun.*”
- ^{dd} Original text: “*Hinar grimmdarfullu og tilefnislausu árásir, sem þrjár Norðurlandþjóðir hafa orðið fyrir af hálfu Rússlands og Þýzkalands, hafa vakið samúð langflestna manna hér á landi. Íslenszka þjóðin óskar þess yfirleitt, að frændþjóðirnar, sem sætt hafa hinu skefjalausa ofbeldi, fái sem fyrst slitið sig úr kúgunarþjötrunum [...].*”
- ^{ee} Original text: “[Innrásin] *var svo lævislega undirbúin og framkvæmd af svo takmarkalausri fyrirlitning fyrir rétti, fyrir gefnum lofordum [...].*”
- ^{ff} Original text: “[Á]rás Þjóðverja á Noreg og Danmörku var fyrir löngu undirbúin og það á einn hinn lævislegasta og ódregilegasta hátt, sem um getur.”
- ^{gg} Original text: “*Það er þýðingarlaust fyrir Þýzkaland að ætla sér að afsaka þessa svívirðilegu árás með tundurduflalagningum Bretlands úti fyrir vesturströnd Noregs, þó að þar hafi tvímælalaust verið um hlutleysisbrot að ræða. [...] Og er það ekki öllum ljóst, að árás Þýzkalands hefir líka verið undirbúin löngu áður en Bretland lét leggja tundurduflunum við vesturströnd Noregs, og meira að segja hafin fyrir þann tíma, [...].*”
- ^{hh} Original text: “[...] hver smáþjóðin eftir aðra er svift sjálfstæði sínu, mannréttindum og frelsi af hans [Stalíns] nýja vini Hitler.”
- ⁱⁱ Original text: “*En þó verður að viðurkenna það, að hernám af hendi vinveittrar drengskaparþjóðar, [...], getur ekki verið mikið áhyggjuefni samanborið við hlutskifti margra annarra smáþjóða og eru síðustu nærtæku dæmin Holland, Belgía og Luxemburg, að ógleymdum okkar mestu vina- og frændþjóðum.*”
- ^{jj} Original text: “*En hve ógeðfellt sem hernám landsins er þjóðinni, mætti hún muna það, að stórum þyngri örlogum hafa frændþjóðir okkar sætt [...].*”
- ^{kk} Original text: “*Við getum hver og einn haft okkar skoðanir á aðferðum hernáðarþjóða. Við getum eða öllu heldur við hljótum að bera sárán harm í brjósti útaf hlutskifti frændþjóða okkar.*”

^{ll} Original text: “[...] þrátt fyrir einlægán friðarvilja sinn [og] þær fórnir, sem þau hafa fært, bæði efnalegar og andlegar, til þess að fá að halda friði og hlutleysi, hafa ekkert stóðað.”

^{mmm} Original text: “Við hvert fótínál okkar Íslendingar og hverja athöfn líður okkur ekki úr minni hið yfirlýsta ævarandi hlutleysi okkar. En alt fyrir það getur ekki hjá því farið, að samúð okkar mde fændþjóðunum á Norðurlöndum er innileg og ævarandi.”

ⁿⁿ Original text: “Hafi einhverjar leifar gamallar andúðar leynst í fylgsnum íslenskrar þjóðarsálar, hafa þær horfið um leið og ofbeldisverkið var framið.”

^{oo} Original text: “Þessar getsakir eru hvorttveggja í senn fávíslegar og ódregilegar. [...] Hér er um að ræða þær þjóðir, sem við höfum þolað súrt og sætt með gegnum aldirnar. Vináttu- og menningarböndin við þær munu aldrei verða rofin af okkar hálfu.”

^{pp} Original text: “Árásin á Finnland var sú fyrsta á Norðurlönd. Nú hafa hinir hættulegu atburðir færst nær okkur, hættan meira yfirvofandi okkur sjálfum og allt gerist svo óvænt [...] Við hinar hörmulegustu fréttir setur menn oft hljóða,, þá brestur orð til þess að lýsa sársaukanum.”

^{qq} Original text: “Og allstaðar þar sem Norðmenn koma stendur af þeim hressandi gustur atorku og manndóms.”

^{rr} Original text: “Hér átti í hlut smáþjóð, friðsöm og óhlutskiftin, sem með iðjusemi, atorku og natni hafði reist eitthvert mesta menningarþjóðfélag sem sögur fara af. Í einni svipan verður hún að varpa ávöxtunum af striti sínu fyrir fætur árásarþjóðar og eiga það undir geðþóttu hennar, hvaða bætur hún hlýtur fyrir.”

^{ss} Original text: “Og við sívaxandi lýðræði hafa Norðmenn síðan notið friðar við allar þjóðir og frelsis inn á við í meira en 125 ár; þangað til nú, og orðið það, sem þeir eur í dag: ein frjálsasta, atorkusamasta og siðmenntaðasta þjóð heimsins.”

Chapter V – Comparison and Discussion

^a Original text: “Í dag sýnum við samúð okkar hinni fínsku frændþjóð vorri, samúð, sem fær litlu umþokað, en sannar þó að við Íslendingar teljumst til menningarþjóða [...]”.

^b Original text: “[Íslendingar eru] ysti útvörður norrænnar menningar í vestri, eins og Finnar eru það í austri”.

^c Original text: “[...] tórtríming norrænna þjóða, norrænnar menningar.”

^d Original text: “Og þetta er eðlilegt. Finnar máttu heita jafnaldrar okkar í fullveldinu. Þeir höfðu eins og við notað fengið frelsi kappsamlega. Menningarlegar og verklegar framfarir voru mjög örar. Alþýðumenntun þeirra hafði komist á hátt stig. [...] Þeir kunnu að meta frelsið og þau verðmæti, sem það hafði fært þeim. Þess vegna fórnðu þeir blóði sínu til verndar því.”

^a Original text: “Hlutur smáþjóða er erfiður á þessum dögum. Fyrir hverja frændþjóðina eru horfurnar skárstar af þessum þrem, þeirri vopnlausu, sem varðist ekkert, þeirri sem verst, og þeirri sem bíður vopnuð innikróuð, átektá? Það getur orðið vafamál. En eigi smáþjóðum að vera lífsvon á þessum tímum, þá byggist hún á því, að úr djúpi hörmunganna stigi einbeittur þjóðhugur þrek og eining eins og sýndi sig meðal Finna. Sundruð smáþjóð nú á tímum þurkast út.”