

Erik Beukel, Frede P. Jensen and Jens Elo Rytter

Phasing out the Colonial Status of Greenland, 1945-54

A Historical Study



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Erik Beukel, Frede P. Jensen and Jens Elo Rytter

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Cover photo: Hermod Lannung, the Danish delegate to the UN in 1947-1957
and again in 1961-1970, looking at a map of Greenland. Pressehuset, March 1949,
the Royal Library, map and photo archive (see p. 188)

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Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	9
2. GREENLAND AND DENMARK BEFORE 1945 <i>Erik Beukel</i>	13
Introduction	13
Greenland as a Danish colony	13
Greenland between North America and Europe: World War II	21
World War II as a turning point	29
3. THE GREENLAND ISSUE – SOVEREIGNTY, SELF-DETERMINATION AND DEPENDENCE <i>Erik Beukel</i>	33
Introduction	33
Sovereignty	36
National right of self-determination	42
Factors governing dependence: National security policy and economics	48
Conclusion	64
4. THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT: THE DECOLONISATION PROCESS IN THE UN <i>Erik Beukel</i>	67
Introduction	67
Normative framework	68
Organisational framework	77
Closing remarks	86
5. THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL LAW CONCERNING DECOLONISATION AND SELF-DETERMINATION <i>Jens Elo Rytter</i>	89
Introduction	89
On the development of international law in general, especially the conditions for the formation of customary law	90
On colonial self-determination, the territorial integrity of states, and the rights of minorities	93
The establishment of colonial self-determination as a norm of international law ..	95
Requirements concerning the implementation of colonial self-determination (around 1953-1954)	106
Evaluating the process of Greenland's integration with Denmark in 1953-1954	113
Summary	120
Brief conclusion	123
6. A NEW POLICY ON GREENLAND IN THE PIPELINE: DANISH AND GREENLAND INITIATIVES, 1945-1950 <i>Erik Beukel</i>	125
Introduction	125
The Greenland issue emerges	126
Hedtoft goes on the offensive	138
The new policy on Greenland gets off the ground	152
Conclusion	164

7. THE GREENLAND ISSUE IN THE UN, 1945-1950 <i>Frede P. Jensen</i>	167
The Danish authorities and reporting to the UN	167
The UN General Assembly, 1946	171
The UN General Assembly, 1947	175
The UN General Assembly, 1948	178
Meetings in the Fourth Committee	182
Defining the concept of a “non-self-governing territory”.	184
The UN General Assembly, 1949	186
The UN General Assembly, 1950	193
The American UN initiative	193
8. THE GREENLAND ISSUE IN THE UN, 1951-1952 <i>Frede P. Jensen</i>	201
The Greenland report	201
The meetings in the UN	202
New Danish deliberations	203
Meetings in the 73 (e) Committee: The factor issue	207
Outlook in 1951	220
The UN assembly in 1952	221
Reply to the United Nations Secretary-General on the factor issue	222
The Dutch initiative	224
Meetings in the UN	231
The meetings in the 73 (e) Committee, the Fourth Committee, and the plenary meeting	235
Summary of chapters seven and eight	243
9. GREENLAND ON THE PATH TO CONSTITUTIONAL EQUALITY, 1951-1953 <i>Erik Beukel and Frede P. Jensen</i>	247
Introduction	247
Consensus on Greenland’s future: Meetings of the Committee on Greenland in 1952	248
Poul Andersen and Alf Ross’ expert opinion on Greenland	253
Between Nuuk and Copenhagen	268
Debate in the <i>Folketing</i>	275
Why the integration solution?	278
Conclusion	284
10. THE GREENLAND ISSUE AT THE UN, 1953 <i>Frede P. Jensen</i>	287
The report on Greenland	288
Negotiations at the UN, 1953	289
Denmark’s notes to the UN Secretary-General	294
Hermod Lannung’s initiatives	301
Meetings of the Fourth Committee	307
The fate of the draft resolution in the plenary session on 27 November 1953	314
Conclusion	315
11. THE GREENLAND ISSUE AT THE UN, 1954 <i>Frede P. Jensen</i>	317
Report on Greenland	317
Negotiations at the UN in 1954	320
Meeting of the 73 (e) Committee	324

Brazil's draft resolution	338
Preliminary recapitulation	344
Conclusion of the Greenland issue at the UN: Meeting of the Fourth Committee and the General Assembly	346
Meeting of the Fourth Committee	348
Conclusion	367
12. CONCLUSION <i>Erik Beukel and Frede P. Jensen</i>	371
Why did Greenland's status become a political problem?	371
Greenland's integration as a Danish-Greenland project	373
The Greenland issue at the UN	375
The issue of international law	380
Why was the integration solution desirable?	382
APPENDICES	
Appendix 1: Terms of reference for preparing a historical study of Greenland's change in status from a colony to an equal part of the Kingdom of Denmark pursuant to the Constitutional Amendment of 1953	387
Appendix 2: Memorandum of 4 March 2005 from Greenland's Home Rule government. Clarification of the issue concerning analysis of the process preceding Greenland's change of status in 1953	391
Appendix 3: Original expert opinion of 17 June 1952 provided by Poul Andersen and Alf Ross	393
Appendix 4: Expert opinion of 17 June 1952 provided by Poul Andersen and Alf Ross, with the amended separate statement by Alf Ross of January 1953	401
Appendix 5: Prime Minister Erik Eriksen's letter of 13 August 1952 officially requesting the issue to be presented to the Provincial Council of Greenland	405
Appendix 6: Letter of 13 August 1952 containing personal and highly- confidential information from Prime Minister Erik Eriksen to Governor Lundsteen	407
Appendix 7: UN Resolution 567 (VI) of 18 January 1952 with the first list of factors	409
Appendix 8: UN Resolution 648 (VII) of 10 December 1952 with the second list of factors	413
Appendix 9: UN Resolution 742 (VIII) of 27 November 1953 with the third list of factors	417
Appendix 10: UN Resolution 849 (IX) of 22 November 1954 (the Greenland Resolution)	421
Appendix 11: Important bodies in the administration of Greenland	423
Appendix 12: Change of status in 1953: The Greenlanders' relationship with Denmark from 1945 to 1954 <i>Jens Heinrich</i>	425
Appendix 13: Icelandic claims to Greenland <i>Margit Bech Larsen</i>	443
SOURCES	455
BIBLIOGRAPHY	461
INDEX OF NAMES	473



Map of Greenland. Geodetic Institute, Copenhagen 1951. © The National Survey and Cadastre (A.07.07)

1 · Introduction

At the end of 2004, Prime Minister Hans Enoksen requested from Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen a historical account of the circumstances concerning Greenland's change in status from a colony to an equal part of the Kingdom of Denmark when the Danish Constitution was amended in 1953. The political debate in Greenland that ensued after the book *The Right to National Self-Determination* was published in 2004 spurred the home rule government's request. This book was written at the request of the North Atlantic Group in the *Folketing*. At a meeting on 12 April 2005, Prime Minister Hans Enoksen and Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen agreed that such a historical account should be carried out. They agreed that the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) should be asked to undertake the study.

The government's terms of reference of 1 June 2005 for DIIS state thus:

The Danish government requests the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) to prepare a historical analysis of the period from 1945 to 1954 describing Greenland's change of status from colony to an equal part of the Kingdom of Denmark pursuant to the Constitutional amendment of 1953. The study will cover the course of events in Denmark and Greenland as well as the debate in the UN upon receiving notification of this matter.

Both prime ministers agreed to the terms of reference. In addition to the terms of reference sent to DIIS, the Prime Minister's Office sent a memorandum dated 4 March 2005 from Greenland's Home Rule government entitled "Clarification of the issue concerning analysis of the process preceding Greenland's change of status in 1953". The Danish prime minister expected the study to, among other things, examine the questions brought up in the memorandum. The text of the terms of reference and the memorandum are provided in appendix 1 and 2. In a letter dated 27 June 2005, the board of directors at DIIS agreed to take on the project.

In this book, DIIS presents the results of the study. The study was completed by senior researcher Erik Beukel, dr.scient.pol., senior researcher Frede P. Jensen, dr.phil., and university lecturer Jens Elo Rytter, Ph.D. Assistance was provided by

senior researcher Svend Aage Christensen, MA, and masters students Iben Bjørnsson, Margit Bech Larsen, and Gry Thomasen. Ph.D. student Jens Heinrich, Ilisimatusarfik, University of Greenland, worked as a research assistant for two months and studied the Greenland press during the period under scrutiny. His report is included in appendix 12.

The archives that DIIS chiefly used in this study also include the relevant records of state authorities – primarily the Danish National Archives as well as documents from the Library, Archives and Information Service of the Danish Parliament; The Labour Movement's Library and Archives; the Arctic Institute; and Greenland National Museum and Archive, Nuuk. In addition to Danish documents, the collections of the state authorities in the Danish National Archives also contain the extensive, highly detailed material produced during the UN's discussion of the Greenland issue. In addition, many private archives have also been examined, including Hermod Lannung's private archive in the Danish National Archives and Alf Ross' private archive at The Royal Library. A comprehensive list of the archives used can be found at the back of the book.

The international archives used include the UN's archives in New York. However, the records in Copenhagen have admittedly proven to be generally more significant than the UN records when the central issues covered in this study were examined. This discovery is not so remarkable when one takes into account the circumstances in large international organisations; both the administrative apparatus and the member states of these organisations might have had reservations concerning the level of confidentiality of the organisation's archives. The records covering Secretary-General Trygve Lies' period in office were given to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ministry then kindly examined material relevant to this study in Lies' archives, but did not return any results. Another high ranking UN official, Andrew Cortier, gave his records to the manuscript collection at Columbia University in New York. Upon examination, these records also did not yield results. The influential American Council on Foreign Relations also turned over its records, which included a confidential report from a myriad of important task groups, to the Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library at Princeton University. These records were examined for information on the perspectives of leading American circles on the issue of strategy and decolonisation from the end of the 1930s to the beginning of the 1950s. Time limitations did not permit an extensive examination of the American National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

On 26 April 2006, a meeting was held at DIIS during which Professor Gudmundur Alfredsson presented his interpretation of some of the issues analysed in this study. Representatives from DIIS' board of directors, scholars, and a number of invited Greenland and Danish collaborators participated in the meeting.

In September 2006, during Erik Beukel and Frede P. Jensen's month-long stay in Greenland, a seminar was held on 12 September at Ilisimatusarfik, University of Greenland, with researchers from the university as well as representatives from Greenland National Museum and Archives. Vice-Chancellor Ole Marquardt headed the seminar, which covered general issues about the study of Greenland's

history and individual topics of significance for the work completed on this project.

On 13 September 2006, Erik Beukel and Frede P. Jensen held a meeting with Prime Minister Hans Enoksen and representatives of the provincial government. A progress report was given at the meeting, and many of the subjects addressed in this study were discussed. During their stay, the researchers likewise spoke with author Jørgen Fleischer.

On 14 November 2006, Beukel and Jensen spoke with Niels Højlund. On 21 November 2006, they conferred with a former minister, Professor Isi Foighel, LL.D.

On 23 November 2006, the following people kindly made themselves available for an informal discussion with Beukel and Jensen: Professor Hanne Petersen, LL.D, Professor Frederik Harhoff, LL.D, Professor Robert Petersen, dr.h.c, and Professor Ole Spiermann, Ph.D.

DIIS would like to thank the individuals mentioned above as well as the archives staff who assisted the researchers in countless ways.

The book's twelve chapters are divided as follows: Chapters 2-5 provide an overview of the framework for the Greenland issue from 1945-1954. Chapter 2 discusses the relevant historical background factors in the relationship between Greenland and Denmark before 1945. Chapter 3 discusses the issue from the perspective of three key concepts: Sovereignty, self-determination, and dependence. Chapter 4 examines an important aspect of the international context, namely the decolonisation process in the UN, while chapter 5 explores the development of legal norms. Chapter 6 analyses the political processes in Denmark and Greenland as well as the connections between the two countries from 1945-1950. During these years, many important Danish and Greenland initiatives were taken. Chapters 7-8 and 10-11 examine how the Greenland issue was handled in the UN from 1945-1950, 1951-1952, in 1953 and in 1954. Chapter 9 investigates the political processes in Denmark and Greenland as well as the connections between them from 1951-1953 immediately before the Constitutional amendment of 1953 when Greenland was enroute to constitutional equality. Chapter 12 presents the conclusions of this study.

This study mainly discusses "Greenlanders". However, "Eskimos" are mentioned in a few places throughout the study. In 1977, "Inuit" was made the official collective term for the Arctic peoples to which the Greenlanders belong. Although this term, rather than "Eskimo", is still used today, this study nevertheless uses the latter. "Eskimo" is used here because it appears in the researched source material and because oscillation between the two terms could cause confusion.

The DIIS board of directors, who are responsible for this study, regularly followed its progress. The members of the DIIS board of directors include: Professor Georg Sørensen, Department of Political Science, Aarhus University (chair of the board); senior researcher Lars Buur, Ph.D., DIIS (appointed by colleagues at the Institute); department head Kristian Fischer, Ministry of Defence; Professor Holger Bernt Hansen, dr.phil., administration head, Centre of African Studies, Copenhagen University (vice chairman); Professor Henrik Secher Marcussen, Ph.D., Department of Geography and International Development Studies, Roskilde University; Associate

Professor Marianne Rostgaard, Ph.D., Department of History, International and Social Studies, Aalborg University; Deputy Under-Secretary of State Ambassador Carsten Staur, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Professor Finn Tarp, Department of Economics, University of Copenhagen; Associate Professor Ingolf Thuesen, mag. art., lic.phil., Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen; Ambassador K. Erik Tygesen and Associate Professor Marlene Wind, Ph.D., Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen.

We would like to dedicate this book to the memory of dr.phil. Frede P. Jensen, who passed away in November 2008.

Nanna Hvidt and Erik Beukel
Danish Institute for International Studies

Copenhagen, April 2010

2 · Greenland and Denmark before 1945

Erik Beukel

Introduction

This chapter presents a short discussion of the historical background important for understanding the Greenland issue in the years 1945-1954. It examines aspects of the relationship between Greenland and Denmark before the end of World War II in 1945.¹ Greenland's transition from colony to constitutionally equal status in the Kingdom of Denmark in 1953 is the result of a unique historical backdrop: The combination of two hundred years of Danish Greenland policy and the opening of Greenland during World War II. This assessment is divided into three parts: *First*, several specific features that characterise the Danish approach to the colonies in Greenland are examined. *Second*, Greenland's role during World War II, a time when other countries took on unprecedented significance compared to previously in the development of Danish-Greenland relations, is discussed. *Third*, a summary and explanation is provided of how World War II became a turning point that significantly hastened the development of Greenland's society and the extensive changes that took place in Denmark's Greenland policy in subsequent years.

Greenland as a Danish colony

Greenland was colonised by the Danish-Norwegian priest Hans Egede in 1721. There were two incentives to colonise: A desire to evangelise the Eskimos and to trade with the Greenlanders by taking advantage of the opportunities for fishing and sealing in the waters around the island. Hans Egede's missionary work was generously aided by Norwegian and Danish merchants and later by the Danish state (the king). In general, the Greenlandic-speaking Lutheran church played a central role in the development of Greenland's culture and identity.² After Hans Egede's arrival, colonial sites were built throughout the course of the eighteenth century from Nanortalik in the south, to Upernavik in the north. During the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, a heavy curtailment of shipping in Greenland limited contact with the island. When the Treaty of Kiel was signed in 1814 by Denmark,

¹ For general presentations of Greenland's history, see, for example: Jørgen Fleischer, *Grønlands historie – Kort fortalt* – [*The History of Greenland: In Brief*], 2003; Finn Gad, *Grønland* [*Greenland*], 1984; Mads Lidegaard, *Grønlands historie* [*The History of Greenland*]. The most recent history of Greenland up to the introduction of home rule in 1979 is presented in Tupaarnaq Rosing Olsen, *I Skyggen af kajakkerne. Grønlands politiske historie 1939-79* [*In the Shadow of the Kayaks: Greenland's Political History 1939-79*], 2005.

² See, for example, two articles by Robert Petersen concerning missionaries and trade, respectively, in Bent Gynther and Aqigssiaq Møller (eds.), *Kalaallit Nunaat. Gyldendals bog om Grønland* [*Kalaallit Nunaat: Gyldendal's Book on Greenland*], 1999, pp. 191-198 & 199-206.

England, and Sweden, however, Greenland – along with the Faroe Islands and Iceland – was still allotted to Denmark. In the following decade and throughout the nineteenth century, the Danish commitment in Greenland expanded and intensified. For example, approximately fifty small trading stations were established to ensure supplies for the people of Greenland.³ In 1862, a parish council of Danish officials and members chosen by Greenlanders, usually from among the most respected sealers, was introduced. Their task essentially was to aid the poor, assist in procuring hunting equipment, and function as a court of first instance. The parish council marked the commencement of limited local self-governance in Greenland.⁴

Simultaneously with the development of the Danish commitment in Greenland, a set of basic attitudes about Greenland as a Danish colony took form. These attitudes were shared not only by Danes in Greenland and by the circle of Danish politicians and officials concerned with Greenland, but also largely by the general population. Fascination with Greenland as a vulnerable country surrounded by a unique aura and in need of Denmark's protection was one essential aspect. Another distinguishing feature was that Greenland, only in exceptional cases, was a point of conflict in Danish politics. It was generally agreed upon that Greenlanders should be given limited self-governance, gradually and cautiously. Furthermore, relationships with other countries, an issue that gained greater significance between the two world wars and reinforced the idea of Greenland as a vulnerable part of the Danish realm, are mentioned.

The aura surrounding this vulnerable colony

A consistent part of the Danish attitude toward Danish possessions in Greenland was the idea that as an economically, socially (including healthcare), and politically underdeveloped nation, the island was both unique and extremely vulnerable. As a result, Denmark was obliged to protect Greenlanders and their fragile society from destructive outside influences while also promoting, as much as possible, Greenland's development as a modern society. Combined with these patriarchal attitudes, Denmark also heavily romanticised Greenland because it was a far-off island with a distinctive ethnic population and unrivalled natural beauty. This romantic picture was reinforced by enthralling stories from Knud Rasmussen and Peter Freuchen's perilous journey across the inland ice and their exploration of remote parts of Greenland. The more than fifty expeditions completed in Greenland at the turn of the twentieth century created the basis for anthropological studies of the interplay between social conditions and cultural ideas in Greenland. The exploration of Greenland and other distant countries contributed to Greenland's special aura re-

³ *Den Store Danske Encyklopædi* [*The Big Danish Encyclopaedia*], vol. 8, 1997, p. 34; Finn Gad, *Grønland* [*Greenland*], pp.146f & 211f; Finn Gad, "Den nyere kolonisations historie til 1939 ["Recent history of colonisation to 1939"], Kaj Birket-Smith (ed.), *Grønlandsbogen* [*The Greenland Book*], I, 1950, pp. 275-304.

⁴ Finn Gad, *Grønland* [*Greenland*], pp. 225f. Parish councils were introduced in Denmark in 1841 as a forerunner to democracy.

ardless of the academic and professional objectives of the different studies.⁵ Simultaneously intertwined with the romance surrounding Greenland was a sense of responsibility. Without protection from Denmark, Greenland would fall into ruin. The island's population needed a guiding hand to keep it safe from the dangers of civilisation and to guard it against damaging financial and spiritual influences in all areas.⁶ Greenlanders were viewed as "blameless noble savages" who had adapted to a harsh environment and whose culture Denmark had to safeguard from a hazardous outside world.⁷

The vulnerability of the Kingdom of Denmark turned the issue of Greenland into something special for many Danes. Over the course of hundreds of years, Denmark had become continually smaller, making it even more important to maintain Danish colonies in Greenland. A large, festive event affirming the connection between Greenland and Denmark hence took place when Greenland received its first visit from the Danish king and queen for the two-hundred-year anniversary of Hans Egede's arrival.⁸ Nine years later, Stauning became the first prime minister to visit Greenland, confirming its sense of belonging with Denmark while simultaneously driving home Denmark's role as protector of the vulnerable colony.⁹ Greenland was more or less sealed off from the rest of the world specifically as a result of the vulnerability/protector mindset. One issue was simply language problems, while communications and transportation conditions largely closed Greenland to foreigners. Being sealed off, however, was also a result of Denmark's policy, which applied as well to Danes who were not in the service of the Greenland Administration, members of the government, and Members of Parliament. Only a few fortunate journalists were ever given permission to write travel reports, and when they did, they had to restrain the press reports after their visit.¹⁰

The monopoly

This perception of Greenland as a vulnerable colony developed in conjunction with a number of financial and social measures that resulted from and were reinforced

⁵ The period around the turn of the century was characterised by major journeys and expeditions in which Greenland (as well as Central Asia and North Africa) were toured and explored, cf. Ole Høiris, *Antropologien i Danmark. Museal etnografi og etnologi 1860-1960* [*Anthropology in Denmark: Museum Ethnography and Ethnology 1860-1960*], 1986, pp. 57-80.

⁶ Cf. Thorsten Borring Olesen and Poul Villaume, *I Blokopdelingens Tegn 1945-1972* [*The Challenge of Bloc-Building 1945-1972*], Dansk Udenrigspolitik Historie 5 [The History of Danish Foreign Policy 5], 2005, p. 56; Johannes Lindskov Hansen, "Da Grønland blev frit" ["When Greenland was liberated"], H.C. Hansen and Jul. Bomholt (eds.), *Hans Hedtoft. Liv og virke* [*Hans Hedtoft's Life and Work*], 1955, p. 212.

⁷ Jens Heinrich, *Grønlænderes holdninger til forholdet til Danmark og statusændringen i 1953 i 1945 til 1954* [*Greenland attitudes on the relationship to Denmark and the change of status in 1953 from 1945 to 1954*], memorandum, 2006, p. 15.

⁸ Jørgen Fleischer, *op. cit.* pp. 52-53, note 1; Finn Gad, *Den nyere kolonisations historie til 1939* [*Recent history of colonisation to 1939*], p. 299.

⁹ In 1930, Stauning published a book about his travels in Greenland that was republished in 1999, cf. T. Stauning, *Min Grønlandsfærd. Med efterskrift af Søren Stauning* [*My Travels in Greenland: With Epilogue by Søren Stauning*], 1999.

¹⁰ Niels Højlund, *Krise uden alternativ. En analyse af dansk grønlandsdebat* [*Crisis without An Alternative: An Analysis of the Danish Debate on Greenland*], 1972, p. 18.



The cryolite quarry at Ivittuut. Greenland's most important raw material, cryolite, was used in aluminium production and was essential to American heavy industry. (Photograph by Jette Bang, the Arctic Institute)

by these core values. In 1776, Royal Greenland Trade (RGT) was established, introducing a trade monopoly with Greenland that was not abolished until 1950 in connection with the new Greenland laws, cf. chapter 6. An important feature of Greenland's colonial status was that RGT also managed the administration of Greenland until 1908. The principles for trade were established in comprehensive guidelines in 1782 and remained in force until the beginning of the twentieth century with the exception of some minor modifications. In principle, the guidelines were enforced as late as 1950.¹¹ RGT purchased, prepared, and managed the further sale and export (so-called purchasing) of goods produced in Greenland, as well as the import and sale (so-called distribution) of external goods in Greenland. Thus, the goods were purchased and sold at prices set by the RGT based on an estimation of what Greenlanders needed or how necessary they perceived a good to be compared to the Greenland production. This occurred without any special consideration given to the influence of international price movements. In accordance with the idea that Greenland should be self-contained financially and economically, any deficits in this regard and expenses involved in the administration of Greenland were to be covered by income from the quarrying of cryolite at the mine near Ivittuut in Southwest Greenland. The Cryolite Company Øresund (Kryolitselskabet Øresund) paid a significant fee to the state in exchange for a monopoly to quarry at this mine.¹²

RGT's monopoly meant that a central component of Denmark's colonial policy was that private business enterprises were not permitted entry while Greenland was

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¹¹ Finn Gad, *Grønland [Greenland]*, pp. 178f and 218; Axel Kjær Sørensen, *Danmark-Grønland i det 20. århundrede – en historisk oversigt [Denmark-Greenland in the Twentieth Century: A Historical Overview]*, 1983, p. 12.

¹² Erik Rasmussen, *Velfærdsstaten på vej. 1913-1939 [Enroute to a Welfare State 1913-1939]*, 1971, p. 395; see also two articles by Daniel Thorleifsen: "Det lukkede land" ["The Closed Nation"] and "Det danske kolonistyre" ["Danish Colonial Rule"], Bent Gynther and Aqigssiaq Møller, *Kalaallit Nunaat. Gyldendals Bog om Grønland [Kalaallit Nunaat: Gyldendal's Book on Greenland]*, 1999, pp. 217-222 & 223-232; Niels Bjerrum, Julius Thomsen, *Tidsskrift for Industri*, 1909, pp. 65-67.

a colony (with the exception of the final three years, cf. chapter 6). This monopoly also meant that RGT took care of all finances beyond the household level. Opening the economy to some form of private enterprise was discussed several times, but the deliberations always concluded that this would be damaging for Greenlanders. Ordinary market mechanisms were replaced by nationally determined Greenland “needs”, while “fair” prices were based on what was “best” for the Greenlanders. Thus, the financial structure in Greenland was based on paternalistic principles. From a general perspective, it does not make sense to conclude that RGT’s activity was purely charity or simply exploitation of Greenlanders.

Apart from disputes with other neighbouring countries (see below), the monopoly caused conflicts with other parts of the Kingdom of Denmark. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Faroese people wanted to fish near Greenland’s coasts, thus putting them in conflict with the monopoly. In 1939, when the conflict reached a deadlock, the government in Copenhagen quickly stepped in and a law was passed that gave the Faroese certain fishing rights in Greenland waters as well as bases on land. When the law was adopted without consultation with the Greenland Provincial Council as prescribed by the 1925 Act on the Administration of Greenland, it triggered bitterness in Greenland.¹³

Consensus

Only in a few exceptional cases was Greenland a point of contention in the political world of Denmark. No conspicuous financial or foreign policy interests connected to the island roused the public’s attention. Even during parliamentary elections, Greenland was never a dominant topic and votes were not won or lost over Greenland policy. Greenlanders did not have the right to vote in the Danish Parliament. In contrast to other colonial countries where emigration from the mother country to the colony had taken place, only a handful of Danes had family ties to Greenland. RGT’s monopoly was periodically discussed and criticised, but Parliament predominantly backed the idea that suddenly opening the island would be financially and morally destructive to Greenland and the health of Greenlanders. The monopoly was designed precisely to provide Greenlanders with time to mature into social conditions that were more open and free. In essence, none of the conditions were present that made overseas possessions an object of public debate or a point of contention between political parties in other European countries.¹⁴ Generally, in a political context, it was chiefly administrative problems that were handled by the Greenland Administration. The Greenland Administration was typically unwilling to have the Danish Parliament’s Greenland Committee, established after the 1925 administrative law, cf. below, interfere in its affairs. As a result of the absence of independent information and substantial disagreement between

¹³ Finn Gad, *Den nyere kolonisations historie til 1939* [*Recent history of colonisation to 1939*], pp. 301-302.

¹⁴ Niels Højlund, *op. cit.* p. 18, note 10.



The Provincial Council for South Greenland in 1939. The head of the Greenland Administration, K.H. Oldendow, and Governor Aksel Svane are seated at the head of the table. Gerhard Egede (first from the left) and Hans Lyngø (third from the left) were among the Greenlanders who also participated in the events that brought Greenland's colonial status to an end. (The Arctic Institute)

the political parties about the content of Danish Greenland policy, there was little need for interference anyway.¹⁵

The voting pattern for the adoption of the three most important Greenland laws in the first half of the twentieth century illustrates the broad sense of agreement behind the Greenland policy. The 1908 law (Law on the Administration of Colonies in Greenland) that established the Greenland municipal councils (62 in total) and two provincial councils, while also separating the administration from RGT, was adopted unanimously in both the *Folketing* and the *Landsting*. The same unanimous decision was true for the 1925 Act on the Administration of Greenland, which introduced a new body called the district council. Within this body, the municipal council chair-people and Provincial Council members had seats.¹⁶ The revision of the 1908 law in 1912 was one exception to this pattern of consensus. The new law rejected the separation of trade and administration when the situation presented practical problems that implementation had entailed. While the *Landsting* passed

¹⁵ Erik Rasmussen, *op. cit.* pp. 394-399, note 12.

¹⁶ Axel Kjær Sørensen, *op. cit.* pp. 27-37, note 11 (on the 1908 law) & pp. 70-73 (on the 1925 law); see also: Finn Gad, *Grønland [Greenland]*, pp. 236-248.

the law unanimously, the Social Democrats and the Social Liberals voted against it in the *Folketing*, arguing that no documentation had been presented demonstrating that a separation of trade and administration was infeasible.¹⁷

In the summer of 1939, negotiations commenced between the Danish Parliament's Greenland Committee, the Greenland Administration, and representatives from the Provincial Councils. These negotiations concerned options for improving Greenland's situation in specific areas (health, education etc.) and the possibility of revising the 1925 law. Immediately after the outbreak of World War II in 1939, the negotiations were discontinued and did not resume until after the war, cf. chapter 6.

Relationships with other countries: Vulnerable sovereignty

Until late into the twentieth century, the perception of Greenland as a vulnerable nation in need of Denmark's protection existed even though it was far from obvious that Greenland in its entirety was a Danish colony. In other words, even as a recognised part of the Danish realm, Greenland was vulnerable. The challenges made against Denmark's sovereignty concerning Greenland came from countries friendly with Denmark, especially the United States, Great Britain, and Norway; access to Greenland also created competition between these countries. Thus, the US more or less distanced itself from Britain's overt attempts to forge links with Greenland.¹⁸ In 1920, one well-known encyclopaedia stated that "a large part" of Greenland was a Danish colony because the west coast, from Kap Farvel to the area north of Upernavik and the Ammassalik district in East Greenland, were internationally recognised as Danish colonies. According to the same source, other areas were not internationally recognised as belonging to Denmark.¹⁹

Evidently aware of the lack of clarity, the government in Copenhagen placed this issue on the agenda several times during negotiations with other countries. In 1916, when Denmark sold the West Indian Islands to the United States, Denmark wanted the US to recognise its sovereignty over all of Greenland. Recognition occurred, but without the use of the word "sovereignty". Thus the US stated that "the American government will not oppose Denmark further expanding its political and economic interests in all of Greenland".²⁰ One of the reasons Denmark wanted the United States' approval was that since the purchase of Alaska in 1867, discussions in the US involved proposals about whether or not the US should buy Greenland.

¹⁷ P.P. Sveistrup, *Rigsdagen og Grønland* [Danish Parliament and Greenland], *Den Danske Rigsdag 1849-1949* [The Danish Parliament 1849-1949], vol. VI, 1953, pp. 257-260.

¹⁸ Nancy Fogelson, "Greenland: Strategic Base on a Northern Defence Line", *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 53, no. 1, January 1989, pp. 52-63.

¹⁹ *Salmonsens Konversations Leksikon* [Salmonsens's Conversation Encyclopaedia], vol. X, Second Edition, Christian Blangstrup (ed.), MCMXX, p. 288.

²⁰ Bo Lidegaard, *Overleveren 1914-1945* [The Survivor 1914-1945], *Dansk Udenrigspolitisk Historie 4* [The History of Danish Foreign Policy 4], 2003, p. 81 & pp. 177-178.

In addition, Denmark also presumed that a statement from the US recognising Denmark's sovereignty would positively affect the opinions of other nations. Evidently, however, American recognition was not without conditions. In a separate annotation in 1920, the US further clarified that its recognition did not entail the acceptance of Denmark's right to sell Greenland to a third country. Thus, it became even clearer that the unconditional recognition Denmark desired would be difficult to achieve.

Denmark's simultaneous urging of England to recognise its ascendancy over the island presented another indication of the vulnerability of its sovereignty. England's recognition did not come, however, until after a number of arduous sessions that included, among others, Canada and the US. These sessions were accompanied by a unilateral right pled by the British to be consulted should Denmark propose to sell Greenland.²¹ Due to the uncertainty of the situation, Minister of the Interior Sigurd Berg issued an executive order in 1921 upon the two-hundred-year anniversary of Hans Egede's arrival in Greenland. The executive order clarified that Denmark had established trade, mission, and hunting bases on both the west and east coasts of Greenland, subsequently making all of Greenland part of Denmark's colonies and bases, and also part of Denmark's administration of Greenland.²² As a result, it was more correct to discuss Danish *colonies* in Greenland as opposed to all of Greenland as a Danish colony.

The issue of sovereignty led to outright disputes with Norway. Especially since World War I, the Norwegians had pursued hunting and fishing on the east coast. In the beginning of the 1930s, conflict erupted. To aid Norwegian hunters in East Greenland in a quarrel with Danish hunters, a Norwegian expedition manager was given police authority by the Norwegian government in 1930 over the Norwegians living in the area. The Danish government viewed this appointment as provocation and protested. In the summer of 1930, two Norwegian hunters independently occupied a part of East Greenland in the name of King Håkon. After intense pressure from strong, nationally-committed groups in Norway, the Norwegian government recognised, with some hesitation, the occupation. Several Norwegian occupations of East Greenland followed in the area. With support from the Greenland Provincial Council, Denmark summoned Norway to appear before the International Court at The Hague. The conflict ended when the Court in 1933 awarded Denmark sovereignty over all of Greenland.²³

²¹ Bo Lidegaard, *op. cit.* pp. 179-180, note 20.

²² "Bekendtgørelse Nr. 304 af 10. maj 1921 [Executive Order No. 304 of 10 May 1921]", *Lovtidende for 1921* no. 27, 2 June 1921 edition.

²³ Finn Gad, *Grønland [Greenland]*, pp. 270-274; Finn Gad, *Den nyere kolonisations historie til 1939 [Recent history of colonisation to 1939]*, pp. 303-304; *Grønland under den kolde krig. Dansk og amerikansk sikkerhedspolitik 1945-68 [Greenland during the Cold War: Danish and American Security Policy 1945-68]*, Appendix, Danish Foreign Policy Institute, 1997, p. 50; an assessment of the conflict before The Hague ruling: Lawrence Preuss, "The Dispute Between Denmark and Norway Over the Sovereignty of East Greenland", *The American Journal of International Law*, vol. 26, no. 3, July 1932, pp. 469-487.

Greenland between North America and Europe: World War II

Greenland's development and significance during World War II was shaped by the island's strategic military role in relationship to the belligerent parties. In April 1941, this relationship led to the Greenland Agreement between the United States and Denmark's independent envoy in Washington, Henrik Kauffmann. The specific political consequences of this agreement, however, were ambiguous, as is demonstrated by the dissimilar perspectives of Kauffmann and Eske Brun, who from 1941 was the only governor in Greenland.

In the shadow of World War II: American considerations and proposals

Strategic military interest in Greenland arose during World War I and was strengthened throughout the 1930s by the heightened threat of war in Europe.²⁴ When World War II broke out in the autumn of 1939, the American government and military planners focused on the North Atlantic region as a vulnerable transportation route for European democracies, particularly Great Britain. They also focused on establishing defence lines against possible attacks from Germany. In this context, interest grew in Greenland as a security policy asset as efforts increased to ensure connections across the Atlantic and to develop the financial and military foundations for the war against Nazi Germany.

An important example is that during a meeting on the defence of North America that took place in the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), an influential think tank, in the autumn of 1939, the view of Greenland (like the Faroe Islands and Iceland) as a stepping stone from Northern Europe to North America was put forward. Greenland's well-placed landing bases thus made it vitally significant, for example, to the United States, since Denmark was a weak country unable to defend itself in the event of an invasion. Germany was a threat to Denmark, and if it occupied the Danish islands in the North Atlantic, it would be a threat to the US. This possible threat resulted in discussions about America's plans if Denmark was conquered and control of the North Atlantic islands landed in the hands of the aggressor.²⁵ A few months later, several additional, specific proposals arose concerning the US purchasing Greenland from Denmark. This set of proposals occurred in the CFR a few weeks before the German occupation of Denmark on 9 April 1940 and again, immediately afterwards, when Congress presented a proposal concerning the purchase of Greenland.²⁶ The administration did not follow up on these proposals. However, the idea of purchasing Greenland was publically advanced as a means of averting a security policy threat within a specific context dominated by the outbreak of World War II. In the introduction to a debate in the CFR in the

²⁴ Nancy Fogelson, *op. cit.* pp. 52-63, note 18.

²⁵ *The Defense of North America*, Council on Foreign Relations. Study Group Reports, Digest of a Study Group Meeting, 9 September 1939, pp. 7-8. The following wording was used: "if the German flag were planted on these northern islands".

²⁶ The suggestion to buy Greenland was presented in Congress on 18 April 1940, cf. *Congressional Record-House*. 76th Congress, 3rd Session, p. 4770.

spring of 1940, the point was driven home that the transference of sovereignty over Greenland to Germany would constitute a violation of the 1823 Monroe Doctrine, which proclaimed that the US would view any expansion of European interests on the American continents as a threat to the security of the United States. Generally, at the time, there was a growing American interest in establishing bases in Greenland and at least in avoiding enemy bases or outright German moves against Greenland. Such moves especially presented a risk along the sparsely-populated northeast coast where, like other locations in Greenland, they would pose a direct and unacceptable threat against the US.

The US, Greenland, and Denmark after 9 April

Upon the occupation of Denmark on 9 April 1940, the envoy in Washington, Henrik Kauffmann, abandoned the government of German-occupied Copenhagen and declared himself an independent diplomatic representative. Some weeks later, American interest in Greenland resulted in the arrival of an American diplomat in Nuuk. Kauffmann gradually succeeded in establishing himself as an independent power player in the relationship between Denmark and the US by, among other things, exerting pressure to be entrusted with maintaining Danish control over Greenland. He was also aware that Greenland could be an important asset for the legation's attempts at recognition. Contact between Greenland and the US had already been established two days after the occupation, and during the ensuing period, telegrams flew back and forth between Kauffmann and the governors, Eske Brun in North Greenland and Aksel Svane in South Greenland.²⁷ In Greenland, the US was considered the only country with the ability to provision the island. Kauffmann involved the embassy in Washington in the task of ensuring the provisions.²⁸ A couple of days after the occupation, without consulting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Copenhagen, Kauffmann established a special Greenland commission comprised of prominent Danish-Americans and Americans with connections to Denmark – including several former American ambassadors in Copenhagen. Their task was to protect Danish interests in Greenland, which, because of the occupation, had become an “abandoned” Danish colony.²⁹ Kauffmann's activities took place in an atmosphere characterised by both co-operation and competition with the governors, who were gradually pushed into a defensive position. A few weeks after the occupation, Brun and Svane asked Kauffmann to be their diplomatic representative in Washington and accepted the idea of an American diplomatic representative in Nuuk. This rapprochement with Kauffmann and the

²⁷ A number of copies can be found in the Danish National Archives in K.H. Oldendow's papers, Greenland during the war 1940-1944, packet 3.

²⁸ Tupaarnaq Rosing Olsen, *op. cit.* p. 11, note 1.

²⁹ The term “the abandoned” Danish colony comes from Bo Lidegaard, *op. cit.* p. 454, note 20; see also: pp. 410-413; Bo Lidegaard, *I Kongens Navn. Henrik Kauffmann i Dansk Diplomati 1919-58* [*In the Name of the King: Henrik Kauffmann in Danish Diplomacy 1919-58*], 1996, pp. 188-193, and Eske Brun, “Grønland Under Den Anden Verdenskrig” [“Greenland during the Second World War”], *Grønlandsbogen* [*The Greenland Book*], I, 1950, pp. 306-307.

United States surely reflected the situation they found themselves in rather than an independent goal. These events occurred with coerced acceptance on the part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Copenhagen, which was incapable of accomplishing anything except caving in to Kauffmann's highly unusual independence and activism beyond the reach of occupied Denmark.

The growing American security policy interest in Greenland was reflected in a dispatch from Henrik Kauffmann to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Copenhagen in September 1940. The report was clearly motivated by a desire to clarify that even the smallest actions in Greenland, instigated by Germany, would trigger an American (or Canadian) occupation. If this occupation occurred, Denmark's maintenance of sovereignty over Greenland in the future was uncertain.³⁰ The report certainly helped sharpen the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' interest in Denmark's ability to maintain sovereignty over Greenland at a time when the Danish authorities were unable to exert sovereignty. After 9 April, the sections of the central administration principally responsible for relations to Greenland (the Greenland Administration and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) essentially failed to understand that the US and other countries in the North Atlantic region could not consider occupied Denmark as an ordinary sovereign state with the normal rights and ability to act freely in relation to Greenland as a colony. This misunderstanding was reinforced when the two Provincial Councils, joining forces in the beginning of May for the first collective Provincial Council meeting in the history of Greenland, passed a pledge of allegiance to the Danish king.³¹

Copenhagen's gradual awareness of its fundamental lack of acknowledgement concerning the significance of its status as an occupied country contributed to a prolonged jitteriness throughout the rest of the occupation about whether or not Henrik Kauffmann, whose actions Copenhagen had been forced to accept for lack of a better alternative, had successfully secured Danish sovereignty over Greenland after the war.³²

In the autumn of 1940, the idea of establishing navy and landing bases in Greenland took further shape in Washington after pressure from Britain, Canada, and Norway. Great Britain was in the midst of a crucial war for survival against Nazi Germany, which created an immediate need for a broader military industrial base than the one the country could establish on its own soil. Therefore, the British displayed a vital interest in establishing points of support in the North Atlantic islands as quickly as possible to enable the transfer of the short-distance planes that were being produced by the thousands in the United States and Canada, to Great Britain via an air route instead of vulnerable North Atlantic sea lanes. Against that background, establishing American bases in Greenland was a necessary link in the chain of transatlantic precautions that made it possible for Great Britain to survive

³⁰ Kauffmann's report can be found in the Danish National Archives in K.H. Oldendow's papers. Grønland under krigen 1940-1944 [Greenland during the War 1940-1944], packet 3; see also: Bo Lidegaard, *I Kongens Navn [In the Name of the King]*, pp. 166-167.

³¹ This statement is in the Danish Royal Archives in K.H. Oldendow's papers, Greenland during the war 1940-1944, packet 3.

³² Bo Lidegaard, *I Kongens Navn [In the Name of the King]*, pp. 191-192.

the first years of the war.³³ In November 1940, an official from the State Department mentioned to Kauffmann, for the first time, the possibility of the United States establishing bases in Greenland. However, a plan approved by Roosevelt, in cooperation with the governors, in February 1941 for building bases that could be used by the Americans during the war was not implemented. Instead, events unfolded such that Kauffmann took centre stage.

Kauffmann's Greenland agreement

On the first anniversary of the occupation of Denmark, 9 April 1941, Henrik Kauffmann, as a self-appointed representative of the Danish government and without prior consultation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Copenhagen, entered into an agreement with the American government about the defence of Greenland. Kauffmann pleaded that he was, as expressed in the introduction to the agreement, "acting on behalf of His Majesty the King of Denmark in his capacity as sovereign of Greenland".³⁴ The agreement, which was negotiated in the space of a couple of weeks at the end of March and the beginning of April, gave the US the right to establish areas of defence, i.e. bases, in Greenland with full internal jurisdiction over them. Denmark's sovereignty over Greenland was explicitly stated, but it was also added that current conditions prevented the Danish government from exercising its authority. The duration of the agreement and its cessation were two of the most difficult issues in the negotiations; the agreement states that it "shall remain in force until it is agreed that the present dangers to the peace and security of the American Continent have passed" (Article X). This clause was entirely unusual in a charter that simultaneously made Denmark's sovereignty over Greenland clear. The fundamental design of Article X was – in the words of historian Bo Lidegaard – an international law horror story. Kauffmann's central issue was that the decisive concession he received in 1941 for the denunciation clause – recognition as an independent diplomatic representative – did not appear in the agreement.³⁵ As an independent diplomatic representative, Kauffmann further strengthened his position in the succeeding period. This strengthening initially occurred through a restructuring of the administration of provisions for Greenland, which, like Kauffmann's other activities, was balanced with his close connections at the American State Department. Kauffmann's position was again strengthened in the

³³ Bo Lidegaard, *Overleveren 1914-1945 [The Survivor 1914-1945]*, pp. 453f; see also: Eske Brun, *Mit Grønlandsliv [My Life in Greenland]*, 1985, pp. 83f.

³⁴ The agreement is printed in *Grønland under den kolde krig [Greenland during the Cold War]*. Appendix, pp. 9-23. See also: *Grønland under den kolde krig. Dansk og amerikansk sikkerhedspolitik 1945-68 [Greenland during the Cold War: Danish and American Security Policy 1945-68]*, Danish Foreign Policy Institute, 1997, pp. 50-53; Bo Lidegaard, *I Kongens Navn [In the Name of the King]*, pp. 186ff; Bo Lidegaard, *Overleveren 1914-1945 [The Survivor 1914-1945]*, pp. 453-455. An earlier analysis can be found in Finn Løkkegaard's *Det danske Gesandtskab i Washington 1940-1942. Henrik Kauffmann som uafhængig dansk gesandt i USA 1940-1942 og hans politik vedrørende Grønland og de oplagte danske skibe i Amerika [The Danish Envoyship in Washington 1940-1942: Henrik Kauffmann as an Independent Danish Envoy in the USA 1940-1942 and His Policy on Greenland and the Danish Ships Laid Up in America]*, 1968.

³⁵ Bo Lidegaard, *I Kongens Navn [In the Name of the King]*, p. 196 & pp. 386-390.

autumn of 1941 when he was given the right by the State Department to handle all frozen national Danish assets in the US.³⁶

Initially, the agreement caused a sense of bewilderment in Copenhagen, followed by anger, fury, and a sense of bitterness in those responsible for Danish foreign policy.³⁷ Henrik Kauffmann was dismissed by royal resolution and recalled. An imprisonment court order was issued and he was charged with high treason.³⁸ For supporters of the traditional Danish policy of neutrality, which still dominated foreign policy thinking in Copenhagen as a path to be resumed after the war, the deciding factor was not solely the fact that Kauffmann had taken action behind the government's back, but that he had advanced a policy through an agreement that he knew would breach many years of established tradition in Danish foreign policy. The two governors in Greenland had a different opinion, but only partially, and their opinions were somewhat contingent upon the given situation. They accepted the agreement when they were requested to approve it, either after signing the agreement or with only an hour's warning. However, they protested against not having been consulted within a reasonable amount of time beforehand. The governors acknowledged, however, that when the US recognised Kauffmann, they were forced to do the same. They also acknowledged that "guaranteeing" Kauffmann's agreement put them in a stronger position.³⁹ On the other hand, they undoubtedly agreed completely with Kauffmann concerning how little Copenhagen understood about Greenland's situation regarding provisions and why it necessitated having close relations with the United States.⁴⁰

³⁶ This reorganisation meant that the above-mentioned Greenland Commission from 1940 was abolished when its impact had become more decorative than functional, cf. Eske Brun, *Mit Grønlandsliv [My Life in Greenland]*, pp. 60-61. The practical work involved in guaranteeing supplies for Greenland was henceforth the responsibility of the Consulate General in New York, whose leader, consul-general Georg Bech, was one of Kauffmann's most loyal supporters. The reorganisation also had an impact on the paths of influence between senior Danish administration officials in that Aksel Svane was connected to the Consulate General in a position subordinate to the consul-general. Eske Brun subsequently remained the sole "king of Greenland", cf. Bo Lidegaard, *I Kongens Navn [In the Name of the King]*, p. 261.

³⁷ This anger and bitterness are illustrated in a letter sent by Foreign Minister Scavenius on 12 April to the American *Chargé d'Affaires* in Copenhagen, Mahlow F. Perkins, cf. the copy in the Danish National Archives in K.H. Oldendow's papers. Grønland under krigen 1940-1944 [Greenland during the War 1940-1944], packet 3; see also: Bo Lidegaard, *I Kongens Navn [In the Name of the King]*, pp. 200-207 & 212-214; Bo Lidegaard, *Overleveren 1914-1945 [The Survivor 1914-1945]*, pp. 456-458, which provides a concise account of the reaction by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

³⁸ In a message given by President Roosevelt on 19 April 1941, and in a letter dated 5 May to the Danish king, Christian X, he expressed regret concerning Kauffmann's treatment, the Danish National Archives, Greenland during the War 1940-1944, packet 3.

³⁹ Telegram from Eske Brun to Henrik Kauffmann and Aksel Svane on 9 April 1941, and a telegram from Aksel Svane to Eske Brun 14 April 1941 states, "I believe, however, that we stand stronger ... after having stood surety for his [Kauffmann's] Treaty", Danish National Archives, Aksel Svane's private records, packet 2; Eske Brun, *Mit Grønlandsliv [My Life in Greenland]*, p. 83, is less critical of the agreement compared to how it is presented in contemporary papers. A note dated 27 May in a little black notebook, Danish National Archives, Aksel Svane's private records, packet 12, states that Kauffmann had sent a telegram to the governors saying that if they did not endorse the agreement, then they faced a British-Canadian invasion approved by the US. Additional material about the conflict between the governors and Kauffmann is located in the Danish National Archives in K.H. Oldendow's papers. Grønland under krigen 1940-1944 [Greenland during the War], packets 1 & 3.

⁴⁰ Letter from Henrik Kauffmann to Eske Brun, 4 March 1941, and a letter from Eske Brun to Henrik Kauffmann, 17 May 1941, Danish National Archives, Aksel Svane private archive, packet 15.



Governor Eske Brun (right) and the Danish envoy Henrik Kauffmann (left) had different opinions about the role that America should play in Greenland during WW II. The later governor, C.F. Simony, is in the middle. (The Arctic Institute)

After the agreement, a wide-scale American military and civilian facilities programme was quickly set in motion in Greenland and aimed especially at creating base facilities in the southern part of the island. These bases would make it possible to support the ship convoys in the northern part of the Atlantic Ocean. During the war, fourteen air and naval bases, as well as weather stations, with military personnel were established for a total of 5,500 people in 1943.⁴¹ For the sake of comparison, the entire indige-

genuous Greenland population at that point was approximately 20,000 people, i.e. less than four times the aforementioned amount; hence, a relatively large number of non-Greenlanders were of course spread out across an immense area. Consequently, Greenland became a stepping stone for the transfer of airplanes, personnel, and materials from North America to Europe, giving this part of the otherwise German-occupied Denmark an important role in the fight against Nazi Germany. After 1941, a number of meteorological stations on the island produced information of great significance for the course of the war. The strategic military interest in Greenland also arose from the need to combat German activities on the island itself. In 1940, the Germans attempted to establish meteorological observation posts in East Greenland. In the winter of 1941-1942, they succeeded in establishing a weather station on the east coast. The information collected could be used to predict the weather in Europe to help plan war operations. In 1943, this German weather station on the east coast was attacked and demolished by the American air force based on information from a Danish sled patrol established in 1941; the same events occurred the following year at a similar station further north. In 1941, Germany undertook reconnaissance flights over East Greenland, and in 1943, more German military activities were discovered along the east coast; clashes occurred

⁴¹ Niels Amstrup, "Grønland i det amerikansk-danske forhold 1945-48" ["Greenland and the Relationship between America and Denmark 1945-48"], Niels Amstrup and Ib Faurby (eds.), *Studier I dansk Udenrigspolitik* [Studies in Danish Foreign Policy], 1978, pp. 159f; Nikolaj Petersen, *Grønland i global sikkerhedspolitik* [Greenland and Global Security Policy], SNU, 1992, p. 13; Jørgen Taagholt and Jens Claus Hansen, *Grønland i et sikkerhedspolitisk perspektiv* [Greenland from a Security Policy Perspective], The Atlantic Federation, 1999, pp. 19-21; *Sorsunnersuaq Kingulleq Nunarpullu. Anden Verdenskrig og Grønland* [Sorsunnersuaq Kingulleq Nunarpullu: World War II and Greenland], Greenland National Museum, Nuuk, 2005, p. 53.

with the sled patrol. Greenland had gained a militarily strategic significance previously unknown in history.⁴²

Two Danish perspectives: Brun and Kauffmann

During the rest of the war, when Eske Brun was the only governor in Greenland after Aksel Svane left for the US in the spring of 1941, the adversarial relationship that developed between Brun and Kauffmann demonstrates the overlapping and diverging objectives and conditions of these two prominent Danish representatives in dealing with the issue of Greenland. In a letter to Kauffmann dated 12 November 1941 – four weeks before the US entered the war – Eske Brun described Kauffmann’s relationship with the Americans as “*plus royaliste que le roi*”. Hence, in Brun’s eyes, Kauffmann did not manage Greenland interests with the enthusiasm and devotion they deserved. To illustrate, he mentions the agreement about the defence of Greenland that achieved much less for the island than a comparable defence agreement with the United States did for Iceland. Brun’s most important task in Greenland essentially was to do everything in his power to ensure Greenland’s full return to Denmark, and thereby contribute to the prosperity and well-being of Greenlanders and ensure that they retained their birthright to their own country. Subsequently, Brun believed his task was to support America’s defence work to the greatest extent possible. The governor of Greenland, however, emphasised that how much one could involve oneself when supporting the cause, which he also saw as fighting for Denmark’s liberation, was limited if it was done to the detriment of the Greenlanders.⁴³ Overall, the relationship between Brun and Kauffmann was doubtlessly characterised by mistrust stemming from the decidedly different perspectives they had adopted. This lack of confidence was shared by Brun’s former colleague, Aksel Svane, until the spring of 1941. They both agreed that Kauffmann never showed the United States the firmness required to benefit Danish and Greenland interests.⁴⁴

The arguments and distrust between Brun and Kauffmann continued through the rest of the war. They were especially visible in the friction and conflicts that the relationship with the Americans eventually caused in Greenland. Correspondence,

⁴² “Forslag til Rigsdagsbeslutning i anledning af den i Washington den 9. april 1941 undertegnede Overenskomst mellem Danmark og Amerikas Forenede Stater om Grønlands Forsvar” [“Proposal for the Danish Parliament’s decision made on the occasion of the signing in Washington on 9 April 1941 of the Agreement between Denmark and the United States of America on Greenland’s Defence”], *Rigsdagstidende. Forhandlinger i Folketinget 1945* [*Rigsdagstidende. Debates in the Folketing 1945*]. Supplement A. (1), 16 May 1945, section 3; Paul F. Ancker, “Angrebet på Pearl Harbor. Reaktionen på det japanske angreb på Pearl Harbor den 7. december 1941 set fra en grønlandsk/dansk synsvinkel” [“The attack on Pearl Harbor: Reaction to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor 7 December 1941 seen from a Greenland/Danish perspective”], *Tidsskrift for Søvejen*, 1991, pp. 296-323; Eske Brun, “Grønland under den Anden Verdenskrig” [“Greenland during the Second World War”], pp. 314-315; Jørgen Taagholt, “Grønland under 2. Verdenskrig” [“Greenland during World War II”], pp. 243-248.

⁴³ The Danish National Archives, Eske Brun private archive, letter to Henrik Kauffmann, 12 November 1941.

⁴⁴ The Danish National Archives, Aksel Svane private archive, packet 1, folio 3, letter from Aksel Svane to H. Christiansen, 22 November 1941; the Danish National Archives, Aksel Svane private archive, packet 1, folio 2, letter from Eske Brun to Aksel Svane, 2 December 1941.

stemming from their disagreements, arose between Kauffmann and Brun in the spring of 1943. The governor was intent on explaining the nature of the conflicts to Kauffmann – how they originated in America’s habitual belief that anything American was first class, while anything that was not American deserved a compassionate smile at the most. For the independent envoy in Washington, however, the point was to unequivocally demonstrate what the war was about and what role the American bases played in this regard. US bases in Greenland were a necessary part of democracy’s battle against Hitler and the US also fought for Denmark’s liberation.⁴⁵ According to Kauffmann, the Americans were disappointed with how Greenlanders viewed them. Though they did not expect to be met with appreciation, they at least desired understanding. Instead, they were confronted with resentment and “an atmosphere of neutrality”. The Greenlanders, according to Brun, carried the impression that Americans believed that it was only natural if Greenland remained in US hands forever. More than once, Brun calls the American soldiers occupation troops. According to Brun, these reservations about the Americans existed solely where people had had contact with them. People living in places where the Americans had never set foot remained enthusiastic. Brun recounts the surprise of a top-level American when he mentioned the possibility of American occupational forces leaving Greenland after the war. He added that for Danes in Greenland, any attempt by the Americans to continue the occupation of Greenland after the war would be viewed as a breach of faith and a violation regardless of the Danish government’s understanding and approval, which, because of the provisions in Article X, cf. above, would always be viewed as forced. Brun simultaneously emphasised, however, that he had had far from only dismal experiences with the Americans. On the contrary, he described the majority of them as splendid, cultivated, and sympathetic people whose acquaintance had been a pleasure to make.

To improve the relationship, Kauffmann suggested that the services the Americans provided for Greenland receive more publicity. In Kauffmann’s eyes, the poor amount of information available on the political background of the war was the primary problem. From Brun’s perspective, on the other hand, maintaining the occupation forces’ isolation from the population was important, even though it displeased the Americans, who were, in the words of the governor, of course accustomed to getting everything they wanted.⁴⁶ In his letter, Kauffmann also mentioned that he was aware of incidents of outright assaults. He added that informing him of

⁴⁵ The Danish National Archives, Eske Brun private archive, letter from Henrik Kauffmann to Eske Brun, 20 April 1943, and from Eske Brun to Henrik Kauffmann, 9 June 1943. The letter from Eske Brun mentions “the American occupation troops”. See also the memorandum enclosed in the 20 April 1943 letter from Kauffmann in which he distances himself from the speech on the occupation of Greenland as presented in a one-sided language of power.

⁴⁶ When speaking about this matter, Eske Brun points out immediately that, in the first year after the arrival of the Americans, it was more than hinted at by “extremely high-ranking” Americans that in the Philippines there was a brothel in the vicinity of every camp with “native” women, and that if Brun willingly offered his support, a similar setup could be arranged in Greenland that would beneficially influence people’s morale. Brun adds that after his response, nothing further happened concerning this issue, cf. the Danish National Archives, Eske Brun private archive, letter from Eske Brun to Henrik Kauffmann, 9 June 1943.

matters of this nature would be wise so that he could refer to them if the Americans put forward complaints about the conditions in Greenland.

To understand the substance and consequences of the diverging perspectives portrayed by Eske Brun and Henrik Kauffmann, it is important not to exaggerate or dramatise the differences. This importance can be illustrated by a letter from Eske Brun to provincial council member Frederik Lynge in the autumn of 1942 in response to Lynge's concerns about Kauffmann having forced himself, supposedly, to a superior position in relation to the Greenland Administration. Several times in his letter, Brun emphasised that Kauffmann was in the same position as the governors in Greenland, i.e. he was, at his own risk, to represent the Danish state's interests in relation to the US. According to Brun, the main issue was that the Danish government was not in a position to impart its directives with judicial repercussions, thus making the task in Washington, just as in Nuuk, to keep the Danish policy guidelines in mind and to further these policies. In no uncertain terms, Brun underlined Kauffmann's meritorious work in securing provisions for Greenland and the value to Greenland of receiving a high level of recognition from America. Eske Brun clearly made a point of explaining the differences between Kauffmann and himself as a consequence of their different geographic locations in relation to the difficult situation of the war.⁴⁷

World War II as a turning point

In several ways, World War II was a crucial turning point for the relationship between Denmark and Greenland and the latter's people. Kauffmann's much-criticised 1941 Greenland Agreement was greatly important for more than just the maintenance of transatlantic connections throughout the course of the war. More than four years later, Kauffmann became a member of the liberation government as a minister without a portfolio, and the agreement was unanimously approved by the Danish Parliament on 16 May 1945. In subsequent years, the agreement played a central role in dealing with the issue of Greenland as an important part of the Danish-American relationship, cf. chapter 3. However, the bitterness against Kauffmann for his "illegitimate" agreement did cast an imperceptible shadow over the Foreign Service's work with Greenland and its relationship to the US. Looking back, the agreement and the American military commitment on the island were the first critical steps toward acknowledgment of Denmark as an ally and as a member of the United Nations. If the time from 1949 and the following forty years up to the end of the Cold War are included, then Kauffmann's agreement was the first important step toward a permanent part of Denmark's security policy, namely an American commitment to Denmark as an ally and as the country with sovereignty over Greenland as an active player in NATO.

⁴⁷ The Danish National Archives, Eske Brun private archive, letter from Eske Brun to Mrs Lynge, 10 September 1942.

World War II became a landmark event for the development of Greenland. For hundreds of years, the island had been isolated, its connection to the outside world virtually restricted to contact via Copenhagen. Already before the war, Greenland had begun opening up, while at the start of the war, an internal movement had arisen in Greenland to open up the country. The absence of contact with occupied Copenhagen during the war was also pivotal. Greenlanders experienced the “great wide world” for the first time without Danish government officials arranging the contacts. They experienced extensive contact with Americans and Canadians in particular. Consequently, many young Greenlanders were hired to work on ships that sailed to the US and brought supplies to Greenland. This contact inaugurated a new sense of self-confidence and the courage to try something new in Greenland.⁴⁸ Greenlanders realised that they could manage without the customary directives from Copenhagen; at times, it was even advantageous to be liberated from consultation about all types of problems across the Atlantic. In January 1942, radio service was established in Nuuk. Even though no more than one hundred radio receivers existed in all of Greenland at this point, the majority were in Danish hands. Therefore, people were able to follow world events in a completely different manner compared to before the war when news coverage had been even sparser. Greenlanders understood that they were part of a greater world drama that touched them directly. Awareness that conditions in Greenland could be different began to grow. The United States and Canada especially contributed to a new surge in e.g. popular culture (music, film etc.); youth and sports clubs, for example, flourished. As a new activity, evening lectures also began taking place. In addition, teaching in schools received a renewal and revamp.⁴⁹ The Danish authorities supported many of these activities based on the belief that the population of Greenland would mature via the strengthening of public debate. Paradoxically, however, the inclination to control this nascent desire for debate also existed. Consequently, a lecturer at a teacher college, Augo Lynge (MP from 1953), shortly after establishing an association in 1942 called *Nunatta Qitornai* (Our Nation’s Children) to strengthen Greenlanders’ capabilities in the face of Danish dominance, was transferred from Nuuk to Egedesminde because the authorities feared the effect Lynge’s activities in Nuuk would have on young people. Blunt critique of the conditions offended not only Danes, but also many Greenlanders.⁵⁰

Economic conditions during World War II clearly improved, e.g. because the cod catch nearly doubled during the war and trading prices for cod and other fishing-related products rose steadily with sales in places such as England and Portugal. These countries in turn supplied Greenland with salt.⁵¹ Contrary to what was

⁴⁸ Christian Vibe, *Ene Ligger Grønland. Livet I Grønland Under De 6 Lange Adskillelsens Aar 1939-45* [*Solitary Greenland: Life in Greenland during Six Long Years of Separation 1939-45*], 1946, p. 188.

⁴⁹ Jørgen Fleischer, *Forvandlingens år. Grønland Fra Koloni Til Landsdel* [*The Transformation Years: Greenland from Colony to Part of the Country*], 1996, pp. 94f; *Anden Verdenskrig og Grønland* [*World War II and Greenland*], pp. 40f; Niels Højlund, *op. cit.* pp. 13f, note 10.

⁵⁰ Jens Heinrich, *op. cit.* pp. 3-4 & 16, note 7.

⁵¹ Axel Kjær Sørensen, *op. cit.* pp. 100f, note 11; Jørgen Fleischer, *Forvandlingens år* [*The Transformation Years*], pp. 109f.



Eske Brun passes the position of governor on to C.F. Simony in June 1945. During WW II, when contact with Denmark was interrupted, Eske Brun had more or less independently governed Greenland. (The Arctic Institute)

feared, supply problems did not emerge; instead, the range of products in stores included American and Canadian goods never before available on the island, although American products, in the beginning, were of a poorer quality.⁵² As something new, it was also possible to order catalogue goods from large American and Canadian post-order companies. Though both Danish and American authorities made a great effort to limit interaction between Greenlanders and Americans, and though the actual amount of contact was indeed modest, the mere presence of American soldiers in Greenland and the allied ships calling on Greenland ports were – similar to the new non-Danish goods in shops – something entirely new. Greenlanders began to understand *how* great the difference between their own existence and life in modern societies was. This understanding made Greenlanders realise that their own conditions could be improved. The friction and conflicts

⁵² Cf. the Danish National Archives, Aksel Svane private archive, packet 15, Eske Brun in a letter to Henrik Kauffmann, 17 May 1941, p. 14.

described above that surfaced concerning American forces strengthened this apprehension among Greenlanders.⁵³

The consequences of opening the island to the rest of the world and the material progress that took place in Greenland were complex, of course. A foundation was established for a national sense of a community composed of unique people, and the growing self-awareness that had taken hold two decades earlier among well-educated urban Greenlanders now gripped a broader portion of the population. Part of the reason for this change was that during the war a closer connection developed between the different regions of Greenland that had previously been isolated from one another. Everything indicates, however, that Greenlanders possessed a continued desire to retain their ties to the Kingdom of Denmark, and the sense of belonging to Denmark grew during the years when the connection with the motherland had been severed.⁵⁴ Greenlanders' experiences from direct encounters with the Americans, which, as mentioned, were of a varying quality, form one of the reasons for this allegiance.

Regardless of these circumstances, a strong challenge for Denmark lurked in the revolutionary development that had taken place in the colony throughout the five years the colonial power was occupied. A substantially unchanged, close connection to Denmark was threatened by the opening of the island to the outside world, which had been set into motion when Denmark was unable to exercise sovereignty over its colony. A significant factor was that the openness had a number of effects that the Danish government was unable to control regardless of the many endeavours undertaken to limit Greenlanders' interaction with non-Danes. The conviction grew among elite Greenlanders in Nuuk, who consisted of people with connections to Greenland schools, church, and press, as well as Danish government officials, that a return to the "old" Greenland could not and should not take place after the war. The traditional Greenland policy of persistently emphasising the need for protection, and the paternalistic focus on what was "for their own good", was no longer feasible. Based on the norms of the past, the idea of protecting an underdeveloped country had a positive sheen. However, it would also have an incapacitating effect if emphasis in the political arena continued to be placed on the need for protection when the population has realised that circumstances are not unalterable.

⁵³ Mads Lidegaard, *op. cit.* pp. 185-187, note 1; Axel Kjær Sørensen, *op. cit.* pp. 106-108, note 11; Ulloriannuaq Kristiansen, "Sorsunnersuaq – Den Store Krig" ["Sorsunnersuaq: The Great War"], Bent Gynther and Aqigssiaq Møller, *Kalaallit Numaat. Gyldendals Bog om Grønland [Kalaallit Nunaa: Gyldendal's Book on Greenland]*, 1999, pp. 249-255.

⁵⁴ Axel Kjær Sørensen, *Dansk Grønlandspolitik Efter 1945 [Denmark's Policy on Greenland after 1945]*, 1974, p. 14; Mads Lidegaard, *Ligestilling uden lighed. En oversigt over det statsretlige forhold mellem Grønland og Danmark [Equal Rights without Equality: An Overview of the Constitutional Relationship between Greenland and Denmark]*, 1973, p. 50; Ulloriannuaq Kristiansen, "Sorsunnersuaq – Den Store Krig" ["Sorsunnersuaq: The Great War"], pp. 249-255.

3 · The Greenland issue – sovereignty, self-determination and dependence

Erik Beukel

Introduction

Denmark, as a sovereign state, could determine Greenland's status in the Kingdom of Denmark as well as the degree of self-determination and self-government that Greenland could exercise in connection with the constitutional amendment of 1953. Similarly, in 1953, Denmark could have initiated the process for Greenland to become a sovereign state that other sovereign states could then recognise. At the same time, Denmark and Greenland were dependent, in different ways, on the world around them. This dependence influenced how Danish authorities exercised their sovereignty over Greenland as well as the actual options Denmark had available to employ its right of self-determination. Moreover, Greenland's dependence on the rest of the world would have affected a Greenland with the status of a sovereign state. This dependence also would have affected, after 1953, a Greenland exercising its right of self-determination in the form of home rule that is on a par with what it received twenty-five years later. The concepts of sovereignty, self-determination, and dependence thus frame overall problems that are central to the clarification of the circumstances of Greenland's change in status from a colony to an equal part of the Kingdom of Denmark following the constitutional amendment of 1953.

The concepts of sovereignty, self-determination, and dependence also play a prominent role in discussions in recent years about the chain of events leading up to the change in status in 1953. Analyses performed according to international law have thus questioned whether or not Greenland's right of self-determination was violated in 1953.¹ Many questions have been raised in the new debate about

¹ See, notably, a series of articles by Gudmundur Alfredsson: "Greenland and the Law of Political Decolonization", *German Yearbook of International Law*, vol. 25, 1982, pp. 290-308; "Greenland and the Right to Self-Determination", *Nordisk tidsskrift for international ret*, vol. 51, no. 1/2, 1982, pp. 39-43; "The Rights of Indigenous Peoples with a Focus on the National Performance and Foreign Policies of the Nordic Countries", *Zeitschrift für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht*, Band 59, N2. 2, 1999, pp. 529-542; "The Greenlanders and their human rights choices", Morten Bergsmo (ed.), *Human Rights and Criminal Justice for the Downtrodden. Essays in Honor of Asbjørn Eide*, 2003, pp. 453-459. In addition: Steen Wulff, "The Legal Bases for the Inughuit Claim to their Homelands", *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, vol. 11, 2005, pp. 63-91.

the events of the decisive years of 1952-1953.² Did the absence of a plebiscite in Greenland before the decision about the change in status mean that Greenlanders were deprived of the right to determine their nationality? Did the option truly exist for Greenland to gain national independence and sovereignty in 1952-1953? On this basis, can one say that – as formulated in the above-mentioned interview in the newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* – Greenland is owed a plebiscite with the option of complete secession? Or was it the situation that – as expressed in a working paper of the Home Rule Commission’s Working Group on Foreign and Security Policy in 2002 – from the late 1940s onward the American military planners, who were influenced by growing opposition to the Soviet Union, were not only ready to buy, but also to occupy Greenland without regard to political relations with Denmark?³ In this situation, the American capital would have immediately caught on to any signs of Greenland’s possible secession from Denmark, which would have resulted in dependence on the outside world not offering Denmark and Greenland much of a choice. Thus, Greenland’s Provincial Council, cf. chapter 9, was presented in the late summer of 1952 with inadequate material as the basis for the Council’s decision to endorse the proposal for becoming an equal part of the Kingdom of Denmark. However, having ascertained this matter, the question can be asked as to whether this error on the part of the Danish government could easily develop into the myth that Greenland actually faced a real choice in 1952-1953. In the words of Finn Lynge, “Perhaps we do not have enough myths in Greenland”.⁴

This chapter sheds light on some aspects of the circumstances concerning Greenland’s change in status from a colony to an equal constituent of the Kingdom of Denmark in 1953 by means of the concepts sovereignty, self-determination, and dependence. In this way, the questions specified above can be given provisional clarification. However, a fundamental assumption of this book is that the problems surrounding the course of events concerning the Greenland issue in 1945-1954 also involve questions that cannot be resolved by means of an empirical study alone. A final resolution also requires taking a position on politically loaded questions that lie outside the scope of this assessment.

² See among others: Jens Brøsted, “Grønland, Grundloven og FN” [“Greenland, the Constitution and the UN”], Daniel Thorleifsen (ed.), *De vestnordiske landes fælleshistorie. Udvalg af indledende betragtninger over dele af den vestnordiske fælleshistorie* [*The Western Nordic Countries’ Common History: A Selection of Preliminary Observations about Aspects of the Western Nordic Common History*], 2003, pp. 85-91; Mads Lidegaard, “50-året for Grønlands grundlov”, *Grønland. Årsregister og Meddelelser 2003* [“The 50th Anniversary of Greenland’s Constitution”, *Greenland: Annual Register and Information 2003*], published by The Greenlandic Society, December 2003, pp. 214-219; Anders Rostgaard and Dorte Kuula, “Den grønlandske mellemregning” [“The Greenland Account”], *Jyllands-Posten*, 17 March 2002. (Interview with Gudmundur Alfredsson and Kuupik Kleist, MP for *Inuit Ataqatigiit*).

³ *Grønlands sikkerhedspolitiske placering* [*Greenland’s National Security Policy Position*], Working paper no. 3, Home Rule Commission. Working group on Foreign and Security Policy, February 2002, p. 6; see also Finn Lynge, *Den vanskelige tango. Tango nalunartoq. En indvendig rundtur i Riget. Naalagaaffiuq iluanut pulattarneq* [*The awkward tango. Tango nalunartoq: A tour inside the Kingdom. Naalagaaffiuq iluanut pulattarneq*], 2002, p. 50.

⁴ Finn Lynge, *op. cit.* p. 42, note 3.

One distinctive aspect of sovereignty and self-determination is that, like self-government, independence, freedom of action, home rule, and free association, these concepts have positive value in political discussions. The *right* of self-determination is viewed as an obvious moral imperative detached from any judgement about whether or not dependence on the surrounding world restricts genuine self-determination. Sometimes the use of positively-loaded words leads to inflation of the concept so that new demands are constructed as the logical consequences of the fundamental right of national self-determination.⁵ Demands for self-government and independence often serve as watchwords for attempts by population groups or nations to secede from a state, or for the struggles of colonial territories to liberate themselves from colonial status; such was the case during the decolonisation process that took place during the decade after World War II (cf. chapter 4). In the early 1950s, there were approximately sixty independent states. Today, there are nearly 200. Any individual could then as now in principle be identified as a citizen of one of these independent states. The notion of the sovereign and independent state was, in the first decade after World War II and still today, central to most people's expectations, desires, and demands for the realisation of fundamental social and political values such as security, freedom, order, justice, and welfare.⁶ Independent states were and still are the key to people's attempts to grasp and understand foreign policy and international politics; major international news is described as happening *in* or *between* states, or as something that has happened within international organisations that have states as members.

The concepts of sovereignty and the right of self-determination simultaneously have unclear, varying, and confusing meanings and content in political discussions. First and foremost, they are used with their legal or international legal meanings. They are also used to characterise actual capacities, conditions, and developmental tendencies, or to express normative principles. The problem is that these different meanings are often confused. For example, the concept of sovereignty is a legal category of binary either/or dimensions. However, the term is often used to describe actual, substantial conditions about the actual freedom of action that states possess. In such cases, sovereignty has a continuous dimension with grey areas and interim positions. Sovereignty as genuine freedom of action is a fluctuating entity.⁷ The idea of the right of self-determination is replete with latent meanings and fundamental ambiguities regardless of whether or not the right is applied to a state, a nation, a people, or a group. As is often indicated in publications a generation or two ago, a stubborn insistence on requiring a con-

⁵ Clyde Eagleton, "Excesses of Self-determination", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 31, no. 4, July 1953, pp. 592-604.

⁶ Robert Jackson and Georg Sørensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*, 2nd edition, 2003, pp. 2-9.

⁷ Georg Sørensen, *Suverænitet: Formel og faktisk*, Fokus 1, [*Sovereignty: Formal and Actual*, Focus 1] DUPI, 1997.

vergence of borders between nations and borders between states would be meaningless.⁸

The first part of this chapter examines and discusses in outline the concepts of sovereignty and the national right of self-determination. These two terms are often used indiscriminately; as political ideas, they overlap each other. Important differences, however, exist between the two concepts. These differences are clarified when their origins and development as political ideas are reviewed. The concept of sovereignty is several hundred years older than that of the national right of self-determination. Moreover, since both concepts developed in contrasting historical contexts, it is important to bear in mind this difference when the book uses these terms to analyse specific problems. Therefore, the first part of this chapter focuses on a historical and ideational analysis of these two concepts. The latter part of the chapter introduces the angle of dependency and, focusing on relationships between sovereignty, self-determination, and dependence, examines national security and economic conditions that are important in the description and explanation of the development of the Greenland issue in 1945-1954.

Sovereignty

Sovereignty is an institution in the international community, i.e. a set of norms and rules for states and their behaviour toward one another.⁹ At the core of sovereignty is constitutional independence – in other words, constitutional authority in a sovereign state lies within a country's borders and is not a formally binding component in a more comprehensive constitutional system. In studies of international politics, the concept of sovereignty has traditionally been extremely controversial.¹⁰ It still is today. Some researchers reject it as volatile, anachronistic, and lacking in analytical relevance, while others uphold it. Researchers who attach importance to the analytical value of sovereignty also emphasise that, since there has never been agreement on the concept's definition, it must be precisely specified and modified for productive use.¹¹

In recent years, there has been renewed interest in the concept and its application in international studies. The notion of the sovereign state plays a prominent role in the efforts of different schools of research to describe basic structures in international politics and to develop explanations for the behaviour of states. These schools of research and their approaches to the concept of sovereignty can provide useful ideas for comprehending the political process of Greenland's

⁸ See e.g. Ralph Emerson, *From Empire to Nation: The Rise to Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples*, 1960, pp. 295ff; Benjamin Rivlin, *Self-determination and Dependent Areas*, 1955, pp. 266-271.

⁹ Robert Jackson and Georg Sørensen, *op. cit.* pp. 279f, note 6.

¹⁰ See e.g. eleven very different contributions covering three decades in W.J. Stankiewicz (ed.), *In Defence of Sovereignty*, 1969.

¹¹ Alan James, *Sovereign Statehood: The Basis of International Relations*, 1986, pp. 2f; Michael Ross Fowler and Julie Marie Bunck, *Law, Power, and the Sovereign State: The Evolution and Application of the Concept of Sovereignty*, 1995, pp. 1f.

change in status more than fifty years ago. Thus, both classical realism and the so-called neorealism, which was developed in the 1980s as a modification and specification of realism, are based on the fact that, in the international system that comprises sovereign states, no superior sovereign authority exists. In the final analysis, according to neorealism in particular, the decisive factor in international politics is therefore the relative division of power between the sovereign states. The English School's research approach also uses the existence of sovereign states as its point of departure, but it does not agree that the relative division of power is critical. Instead, it prefers a broad understanding of historical conditions, norms, powers, and interests. Both neorealism and the English School consequently attribute a central role to the concept of sovereignty. At the same time, however, they describe factors that create dependence between states and are important for understanding what happens in international politics. Other schools of thought, including versions of neoliberalism, also devote attention to the institution of sovereignty, but they focus more on how limitations in the individual state's actual freedom of action (due to interdependencies in international politics) have largely voided the concept of sovereignty of any substantial content.

These otherwise different schools of research find the concept of sovereignty useful and thus stress that sovereignty *does not* mean actual independence in political, military, economic, and technological affairs.¹² However, many applications of the term sovereignty blur this distinction. Therefore, it is not without reason that Kenneth Waltz, the most prominent spokesman for the neorealist school, calls sovereignty a "bothersome concept".¹³ The following review of sovereignty will show that, while important aspects of the concept have not changed since it first appeared in political discussions and analyses 300-400 years ago, other aspects of sovereignty as a political institution have changed considerably. These changes emphasise the need to specify different aspects of the concept and to substantiate its value in a concrete analytical context. This is done in the following section by examining sovereignty as a fundamental and relatively stable norm in international politics, and by scrutinizing the rules governing relations between sovereign states, which have been more variable.

Sovereignty as a fundamental norm

The concept of sovereignty in its original form can be traced back to the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. During that period, it was developed in Europe as a practice and a norm for the relationship between the existing heterogeneous governments in states, which began to accept each others' existence and internal autonomy. The terms state,

¹² Robert Jackson and Georg Sørensen, *op. cit.* incl. pp. 48-56 and 279-285, note 6; see also: J. Samuel Barkin and Bruce Cronin, "The State and the nation: Changing norms and the rules of sovereignty in international relations", *International Organization*, vol. 48, no. 1, winter 1994, pp. 107-130; Ole Wæver, *Introduktion til Studiet af International Politik [Introduction to the Study of International Politics]*, 1992, pp. 54-60.

¹³ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 1979, p. 95.

sovereignty, and territory gradually became closely interwoven during this period.¹⁴ The appearance of the institution of sovereignty as a recognised practice in relations between states is commonly associated with the Peace of Westphalia (1648), which formally concluded the Thirty Years' War. This peace treaty did not bring about any sudden, significant changes in the relations between the participating kings, emperors, and other heads of state, and it is not meaningful to employ the expression "the Westphalian model" as a valid empirical description of a given historical system. On this point, the notion of "the Westphalian model" has often functioned as a myth.¹⁵ Evaluated from a historical perspective, however, this peace treaty was an important step towards the development of an international system based on the existence of sovereign states that could have diplomatic relations and enter into treaties with one another. The system was first developed in Europe, then in North and South America. During the mid-twentieth century, it also developed in Asia and Africa, covering the entire globe today.¹⁶ As a frame of reference or ideal type, this notion of a state-centred international system based on a set of fundamental norms is still relevant not just in describing, but also in understanding and explaining important aspects of international politics.

In the state-centred international system, the states are by far the most important units and their territories are well-defined; they have a given population and government, and they are recognised by other states as sovereign with all the rights and duties thereby associated.¹⁷ The reciprocal recognition of sovereignty forms the basis for the development of diplomatic relations between states with privileges (e.g. immunity), non-intervention, the right of self-defence, and the right to enter into treaties. The most prominent international organisations (UN, NATO, and the EU, to name a few) only admit states as members; sovereignty is the prerequisite for admission to important international fora. State sovereignty is thus a fundamental characteristic of the organisation of an international society.¹⁸ Accordingly, the UN treaty incorporates its members' sovereign equality as the first principle of the organisation.

In its basic form, sovereignty has two sides: An outer and an inner one that correspond with each other. On the one hand, sovereignty concerns the state's exter-

¹⁴ Jens Bartelson, *A Genealogy of Sovereignty*, 1996, chpt. 4; Thomas J. Biersteker, "State, Sovereignty and Territory", Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons, *Handbook of International Relations*, 2001, pp. 157-176; K.J. Holsti, *Taming the Sovereigns: Institutional Change in International Politics*, 2004, pp. 121-128.

¹⁵ Stephen D. Krasner, "Westphalia and All That", Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane (eds.), *Ideas & Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions and Political Change*, 1993, pp. 235-264; as well as "Compromising Westphalia", *International Security*, vol. 20, no. 3, Winter 1995-1996, pp. 115-151. Andreas Osiander, "Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Westphalian Myth", *International Organization*, vol. 55, no. 2, spring 2001, pp. 251-287, is a harsh critique of "the Westphalian Myth".

¹⁶ The only large territory that is not or does not belong to a state is Antarctica, which is administered by a consortium of states.

¹⁷ Alan James, *op. cit.* pp. 13-14, note 11; Michael Ross Fowler and Julie Marie Bunck, *op. cit.* pp. 213-233, note 11.

¹⁸ Robert Jackson, "Sovereignty in World Politics: A Glance at the Conceptual and Historical Landscape", *Political Studies*, XLVII, 1999, pp. 431-434.

nal relations, where the sovereign state cannot be bound by any foreign authority without its own acceptance. The decisive minimum condition is – as implied above – constitutional independence, i.e. the constitutional authority in a sovereign state lies within the country's borders and is not a formally binding component in a more comprehensive constitutional system.¹⁹ On the other hand, sovereignty concerns the position of highest internal authority, which can rest with an absolute ruler, a single party with a monopoly of power, or it can emerge from a democratic process. Until 1849 in Denmark, the sovereign constitutional authority was the autocratic king. Thereafter, the final sovereign authority has rested with the *Folketing* (Danish Parliament) and with the voters during a plebiscite in compliance with the provisions specified in the Constitution.

This definition of sovereignty as a fundamental norm in international politics puts great stock in the constitutive element, i.e. it identifies the legitimate authorities and their powers with regard to the legitimate use of force within a specific territory. It also identifies the powers of these authorities in relation to the sovereign authorities of other countries. States vary enormously in geographic area, population, wealth, power etc., but all states are equal in the sense that all are sovereign.²⁰ Sovereignty is thus defined as an institution in the same way that a legislative authority defines, for example, matrimony as an institution: The legislative authority specifies by law certain characteristics for a relationship between two people that must be present to qualify for the designation of lawful matrimony. But, similar to how the concrete substance of a marriage can vary greatly, the substance and exercise of different countries' sovereignty can also vary greatly and depend on many concrete attributes (cf. above). These attributes can, in the long run, become important for the recognition of sovereignty by other states. Moreover, serious consequences might ensue if the exercise of sovereignty has been interrupted for a long period of time as a result of communication problems with other parts of a state during, for example, a war. Some states can more or less collapse due to unrest, civil war, extreme hardship etc. that result in the government losing control of large portions of the country. Such failed states (quasi-states) are clearly too lacking in some capacities to function as normal states do.²¹

¹⁹ Alan James, "The Practice of Sovereign Statehood in Contemporary International Society", *Political Studies*, XLVII, pp. 460-462; Alan James, *Sovereign statehood*, pp. 38-58; Øyvind Østerud, "Suverænitet" ["Sovereignty"], Mogens N. Pedersen, Kjell Goldmann, and Øyvind Østerud (eds.), *Leksikon i Statskundskab [Political Science Encyclopaedia]*, 1997, p. 228. It is important to note that the minimum prerequisite is that the constitutional authority in a sovereign state lies within the country's borders. It is another matter entirely should this authority be influenced by political ideas flowing across borders, as was the case when the sovereign states of Europe developed their first democratic constitutions in the nineteenth century. A state is also called sovereign regardless of whether or not its political system has been forced upon it from outside, as was the case with the communist states in Eastern Europe during the Cold War.

²⁰ K.J. Holsti, *op. cit.* pp. 113-118, note 14; Georg Sørensen, "Sovereignty: Change and Continuity in a Fundamental Institution", *Political Studies*, XLVII, 1999, pp. 591-595; Georg Sørensen, *Changes in Statehood: The Transformation of International Relations*, 2001, pp. 146-149.

²¹ Cf. Louise Andersen, "Hvad stiller man op med fejlsagne stater?" ["What does one do with failed states?"], *Udenrigs*, no. 2, 2005, pp. 81-91. For a more comprehensive treatment of the subject: Louise Andersen, *International Engagement in Failed States: Choices and Trade-Offs*, DIIS Working Paper, no. 2005/20.

The constitutive meaning of state sovereignty has essentially been a cornerstone of the international legal system and political order for the last 300-400 years and, in some important respects, it still is. Today, sovereignty and the concrete rules associated with it affect innumerable aspects of everyday normal co-existence between people from different countries and between representatives of states, regardless of whether or not they take place bilaterally or in multilateral institutions. For some, the term sovereignty has almost mystical connotations of untouchability and impenetrability. The mere mention that someone comes from or represents a “sovereign state” provides a psychological boost that convinces both that person and others of his/her invulnerability. Nevertheless, a psychological explanation of fascination with sovereignty cannot alter the fact that it helps form the basis for realising core values in people’s lives by prescribing a minimum of predictable order in international society.²² As a basic and, in many ways, natural organisational principle for international society, the fundamental norm of state sovereignty has only seldom been challenged seriously. In this sense, the sovereign state has been extremely viable even though, for many years, it has been confronted with genuine challenges by the interdependence of states – a dependence that especially dominates the regional level. In this context, and since World War II, proposals have been circulating in European cooperation for transferring parts of the constitutional authority from member states to common institutions. The common belief is that sovereignty can only function in a meaningful way if it is exercised in cooperation (pooled) with other countries.²³

The principle of sovereignty can be compared to traffic regulations: Everyone knows that they are often disobeyed. That does not, however, change the fact that traffic regulations are *normally* observed in important respects, which is of course why most people actually venture out into traffic. Despite these rules not always being adhered to, no one has yet challenged the actual principle of having rules to regulate traffic. Similarly, heads of state are aware that aspects of sovereignty have always been violated, but this “organised hypocrisy” cannot justify declaring the concept of sovereignty unimportant.²⁴

²² Alan James, *Sovereign Statehood*, pp. 15-16; Robert Jackson, “Sovereignty in World Politics”, pp. 454-456; Michael Ross Fowler and Julie Marie Bunck, *op. cit.* pp. 140-164, note 11.

²³ *Humanitær intervention. Retlige og Politiske aspekter [Humanitarian Intervention: Legal and Political Aspects]*, Danish Institute of International Affairs, 1999, p. 17; Ian Hurd, “Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics”, *International Organization*, vol. 53, no. 2, spring 1999, p. 393; J.D.B. Miller, “The sovereign state and its future”, *International Journal*, vol. 39, 1984, pp. 284-301; J.D.B. Miller, “Sovereignty as a source of vitality for the state”, *Review of International Studies*, vol. 12, 1986, pp. 79-89. For European cooperation and proposals for the common exercise of sovereignty, see William Wallace, “The Sharing of Sovereignty: The European Paradox”, *Political Studies*, XLVII, 1999, pp. 503-521.

²⁴ The parallel to traffic regulations is taken from Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World*, p. 38; for “organised hypocrisy”, see Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*, 1999, incl. p. 25. See also: Daniel Philpott, “Usurping the Sovereignty of Sovereignty”, *World Politics*, vol. 53, no. 2, January 2001, pp. 297-324.

Changes in the rules of sovereignty

In an international society where sovereignty is the fundamental norm, numerous changes in the rules for interaction between sovereign states have taken place. The most changeable rules have been those for the admittance of new members to the club of sovereign states, i.e. the rules for recognition of new states.²⁵ For many years, the sovereign states acting as “gatekeepers” were mainly European. Non-European countries only became members of the sovereign states’ club by fulfilling the criteria imposed on them by club members. From a historical perspective, the criteria have changed, however, and they have only been stable for short periods of time. The most important changes occurred after World War I, when democratic norms began to supersede traditional diplomatic norms in relations between states.

After World War I, sovereignty of the people, or the right of self-determination (cf. below), became a new basis for recognition. The principle was not, however, clearly formulated or used. The decisive factor was that the enormous catastrophe of World War I was, to a great extent, ascribed to traditional diplomacy. This diplomacy was governed by fairly well-defined and accepted rules for the interaction of states, but also by secrecy, double-dealing, and a lack of responsibility towards democratic institutions. Because of a clash with this latter aspect of traditional diplomacy, some political ideas and democratic norms were grafted into a sphere that, for hundreds of years, had been based on norms from a world completely different from that of democracy and the rule of the people. This grafting became even clearer after World War II, when political attitudes and objectives often overshadowed rules about territory, population, governmental authority, and actual control as criteria for diplomatic recognition. Examples of recognition policy that did not follow that of traditional diplomacy are that many countries did not recognise the Soviet Union’s violent annexation of the Baltic states in 1939-1940, and again after Nazi Germany was expelled; none of the Arab countries recognised Israel until many years after that state’s formation in 1948; and the US did not recognise China until many years after the establishment of the People’s Republic in 1949. It has also proven difficult for many existing states to apply traditional standards of recognition concerning racist states in southern Africa.²⁶ All of these examples show that no doubt existed about who was really in possession of internal authority and power. The problem, however, was that regimes in power were often so repulsive or odious that diplomatic recognition could easily be regarded as – or misinterpreted as – a politico-ethical stamp of approval.

²⁵ Øyvind Østerud, “The narrow gate: Entry to the club of sovereign states”, *Review of International Studies*, vol. 23, 1997, pp. 167-184. See also: Georg Sørensen, “Sovereignty”, *op. cit.*, note 20; Georg Sørensen, *Changes in Statehood*, pp. 149-151.

²⁶ K. J. Holsti, *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis*, 1995, pp. 131-132; Alan James, *Sovereign Statehood*, pp. 150-161.

All in all, the rules for recognition have become more controversial, less automatic, and less predictable in their application during the twentieth century. Changes were well under way in the first few years after World War II. Recognition of a sovereign state, which seems at a specific point to be the expression of a wise and judicious assessment of political power relations in accordance with traditional norms for recognition, later runs the risk of becoming a reprehensible accommodation to seemingly immutable international power relations. This tendency towards greater unpredictability in the judicious practice of recognition reflects on sovereignty as a fundamental norm, which also becomes less stable in its applications.

This conclusion leads to the next subject: The right of self-determination as a norm in international politics.

National right of self-determination

The principle of the national right of self-determination has two aspects: On the one hand, a constitutional principle expressing the idea that the citizens of a nation (“a people”) have the right to determine their own affairs, and on the other hand, a principle for the demarcation of states after which a people or a nation has the right to form a state where they can control their own affairs.²⁷ Compared to the concept of sovereignty, these aspects show that, where sovereignty began as a dynastic sovereignty, it has now become a democratically rooted sovereignty, a people’s sovereignty based on a notion of the right of self-determination of nations and peoples.²⁸

The concept of the right of self-determination is, as mentioned, full of latent connotations. In order to best explain the concept and lay the foundation for assessing its relevance in the analysis of the Greenland issue, it is appropriate to first look briefly at the principle’s historic roots and its development since the idea came about two hundred years ago. Next, on the basis of the UN Charter’s Articles on peoples’ right of self-determination, a number of problems related to the practical application of this right in the years immediately after World War II are studied. These problems have time and time again plagued the advocates of the right of self-determination, regardless of the degree to which states or nations are dependent on the rest of the world.

²⁷ Alfred Cobban, *The Nation State and National Self-Determination*, 1969; Jordan J. Paust, “Self-Determination: A Definitional focus”, Yonah Alexander and Robert A. Friedlander (eds.), *Self-Determination: National, Regional, and Global Dimensions*, 1980, pp. 3-18; Rudolfo Stavenhagen, “Self-Determination: Right or Demon?”, Donald Clark and Robert Williamson (eds.), *Self-Determination: International Perspectives*, 1996, pp. 1-11; Øyvind Østerud, “Selvbestemmelse” [“Self-Determination”], Mogens N. Pedersen, Kjell Goldmann, and Øyvind Østerud (eds.), *Leksikon i Statskundskab [Political Science Encyclopaedia]*, 1997, p. 214.

²⁸ Robert Jackson, “Sovereignty in World Politics”, p. 444.

Origin and development

The notion of national (or the people's) right of self-determination stems from a liberal ideology on liberty concerning the rights of the individual, and was thus developed in opposition to absolutism and dynasty-based sovereignty. The principle was first clearly expressed in the American Declaration of Independence (1776), which stated that a government's right to power rested with the consent of the governed, and that it is the right of the people to establish a new government if those previously in power had violated fundamental rights.²⁹ In Europe, the French Revolution (1789) rejected the notion that the inhabitants of a country were the monarch's subjects; all sovereignty must be based on the nation and its citizens.³⁰ Throughout the nineteenth century, and particularly in the years following 1848, the idea of the people's sovereignty as opposed to dynastic sovereignty won great support among liberal and popular movements. These movements used the idea as a basis for their demands for democratic rights in nations and for the drafting of rules of law governing relations between nations, i.e. international law (see also the historical survey in chapter 5).

During World War I, the demand for the national right of self-determination achieved a breakthrough. The American President, Woodrow Wilson, declared in 1915 that this principle must constitute the foundation of a future peace treaty. In the following year, the British Foreign Ministry's memorandum lent support to the principle, and President Wilson appealed to all of the warring parties to publish their war aims in accordance with the principle of nationality. After the US entered the war in the spring of 1917, President Wilson presented his famous "Fourteen Points" for peace in a speech delivered to Congress in January 1918. The right of self-determination was not specifically named in this speech, but a number of the fourteen proposals pursued the principle of the peoples' right to determine their own national status. The President concluded his points by emphasising the principle of all peoples' and nationalities' right to live on equal and secure terms with one another.³¹ However, the expression "self-determination" was found in the speech that President Wilson, in the following month, gave in Congress in response to European reactions to his first speech – even though "self-determination" still did not appear as one of the fundamental principles for concluding peace presented on this occasion. One notable point about President Wilson's and other American declarations was that they highlighted the evolutionary aspect of the right of self-determination and placed emphasis on well-ordered liberal reforms, as opposed to the new communist challenge from Moscow

²⁹ "The Declaration of Independence as Adopted by Congress", 4 July 1776, J. A. Leo Lemay (ed.), *An Early American Reader*, 1988, pp. 688-691.

³⁰ "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen", approved by the National Assembly of France, 26 August 1789, cf. <http://www.hrcr.org/docs/frenchdec.html>.

³¹ <http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/1918/14points.html>; Øyvind Østerud, *Nasjonenes Selvbestemmelsesrett. Søkelys på en politisk doktrine [The Nations' Right to Self-Determination: Focus on a Political Doctrine]*, 1992, pp. 93f.

that linked the right of self-determination with the right of violent revolution. Overall, the Wilson administration's position on national self-determination was ambivalent, partly, among other things, because the President himself was inconsistent in his concrete use of the principle. Prominent members of the Wilson administration were deeply sceptical of the President's, in their opinion, naive concessions to the right of self-determination.³² However, in comparison with the ambiguous stance of many European governments, the American government was a strong supporter of the national right of self-determination.

In the Treaty of Versailles (1919) and in other peace treaties after World War I, the application of the national right of self-determination was restricted to selected parts of Europe. The actual term did not appear either in the Covenant of the League of Nations or in any of the peace treaties.³³ America's European allies never fully accepted the American President's Fourteen Points. With the exception of some changes in defeated Germany's borders (including North Schleswig/South Jutland), the nationality principle was chiefly followed first in Central and Eastern Europe, where in the wake of the dissolution of the empires of Austria-Hungary and Turkey, which had been defeated in the war, a number of new states arose.³⁴ Overall, the newly-drawn borders and the formation of new states meant that the total number of Europeans living outside their own national state, or who did not belong to one at all, fell from sixty to thirty million.³⁵ From this perspective and according to the nation-state principle, the new boundaries drawn in Europe after World War I were less unjust than those from before the war. However, the nationality principle was limited in its application since it proved impossible to draw boundaries that did not leave a national minority on the wrong side of the border, and so national problems in Europe acquired greater political significance as a result of the "less unjust" borders. Outside Europe, the right of self-determination was limited by the laying down of conditions for its use, particularly with regard to political and economic stages of development – not the least because it was feared that if the colonial populations were given independence too early, a minority could easily force an authoritarian regime onto the majority and thus block the way to genuine political freedom.³⁶ The fact that such an attitude can be characterised today as both patriarchal and provident reveals a great deal about the problematic interplay between sovereignty, the right of self-determination, and independence.

³² http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/fourteenpoints_wilson2.htm. See also: W. Ofuatey-Kodjoe, *The Principle of Self-Determination in International Law*, 1977, p. 72; Øyvind Østerud, *Nasjonenes Selvbestemmelsesrett [The Nations' Right to Self-Determination]*, pp. 107-108.

³³ Robert A. Friedlander, "Self-Determination: A Legal-Political Inquiry", Yonah Alexander and Robert A. Friedlander (eds.), *Self-Determination: National, Regional and Global Dimensions*, 1996, pp. 307f.

³⁴ Antonio Cassese, *Self-Determination of Peoples: A Legal Reappraisal*, 1996, pp. 23-27 & 32-33.

³⁵ Niels Arne Sørensen, *Den Store Krig. Europæernes Første Verdenskrig [The Great War: The Europeans' First World War]*, 2005, pp. 333-335.

³⁶ Robert H. Jackson, "The Weight of ideas in Decolonization: Normative Change in International Relations", Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, *Ideas & Foreign Policy. Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, 1993, pp. 120-121.

During World War II, the notion of peoples' right of self-determination once again picked up steam. The Atlantic Charter, which was signed by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill at their meeting on a warship off the coast of Newfoundland in August of 1941, was one of the most important indicators of this progress. Both statesmen declared that, after the war, no territorial changes were to be made without the consent of the peoples concerned. They also declared that all peoples have the right to choose their own form of government, and that sovereign rights and self-government were to be restored to those who had these rights taken away. A few weeks later, Churchill declared to the House of Commons that the proclaimed self-determination did not include the British colonies. Instead, it was aimed chiefly at restoring sovereignty and self-government to the nations that were under the yoke of Nazi Germany.³⁷ The American President's interpretation of the declaration, in accordance with the traditional divergences of the US and Great Britain, was no doubt more far-reaching than that of the British prime minister's. (The disagreement is elaborated further in chapter 4.)

*The UN Charter and the right of self-determination in practice*³⁸

The UN Charter directly refers to nations and peoples' right of self-determination in two instances. Within the Charter, Chapter I on the UN's purposes and principles, Article 1, 2, states the objective "to develop friendly relations among nations" as one of the UN's purposes based on "the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples". Chapter IX on international economic and social cooperation, Article 55, again mentions "the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples". In two other instances, the less demanding term "self-government" is used: In Chapter XI, which concerns the non-self-governing territories (cf. chapter 4 on the process of decolonisation), Article 73 states that UN members responsible for the administration of such territories should "develop self-government", and in Chapter XII, which describes the international trusteeship system, Article 76 states that promotion of the trust territories' "progressive development towards self-government or independence" is one of the objectives.³⁹

These provisions are not very precise. They were, of course, the outcome of a compromise reached during the negotiations not just between the leading governments, but also between the different factions within the American government, which played a prominent role in the formulation of the UN Charter.⁴⁰ The provision of unequivocal guidelines for a correct interpretation is not possible, but on the basis of both the discussions held during the drafting of the Charter and the events of the next few years, one can certainly comment on how the pro-

³⁷ <http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/53.htm>; Antonio Cassese, *op. cit.* p. 37, note 34.

³⁸ In chapter 5, an account is given of self-determination on the basis of international law.

³⁹ <http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/>.

⁴⁰ W. Ofuately-Kodjoe, *op. cit.* pp. 97ff, note 32. For further details about the compromise, see chapter 4.

visions are *not* to be understood. The two direct references are thus not an *injunction* for the UN's members to secure "peoples' self-determination" in the same sense that the Charter, for example, requires members to refrain from acts of aggression and gives the Security Council special powers to oppose such acts. Nor do they mean that an ethnic, national, or linguistic minority has the right to secede from a sovereign state (for colonies, see chapter 4), and nor do they mean that the people of a sovereign state have a right guaranteed by the UN to freely choose their government. This lack of guarantee was especially important to establish for communist states and for Third World states that were former colonies and that were a long way from being able to fulfil requirements for freely-elected governments. On the other hand, there was a broad consensus in the UN that existing states had the right to determine their own internal affairs without any external interference. The focus was on the rights of *states* – not individuals. Here, too, agreement existed between the communist countries and the newly independent states that were once colonies.⁴¹

One special version of the right of self-determination in practice is called "free association", meaning a constitutional state midway between integration into the metropolitan state and full independence. Two parties can enter into a free association treaty on the basis of international law. This treaty provides full domestic self-determination supplemented by an agreement that the metropolitan state will assist in specific areas.⁴² In terms of foreign policy, competence can vary from strictly limited foreign policy power that is possibly confined to regional politics, to almost total self-determination in foreign relations with limits only in the areas of security and defence, but with full membership in the UN. Such variations allow free association to be tailored to the concrete circumstances, while treaties for this purpose can be more or less permanent with agreed time intervals for renewal if desired. Free association is utilised in particular by numerous islands around the world. Since 1965, free association treaties have been entered into by the Cook Islands and New Zealand (1965), the Marshall Islands and the US (1983), Micronesia and the US (1986), Aruba and the Netherlands (1986), and Palau and the US (1993). The Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and Palau are members of the UN, while the Cook Islands and Aruba are not recognised and do not consider themselves as independent states.⁴³ Partially in this context, there has been considerable interest in recent years in the right of self-determination for

⁴¹ Antonio Cassese, *op. cit.* pp. 41-43 & 317ff, note 34; Rosalyn Higgins, *Problems and Process: International Law and How We Use It*, 1998, pp. 111-114; Muhammad Aziz Shukri, *The Concept of Self-Determination in the United Nations*, 1965. See also: Hans Kohn, "The United Nation and Self-Determination", *The Review of Politics*, vol. 20, no. 4, October 1958, pp. 526-545.

⁴² The following is based on information taken from the website of the North Atlantic Group in the *Folketing*: <http://www.dnag.dk/index.php?id=375>.

⁴³ <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/aa.html>; <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/cw.html>.

so-called indigenous peoples.⁴⁴ For these peoples, historical continuity plays a special role. They inhabit lands that were inhabited by their ancestors, and they are characterised by a distinct culture and language that they share with their forefathers. Ethnic Greenlanders (Inuit – formerly Eskimos) are an indigenous people. Many accounts emphasise that the relationship between humans and nature is central to the Inuits' and other primitive peoples' view of life.⁴⁵

When the national right of self-determination is realised, one of the unique problems that arises is the definition of a nation or “a people”. This problem was expressed in a British treatise fifty years ago: “... the people cannot decide until somebody decides who the people are”.⁴⁶ In order to obtain an overview of the different perceptions of a nation, these perceptions can be simplified into variants of two main types: A so-called objective and a so-called subjective variant. The objective variant is based on common cultural characteristics such as ethnic background, language, religion, and history, which typify a people who inhabit or are tied to a specific area of land and clearly distinguish them from other peoples. The so-called subjective national perception is based on political characteristics such as sentiments and a feeling of belonging, expressed wishes, or wills. Simply put, the objective (or cultural) perception of nationhood is a question of something *given*, while the subjective (or political) is a question of something *willed*. (A definition of “a people” from the viewpoint of international law is found in chapter 5).⁴⁷

One example that is often given of the subjective perception, based on sentiments and a feeling of belonging, is the first lines of a verse from Grundtvig's poem “Folkeligheden”, printed in *Danskeren* in 1848:

*To one people they all belong,
Committed to one nation they understand.
With an ear for their mother tongue,
Burning with fire for their fatherland;*

⁴⁴ Gudmundur Alfredsson, “Minorities, Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, and Peoples: Definitions of Terms as a Matter of International Law”, Nazila Ghanea and Alexandra Xanthaki (eds.), *Minorities, Peoples and Self-Determination*, 2005, pp. 163-172.

⁴⁵ John B. Henriksen, “Implementation of the Right of Self-Determination of Indigenous Peoples”, *Indigenous Affairs*, March 2001, pp. 6-21; Jens Dahl, “Self-Government in Greenland”, *Indigenous Affairs*, 3/01, p. 38; *Den Store Danske Encyklopædi* [*The Big Danish Encyclopaedia*], vol. 9, 1997, p. 449.

⁴⁶ Sir Ivor Jennings, *The Approach to Self-Government*, 1956, pp. 55-56. In its entirety, Ivor Jennings' commentary was sharp: “Nearly forty years ago a Professor of Political Science who was also President of the United States, President Wilson, enunciated a doctrine which was ridiculous, but which was accepted as a sensible proposition, the doctrine of self-determination. On the surface it seemed reasonable: let the people decide. It was in fact ridiculous because the people cannot decide until somebody decides who the people are”.

⁴⁷ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 1983, pp. 7 & 53f; Øyvind Østerud, *Nasjonenes Selvbestemmelsesrett* [*Nations' Right to Self-Determination*] 2, pp. 17-23; Øyvind Østerud, *Hva er nasjonalisme?* [*What is Nationalism?*], 1994, pp. 17-19. See also: *Besvarelse af spørgsmål 1: Hvorvidt det grønlandske folk er et folk i folkeretslig henseende*, Notat, Juridisk Tjeneste, Udenrigsministeriet, [*Answer to Question 1: How the Greenlanders Are a People with Respect to International Law*, Note, Legal Counsel, Ministry of Foreign Affairs], 8 November 2004. The note concludes that the Greenlanders can be defined as a people in respect to international law, <http://www.dnag.dk/index.php?id=375>.

Closer examination of Grundtvig's text makes it clear that it is not an unambiguously subjective definition. Instead, it is a mixture of the two perceptions. The first two lines point unequivocally at manifest wishes and wills being crucial, while the last two lines indicate linguistic and cultural patterns. Generally, in Europe the cultural perception of nationality has its roots in German Romanticism, while the political perception has its roots in the French Revolution, among other things. In practice, there will always be, to some degree, a merging of these two perceptions, but the actual mixture can greatly vary, with either the cultural or the political perception of nationhood as the most dominant. The American perception of nationhood has traditionally been dominated by a political concept of a nation, which, based on the American Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, emphasises certain individual notions of liberty that Americans *choose* to endorse.⁴⁸

When the concept of self-determination is employed in a study and an analysis, it should be noted that the right of self-determination has been used and misused in numerous ways with great imagination for the last couple of hundred years. In the years after World War II, this proliferation of uses was influenced by the political trends in international relations that were occurring in the UN, which was a preeminent political arena in this area. The standards governing the right of self-determination are, therefore, far from clear. The term's interweaving with actual political conflicts has encumbered its usage with many shortcomings.⁴⁹ Thus, to use the concept analytically, it must first be placed in a given historical and ideational context.

Factors governing dependence: National security policy and economics

Sovereignty does not mean that states can do whatever they please. Invocation of sovereignty is not an impenetrable shield that can be summoned to ward off a disagreeable world. Possession of the *legitimate authority* to make a decision is one thing, but it is another to be *in control of the effects* of that decision.⁵⁰ To evaluate the latter, dependence on the surrounding world must be included in the analysis. The relationship between governmental decision-makers and the ambient factors they depend on, i.e. the factors that affect a decision and shape its effects, can be

⁴⁸ Uffe Østergård, *Europas Ansigter. Nationale stater og politiske kulturer i en ny, gammel verden* [*The Faces of Europe: National States and Political Cultures in a New, Old World*], 1992, pp. 46-48 & 90-98; Uffe Østergård, "Nation, nationalisme, og nationalstat" ["Nation, Nationalism, and Nationstate"], Tim Knudsen (ed.), *Kernebegreber i politik* [*Key Concepts in Politics*], 2004, pp. 102-132. Øyvind Østerud, *Hva er nasjonalisme?* [*What is Nationalism?*], pp. 19-27.

⁴⁹ Cf. Antonio Cassese, *op. cit.* pp. 330-331, note 34.

⁵⁰ The line between authority and control corresponds to the line between "rule-making" and "rule-enforcement", cf. Janice E. Thomson, "State Sovereignty in International Relations: Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Empirical Research", *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 39, no. 2, June 1995, p. 223.

illustrated in various ways.⁵¹ The survey that follows is based on the notion that national security and economic factors set certain *limits* that restrict the decisions made by Danish authorities and their consequences in the Greenland issue. These limits also created certain *opportunities* that the Danish authorities could exploit. The nature of these limits and opportunities must be further examined. How clear were the limits and opportunities for the contemporary decision makers, and what was the relationship between these limits and opportunities? The first two of the three following sections describe factors governing dependence in the Greenland issue in terms of national security policy, while the third section discusses the economic factors.

After liberation

Shortly after liberation, it appeared that Denmark and the US had widely divergent interpretations of the Greenland Agreement of 1941, its duration, and Greenland's role in national security policy. While Denmark wished to rescind the agreement and wished for the US to relinquish its presence in Greenland, the US was most unwilling to comply. These positions were maintained until the spring of 1948, when Denmark gave up any hope of obtaining an American commitment to leave Greenland.

In the summer of 1945, according to reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Copenhagen, there were rumours in the American press about a direct American purchase or takeover of Greenland. Proposals to this effect had been made in the House of Representatives.⁵² A couple of months later, Ambassador Henrik Kauffmann, however, reported with reassurance that the State Department was inclined to laugh at such proposals. He did not believe that any grounds for taking them seriously existed. Accordingly, Jens R. Dahl, director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' politico-legal department, wrote to Knud Oldendow in the Greenland Administration early in 1946 that the matter could, for the time being, be considered dropped, but he warned that it could come up again.⁵³ The notion that the US should purchase Greenland was occasionally debated publicly during these years. Each time it was debated, the mere idea of such a transaction was indignantly rejected by all political parties. The Budget debate of March 1947 is a notable example, when Jens Sønderup (V) stated:

⁵¹ A classic study is: Harold and Margaret Sprout, "Environmental Factors in the Study of International Politics", *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 1, 1957, pp. 309-328. The article is printed in James N. Rosenau (ed.), *International Politics and Foreign Policy: A Reader in Research and Theory*, rev. ed., 1969, pp. 41-56. The article is also printed in a Danish publication: *Artikelsamling om synspunkter på studiet af International Politik [A Collection of Articles on Viewpoints in the Study of International Politics]*, 1971, pp. 128-147.

⁵² The Danish National Archives, GS, journal 10004/1045 Political cases in Greenland – external, C.A.C. Brun's report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the Embassy in Washington, "No. 344 Proposal for the Purchase of Greenland", 10 August 1945.

⁵³ The Danish National Archives, GS, journal 10004/1945, report by Henrik Kauffmann, 23 November 1945, "No. 974 Proposal for the Purchase of Greenland"; Danish National Archives, GS, journal 10004/45, letter from J. R. Dahl to Knud Oldendow, 15 January 1946.

There have been rumours in the newspapers about America wishing to acquire Greenland. King Dollar is, so to speak, about to become a major factor in all areas. I am not aware of any approach concerning the purchase of Greenland, but assume that it is a given that we will not embark on anything in that respect. Should the Greenlanders desire another relationship or secession, that would be another matter, but in this respect there can be no question of any form of financial transaction.⁵⁴

Foreign Minister Gustav Rasmussen replied that the idea of Denmark ceding Greenland was absurd. On behalf of the government, he declared that Denmark was not willing to sell or in any way cede Greenland to a foreign power.⁵⁵ In the following years, this declaration was repeated on many occasions and was a permanent component of handling relations with the US as part of Denmark's Greenland policy. Correspondingly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Greenland Administration were very preoccupied with asserting Denmark's sovereignty over Greenland with respect to the American presence and American interests.

The American bases quickly developed into a central issue. In the autumn of 1945, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs's great surprise, Kauffmann reported that the Americans wanted to keep their bases on the island. Kauffmann, however, only told Copenhagen a limited amount of information about the extent of the American request; it is clear that he was playing a double role with regard to the government. For example, in collusion with a close acquaintance in the State Department, he prepared a strategy for how best to promote, in neutral Denmark, the issue of the American bases in Greenland.⁵⁶ Important aspects of the contents of America's request were not known in Copenhagen. After a fruitless attempt was made in the autumn of 1946 to inform the American administration that negotiations on the annulment of the agreement were desired, Foreign Minister Gustav Rasmussen visited Washington at the end of 1946. He was presented with a memorandum containing three alternative solutions to annulment by American Secretary of State Byrnes. Two of the solutions represented variations of the 1941 agreement, while the third – which was preferred by the US and believed to be best for Denmark – was that the US should purchase Greenland. The American memorandum conceded that purchase was a radical solution, but it would once and for all end the complex problem that exposed both the US and Denmark to

⁵⁴ "3rd Reading of Budget for 1947-48", *Rigsdagstidende. Forhandlinger i Folketinget 1946/47* [*Rigsdagstidende. Debates in the Folketing 1946/47*], 11 March 1947, section 3576. Christmas Møller (KF) also touched on the subject, cf. section 3592.

⁵⁵ "3rd Reading of Budget for 1947-48", *Rigsdagstidende. Forhandlinger i Folketinget 1946/47* [*Rigsdagstidende. Debates in the Folketing 1946/47*], 12 March 1947, section 3650.

⁵⁶ Erik Beukel, "Henrik Kauffmann som politisk diplomat" ["Henrik Kauffmann as a Political Diplomat"], *Historie*, 1997, 2, pp. 318-331; Bo Lidegaard, *I Kongens Navn. Henrik Kauffmann i Dansk Diplomati 1919-58* [*In the Name of the King: Henrik Kauffmann in Danish Diplomacy 1919-58*], 1996, pp. 394-398 & 419ff.

the criticism of other powers. Moreover, the purchase price amount would relieve Denmark's strained economic situation and release Denmark from further expenses in Greenland's administration. The Danish Foreign Minister was surprised, if not shocked, by the American proposal, and it now became clear to the foreign policy leaders in Copenhagen that Denmark was trapped in a delicate situation shaped by a subtle interplay between foreign and domestic political interests and conceptions. The dilemma was further compounded by the fact that the American ambassador in Copenhagen, Josiah Marvel, had been instructed by the Secretary of State to inform the Danish Foreign Minister that the latter should refrain from any action that could lead to the disclosure of the discussion between the two ministers at their recent meeting.⁵⁷

It was a fundamental problem that the Danish government had only an extremely limited understanding of Greenland's significance in the new geostrategic map at the beginning of the Cold War, including the consequences of Greenland's geographic location on a direct flight path between the eastern United States and core Soviet zones around Moscow. This absence of insight had a complex background. First, it was both natural and obvious for a small country whose national security horizon had traditionally been, and still was, regionally based. Such was the case when Prime Minister Knud Kristensen, in the summer of 1947, attempted to link a permanent base arrangement for the US in Greenland with active American support for Denmark in the South Schleswig issue.⁵⁸ Second, the government was never – as mentioned above – informed by the embassy in Washington of the American visions and plans that might have challenged the thinking in Copenhagen. Third, the government had time and again in the years following the war either shrunk from admitting or directly denied that the US had any interest in Greenland other than to assist Denmark in the island's defence. All in all, in the years immediately after the war, it was by no means apparent to the Danish political leaders that Denmark, together with other Western countries, could have any interest in taking advantage of Greenland's geographic location as part of a common national security strategy against the Soviet Union. This reasoning and the factor of national security dependence were not understood and only accepted reluctantly after a couple of decades had passed. They did not play any role in the limited public debate about the Greenland issue at this time and not at all in relation to the Greenlanders.

In response to domestic pressure, especially from the Communist Party of Denmark (DKP), to inform the public about the progress of negotiations with the US concerning the closure of the American bases, the government, based on an

⁵⁷ Niels Amstrup, "Grønland I Det Amerikansk-Danske Forhold 1945-48" ["Greenland and the Relationship between America and Denmark 1945-48"], Niels Amstrup and Ib Faurby (eds.), *Studier I Dansk Udenrigspolitik* [*Studies in Danish Foreign Policy*], 1978, pp. 178-179; Thorsten Borring Olesen and Poul Villaume, *I Blokopdelingens Tegn 1945-1972* [*The Challenge of Bloc-Building 1945-1972*], Dansk Udenrigspolitik Historie 5 [The History of Danish Foreign Policy 5], 2005, pp. 52-56; *Grønland under den kolde krig. Dansk og amerikansk sikkerhedspolitik 1945-68* [*Greenland during the Cold War: Danish and American National Security Policy 1945-68*], Attachment, Danish Institute of International Affairs, 1997, pp. 78-80.

⁵⁸ Cf. Ditlev Tamm, *Federspiel. En dansk europæer* [*Federspiel: A Danish European*], 2005, p. 190.

agreement with the Americans following discussions between Kauffmann and officials in the State Department, announced that in May 1947 it had delivered a note to the US requesting consultations pursuant to Article X of the 1941 agreement. That same autumn, the American government informed the Danish government that they were willing to commence these consultations. Until the spring of 1948, the government employed these consultations as a strategy for mitigating the delicate situation while they worked towards annulment of the 1941 accord. This annulment would consequently remove America's presence, but Denmark, in return, would maintain the existing base facilities and allow the US to take them over in the event of imminent war. Early in 1948, it became clear that this route was unacceptable to the US, which stuck to its more ambitious plans, including that of purchasing Greenland. Both countries agreed to tread water and abide by the status quo.⁵⁹ This "tread-water-policy" was combined with a new development: The Hedtoft government – which after the change of government in November 1947 had recognised Kauffmann's double game, cf. above – had begun to take over Kauffmann's double politics and extend it to a form of double double-politics. In front of the Danish public, the government maintained the impression that the American presence in Greenland *was* being phased out, but it also let the US believe that Denmark would *not* take any such steps; internally, the government was working heavily at the same time on how it *could* get rid of the American bases in Greenland. Meanwhile, in Washington, Kauffmann continued with his personal efforts to find a solution that could give the US *permanent* base rights in Greenland.⁶⁰ However, the Danish government would not budge on one point: Denmark should assert its sovereignty over Greenland.

Starting in the autumn of 1947, much analytical work was set in motion by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to achieve a better position in the negotiations with the US – and probably to also achieve less dependence on Kauffmann's activities in Washington. Different approaches were analysed and discussed. The result of these activities was, however, preempted by external events. In the spring of 1948, the escalation of the Cold War (the Soviet pressure on Finland, the *coup d'état* in Czechoslovakia, the Berlin Blockade, and other East-West clashes), along with the repercussions in Denmark (the Easter Crisis), gravely overshadowed the significance of Greenland for the Danish government. With the prior endorsement of right-wing parties, the government made a declaration on 8 April that signalled a temporary conclusion to the Greenland issue.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Thorsten Borring Olesen and Poul Villaume, *op. cit.* pp. 53-55, note 57; *Grønland under den kolde krig. Dansk og amerikansk sikkerhedspolitik 1945-68* [Greenland during the Cold War: Danish and American National Security Policy 1945-68], Danish Foreign Policy Institute, 1997, p. 82; see also: Memorandum of Conversation, *Grønland under den kolde krig. Dansk og amerikansk sikkerhedspolitik 1945-68* [Greenland during the Cold War: Danish and American National Security Policy 1945-68], Attachment 6, pp. 35-37.

⁶⁰ Erik Beukel, *op. cit.* p. 325, note 56; Bo Lidegaard, *op. cit.* pp. 436-439, note 56.

⁶¹ Niels Amstrup, *op. cit.* pp. 193-194, note 57; *Grønland under den kolde krig. Dansk og amerikansk sikkerhedspolitik 1945-68* [Greenland during the Cold War: Danish and American National Security Policy 1945-68], pp. 84-92.

Danish resistance to letting the US have a permanent military presence in Greenland was based on the fear that the Soviet Union would demand some reciprocation in South Denmark, such as military control over Bornholm or other parts of the country. However, this fear was baseless: There is no indication that the Soviet leadership ascribed any significance to Greenland in Danish-Soviet relations or directly envisioned any linkage of these two subjects as part of Soviet policy. In 1947, in a speech in Moscow on the anniversary of the revolution of 7 November, Foreign Minister Molotov stated that, for Denmark and other small countries, it must be intolerable not to be free of American bases. Molotov named Greenland in particular. By the end of the 1940s, further diplomatic expressions of displeasure from the Soviets over the American activities in Greenland developed, but the diverse criticisms were not followed by clear political action. To all appearances, the island did not play any special role for the Russians.⁶²

The people of Greenland were not involved in any of these considerations. Nor does it seem that any Danish decision makers suggested or considered asking the Greenlanders for their opinions. However, there was a particular aspect of the relations between Greenlanders and Americans in Greenland that worried the Danish decision makers in Copenhagen and reinforced the desire to assert Denmark's sovereignty over the island and have it reflected as much as possible in actual control. The anxiety was due to the fact that, after the war, contact between Greenlanders and Americans had become increasingly problematic. The number of contacts reported was rising, and the ways in which they met with one another were manifold.⁶³ Whatever the character of the communication, the Danish and Greenland authorities regarded these goings-on very seriously. Among other things, they feared that syphilis would spread to the people of Greenland and that Greenland's economy would suffer as a consequence of the contact between the population and the soldiers. They also feared that, in general, these contacts might have a damaging effect on individual Greenlanders and on the local society.⁶⁴

Copenhagen also received reports of the American authorities and soldiers becoming more integrated into post-war Greenland in ways that could not be rejected as harmful. For example, base personnel were able to assist with vital

⁶² Bent Jensen, *Bjørnen og Haren. Sovjetunionen og Danmark 1945-1965* [*The Bear and the Hare: The Soviet Union and Denmark 1945-1965*], 1999, pp. 211-217.

⁶³ There were reports about "young girls" on the bases, American servicemen spending the night outside the bases, Greenlanders being employed on the bases, and numerous presents being distributed from the bases. See Greenland National Archives, governor of South Greenland, archive 1947, box 136; Greenland National Archives, governor of South Greenland, archive 1948, box 144; Greenland National Archives, governor of South Greenland, archive 1949, box 166.

⁶⁴ The quantity of reports led to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs contacting the State Department "American Military Personnel's Relations with the Greenland Population, 28 Feb. 1947", Greenland National Archives, governor of South Greenland, archive 1947, box 136.

medical services, and the Americans sought to “legalise” this practice.⁶⁵ It was duly noted that the Greenlandic society was grateful to the American servicemen for this assistance.⁶⁶ All in all, Copenhagen had many reasons to fear that Greenland was about to slip away from Denmark.

Denmark and the US in NATO

When Denmark became a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the spring of 1949, the national security policy decision-makers in Copenhagen hoped and expected that the issues concerning the American bases in Greenland would become a multilateral North Atlantic Treaty matter, one that would be discussed and decided on within the common institutions that were created by the Treaty. Prior to accession to NATO, such issues were handled bilaterally between the American superpower and the small country of Denmark. The superpower was thus given the opportunities to apply both direct and indirect pressure. Some people in the Danish decision-making circle expected that, since Denmark and the US had now become allies, the US could rest assured that the island was under the control of an ally. Therefore, in peacetime they could confidently vacate the bases wholly or partially. Until the advent of the Korean War in the summer of 1950, parts of the Truman administration were not entirely unsympathetic to such notions, but they were clearly falling out of favour in Washington. Other leading Danish politicians more directly expressed their private expectations and calculations concerning the handling of the Greenland issue under the new multilateral auspices. For example, when the decision to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was made, Trade Minister Jens Otto Krag wrote in his diary that one of the arguments favouring the decision was “the USA’s *de facto* partial occupation of Greenland (which we do not possess the power to prevent)”. This decision meant that the Soviets would perceive Denmark as favouring the West under any circumstances. Furthermore, since the US was going to “keep” Greenland anyway, Denmark, in Krag’s opinion, might as well get something out of the matter.⁶⁷

However, as a multilateral framework, NATO offered limited support only as a formality, insofar as Denmark was able to use it to achieve a more equal position in negotiations with the US. Thus, Denmark emphasised discussion of Greenland’s defence in NATO’s special planning group for the northern part of the Atlantic,

⁶⁵ Detective Inspector Karl Kirkegård (Bluie West One) to the governor of South Greenland, 8 June 1949, Greenland National Archives, governor of South Greenland, archive 1949, box 161. The report explained that the American authorities were willing to make an agreement with the Greenland authorities for the provision of vital medical services.

⁶⁶ The entire population of Greenland thanked the American authorities in a letter dated 18 October 1952, Greenland National Archives, Head of the Provincial Council’s archive, 1952 copybooks, no. 7525.

⁶⁷ Thorsten Borring Olesen and Poul Villaume, *op. cit.* pp. 193-200, note 57; Bo Lidegaard, *op. cit.* pp. 480-481, note 56; Bo Lidegaard, *Jens Otto Krag 1914-1961*, 2001, pp. 336 & 413; Poul Villaume, *Allieret med forbehold. Danmark, NATO og den kolde krig. En studie i dansk sikkerhedspolitik 1949-1961* [*Conditional Allies - Denmark, NATO and the Cold War: A Study in Danish Security Policy 1949-1961*], 1995, pp. 107-108.

the Ocean group, but it was soon evident that bilateral negotiations could not be avoided. Over the next two years' discussions and negotiations concerning the American presence in Greenland, the central bone of contention was that the American negotiators did not – as did the Danes – see it as their purpose to assist Denmark in Greenland's defence as part of a multilateral defence treaty (NATO). Instead, they sought to involve Greenland in the overriding strategic struggle between the US and the Soviet Union. In light of this struggle, there was constant internal disagreement within circles of American national security policy about the extent to which America's allies could and should be more than onlookers. On the other hand, both ideological and bureaucratic currents and interests in the US often disparaged and downgraded the influence of their allies; these actions impacted the negotiations with Denmark about Greenland.

In 1947, the American Air Force became an independent service and, from that time onward, the importance of Thule played a role in plans for the development of a strategic air capability. In general, Greenland's significance in the Cold War's nuclear and airborne military strategies increased during this time. From 1950 onward, and with the increase in tensions following North Korea's attack on South Korea in June, the Thule Air Base was given a direct role in supporting the American mid-range bombers, which functioned as deterrents to the Soviet Union. At the same time, the new so-called Polar Strategy, which described the placement of deterrent forces either on bases in the US or on forward airbases in the Arctic, meant that Greenland's importance increased. With the increasing operational radius of bombers, the US now began to also anticipate the potential for Soviet air attacks over the Polar Regions; this anticipation, too, enhanced Greenland's importance for American air defences.⁶⁸

In April 1951, after two weeks of final negotiations in Copenhagen, a new agreement was signed between Denmark and the US for the defence of Greenland, effective June of that year.⁶⁹ The new agreement meant that the 1941 agreement was terminated, and that the American presence in Greenland thereafter would be regulated by an agreement negotiated between the governments of the two countries. This new agreement was of the utmost importance to the Danish government. Simultaneously, the NATO context was explicitly stated: The negotiations had been conducted at NATO's request with the intent of entering into

⁶⁸ Nikolaj Petersen, *Grønland i global sikkerhedspolitik* [Greenland and Global Security Policy], SNU, 1992, pp. 23-27; Jørgen Taagholt and Jens Claus Hansen, *Grønland i et sikkerhedspolitisk perspektiv* [Greenland from the Perspective of National Security Policy], The Danish Atlantic Treaty Association, 1999, pp. 23f; Bo Lidegaard, *op. cit.* pp. 480-481, note 56; *Grønland under den kolde krig. Dansk og amerikansk sikkerhedspolitik 1945-68* [Greenland during the Cold War: Danish and American National Security Policy 1945-68], pp. 99-100 & 110-117.

⁶⁹ The concluding negotiations in Copenhagen are portrayed in *Grønland under den kolde krig. Dansk og amerikansk sikkerhedspolitik* [Greenland during the Cold War: Danish and American National Security Policy 1945-68], pp. 127ff; the agreement itself is reviewed in pp. 159-164. See also: Bo Lidegaard, *op. cit.* pp. 491-497, note 56. Denmark had wanted the negotiations to be conducted under multilateral NATO auspices, but this demand was rejected by the US, which in return agreed to a request from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the negotiations take place in Copenhagen rather than Washington. In this way, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was able to avoid including Ambassador Kauffmann in the Danish delegation, cf. Thorsten Borring Olesen and Poul Villaume, *op. cit.* p. 195, note 57.



Danish-American defence negotiations in 1951. Left to right are Lieutenant Colonel F.B. Larsen; Eske Brun, head of the Greenland Department in the Prime Minister's Office; Deputy Under-Secretary of State C.A.C. Brun; Commander Frits Hammer Kjølsten; and chief of section Erik Schram-Nielsen at negotiations of the Greenland agreement in March 1951. (Photograph Mogens Holmberg, The Royal Library, map and photo archive)

agreements for the use of facilities in Greenland for the defence of that country and the rest of the area within the North Atlantic Treaty. In accordance with Article XIV, the agreement was to remain in force for the same duration as the North Atlantic Treaty (NATO).⁷⁰ While the 1941 agreement gave the US unlimited rights for military dispositions in Greenland, guidelines were agreed upon in the new agreement for the American presence in so-called defence areas, i.e. areas that the governments of both countries, on the basis of NATO's defence plans, regarded as necessary for the development of Greenland's and the rest of the North Atlantic Treaty territories' defence. In these defence areas, the US was given almost unhindered access to establish military dispositions, including access "to construct, install, maintain and operate the facilities" and "to store sup-

⁷⁰ The agreement is printed in *Grønland under den kolde krig. Dansk og amerikansk sikkerhedspolitik 1945-68* [Greenland during the Cold War: Danish and American National Security Policy 1945-68], Attachment, pp. 144-153; see also: *Grønland under den kolde krig. Dansk og amerikansk sikkerhedspolitik 1945-68* [Greenland during the Cold War: Danish and American National Security Policy 1945-68], pp. 159-162.

plies” (Article II, 3(b)(ii)). This access should occur “without prejudice to the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Denmark over such defence area and the natural right of the competent Danish authorities to free movement everywhere in Greenland” (Article II, 3(b)). The agreement also made it clear that America’s armed forces had the right of free access to and movement between defence areas through Greenland, including its territorial waters, by land, sea, and air. American aircraft were permitted to fly over any part of Greenland, including its territorial waters (Article V, 3). The United States was also awarded “the right to exercise exclusive jurisdiction over those defence areas in Greenland” (Article VIII) for which it was responsible. Danish laws were not to prevent admission to or departure from defence areas containing any military or civilian personnel (Article IX).

One notable feature of the agreement was that it prepared the way for a sharp demarcation between the defence areas and Greenland society. This demarcation was of extraordinary importance to Denmark, especially because the developments in and around Greenland during World War II had led the Danes to feel that they could “lose” Greenland. Article VI states that the US and American nationals in Greenland will give due respect to:

[A]ll the laws, regulations and customs pertaining to the local population and the internal administration of Greenland, and every effort will be made to avoid any contact between United States personnel and the local population which the Danish authorities do not consider desirable for the conduct of operations under this Agreement.⁷¹

In its deliberations, the Foreign Affairs Committee prioritised avoidance of contact between Greenlanders and American personnel over aspects of international security and military strategy. Consequently, the military and nuclear strategic significance of the Thule Air Base and the other American bases was not mentioned when the draft treaty was presented to the Committee immediately prior to the conclusion of the negotiations. Such overriding questions of nuclear strategy were not touched upon in the negotiations. Denmark did not wish to seek information about, nor influence, something they only possessed limited knowledge about and could never have any decisive influence on anyway. Neither the Danish Parliament nor the Foreign Affairs Committee was informed about the details of the defence areas the agreement identified. A technical attachment to the treaty described the demarcation of the defence areas, including the procedure for their future expansion or increase in activity, and was thus classified as secret. Correspondingly, two protocols resulting from Danish initiatives were classified as confidential. These classifications did not apply just to the contents

⁷¹ *Grønland under den kolde krig. Dansk og amerikansk sikkerhedspolitik 1945-68* [Greenland during the Cold War: Danish and American National Security Policy 1945-68], Attachment, pp. 149-150.

alone, but also to the existence of the three documents.⁷² The government, however, undoubtedly notified the leaders of the Social Democrats informally about the secret addenda. All in all, a number of central issues concerning how the US could use the bases remained vague, and the matter of the Greenland treaty's contents and strategic importance were therefore consigned to Arctic twilight.⁷³ When seen in the strategic context of the Cold War, and from the viewpoint of past standards for openness in Western democracies, there were good reasons for this twilight. Nevertheless, the seed for future conflicts within and between democratic societies had been planted.

Negotiations for the new defence treaty proved exceptionally arduous on certain points. From the Danish perspective, an American proposal made at the beginning of the negotiations in favour of extensive base rights was, in particular, unacceptable since it "apparently did not give any room at all for any form of Danish military activity in Greenland". In this regard, the American proposal was "barely usable as a basis for negotiation".⁷⁴ The Danish delegation, with the approval of the Foreign Minister and the Minister of Defence, countered with a proposal presented to the Americans. They commented that the principles contained therein must, on all counts, be accepted for an agreement to be reached. They also presented an earnest appeal to the American delegation, urging them to contribute to a satisfactory result for both parties. The Americans thereafter declared that they were willing to comply with Danish requests on many important points. Overall, the amount of substance – which can be easily overestimated – in the Danish ultimatum-like counterproposal is difficult to determine, but it seems that the Danish acknowledgement of, and tactical insistence on, both common and conflicting Danish and American interests undoubtedly resulted in American concessions. Denmark occasionally voiced dissatisfaction with America's lack of respect for Denmark's sovereignty over Greenland. However, the Danish policy – acknowledgement of and tactical insistence on both common and conflicting Danish and American interests – made it much easier to combine a merely reasonable and credible Danish sovereignty over Greenland with the extensive American defensive and political commitment in Greenland.

The proposal for the approval of the treaty was laid before Parliament by Foreign Minister Ole Bjørn Kraft on 18 May 1951.⁷⁵ The proposal was read for the first time on 22 May, and after a second reading on 1 June, it passed with 80 votes

⁷² The Danish National Archives, UM. 105.D.1.a., Note dated 7 April 1951; The Danish National Archives, UM. 105.D.1.a., letter of 1 June 1951 to Ambassador H. Hjort-Nielsen, London.

⁷³ *Grønland under den kolde krig. Dansk og amerikansk sikkerhedspolitik 1945-68* [Greenland during the Cold War: Danish and American National Security Policy 1945-68], pp. 156-162 & 166-170; Thorsten Borring Olesen and Poul Villaume, *op. cit.* p. 197, note 57.

⁷⁴ The Danish National Archives, UM. 105.D.1.a., "Report to the Government from the Delegation Appointed for Negotiations with the USA about the rights of the American Military Forces in Greenland", 9 April 1951. A detailed account of the negotiations can be found in: *Grønland under den kolde krig. Dansk og amerikansk sikkerhedspolitik 1945-68* [Greenland during the Cold War: Danish and American National Security Policy 1945-68], pp. 127-156.

⁷⁵ *Rigsdagstidende. Forhandlinger i Folketinget 1950-51* [Rigsdagstidende. Debates in the Folketing 1950-51], 18 May 1951, sections 3662-3690.

(Social Democrats, Denmark's Liberal Party, Conservative People's Party, and the Justice Party of Denmark) to seven (Communist Party of Denmark), while the Social Liberals abstained.⁷⁶

It is worth noting that the people of Greenland were not involved in nor asked for counsel about the negotiations with the US concerning this Greenland treaty. The Greenland press mentioned the treaty the day after its accession.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the Provincial Council reviewed the treaty at a meeting in the autumn of 1951, at which point the Council took note of the review and expressed its satisfaction with the agreement. Great lengths were taken to present the agreement to the Provincial Council as an extension of the North Atlantic Treaty, rather than as an independent agreement between Denmark and the US. Effort was also put into presenting how it differed significantly from the 1941 agreement.⁷⁸

Everything considered, the US essentially gained an unlimited military presence in Greenland. That presence formed the background for what has been called the "Greenland card", an expression defined as something the US owed Denmark in payment for this right. The Greenland card implied that Denmark had something to use in negotiations with the US, and that it could conduct a policy based on the idea that "one good turn deserves another" in relation to the superpower. After 1951, this card was apparently mostly used defensively against the US and other allies to fend off accusations of neglecting to make sufficient contributions towards the alliance's defence. From the Danish point of view, it can be argued that American base facilities in Greenland should be counted as part of the Danish defence contribution. On the basis of this reasoning, Denmark would have reaped financial benefits by saving on its defence budget by allowing the Americans to exploit Greenland for military purposes.

Despite the fact that Denmark thus possessed an advantage with the Greenland card in negotiations, there is no indication that the relatively low Danish defence budgets were directly related to the American mandate on Greenland. It is also doubtful how far the Danish government was prepared to go in using this card. Successive Danish governments clearly had little opportunity to follow American military activities in Greenland, and they did not seem to have had any wish to do so.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 22 May 1951, sections 3700-3776 and 1 June 1951, sections 4229-4271.

⁷⁷ Jens Heinrich, *Statusændringen i 1953. Grønlandernes forhold til Danmark i perioden 1945-1954* [*Change of Status in 1953: The Greenlanders' Relationship with Denmark from 1945 to 1954*], note, 2006, pp. 11 & 15.

⁷⁸ Telegram to the Prime Minister's Office from Greenland's Provincial Council, 3 November 1951, Greenland National Archives, Provincial Council's archive, box: Provincial Council 1951. 005.5.1-9. Folio: Meeting of the Provincial Council 1951. Defence Agreement. Journal no. 005.5.0551; A note dated 21 September 1951 prepared for the presentation to the Provincial Council states that the agreement "is intended to lay down the rules under the main agreement between the North Atlantic Treaty states and is thus not an independent agreement between Denmark and the USA". Greenland National Archives, Provincial Council's archive, folio: Meeting of the Provincial Council 1951. Defence Agreement. Journal no. 005.5.1351.

⁷⁹ Poul Villaume, *op. cit.* pp. 850-852, note 67.

One other important limitation here is that only in a limited tactical context did Danish decision makers perceive the US as an adversary from whom payment could be exacted for the bases in Greenland. The support of the US and the American bases in Greenland was fundamentally regarded as a necessary counterweight to the Soviet Union. As an ally of the US, Denmark also held a basic interest in the American military's countermeasures against the Soviet Union. Danish decision makers acknowledged that Greenland had a decisive role to play in this matter – although this acknowledgement, especially at the beginning, was based on a limited knowledge of American strategy. Simply put, Denmark's reliance on the American military's strategic interests in Greenland was also a consequence of Denmark's position on the side of the West in the Cold War, but the social democrats, liberals, and conservatives also realised that Danish and American interests did not always coincide. Within this framework, however, it can be said that Denmark's sovereignty over Greenland afforded the country a certain status in relation to the US. Negotiations with Denmark were accorded a more important role in American security policy.

In the spring of 1953, events occurred that illustrate the special interweaving of American and Western defence interests, Greenland's status as a colony, and Danish interest in preventing close relations between the local population and American base personnel.⁸⁰ The 116 inhabitants of the Inughuit settlement of Uummannaq, which was located close to the Thule Air Base, were given a few days' notice by the Danish government and ordered to move to Qaanaaq, 120 km further north.⁸¹ The possibility of moving the settlement had already been discussed by Danish and American civil servants in the summer of 1951, but after a Danish study of conditions at the location was performed, the matter was put on ice. The background behind the matter in the spring of 1953 was that, in the wake of various deliberations by the Pentagon (about which the Danish authorities had been kept informed since late summer of 1952), the American government told the Greenland Department at the Prime Minister's Office at the end of April that they wished to set up anti-aircraft artillery on the peninsula where the above-mentioned settlement was located. This wish was accepted by the Greenland Department on the condition that the US paid all expenses incurred for moving the settlement. The removal took place at the end of May, i.e. just days before it became apparent that the Constitution also applied to Greenland. No direct request for Denmark to move the settlement has been proven, but such a request would be superfluous since Denmark's primary interest was to avoid close contact between the Greenlanders and the Americans. The decision to make the move

⁸⁰ *Grønland under den kolde krig. Dansk og amerikansk sikkerhedspolitik 1945-68* [Greenland during the Cold War: Danish and American National Security Policy 1945-68], Attachment, pp. 185-196; Thorsten Borring Olesen and Poul Villaume, *op. cit.* p. 199, note 57.

⁸¹ *Beretning om flytningen af Thulebefolkningen i 1953* [Report on the Transfer of the Thule Population in 1953], submitted by the Commission of Enquiry on 4 June 1987, pp. 5-11 & 61-193. The commission of enquiry was appointed following the publication of Jens Brøsted and Mads Fægteborg, *Thule fangerfolk og militæranlæg* [Thule – Sealers and Military Bases], 1985.



Thule Air Base played an important role in the American Cold War strategy. From 1958-1965, the Americans had different nuclear weapons on the base, cf. the Report on Greenland (1997). (Photograph Jette Bang, the Arctic Institute)

was made under *Danish* auspices, and to camouflage the case, a press release was sent out via Ritzau's Bureau on 11 May 1953 that presented the move as voluntary and desired by the local Greenlanders, who wished to find better conditions for sealing.⁸² The Greenland Department, in particular, had been anxious about fraternisation between local Greenlanders and Americans at the nearby base for some time. They wanted an "iron curtain" around it just like the other American bases in Greenland. In addition, the Danish authorities were undoubtedly worried that the sealers' traditional way of life would suffer due to their proximity to the base. Nor is there any doubt that the overriding military strategic developments – and the American interests in the role of Thule Air Base in them – constituted the underlying and compelling reasons for the inhabitants to be moved.⁸³

Economic dependence

The objective of this section is to analyse the consequences that the structure of Greenland's economy in the middle of the twentieth century had for Greenland's

⁸² *Beretning om flytningen af Thulebefolkningen i 1953* [Report on the Transfer of the Thule Population in 1953], submitted by the investigating committee of 4 June 1987, pp. 61f, 106f & 185-193.

⁸³ *Ibid.* p. 11.

economic dependence on the rest of the world. This section does not describe all aspects of Greenland's economy. Focusing on this specific period of time – the middle of the twentieth century – means that a long-term perspective ought to be included since one of the questions that arises is whether or not the business structures in Greenland had undergone significant changes in their ties to the outside world.

In an analysis of the economic dependence of a state or a particular geographic entity on the world at large, a distinction can be made between two dimensions of dependence: Sensitivity and vulnerability. Both dimensions are important for describing particular aspects of Greenland's dependence on the outside world. Sensitivity indicates the extent of the external economic ties as well as their type, intensity, and internal impact within the scope of the policies being applied at any given time. Vulnerability refers to the economic and political costs of developing the capability to counter or adapt to changes in the external links. Thus, the dependence of a state or a particular geographic entity is assessed both in the short and long term. In the long term, dependence, in the sense of vulnerability, is partly determined by the existence of external alternatives and partly by internal economic, social, and political flexibility. In both respects, the existence of external sensitivity to some degree – i.e. the existence of a minimum of external economic links – is a necessary condition for these links to have an internal effect and for actual vulnerability to exist.⁸⁴ These dimensions of dependence can, for example, shed light on the way in which the patterns of a country's foreign trade, over time, tell us something about the development of that country or area's economic dependence on the outside world.⁸⁵

It is important to note that this concept of economic dependence does not just refer to “something happening” within an economic sphere. What is happening in the economic sphere is the starting point, but the notion of vulnerability also comprises some very important political dimensions and assumptions. The use of the above-mentioned expressions “external alternatives” and social and political “flexibility” in reference to determinants for vulnerability implies that given external alternatives – ones that can reduce vulnerability, and what can be achieved by demonstrating social or political “flexibility” – must accord with the political goals of a state or other territorial area. Vulnerability is thus also a matter of the political goals and values of the society concerned, as is its willingness to consider whether or not these goals and values should be changed.

By applying this concept of dependence to Greenland, it can be quickly and simply concluded that the country progressed from a low economic dependence on the outside world at the beginning of the twentieth century to a significantly

⁸⁴ An important presentation of the different dimensions of dependence can be found in: Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Independence*, Third Edition, 2001, pp. 9-17.

⁸⁵ Bo Anker Svendsen, “Indflydelse og stress: Danmarks udenrigshandel 1948-77” [“Influence and Stress: Denmark's Foreign Trade 1948-77”], Niels Amstrup and Ib Faurby (ed.), *Studier i Dansk Udenrigspolitik* [Studies in Danish Foreign Policy], 1978, pp. 263-298, analyse how much sensitivity and vulnerability were concealed in Denmark's trade relations over a period of thirty years.

greater dependence by the middle of the century. In the two hundred years after Hans Egede embarked on the colonisation of Greenland in 1721, Greenland's economy was mainly based on sealing.⁸⁶ Hunting of these animals formed the basis for the population's daily existence and a self-sufficient natural economy: Food, clothing, tools, boats, fuel, and also, to a certain extent, housing. The limited economic links to the outside world meant that sensitivity was low and, therefore, Greenlanders were not vulnerable to changes in these external ties. However, the first decade of the twentieth century saw a considerable decline in sealing as a result of the decreasing number of seals, which was caused by a milder climate and the scarcer occurrence of field ice. Thus, sealing could no longer support their livelihood as its most essential component.⁸⁷ The change in climate did, however, increase the number of fish, primarily cod and halibut; cod fishing thus became the new main industry, especially in South Greenland. In order for the fishermen to buy the consumer goods and production equipment they wanted, they had to sell their catches and a fishing industry had to be developed. The development of this industry meant that a primarily self-sufficient, natural economy underwent a radical change to a primarily monetary economy, where all important consumer goods and production equipment had to be imported. Greenlanders thus became highly dependent on these economic links to the outside world. Before this change, isolation from the outside world would have caused only minor inconvenience for the bulk of the population, but after the transition from sealing to fishing, any disruption in connections with the outside world could have easily been catastrophic for the population as a whole.⁸⁸

Dependence and sensitivity also have an export aspect. A society with very few export options is extremely dependent on price fluctuations for these goods. Therefore, the cod fishing venture could also be regarded as very economically risky.⁸⁹ The main exports around 1950 were fish (particularly salted fish) and animal oil (seal and whale oil as well as shark liver oil). Prices for both kinds of goods were subject to sudden and sharp fluctuations. The transition from sealing to fishing had, in general, made Greenland dependent on international markets, and this dependence resulted in Greenland's export goods fluctuating sharply in price. Greenland's close geographical location to the American market for fish gave the Greenlanders an advantage over European producers, counter-balanc-

⁸⁶ Erhvervsmæssige og Økonomiske Forhold, *Grønlandskommissionens Betænkning 5* [Industrial and Economic Conditions, *the Greenland Commission's Report 5*], February 1950, pp. 11f; Mads Lidgaard, *Grønlands Historie* [History of Greenland], 1974, pp. 170f.

⁸⁷ *Report Concerning Dr Victor Hoo's and Mr Wilfrid Benson's Trip to Greenland 1950*, UN Department of Trusteeship and Non-Self-Governing Territories, July 1950, the Arctic Institute, pp. 14-26; Erik L.B. Smidt, "Om overgangen fra fangst til fiskeri i Vestgrønland" ["On the Transition from Sealing to Fishing in West Greenland"], *Greenland*, vol. 5, no. 5, 1983, pp. 125-143.

⁸⁸ Eske Brun, "Grønland under den Anden Verdenskrig" ["Greenland during the Second World War"], Kaj Birket-Smith (ed.), *Grønlandsbogen* [The Greenland Book], I, 1950, p. 305.

⁸⁹ Erhvervsmæssige og Økonomiske Forhold, *Grønlandskommissionens Betænkning 5* [Industrial and Economic Conditions, *the Greenland Commission's Report 5*], February 1950, pp. 14f; *Report Concerning Dr Victor Hoo's and Mr Wilfrid Benson's Trip to Greenland 1950*, UN Department of Trusteeship and Non-Self-Governing Territories, July 1950, the Arctic Institute, Copenhagen, p. 21.

ing factors that increased sensitivity. Exports to the American market had increased sharply during and after the war, giving rise to demands from American producers to limit imports from Greenland.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, in the middle of the twentieth century, it was obvious in any case that Greenland's location near major North American markets also gave Greenland advantages over other producers. At the same time, however, their concentration on only a few export industries and a few export countries led to a high degree of vulnerability.

This vulnerability was not compensated by any internal social or economic flexibility; primarily, no obvious alternative industrial possibilities existed. Yet, when viewed from a broader perspective, there was, without a doubt, a strong desire on the part of both the Greenlanders and the Danish authorities to limit the vulnerability. Improvements in education facilities and in the wretched state of public health (tuberculosis) comprised the most important measures for limiting vulnerability on the part of the public institutions that were responsible for supplying the necessary services. However, the authorities' actions had to be combined with a much more differentiated economy in order to seriously reduce the vulnerability. This issue was the core problem in Greenland's increased economic dependence on the outside world in the mid-twentieth century.

Conclusion

When sovereignty and self-determination are viewed in the light of dependence on the rest of the world, and with the ensuing limitations on and opportunities for a state's freedom of action, it becomes clearer that the essence of sovereignty is thus: That sovereign states or other entities with the right of self-determination determine, on their own, how they will balance conflicting internal and external objectives and measures. This balancing act is, as a rule, difficult and confusing, particularly in states with close economic, political, and cultural ties with other countries. Nevertheless, the essence of the matter is that in the final analysis, states or other entities with the right of self-determination have the responsibility to decide which consequences they are willing to risk or hope for. Combining the perspectives of sovereignty and self-determination with dependence illustrates that political decisions are made only in exceptional cases in a situation of either absolute necessity or total freedom of action. This illustration leads to a two-sided conclusion – namely, that a simple reference to dependence on the outside world cannot be used by decision makers to abdicate their responsibility, and that a distinction must always be made between sovereignty and the right of self-deter-

⁹⁰ Erhvervsmæssige og Økonomiske Forhold, *Grønlandskommissionens Betænkning 5* [Industrial and Economic Conditions, *the Greenland Commission's Report 5*], February 1950, p. 16.

mination on the one hand, and control of the consequences of decisions on the other.⁹¹

In this analysis of the interplay of sovereignty, self-determination, and dependence throughout the sequence of events in the Greenland issue, the limitations on the freedom of action of the Danish decision makers are shown to have often been much more obvious than the opportunities. A corresponding conclusion applies to a much greater extent when reviewing the Greenlanders' opportunities for action. Their colonial status never allowed them *to take a position and face the consequences*. With regard to Denmark's limited opportunities for action, however, it is important to emphasise that – during a time when the struggles against Nazi Germany and later the Communist Soviet Union were decisive issues on the Western agenda – Danish opportunities for action were restricted by their choosing of sides, even though this decision was only forced upon the country by Nazi Germany. But also within the Greenland issue during the Cold War, Denmark still had plenty of opportunities for using its sovereignty and right of self-determination to make choices other than those that were made. Situations where the Danish decision-making processes at home clearly had problems are conspicuous.

⁹¹ Cf. among others: Alan James. *Sovereign Statehood*, pp. 169-194; Kenneth N. Waltz, *op. cit.* p. 96, note 13. See also: Robert Jackson, *The Global Covenant: Human Conduct in a World of States*, 2000, pp. 308-315 (re: "The responsibility of Sovereignty").

4 · The international context: The decolonisation process in the UN

Erik Beukel

Introduction

From an international perspective, the process of decolonisation and its manifestation in the UN were the most significant developments that made Greenland's constitutional position topical in the years prior to the changes made in the Constitution in 1953.¹ As explained in chapter 7, in 1946, Denmark immediately decided that Greenland should be considered a non-self-governing territory, i.e. a colony that Denmark was obligated to submit information about to the UN in compliance with the UN Charter, Article 73 (e). Constitutionally, colonial status is not an unequivocal concept, but the Greenland Commission's report from 1950 enumerates many unique features that defined Greenland's position, in relation to Denmark, as "a colony subject to its mother country". These features included: (1) the Danish legislative body's regulation of the laws for Greenland, regardless of the fact that Greenlanders were not represented in the Danish Parliament; (2) the 1920 Constitution's inapplicability to Greenland; (3) Greenlanders' award of Danish citizenship although they were, in principal, not covered by Danish law, but rather by special Greenland statutes; and (4) Greenland's closing off – neither Danes nor foreigners were permitted access to the country without permission from the Danish government.²

The issue of greatest significance for politicians and officials in Copenhagen, after the decision that Greenland should be classified as a colony, was how the Greenland issue was handled in the UN as a part of decolonisation. As discussed further in chapter 7, Denmark was uncomfortable with the status of colonial power in the UN. Danish UN delegates made a great effort to ensure that the regulation of the decolonisation process was designed to prevent any unnecessary obstacles from hindering Denmark's objective – the integration of Greenland into the Kingdom of Denmark without too many troublesome objec-

¹ Gudmundur Alfredsson, "Greenland and the Law of Political Decolonization", *German Yearbook of International Law*, vol. 25, 1982, pp. 290-308; Gudmundur Alfredsson, "Greenland under Chapter XI of the United Nations Charter: A Continuing International Law Dispute", Sjúrdur Skaale (ed.), *The Right To National Self-Determination: The Faroe Islands and Greenland*, 2004, pp. 49-94.

² Politiske og Administrative Forhold. Retsplejen [Political and Administrative Conditions: Judicial Procedures, *Grønlandskommissionens Betænkning 2* [The Greenland Commission's Report 2], February 1950, p. 8. See also: Axel Kjær Sørensen, "Ophævelsen af Grønlands kolonistatus – et grønlandsk krav?" ["Lifting Greenland's colonial status: A demand from Greenland?"], *Historie*, vol. 12, nos. 1-2, 1979, p. 162. A more detailed delimitation of the concept of a colony as expressed by provisions in the UN Charter pertaining to non-self-governing territories is discussed in the section "Normative framework".

tions within the UN.³ For Denmark, compliance with the UN Charter and the enactments of UN agencies, or at least *the perception* of the country as loyal to the UN, played an important role. At the same time, the asymmetry of the perspectives is noteworthy. In the context of the UN, the Greenland issue was a completely secondary topic compared to other issues in the decolonisation process. This asymmetry comprised a significant framework for the UN's treatment of the Greenland issue.

In order to more precisely illustrate the process of decolonisation as the general background for making the Greenland issue topical, it is useful to distinguish between the idea of decolonisation as a normative principle, on the one hand, and the organisational principles and instruments that were used to shape and influence the decolonisation process, on the other. The normative framework includes general principles regarding what is fair and reasonable as well as more concrete principles concerning rights and obligations pertaining to decolonisation. The organisational instruments are, in part, rules that either require or prohibit certain actions under the auspices of the UN. They are also decision-making procedures in the UN concerning decolonisation.

A combination of the normative framework of the decolonisation process and the organisational instruments results in a decolonisation *regime*. This concept is defined by its application in international studies.⁴ The purpose of the following assessment of the decolonisation regime in the UN is to chart the development of the process from 1946 to 1954, during which the normative principles for the decolonisation process led to organisational decisions and initiatives in the UN about non-self-governing territories. What were the central features of the development of this organisational apparatus in the UN? The other chapters that examine this issue (chapters 5, 7, 8, 10 and 11) deal with Denmark's participation in the development of the UN's decolonisation system and its subsequent tangible influence on the formulation of Danish policies pertaining to the issue of Greenland.

Normative framework

The UN Charter's declaration concerning non-self-governing territories (Chapter XI) constitutes a central part of the normative framework for the decolonisation process. To provide a cohesive picture of the normative framework, any study of the provisions in Chapter XI should include two points. First, an account is given of the development around the beginning of the twentieth century of the initial germination of the idea of limiting colonialism – an account which culminates

³ Kristine Midtgaard, *Småstat, Magt og Sikkerhed. Danmark og FN 1949-65* [*Small State, Power and Safety: Denmark and the UN 1949-65*], 2005, pp. 234-235.

⁴ For the concept of regimes, see Andreas Hasenclever, Peter Mayer, and Volker Rittberger, *Theories of International Regimes*, 1997, pp. 8f.

in Chapter XI. Following the detailed assessment of Chapter XI is a discussion of an issue that had a significant effect on the concrete impact of Chapter XI in the late 1940s and early 1950s – namely, the decolonisation policy of the United States.

The initial germination

The turn of the twentieth century witnessed the germination of internationally normative principles that would eventually limit colonialism. The system of colonies became “internationalised” through international treaties as countries sought to limit or eliminate certain abuses of the system and establish consideration for the importance of the “spiritual and material welfare” of colonial populations. At the same time, the colonial powers struggled to prevent infighting over their possessions in Africa. It was considered self-evident, however, that the colonial system should be preserved, both because the European colonial powers had differing interests in the system, and because they saw it as their duty to spread civilisation to other parts of the world. After World War I, the League of Nations’ mandate system meant the introduction of a moderate though highly limited international monitoring of the behaviour of colonial powers that was solely restricted to the states defeated in the war – specifically, the former Ottoman Empire and Imperial Germany’s overseas possessions. The predominant normative understanding remained that the colonial system needed to be improved – not disposed of entirely. Analysed from a historical perspective, this normative understanding represents a turning point in the history of colonialism in that the idea of holding colonial powers accountable for their actions became institutionalised in international relations.⁵ Simultaneously, it was also highly significant that the idea of “the people’s right to self-determination” was chiefly promoted by the American President, Woodrow Wilson (see chapter 3).

During and immediately after World War II, the normative framework changed in many ways; initially, it was especially evident in the change in attitudes toward colonialism in the Western world. The political climate surrounding how the colonial system was treated changed in comparison to the period after World War I; patriarchal viewpoints were replaced by ideas of equality among peoples and the right of independence. In contrast to the period after World War I, these principles and norms were also regarded as applicable to the world outside Europe. This change was chiefly reflected in America’s position. Shortly after America’s entry into the War, the US State Department developed plans whereby all “dependent peoples” should be subject to a general international guardianship led by a global international organisation in preparation for

⁵ Wm. Roger Louis, “The Era of the Mandates System and the Non-European World”, Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (eds.), *The Expansion of International Society*, 1984, pp. 201-213; Brita Skottsberg, *FN och Kolonialproblemen [The UN and the Colonial Problem]*, 1956, pp. 5-15; and Brita Skottsberg Åhman, “Kolonialsystemets ‘Internationalisering’” [“Internationalisation’ of the Colonial System”], *Festschrift for Georg Andrén on his seventieth birthday, 10 December 1960*, 1960, pp. 511f.



The final negotiations of the UN Charter in San Francisco in 1945 marked a break with the traditional colonial system. Adopted unanimously, the Charter took effect on 24 October 1945. (UN Photo and Film Collection, Roskilde University Library)

their complete political independence. President Roosevelt supported the plans, while other parts of the administration, among them members of the armed services, were sceptical. The British government was also divided; in particular, Prime Minister Churchill doubted the American President's view of the future. In the spring of 1945 in San Francisco during the concluding negotiations on the UN Charter, corresponding internal disagreement existed, especially in the American delegation, but generally there were important differences between the accommodating American position, which favoured a supervisory role for

the UN, and the more restrained British position.⁶ With the signing of the UN Charter and its provisions (see below), it became crucial that reforming and improving colonialism alone was no longer considered legitimate. The prevailing opinion was that the objective should be to abolish the colonial system altogether. Disagreement revolved around the timetable for the introduction of some kind of self-governance and independence.⁷

The UN Charter

The UN Charter only contains a few general provisions about the normative framework for decolonisation. Therefore, the dispute that arose from the interpretation and development of the UN Charter's provisions and the underlying interests and attitudes of the various countries was an important issue.

The "Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories" in Chapter XI of the UN Charter was a crucial innovation. Chapter XI applies to all non-self-governing territories. An assessment of the normative development shows that especially Article 73 (a)-(b) is of significance:

Members of the United Nations which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government recognize the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of these territories are paramount, and accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote to the utmost, within the system of international peace and security established by the present Charter, the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories, and to this end:

a. to ensure, with due respect for the culture of the peoples concerned, their political, economic, social and educational advancement, their just treatment, and their protection against abuses;

b. to develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions; according to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and their varying stages of advancement.⁸

⁶ Ruth B. Russell, assisted by Jeanette E. Muther, *History of the United Nations Charter: The Role of the United States 1940-1945*, The Brookings Institution, 1958, pp. 85f, 173f, 330f., 510f & 808f; Rudolf von Albertini, *Decolonization: The Administration and Future of the Colonies, 1919-1960*, 1982, pp. 20-29.

⁷ Robert H. Jackson, "The Weight of ideas in Decolonization: Normative Change in International Relations", Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, *Ideas & Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change, 1993*, pp. 118f.

⁸ <http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/unflag.htm>. On interpreting international law and Article 73, see chapter 5, pp. 79f.

These provisions were a compromise between the colonial powers and the countries behind mounting pressure to put an end to the colonial system – a compromise that had been difficult to reach during the negotiations on the wording of the Charter leading up to and during the San Francisco Conference in 1945. The wording “territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government” is an example of the ambiguous compromises the Charter in no way helps to elucidate.⁹ If self-government is intended to mean a democratic system of government, then reconciling this definition with the fact that a state is not required to have a democratic system of government to become a member of the UN is problematic. The wording to the effect that UN member states enter into a commitment to “develop self-government” and develop “free political institutions” was never intended to apply to member states without a democratic system of government, even if the choice of words in Article 73 does not actually preclude such an interpretation.¹⁰ The expression of non-self-governing *territories* was construed as meaning only non-self-governing *colonies*. However, the term colony is just as unclear as the term non-self-governing. Non-self-governing *states* are clearly not included, although it was often pointed out in the late 1940s and early 1950s that the newly emerged communist states in Eastern Europe were part of a Soviet imperial system and could be called Soviet colonies. Returning to the negotiations on the development of the UN Charter, the term colonies most likely only covered areas “inhabited by relatively primitive aborigines with a backward civilisation”. This wording is ostensibly taken from the Covenant of the League of Nations, Article 22, which refers to “territories ... inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world”.¹¹ In 1946, as a result of the linguistic uncertainty, the UN left it to member states to independently determine whether or not they controlled areas covered by Article 73 (see below).

Based on this information, an assessment of the further impact of the provisions of Article 73 must take into consideration that the excerpts quoted above contain some principles and norms that had never been recognised by an international organisation in a way that allowed them to be utilised in the continual push for decolonisation. It is especially important to note that the UN members responsible for the non-self-governing territories assumed a “sacred trust” by undertaking “to promote to the utmost [...] the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories”. To execute this task, consideration was to be given to the culture of the inhabitants in question as well as to their political, economic, social, and educational progress. Simultaneously, self-government was to be encouraged and the ongoing development of free political institutions was to be sup-

⁹ The following discussion is partly based on Hans Kelsen, *The Law of the United Nations: A Critical Analysis of Its Fundamental Problems*, 1951, pp. 555f.

¹⁰ See, for example, Robert A. Asher, Walter M. Kotschnig, William Adams Brown, Jr., James Frederick Green, Emil J. Sady and Associates, *The United Nations and Promotion of the General Welfare*, The Brookings Institution, 1957, pp. 832-837.

¹¹ Hans Kelsen, *op. cit.* pp. 555-556, note 9; http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp.

ported in keeping with the particular circumstances and level of development of each territory and its peoples. Previously, colonies were considered the business of their respective colonial powers, but Chapter XI of the UN Charter contained a principle that made the well-being of colonial people an international matter. The addition of principles and norms of this nature regarding non-self-governing territories to the UN Charter was an important first step toward what could become a more binding process of decolonisation. The actual impact of what was written in the Charter and the question of when interest in the well-being of colonial peoples and “the progressive development of their free political institutions, according to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and their varying stages of advancement” (cf. Article 73 (b)) constituted meddling in the internal affairs of colonial countries was uncertain and became a recurring bone of contention.¹²

As a whole, Chapter XI has been characterised as a “bill of rights” for non-self-governing peoples, and as previously in emerging Western democracies, it could be used to push for the realisation of political rights.¹³ A decisive factor after WWII was the desire for independence in the colonies that coincided with a widespread norm concerning peoples’ right of self-determination (see chapter 3). This norm was, in Western democracies, strongly supported by the US. In Western Europe, especially in England, France, and smaller countries such as Belgium and the Netherlands, the interests and political ideas had a different basis. There were a large number of economic and bureaucratic interests and immediate personal ties to the colonies that led away from the traditional American mindset. However, increasingly more people in Western Europe also wanted, one way or another, to modernise the colonial system and to comply with the economic and social development norms expressed in Article 73. The key point of contention in the UN became whether the provisions in Article 73 should be interpreted – as preferred by the colonial powers – as a declaration of intent to follow certain principles for an “enlightened colony power” without giving the UN or its members any authority to interfere, or if they should be interpreted – as preferred by the anti-colonialists – as a far-reaching contractual obligation for the UN to serve as the representative agency for the international community to steer decolonisation.¹⁴

If this conflict is regarded solely as a question of colonialism versus anti-colonialism, then, undoubtedly, the colonial powers were defensive from the outset.

¹² Inis L. Claude, Jr., *The Changing United Nations*, 1967, pp. 52-54; Sergio Armando Frazao, “International Responsibility for Non-self-governing Peoples”, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 296, November 1954, pp. 56-67; Rosalyn Higgins, *The Development of International Law through the Political Organs of the United Nations*, 1963, pp. 110f.

¹³ A. LeRoy Bennett, *International Organizations: Principles & Issues*, 1991, p. 364. Ralph Bunche described Chapter XI as “an international charter of colonial administration”, cf. Ralph J. Bunche, “Trusteeship and Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Charter of the United Nations”, *Department of State Bulletin*, 30 December 1945, p. 1040.

¹⁴ Peter Hansen, *Hvad er vi med i. En oversigt over internationale organisationer og Danmarks placering i dem [What have we joined? An overview of international organisations and Denmark’s position in them]*, 1968, p. 148.

If, however, the conflict is viewed as part of a larger mix of disputed political issues at the end of the 1940s and the early 1950s, when the Cold War seriously began to impact the political agenda, it is then clear that the European colonial powers also had certain advantages. To understand these circumstances, the American policy regarding decolonisation must be considered. The US played a central role in shaping the UN's decolonisation policy and in defining Western policy towards the Soviet Union. This involvement meant that certain American considerations contributed to the development of important aspects of the normative framework of the UN's decolonisation system.

*The US and decolonisation*¹⁵

The normative aspect of American politics concerning non-self-governing territories was driven by a complex set of views, ideas, and beliefs on a variety of levels of abstraction.¹⁶ From a historical perspective that emphasises the founding of the United States of America and the American self-perception of its mission as the champion of freedom, democracy, and the right of self determination (cf. chapter 3), the US was fundamentally against colonialism. However, as the Cold War developed, the American government often found itself in a dilemma with the threat from the totalitarian Soviet Union and the forced introduction of communism into half of Europe overshadowing everything else. For many Americans, it was regarded with some surprise that, while on the one hand colonies and former colonies were demanding independence from European colonial masters, on the other hand the threat of new Soviet imperialism was less important to those who were or had been oppressed. Other Americans were, however, aware that natural historical reasons existed for these varied normative attitudes, which made people who had lived or were living under colonialism view the Cold War differently than Americans. For example, John Foster Dulles, who served as Secretary of State for most of the Eisenhower administration and is not normally associated with this view, urged his compatriots to remember that while Americans were mainly concerned with the danger of international communism, many people in former colonies primarily feared injustice from the West – “for that is the rule they have actually known at first hand”.¹⁷

¹⁵ The US and the decolonisation process are also described in “The American UN initiative” in chapter 7 of this book.

¹⁶ The following discussion is inspired by Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, “Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework”, Goldstein and Keohane (eds.), *Ideas & Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, 1993, pp. 8-11. The two authors present a conceptual framework to analyse political ideas that differentiates between three types: basic views (“world views”), which are deeply rooted in a country's political history and culture; normative perceptions (“principled beliefs”) about political issue areas; and interpretations of concrete political causal relations (“causal beliefs”).

¹⁷ Radio- and TV speech by Dulles, 23 March 1956, reported by John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War*, rev. edition, 2005, p. 178.

In any event, the fact is that with European colonial powers as America's most important allies during the Cold War, the US softened its criticism of close allies, especially France and Great Britain.¹⁸ From an American viewpoint, it was also frustrating that while the movement for self-determination was one of the most powerful forces in the twentieth century, one that the US basically sympathised with, this movement often entertained a myth of self-sufficiency: All problems would disappear if only people had their own country.¹⁹ This belief meant that the US, in a tight spot, often found it necessary to reconcile strongly conflicting wishes and demands. Intensive deliberations about how these dilemmas should be handled took place especially in the State Department, the American UN mission, and the delegation to the General Assembly. There were various discussions and meetings with other Western countries, especially with the above-mentioned Western European colonies, about these problems.²⁰ Generally, American pressure on European colonial powers to give their colonies independence was greatest when the colonial powers were weak and the leaders of the independence movement were clearly anti-communist. Mediation between the disputing parties in these types of situations, however, also became a key focus in American policy.²¹ An important part of these efforts was that the US sought to push the European colonial powers toward a more accommodating decolonisation policy; the Americans particularly emphasised the necessity of carrying out reforms in the colonies. The logic behind the political reforms in the colonies was presented thus: Reforms would eliminate the basis for both local anti-colonial agitators and demagogues, as well as thwart Soviet attempts to exploit the situation.²²

Beginning in the late 1940s, American foreign policy was increasingly directed at supporting the allied European colonial powers as a counterweight to the Soviet Union. America's decolonisation policy became more focused on the overriding aim of containing the Soviet Union. It is important to emphasise, however, that the development of American policy cannot be viewed as the result of a

¹⁸ Robert A. Asher, Walter M. Kotschnig, William Adams Brown, Jr., James Frederick Green, Emil J. Sady and Associates, *op. cit.* pp. 825f, note 10.

¹⁹ Henry A. Byroade, "The World's Colonies and Ex-Colonies: A Challenge to America", *Department of State Bulletin*, 16 November 1953, pp. 655-660; Deputy Under-Secretary Murphy, "The Principle of Self-Determination", *Department of State Bulletin*, November 28, 1955, pp. 89-94.

²⁰ See e.g.: United States Delegation to the General Assembly, Position Paper. "Cessation of Transmission of Information on Non-Self-Governing Territories: General Assembly Resolution 222 (III) October 25, 1949", NARA, RG 59. Subject files of Benjamin Gerig, director of the Office of Dependent Area Affairs 1944-1959, box 19; United States Mission to the United Nations. Memorandum of Conversation, "Comments on the Dutch Paper Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories, August 13, 1952", NARA, RG 59. Subject Files of the Office of United Nations Political and Security Affairs, 1945-1957, box 11.

²¹ The clearest example of this focus is the American policy concerning the Netherlands and Indonesia, cf. Geir Lundestad, *Øst, vest, nord, sør. Hovedlinjer i internasjonal politikk 1945-1995* [East, West, North, South: Major Developments in International Politics 1945-1995], 1996, pp. 56 & 242f.

²² Michael H. Hunt, "Conclusions: The Decolonization Puzzle in US Policy: Promise versus Performance"; David Ryan and Victor Pungong (eds.), *The United States and Decolonization: Power and Freedom*, 2000, pp. 207-229, esp. p. 227; Julius W. Pratt, "Anticolonialism in United States Policy"; Robert Strausz-Hupé and Harry W. Hazard (Ed.), *The Idea of Colonialism*, 1958, pp. 114-151.

simple conflict between the concept of self-determination and security policy interests. American policy grew from a complex amalgam of ideas and interests on various levels. The exact nature of this development can be illustrated by examining some of the deliberations that took place within the broader American foreign policy decision-making community – namely, the influential Council on Foreign Relations.

At the end of 1948, the Council on Foreign Relations established a study group dealing with American policy covering non-self-governing territories.²³ The group was comprised of more than thirty members drawn from the American UN mission, Army and Navy²⁴, and other federal agencies. They were also drawn from universities, foundations, and industry. Among the most prominent members were Ralph Bunche, who was the UN mediator in Palestine at the time; future Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas; and John D. Rockefeller III. The study group was charged with clarifying the economic, strategic, political, and moral interests of the US regarding non-self-governing territories. What were America's goals going to be in general and in relation to specific geographical areas? What position should be taken in the UN?²⁵ Over the course of 1949, the group met nine times; the first six meetings focused on various geographical areas, such as Southeast Asia, the Caribbean, the Pacific, and Africa. The discussions were often intense, comprehensive, and highly analytical when, for example the focus shifted to America's experiences with its own colonies and possessions.

The importance of the Cold War and the growing conflict with the Soviet Union were discussed, but these topics did not dominate the deliberations in the sense that the guidelines for American policy had become clearly defined by the Cold War and the need to contain the Soviet Union. On the one hand, it was acknowledged that the American people were generally opposed to one people ruling another, but on the other hand, those involved in the formulation of American policy had to consider the pressure exerted by the Soviet Union in its attempts solely to strengthen its standing in the colonies. The members of the study group were clearly aware of the danger of communist or Soviet infiltration in non-self-governing territories. They were also aware of Soviet efforts to exploit the power vacuum in territories from which colonial powers had withdrawn. The study group pointed out that the US should not be snared by a Soviet trap by feeling forced to constantly support the administering countries. The US ought to try making the Western colonial powers aware that their behaviour sometimes

²³ Letter from the chairman of the study group, William F. Holland, Institute of Pacific Relations, 28 December 1948, Study Group on Non-Self-Governing Territories, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Council on Foreign Relations, Record of Groups, vol. XXIX, 1948-1949, box 44.

²⁴ The Department of Defence, Pentagon, was established the following year when the departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force were merged.

²⁵ Lawrence S. Finkelstein, Secretary of the Study Group, "Suggested Outline for Study Group on United States Policy Toward Non-Self-Governing Territories", 28 December 1948, and "Some Propositions About U.S. Policy Toward Non-Self-Governing Territories", 5 January 1949, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Council on Foreign Relations, Record of Groups, vol. XXIX, 1948-1949, box 44. Also included is a list of members who participated in group meetings and more.

played into the Soviets' game. Other contributions stressed that if American society alone was not sufficiently attractive to the former colonies, they would turn their attention to the Soviet Union. The US should be aware that the former colonies were less worried about totalitarianism than racial discrimination.²⁶ At this early stage of the Cold War (1949), discussions in the Council on Foreign Relations were generally marked by the significant care taken to not portray the connection between American policy toward the non-self-governing territories and the Cold War in one-dimensional terms.

In a summation of the American decolonisation policy in the autumn of 1949, the study group concluded that the US – due to its moral and economic position – possessed a greater influence on negotiations in the UN than any other country. Four factors in particular contributed to America's importance. As a former colony, the US had a long tradition of sympathy for the aspirations of colonial peoples; as a colonial power, the US could become a model for others through its policies; America's contribution to the formulation of relevant provisions in the UN Charter, such as Chapter XI; the US often had the decisive vote in UN agencies in disputes between administering and non-administering countries.²⁷

Organisational framework²⁸

Four aspects of the organisational framework of the UN decolonisation system are treated in this section. The first aspect deals with the dispute over whether or not agencies should be established to deal with decolonisation, in addition to the apparatus that had been outlined in separate chapters (Chapters XII and XIII) in the Charter to manage the UN trusteeship system. At the beginning of the 1950s, the trusteeship system applied to only ten per cent of the approximately two-hundred million people living in non-self-governing territories. Consequently, the anti-colonial coalition naturally focused on bringing these territories under organised UN supervision.²⁹ As an extension of this issue, the following aspects are also explored: The development of the organisational apparatus from an ad hoc group to a permanent information committee; the continual expansion of the scope of the work; and, finally, the general issue of draw-

²⁶ These topics are discussed at most meetings; see e.g.: United States Policy Toward Non-Self-Governing Territories, First Meeting, 12 January 1949, Second Meeting, 9 February 1949, Third Meeting, 16 March 1949, Fourth Meeting, 20 April 1949, and Seventh Meeting, 17 October 1949, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Council on Foreign Relations, Record of Groups, vol. XXIX, 1948-1949, box 44.

²⁷ Lawrence S. Finkelstein, "U.S. Policy in UN Organs Dealing with Non-Self-Governing Territories, October 13, 1949", Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Council on Foreign Relations, Record of Groups, vol. XXIX, 1948-1949, box 44.

²⁸ The following section describes the general structure of the organisational framework for decolonisation. Denmark's contribution – or opposition to – this framework is described in more detail in chapters 7, 8, 10, and 11.

²⁹ Richard J. Kozicki, "The United Nations and Colonialism", Robert Strausz-Hupé and Harry W. Hazard (eds.), *The Idea of Colonialism*, 1958, p. 403; *Issues before the Sixth General Assembly 1951*, 1951, p. 91.

ing up lists of factors for use in determining whether a territory had become self-governing (see chapters 8 and 10 for a detailed account of these lists).

An organisational apparatus?

The UN Charter does not establish an organisational apparatus to monitor the implementation of the principles and norms stated in Article 73 (a)-(b), cf. above. The only concrete regulation is the provision in Article 73 (e). According to this provision, UN members responsible for administering non-self-governing territories are obliged to:

[T]ransmit regularly to the Secretary-General for information purposes, subject to such limitation as security and constitutional considerations may require, statistical and other information of a technical nature relating to economic, social and educational conditions in the territories for which they are respectively responsible ...³⁰

The strife that took place in subsequent years regarding the role of the UN in the decolonisation process in non-self-governing territories was mainly a dispute over the organisational implementation of this provision. The administering countries maintained that the provision expressed their maximum obligation. It solely provided the basis for collecting non-political information about colonial territories to be filed subsequently in the archives of the UN Secretariat and to be available for study by interested parties. The colonial powers were able to accept the expansion of the *principle* of trusteeship inherent in the normative framework as described in Article 73, but they opposed the establishment of a special *international organisational structure* to monitor and manage the implementation of the principle.³¹ They did not want the submitted information to be treated systematically in the UN and they felt it should not be used at all in UN agencies as a basis for adopting recommendations. The colonial powers felt this use would constitute a breach of the Charter, Article 2 (7), which establishes the following UN principle:

Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or should require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter[.]³²

³⁰ <http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/unflag.htm>.

³¹ Benjamin Rivlin, *Self-determination and Dependent Areas*, 1955, pp. 239f.

³² <http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/unflag.htm>.

The key words in this statement – that the UN could not “intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state” – are elastic and have been the object of continual interpretation and discussion. Decolonisation was a persistent issue in the UN in its early years, and discussions often revolved around whether it was in compliance with international law that decolonisation had such a prominent position on the UN agenda and within the adopted resolutions. For example, almost one-quarter of the resolutions adopted at the UN’s sixth General Assembly in 1951 dealt with non-self-governing territories.³³ After a few years, however, it was generally accepted that discussion did not mean intervention (“interfere in”). The same belief also applied to the adoption of resolutions directed toward member states in general. However, a resolution addressing a member state concerning a concrete matter would lie outside what was permitted by international law.³⁴ This practice was reluctantly accepted by major European colonial powers, such as France and Great Britain, whereas a country such as Belgium was unequivocally the most uncompromising colonial power among the democracies.

Unlike the administering countries, the anti-colonialists regarded the provision on information gathering only as a starting point. In support of this view, they referred, for example, to Article 10 in the UN Charter:

The General Assembly may discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the present Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the present Charter, and ... make recommendations to the Members of the United Nations or the Security Council or to both on any such questions or matters.³⁵

The anti-colonialists believed that submitting information was meaningful only if UN agencies were able to determine whether or not the colonial powers were actually complying with the principles and norms stated in Chapter XI. In order for the UN agencies to make this determination, it was necessary to establish an apparatus with substantial rules and decision-making procedures.³⁶

The development of an organisational apparatus within the UN to monitor and influence the decolonisation process consisted most simply of a dispute between these two opposing perceptions, with the anti-colonials increasingly gaining the upper hand. This circumstance was partly due especially to the existence of a moderate group of administering countries such as the US, Australia, Denmark, and New Zealand. This group did not wish to identify with the colonial powers, and was particularly eager to distance itself from extremists such as

³³ *Issues before the Seventh General Assembly 1952*, 1952, p. 71.

³⁴ Peter Hansen, *op. cit.* pp. 32-33, note 14.

³⁵ <http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/unflag.htm>.

³⁶ Peter Hansen, *op. cit.* pp. 148-149, note 14.

Belgium. At the same time, however, they could not simply join in the attacks – which they often regarded as unreasonable and radical – on the colonial powers. They especially disliked how the demand for colonial liberation was clothed in inflated political rhetoric that often made it synonymous with the fulfilment of every imaginable claim for economic independence and the liberation of weak peoples from the domination of the strong. The debate climate in the UN was often characterised by a simple black and white division between self-government and dependency.³⁷ The moderate group of countries, and especially the US, therefore tried to act as mediators. As their support was often needed to reach a majority, they frequently wielded great influence.

Disagreement over the establishment of a special organisational apparatus was already present at the UN's first General Assembly in 1946.

Establishing an organisational apparatus: From an ad hoc committee to the Committee on Information

As mentioned, the UN Charter does not define what constitutes non-self-governing territories. Therefore, in June 1946, the Secretary-General wrote to the UN members, asking for their interpretation of the expression and if they administered territories that were non-self-governing. Countries that administered such territories were also asked to submit a list of the territories and state the nature of the information they would provide. Eight countries (Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and the US) sent lists comprising a total of 74 territories.³⁸ Thus, the colonial powers were left to interpret this aspect of the UN Charter.

Now, the question was what the UN would do with this information. In the autumn of 1946, in the Fourth Committee³⁹ and in the General Assembly, the anti-colonial countries argued for a special body to closely examine and analyse the information submitted. One administering country, Australia, strongly supported this view, whereas countries such as the US and Denmark accepted it with some reluctance.⁴⁰ The European colonial powers were opposed; they saw the establishment of this special body as a slippery slope toward international supervision. The outcome was, however, that the General Assembly in late 1946 decided to establish – for one year – an “Ad hoc Committee on Information from

³⁷ Clyde Eagleton, “Excesses of Self-determination”, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 31, no. 4, July 1953, pp. 592-604.

³⁸ Finn Friis, “FN og Kolonistyrets Afvikling” [“The UN and the Phasing out of Colonial Rule”], *Økonomi og Politik*, Year 36, 1962, pp. 238f; the 74 non-self-governing territories are listed in: Robert A. Asher et al., *op. cit.* p. 892, note 10.

³⁹ The Fourth Committee of the General Assembly handled matters concerning trusteeships and other non-self-governing territories. Every UN member state was represented on the committee.

⁴⁰ Until 1949, when Australia had a Labour government, the country often supported the anti-colonialists on this issue, but this changed when a Conservative government was elected that year. This pattern of changing attitudes toward the UN in accordance with changes in government did not occur in Great Britain, where Labour was in power from 1945-1951.



When the Danish ambassador and minister without portfolio, Henrik Kauffmann, signed the UN Charter in San Francisco on 26 June 1945, it heralded a change in the established Danish policy on Greenland. (UN Photo and Film Collection, Roskilde University Library)

Non-Self-Governing Territories”. The committee would be a subcommittee under the auspices of the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly. It would consist of the eight above-mentioned colonial powers who had submitted lists of the non-self-governing territories they administered, as well as an equal number of non-administering countries selected by the General Assembly.⁴¹ The reasoning behind an equal representation of parties was to ensure some restraint in the committee’s recommendations. The plan was that the Secretary-General would then summarise, classify, and analyse the information submitted, after which the ad hoc committee would examine the Secretary-General’s analyses, and after further processing in the committee, would present a report to the Fourth Committee and the General Assembly.

At the end of 1947, the ad hoc committee was extended for an additional year and was named “The Special Committee on Information”. The following year, it

⁴¹ The eight non-administering countries that were chosen by the General Assembly for one year were Brazil, China, Cuba, Egypt, India, the Philippines, the Soviet Union, and Uruguay, cf. Robert A. Asher, et al., *op. cit.* pp. 878f, note 10; *Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47, 1947*, pp. 208f.

was extended by yet another year.⁴² In 1949, it was extended by three years. When this extension was repeated in 1952, the word “special” was removed from the committee’s name, indicating that it was no longer a temporary body. The three-year extension in 1949 took place after India and Czechoslovakia had proposed that the committee become permanent, but this proposal was rejected by Great Britain, France, and Belgium. These countries stated that they would not participate in the work of the Special Committee if it were made permanent. The outcome was that the Fourth Committee advised the General Assembly to approve a suggestion from India for a three-year extension, which was adopted in December 1949. An effort was also made to restructure the committee’s work so that each year it focused on a specific problem, such as education and social conditions, in the non-self-governing territories.⁴³

The conclusion of this topic segues into another key aspect of the UN’s organisational framework and its role in the decolonisation process: The expansion of the scope of the work.

A wider scope

The ad hoc committee and its successors – the Special Committee and the Committee on Information – gradually broadened their scope from what began as a purely technical review of the submitted information concerning individual countries, to preparing broad proposals and recommendations based on Article 73 for presentation to the Assembly. The issue of what subjects the committee could deal with was closely related to the nature of the information that the colonial powers were asked to submit. The key point of conflict was whether or not the information described in Article 73 regarding “economic, social and educational conditions” should be expanded to include political conditions, as demanded by the anti-colonialists. In the autumn of 1947, the General Assembly settled on a standardised questionnaire for the colonial powers to use as the basis for submitting information. The form was based on an American proposal and had been unanimously adopted by the ad hoc committee.

The first part of the questionnaire dealt with matters such as geography, history, and population statistics. It also dealt with issues of a more political nature, such as local participation in government and human rights, which were defined as civil rights guaranteed by law. Submitting information of a political nature was, however, voluntary.

The second part of the questionnaire dealt with what Article 73 (e) (cf. above) calls information about economic, social, and educational conditions that mem-

⁴² Richard J. Kozicki, *op. cit.* p. 407, note 29; *Yearbook of the United Nations 1947-48*, 1949, pp. 155 & 709; *Yearbook of the United Nations 1948-49*, 1950, pp. 726-728.

⁴³ Richard J. Kozicki, *op. cit.* pp. 406f, note 29; *Issues before the Seventh General Assembly 1952*, 1952, p. 72.

ber states had committed themselves to provide.⁴⁴ This questionnaire was later replaced with a new one; in December 1951, the General Assembly adopted without opposition a much more detailed questionnaire to guide the administering countries.⁴⁵

From the beginning, many colonial powers such as Australia, Denmark, the Netherlands, and the US had sent information about political conditions, which was noted with satisfaction by the General Assembly. These countries emphasised, however, that according to Article 73 (e), they were not obliged to send such information. Other Western colonial powers – for instance, Belgium, France, and Great Britain – did not submit any political information. A majority of the General Assembly continued to push for an expansion of the information duty to include these subjects. In this process, it was common for discussions about the information submitted to quickly acquire a sharp tone with harsh attacks on the colonial powers and colonial rule.⁴⁶ When the Special Committee was extended for three years in 1949 (cf. above), the General Assembly recommended that the administering countries include information about political developments in their colonies. Focus on the specific wording of Article 73 gradually faded away. This development, which had been reluctantly accepted by the colonial powers, gradually grew into demands that information submitted to the UN include timetables for when and how changes in the remaining non-self-governing territories would finally lead to self-government. As an expression of the expanding scope of work, it was, as mentioned, also decided in 1949 that the Special Committee should focus on specific problems in the non-self-governing territories, such as social conditions and education.⁴⁷

It is also noteworthy that limits were set for the Committee's activities. These limits indicated a certain balance between the opposing interests and attitudes. An example of this balance was a resolution passed in November 1948, which stated that it was essential to inform the UN about constitutional changes in the status of non-self-governing territories that meant that the colonial power in question no longer saw a need to transmit information as stipulated in Article 73 (e).⁴⁸ Significantly, many countries in the anti-colonial coalition, despite their wish to do so, were reluctant to discuss and demand further analysis of the political information submitted because they knew that they risked having the colonial powers stop sending it. As a result, an overwhelming majority in the

⁴⁴ Resolution 142 (III), 3 November 1947, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/2/ares2.htm>; see also: *Yearbook of the United Nations 1947-48*, 1949, pp. 148-149 & 721-724; Richard J. Kozicki, *op. cit.* pp. 409-411, note 29.

⁴⁵ Resolution 551 (VI), 7 December 1951, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/6/ares6.htm>.

⁴⁶ *Issues before the Seventh General Assembly 1949-50*, 1949, p. 51; Skottsberg Åhman, "Kolonisystemets 'Internationalisering'" ["'Internationalising' of the Colonial System"], pp. 533f.

⁴⁷ Finn Friis, *Økonomi og Politik [Finances and Politics]*, 1962, pp. 240-241; Richard J. Kozicki, *op. cit.* 1958, p. 407, note 29.

⁴⁸ Resolution 222 (III), 3 November 1948, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/3/ares3.htm>; Robert A. Asher, Walter M. Kotschnig, William Adams Brown, Jr., James Frederick Green, Emil J. Sady and Associates, *op. cit.* pp. 919-920, note 10.

General Assembly rejected a proposal from the Soviet Union that the Committee on Information should study petitions, make annual visits to the non-self-governing territories, and include information from individuals and groups. Proposals that the Committee could pass recommendations as they applied to specific non-self-governing territories were rejected by a smaller majority.⁴⁹

Lists of factors

Another aspect of the issue about what the term “non-self-governing territories” covered concerned the criteria for defining when a territory could *leave* this category and when the colonial power’s obligation to provide information would cease. This part of the issue had two aspects: First, drawing up a list of factors to be considered when making the decision; and second, who should have the competence to make the decision: The General Assembly or the administering colonial power? This aspect of the problem became pertinent when it turned out that the number of territories that were registered as non-self-governing fell from 74 in 1946 (cf. above) to 63 two years later; they fell the following year to 61. This development, which was a consequence of decisions made by the colonial powers, caused the anti-colonial group concern about whether or not the UN system would be able to function.

During the early years, the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly discussed this issue at length. When they could not reach an agreement, they left the question to the Special Committee in December 1949. In a resolution passed by the General Assembly, the Special Committee was assigned to examine the factors that should be taken into account in deciding whether or not a territory had achieved full self-government.⁵⁰ But over the course of the following one and a half years, the Special Committee likewise failed to agree, so in October 1951 a special subcommittee consisting of three administering and three non-administering countries was appointed to draft a list of factors.⁵¹ After holding a number of meetings in late October 1951, the committee presented two drafts of the lists of factors: One prepared by the administering countries and one by the non-administering. Both drafts concluded that it was not possible to set exact guidelines to determine whether or not the conditions stipulated in Chapter XI had been met, and therefore it must ultimately rest on the judgement of the administering country. While the non-administering countries tended toward only recognising independence as sufficient reason to lift the obligation to provide information, the administering countries were also willing to recognise equal

⁴⁹ Robert A. Asher, Walter M. Kotschnig, William Adams Brown, Jr., James Frederick Green, Emil J. Sady and Associates, *op. cit.* p. 885, note 10.

⁵⁰ Resolution 334 (IV), 2 December 1949, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/4/ares4.htm>.

⁵¹ *Yearbook of the United Nations 1951, 1952*, pp. 605-606. The three administering countries were Belgium, Denmark, and Great Britain; the three non-administering were Cuba, Egypt, and the Philippines.

participation in the institutions of the colonial power as adequate.⁵² The main dispute was not whether or not a list of factors should be made – which the colonial powers had accepted – but they strongly opposed giving the UN the right to determine constitutional status in specific cases. They felt that only the colonial power should have this competence and that the UN should simply be informed of the decision.

In light of this disagreement, in January 1952 the General Assembly passed a resolution to appoint an ad hoc committee consisting of five administering and five non-administering countries to make yet another study of which factors should be taken into account to determine if a territory was non-self-governing. This ad hoc committee was to base its work on the two lists drafted in October 1951 by the above-mentioned subcommittee. The Special Committee had subsequently revised the lists and appended them to the resolution. The various opinions of UN member states were also added, as well as the reasons given by administering countries for ceasing to submit information about territories.⁵³ The appendix operated with two different approaches for determining when a territory could be removed from its obligation to provide information as specified in Article 73 (e). One approach included factors that signified the attainment of independence or a separate system of government; the other listed factors indicating that a territory had a free and equal association with other parts of the metropolitan state or other country.

The ad hoc committee held numerous meetings in September 1952. They agreed that a list of factors should only serve as a guideline in determining when a territory had achieved self-government. It was outside the committee's jurisdiction to decide who was competent to make the decision. They presented their report in the autumn of 1952, and in December the General Assembly passed a resolution – with 36 votes for, 15 against, and 7 abstentions – that temporarily approved the proposed list of factors as an acceptable guideline. The yea votes came from former colonies and communist countries; the nays came from traditional colonial powers such as Belgium, France, and Great Britain as well as four Nordic countries (Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden).⁵⁴ Also, Western countries that had once been critical of colonial rule, such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the US, voted against. At the same time, the General Assembly appointed a new ad hoc committee consisting of five administering and five non-

⁵² Finn Petersen, *Grønlandssagens behandling i FN 1946-54* [Debate on the Greenland Issue at the UN 1946-54], 1975, pp. 11-13.

⁵³ Resolution 567 (VI), 18 January 1952, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/6/ares6.htm>; the committee members were Australia, Belgium, Burma, Cuba, Denmark, France, Guatemala, Iraq, the US, and Venezuela. See also: Robert A. Asher, Walter M. Kotschnig, William Adams Brown, Jr., James Frederick Green, Emil J. Sady and Associates, *op. cit.* pp. 901f, note 10. The first list of factors is reproduced in appendix 7.

⁵⁴ Finland became a member of the UN in 1955.

administering countries to conduct a more thorough study of the factors, including a possible definition of the concept of self-government.⁵⁵

The new ad hoc committee held several meetings in the summer of 1953, but it could not resolve the points of contention. Based on the committee's recommendation, the General Assembly decided on a final list of factors, with 32 votes for, 19 against, and 6 abstentions in November 1953. The countries voted much as they did in December 1952 (cf. above) and again Denmark voted against (cf. chapter 10). The final list of factors had been expanded with some points more elastic in comparison to the preceding list, but it still stated that the competence to determine the issue rested with the General Assembly, which was why Denmark voted against it (see chapter 10). The list included a total of 34 factors divided into three groups: One group had seven factors pointing toward independence, one had twelve factors pointing toward self-government, and the third one had 15 factors indicating that a territory was a free and equal associate or an integral part of a metropolitan state or other country.⁵⁶ In November 1954, when the General Assembly relieved Denmark of its obligation to provide information about Greenland, it did so with reference to this resolution, emphasising that Greenland had freely chosen integration within the Kingdom of Denmark based on constitutional and administrative equality with other parts of Denmark.⁵⁷

Closing remarks

The UN's decolonisation system from 1946-1954 was characterised by important procedural and substantive changes. With regard to procedure, the slight organisational apparatus in the shape of an ad hoc committee that had been established as a subcommittee under the General Assembly's Fourth Committee in the autumn of 1946 underwent significant expansion. When appointed, the committee was generally expected to merely monitor the Secretary-General's evaluation and classification of the information submitted about the colonies. In the following years, pressure from the steadily growing anti-colonial group caused the scope of the committee's work to gradually expand from dealing only with information of a technical nature pertaining to economic, social, and educational conditions, to more political and constitutional issues. This substantial expansion was reflected by changes in the committee's name and was, to some degree, backed by Western countries critical of colonial rule.

⁵⁵ Resolution 648 (VII), 10 December 1952, *Yearbook of the United Nations* 1952, 1953, pp. 562f. Except for the fact that Denmark and France were replaced by the Netherlands and Great Britain, the other committee members were the same as those on the earlier ad hoc committee appointed in January 1952. The second factor list is reproduced in appendix 8.

⁵⁶ Resolution 742 (VIII), 27 November 1953, <http://www.hawaii-nation.org/742.html>. See Richard J. Kozicki, *op. cit.* pp. 412-413, note 10. The third factor list appears in appendix 9.

⁵⁷ Resolution 849, 22 November 1954, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/9/ares9.htm>. See also chapter 11.

The UN Charter contained provisions for only a specific organisational apparatus to organise UN work in territories under a trusteeship. The striking organisational, procedural, *and* substantial expansion that took place during the first ten years of the UN's dealings with non-self-governing territories resulted in the system progressively merging into the trusteeship system. In this connection, the development of decolonisation policy gradually led to considerable disputes in which the old colonial powers no longer stood alone. The most important example of this situation was the adoption of the two lists of factors at the end of 1952 and 1953, which were also opposed by Western countries that had previously supported some of the wishes and demands of the anti-colonialists.

5 · The development of international law concerning decolonisation and self-determination

Jens Elo Rytter

Introduction

The primary objective of this chapter is to provide an evaluation, in terms of international law, of the process that took place in 1953-1954 when Greenland changed its international status from that of a Danish colony to an integrated part of the Kingdom of Denmark.¹ To ground this evaluation, it is necessary to closely examine how, and especially when, the colonial right of self-determination, including independence from the colonial power, became established in international law as a binding legal norm. It is also necessary to closely study the contents of this norm.

This chapter addresses only the “colonial” aspect of the general principle of international self-determination as found in Article 1 (2) of the UN Charter.² In addition, the colonial system in Chapter XI of the UN Charter on “non-self-governing territories” is of particular interest in this chapter. As will be demonstrated, the UN Charter’s vague provisions on self-determination and decolonisation have been fundamentally elaborated and supplemented by subsequent state practice, especially as communicated through the states’ negotiations and adoptions in the UN General Assembly.

This chapter begins with a brief account of a source of law in international law that has had central importance for the development of the colonial right of self-determination: State practice, which, under certain conditions, can establish norms of customary international law. Thereafter follows a brief account of the relationship between the concepts of the right of colonial self-determination, the territorial integrity of states, and the rights of minorities. Next, historical developments that have led to the recognition of the colonial right of self-determination in international law, including the right of secession, are examined. The aim is to pinpoint the moment that the colonial right of self-determination was transformed from a political ideal to an established norm of international law. Next, the practice of the UN General Assembly concerning decolonisation pursuant to

¹ The actual course of events in the UN on Greenland’s changing status is examined in chapters 10 and 11.

² The principle of self-determination of peoples has a number of implications, cf. in general A. Cassese, *Self-Determination of Peoples: A Legal Reappraisal*, 1995, pp. 32f; G. Alfredsson, “Greenland and the Law of Political Decolonization”, *German Yearbook of International Law*, vol. 25, 1982, pp. 294f. Up until the present, the principle (alone) has resulted in three specific legal norms: The colonies’ right of self-determination, a right of self-determination for populations under foreign military occupation, and an obligation that all races have equal access to governmental power (anti-apartheid), cf. A. Cassese, *op. cit.* p. 319, note 2.

Chapter XI of the Charter is analysed in order to identify the substantive and procedural requirements for the implementation of colonial self-determination as they were applicable around 1953-1954. Based on the general account given in the preceding sections, an assessment is offered in terms of international law of the process that, in 1953, led to Greenland's change in status from a Danish colony to an integrated and equal part of the Kingdom of Denmark, a change subsequently recognised in 1954 by the UN General Assembly as an expression of the free exercise of the people of Greenland's right of self-determination. In connection with this assessment, the strong criticisms launched by international law scholar Gudmundur Alfredsson of the conduct of the Danish authorities and the endorsement by the UN are especially discussed and commented upon. In the last section, the contents and conclusions of the chapter are summarised.

On the development of international law in general, especially the conditions for the formation of customary law

As will later become evident, the right of colonial self-determination is the result of a dynamic process in which the close interplay between broad treaty resolutions and state practice has led to the establishment of the right of colonial self-determination as a norm of customary international law as well as to general agreement concerning the contents and implementation of this right. In order to assess this development, it is necessary to be somewhat familiar with the sources of international law and, in particular, the conditions for the formation of customary international law.

International law develops partially through the formal adoption of treaties and partially through state practice to the extent that this practice acquires the status of customary law. Whereas treaties have, in many areas, nowadays become the primary legal sources of international law, such is not the case as far as colonial self-determination is concerned. In this field, customary law has been of central importance.

Customary international law is formally defined as "international custom, as evidence of a general practice accepted as law".³ Thus, the establishment of a customary law norm first requires that states have, in general, acted in accordance with this norm, and second, that this occurred based on the perception that such behaviour was legally necessary or justified (*opinio juris*).⁴ Separation of these two elements – usage and legal opinion – can be difficult; in reality, the question of the formation of customary law therefore depends on an overall evaluation.⁵ The existence of an overwhelming state practice may weaken the

³ See *Statute of the International Court of Justice*, Article 38 (1) (b).

⁴ Cf. The International Court of Justice, *North Sea Continental Shelf Cases*, ICJ Reports 1969, pp. 12ff, para. 77.

⁵ Cf. also H.W.A. Thirlway, "The Sources of International Law", M. Evans (ed.), *International Law*, 2003, p. 125.

requirements for proof that the states have acted in accordance with a legal opinion (*opinio juris*). On the other hand, states' unequivocal expression of a legal opinion might in itself cause a custom to be established within a relatively short period.⁶

State practice and legal opinion can be expressed through both concrete action and general statements.⁷ The content of customary international law concerning (colonial) peoples' right of self-determination can be thus determined by the actual conduct of (colonial) states in connection with the dissolution of their colonies, as well as the response of other states and the UN. Sometimes, however, this content is difficult to ascertain. After 1945, when a colonial power agreed to one of its colonies gaining independence, it was not clear if the behaviour of the colonial power was a result of its sense of duty to act in accordance with a norm of international law regarding self-determination, or if it was just an expression of a voluntary decision on the part of the colonial power, encouraged by ideological-political support of the principle of self-determination of colonial peoples, and by some international political pressure to recognise this principle. Thus, in this field it seems safer to use the general statements of states regarding self-determination and decolonisation as an indication of the content of customary international law.

Resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly have been especially relevant to the development of the right of colonial peoples to self-determination. Formally, General Assembly resolutions are not legally binding on states since they solely have the status of recommendations.⁸ Nevertheless, such resolutions might contribute to the formation of customary law to the extent that they relate to general normative issues such that discussion about them, and their adoption, provides states with an occasion to clarify and express their legal opinion.⁹ Such law-making resolutions have had particular influence on the establishment of a right of self-determination for colonial peoples as well as on the process of decolonisation.¹⁰

In order to establish customary law, the observance of a specific behaviour in state practice must be sufficiently widespread, consistent, and continuous. The requirement of pervasiveness is especially relevant in the recognition of the right of self-determination of colonial peoples. There must be a general usage/legal opinion that, while not necessarily universal, is nevertheless supported by a ma-

⁶ Cf. E.J. de Arécheaga, "Custom", A. Cassese and J.H.H. Weiler (eds.), *Change and Stability in International Law-Making*, 1988, pp. 1-4; M.E. Villiger, *Customary International Law and Treaties*, 1985, pp. 6 & 24f.

⁷ The relevance of general statements as an expression of states' *opinio juris* is generally recognised, cf. The International Court of Justice, *Military and Paramilitary Activities Case*, ICJ Reports 1986, para. 188. See also: M.E. Villiger, *op. cit.* p. 7, note 6. For a more restrictive point of view, see H.W.A. Thirlway, *International Customary Law and Codification*, 1972, pp. 58f.

⁸ Cf. *UN Charter*, Articles 10-11. See also: M.A. Shukri, *The Concept of Self-Determination in the United Nations*, 1965, p. 340, with additional references.

⁹ Cf. The International Court of Justice, *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, Advisory Opinion*, ICJ Reports 1996, para. 70.

¹⁰ Cf. A. Cassese, *op. cit.* pp. 69f, note 2; W. Ofuatey-Kodjoe, "Self-Determination", O. Schachter and C.C. Joyner (eds.), *United Nations Legal Order*, vol. 1, pp. 368f.

majority of states representing the major politico-economic spheres in the international community; any significant rupture in the international community will thus hinder the establishment of customary law.¹¹ Notably, according to the International Court of Justice, the establishment of customary law presupposes that the norm is supported by the states that are particularly affected by it (at least if the customary law is to be established within a reasonable period of time):¹²

... it might be that, even without the passage of any considerable period of time, a very widespread and representative participation in the convention might suffice of itself, provided it included that of States whose interests were specially affected. (...) Although the passage of only a short period of time is not necessarily, or of itself, a bar to the formation of a new rule of customary international law on the basis of what was originally a purely conventional rule, an indispensable requirement would be that within the period in question, short though it might be, State practice, including that of States whose interests are specially affected, should have been both extensive and virtually uniform in the sense of the provision invoked; and should moreover have occurred in such a way as to show a general recognition that a rule of law or legal obligation is involved.

Even support from a solid majority of states is therefore not sufficient for the formation of customary law if crucial actors oppose it.¹³ In a transitional period before the establishment of a new norm of customary international law, norms expressed in state or General Assembly policies may thus have only moral but not legal force.¹⁴

As will be shown, the formation of customary law concerning decolonisation was especially inspired by the UN Charter's broad principle of the peoples' right of self-determination in Article 1 (2).¹⁵ The subsequent formation of customary law through state practice has therefore also influenced the interpretation of the principle in Article 1 (2) of the UN Charter, though not retroactively.¹⁶

¹¹ See M.E. Villiger, *op. cit.* pp. 12-13, note 6.

¹² Cf. The International Court of Justice, *North Sea Continental Shelf Cases*, ICJ Reports 1969, pp. 12ff, paras. 73-74.

¹³ Hence, the International Court of Justice has acknowledged that resistance from the world's few nuclear powers hinders the establishment of a customary legal ban on nuclear weapons, notwithstanding the fact that a clear majority of states support such a ban. See *Legality of the Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons, Advisory Opinion*, ICJ Reports 1996, paras. 67 & 73.

¹⁴ Cf. R. Higgins, *The Development of International Law Through the Political Organs of the United Nations*, 1963, p. 7.

¹⁵ Cf. A. Cassese, *op. cit.* pp. 67ff, note 2.

¹⁶ In accordance with the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, which codifies international customary law concerning the interpretation of treaties, Article 31 (3) (b), interpretation of a treaty

On colonial self-determination, the territorial integrity of states, and the rights of minorities

The notion of a “people” is not clearly defined in international law, or, rather, different definitions exist for different rules.¹⁷ In terms of the right of self-determination, a colonial people may be defined as a population that: 1) inhabits a territory geographically separate from the colonial power, 2) is ethnically and/or culturally distinct from the colonial power, and 3) has not yet attained a full measure of self-government.¹⁸

Colonial self-determination means the right of all colonial peoples to freely decide their own affairs, including, notably, the right to determine their international political status and the status of their territory.¹⁹ The essence of the right of self-determination is thus respect for the freely expressed will of the (colonial) people.²⁰ However, colonial self-determination is further grounded in, among other things, the concern to promote human rights and ensure international peace.²¹ The exercise by colonial peoples of their right of self-determination might result in the former colony:²² 1) gaining independence as a new, sovereign state, 2) achieving a free association with another sovereign state (possibly the former colonial state), 3) being integrated with another state (possibly the former colonial state) on an equal footing, or 4) achieving any other status. In practice, an overwhelming majority of former colonies, including those in Africa, have opted for independence.

The right of self-determination of peoples evolved from the clear and oft-stated premise that this principle is fundamentally subordinate to the principle of a state’s (political unity and) territorial integrity,²³ which was and continues to

should take into consideration “every subsequent practice concerning the use of the treaty, which establishes an agreement between the participants concerning its interpretation”.

¹⁷ Cf. M. Pomerance, *Self-Determination in Law and Practice*, 1982, pp. 14-23; A. Cassese, *op. cit.* pp. 326f, note 2; K. Doehring, “Self-Determination”, B. Simma (ed.), *The Charter of the United Nations: A Commentary*, 2nd ed., 2002, vol. I, p. 55.

¹⁸ Cf. GA Resolution 1541 (XV), Principle IV, according to which the obligation to provide information pursuant to Chapter XI pertains *prima facie* to non-self-governing territories “which are geographically separate from, and are ethnically and/or culturally distinct from the country that administers it”. See also: G. Alfredsson, *op. cit.* pp. 295 & 299, note 2.

¹⁹ Cf. GA Resolution 1514 (XV), para. 2, to which the International Court of Justice refers in its *Western Sahara Opinion*, ICJ Reports 1975, para. 55. See also: A. Cassese, *op. cit.* pp. 72f, note 2; M.N. Shaw, *International Law*, 5th ed., 2003, p. 231. M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* p. 151, note 8, defines in 1965, with clear reference to the UN Charter’s Chapter XI, the concept less radically: “self-determination for dependent peoples means the right of these peoples, at a certain stage of development, to determine their future status internally as well as externally”.

²⁰ Cf. GA Resolution 1514 (XV), para. 2, and especially the International Court of Justice in *Western Sahara Opinion*, ICJ Reports 1975, paras. 55 & 59. See also: M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* pp. 60, 152 & 337, note 8; R. Higgins, *Problems and Process: International Law and How We Use it*, 1994, p. 119.

²¹ Cf. GA Resolution 1514 (XV) and K. Doehring, *op. cit.* p. 52, note 17.

²² The first three options were already envisaged in the list of factors in GA Resolutions 567 (1952), 648 (1952), and 742 (1953), and enumerated in GA Resolution 1541 (1960), Principle IV. GA Resolution 2625 (1970) makes it clear that other options (obviously) exist if these factors are decided by the people. The International Court of Justice refers in *Western Sahara Opinion*, ICJ Reports 1975, paras. 57-59, to GA Resolution 1541 as well as GA Resolution 2625.

²³ Cf. R. Higgins, *op. cit.* p. 121, note 20.

be the key pillar of international law, cf. also Article 2 (1) of the UN Charter. Therefore, one segment of the population generally cannot invoke the right of self-determination of peoples to justify a right of secession from the mother state, since such a claim would be against the basic principle of the political unity and territorial integrity of the state, cf. also explicitly GA Resolutions 1514²⁴ and 2625.²⁵

The right of colonial self-determination is viewed as compatible with the principle of the state's territorial integrity due to the fact that "the territory of a colony or other Non-Self-Governing Territory has, under the UN Charter, a status separate and distinct from the territory of the State administering it", cf. GA Resolution 2625 (1970). This special status is based on the UN Charter's separate system concerning non-self-governing territories in Chapter XI, including Article 74. Nevertheless, the principle of the territorial integrity of states comes through in the recognised principle that the existing colonial borders must be honoured in the process of decolonisation (*uti possidetis*). This principle is presupposed, for example, in GA Resolutions 1514 and 1541.²⁶

Aside from colonial populations, a minority in a state does not normally constitute a "people" in terms of international law insofar as a minority does not have an independent, external right of self-determination, i.e. the right of secession from the state.²⁷ However, several provisions of international law protect minorities within the state,²⁸ including indigenous peoples.²⁹ The inhabitants of Greenland, no doubt, can invoke rights as a minority in Denmark, including rights as an indigenous people.³⁰

²⁴ GA Resolution 1514 (XV), 1960, para. 6: "Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations".

²⁵ GA Resolution 2625 (XXV), 1970: "Nothing in the foregoing paragraphs shall be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember and impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States [with the exception of racist regimes]".

²⁶ See R. Higgins, *op. cit.* p. 122, note 20, among others. Cf. also The International Court of Justice, *Frontier Dispute (Burkina Faso v. Republic of Mali)*, ICJ Reports 1986, pp. 566f, determines that *uti possidetis* is not in opposition to the principle of the right of self-determination in that the latter principle does not furnish the foundation for contesting existing national borders.

²⁷ Cf. R. Higgins, *op. cit.* p. 124, note 20; K. Doehring, *op. cit.* p. 57, note 17 (with, however, the possible exception in the case of extreme oppression of minorities, pp. 54 & 58).

²⁸ Especially the UN Convention on Civil and Political Rights (1966), Article 27, on the protection of ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities.

²⁹ ILO's Convention 169 of 28 June 1989 on indigenous and tribal peoples in independent states, which was ratified by Denmark and took effect in the case of Denmark on 22 February 1997. In addition, on 29 June 2006, the UN Commission on Human Rights adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which includes, among other things, securing the right of indigenous people to (internal) self-government, control over their own natural resources etc. See also: the Council's Report of 30 June 2006 UN Doc. A/HRC/1/L.10. In December 2006, the Convention was submitted to the UN General Assembly in preparation for its adoption.

³⁰ With the ratification of ILO's Convention 169, the Danish government, with support from Greenland's provincial government, released a statement in which the people of Greenland as a whole constitute an indigenous population according to the terms of the Convention, cf. the resulting reference in the High Court's 28 December 2003 decision in the Thule case, UFR 2004, pp. 382ff (604f). In addition, see G. Alfredsson, *op. cit.* p. 297, note 2.

The establishment of colonial self-determination as a norm of international law

*Self-determination prior to 1945*³¹

The idea of the right of self-determination for all peoples rests intellectually and philosophically on the same ideology as the American Revolution of 1776 and the French Revolution of 1789: Man's right of autonomy transformed into a collective political norm of democratic rule, the right of the people to participate in a constitutional government, and the responsibility of the government to the people. In France, the ideal of self-determination found further expression in the principle that no territory should be annexed against the wishes of the population concerned.³²

Many years would pass before self-determination was linked to demands for decolonisation and the protection of minorities. In the years before the Russian Revolution, Lenin invoked self-determination as an argument in favour of decolonisation – a step towards the realisation of socialism.³³ During that same period, US President Wilson also pleaded for a peoples' right of self-determination, but Wilson emphasised the peoples' general democratic right of self-government and the right to choose their own sovereigns, while the colonial right of self-determination was regarded as something to be achieved through gradual reform.³⁴

Despite grand pronouncements from these heads of state, the 1919 peace agreement after World War I was based on a principle of self-determination only to a very limited degree. States invoked and implemented the principle selectively; historical demands, as well as national economic and military interests, generally took precedence.³⁵ Thus, the peace agreement led to only relatively few plebiscites to implement the right of self-determination in controversial territories, whereas several treaty provisions provided for the protection of minorities in Central and Eastern Europe.³⁶

³¹ See also chapter 3.

³² See A.R. Sureda, *The Evolution of the Right of Self-Determination*, 1973, p. 17ff; A. Cassese, *op. cit.* pp. 11ff, note 2; K. Doehring, *op. cit.* p. 50, note 17.

³³ See A. Cassese, *op. cit.* pp. 15f, note 2; Doehring, *op. cit.* p. 50, note 17.

³⁴ See A.R. Sureda, *op. cit.* p. 20, note 32, with note 12; A. Cassese, *op. cit.* pp. 19f, note 2.

³⁵ Cf. A. Cobban, *The Nation-State and National Self-Determination*, revised ed., 1969, p. 73: "[E]ach side was prepared to appeal to the principle when it assisted in the defence of national interests, and to discard it when its influence was no longer favourable. But it is also true that, however carelessly leading politicians may have spoken, even those who most sincerely accepted the principle of self-determination at Versailles did not expect it to be applied with no regard to other considerations"; *ibid.* p. 101: "The Versailles settlement, as we have seen, was characterised by a failure to apply self-determination logically and systematically"; *ibid.* p. 104: "Practically everyone, including Wilson himself, recognised that self-determination could only be applied with due regard to circumstances". See also: A.R. Sureda, *op. cit.* p. 21, note 32.

³⁶ Cf. A. Cobban, *op. cit.* pp. 70ff, note 35; A.R. Sureda, *op. cit.* p. 22, note 32; A. Cassese, *op. cit.* p. 25, note 2.

Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that the Covenant of the League of Nations from 1919 does not refer to an independent right of self-determination for the people of the world. Instead, it only institutes a system for protecting minorities and a system of mandates, both influenced by the principle of self-determination.

Shortly after the Covenant of the League of Nations was adopted, the League of Nations appointed a committee of experts to deliberate on whether the Aaland Islands could petition to secede from Finland and annex themselves to Sweden. The committee held as a matter of principle that an autonomous population group does not have the right, under international law, to secede from a sovereign state. The committee also decided that the question of the Aaland Islands' status fell within the sovereign domain of Finland.³⁷

In the following decades leading up to the outbreak of World War II, no decisive developments took place in international law pertaining to the principle of self-determination of peoples.

Against this backdrop, there is general agreement in legal theory that, prior to 1945, the principle of peoples' self-determination only had the status of a political and moral ideal; it was not recognised in customary international law as a legal right.³⁸ In terms of international law, it was thus still correct until 1945 to describe the state of the law concerning colonialism in accordance with legal tradition, according to which "colonialism was legitimate in as much as title by conquest and annexation, irrespective of the wishes of the population, was legally accepted".³⁹ State sovereignty remained the indisputable foundation of international law, which is very clearly illustrated in the dispute between Denmark and Norway over Eastern Greenland. The Permanent International Court decided in Denmark's favour without so much as once involving the wishes of the Greenland people⁴⁰ (though local protests in Greenland against the Norwegian occupation of Denmark were presented to the Court).⁴¹

*Self-determination and decolonisation under the UN Charter*⁴²

The UN Charter does not contain a definite requirement for decolonisation. However, Article 1 (2) of the Charter refers to a principle of self-determination of peoples, and Chapter XI of the Charter contains a colonial system that com-

³⁷ "Report of the International Committee of Jurists Entrusted by the Council of the League of Nations with the Task of Giving an Advisory Opinion upon the Legal Aspects of the Aaland Islands' Question", *Official Journal of the League of Nations*, Special Supplement no. 3, October 1920, p. 5. See, for instance, M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* p. 38, note 8; A. Cassese, *op. cit.* pp. 27f, note 2.

³⁸ Cf. A.R. Sureda, *op. cit.* p. 26, note 12; A. Cassese, *op. cit.* pp. 26f & 32f, note 2; Shaw, *op. cit.* p. 225, note 19; M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* p. 333 (with further references), note 8; A. Cobban, *op. cit.* p. 102, note 35, supports the idea that the principle was important to the conclusion of peace in 1919: "World opinion regarded it ... as the moral foundation of the peace".

³⁹ M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* p. 351, cf. also p. 35, note 8.

⁴⁰ *Legal Status of Eastern Greenland*, Judgment, PCIJ, Series A/B, no. 53, 1933.

⁴¹ According to G. Alfredsson, *op. cit.* p. 301, note 2.

⁴² See also chapter 3, pp. 37f.

mits the colonial powers to a gradual development of colonies toward self-government.

The UN Charter is the first multilateral treaty⁴³ that expressly refers to the principle of peoples' right of self-determination. That this principle received any mention at all in the UN Charter was due to the Soviet Union's strong desire for its presence.⁴⁴ The peoples' right of self-determination is mentioned twice in the UN Charter, almost in passing, and in both cases as a minor part of a much larger whole.

Article 1 (2) of the UN Charter states that one of the purposes of the UN is:

... to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace.

Furthermore, Article 55 of the UN Charter establishes the basis of international economic and social cooperation:

With a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the United Nations shall promote: [welfare, solutions of international problems and respect for human rights].

With these provisions, the peoples' right of self-determination is identified as an important UN objective. As such, however, the principle of self-determination is only one of several ambitious aims of the organisation. Notably, this principle was from the outset too broad and imprecise to entail direct legal obligations on the part of states, also because the principle in Article 1 (2) is mentioned as a means of developing friendly relations and strengthening world peace and therefore subordinate to these goals.⁴⁵

Though the UN Charter might thus formally mark the transition of the right of self-determination from a political to a legal principle, general agreement exists that the UN Charter's references to the right of self-determination did not

⁴³ The 1941 Atlantic Treaty between Roosevelt and Churchill referred to the principle of the peoples' right of self-determination, but Churchill subsequently stated that the British understanding of the principle only included European states under Nazi domination, not colonies, cf. A. Ross, *De Forenede Nationer: Fred og Fremskridt* [*The United Nations: Peace and Progress*], 1963, p. 372; A. Cassese, *op. cit.* p. 37, note 2.

⁴⁴ Cf. M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* p. 39, note 8; A. Cassese, *op. cit.* p. 38, note 2. The references to the right of self-determination were not included until the concluding negotiations in San Francisco in 1945. However, the three other Big Powers in San Francisco did not agree with the Soviet Union that this principle contained a right to secede on the part of the colonies, cf. M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* p. 44, note 8.

⁴⁵ Cf. A. Ross, *op. cit.* pp. 85-87, note 43; M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* pp. 51, 71ff & 343f, note 8; A. Cassese, *op. cit.* p. 43, note 2.

originally imply any specific legal obligations on the part of the states.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the UN Charter's conception of the "self-determination of peoples" was originally aimed at promoting the broadest possible self-government within states based on the free will of the people and without outside influence; it did not imply any right of secession of minorities or colonies.⁴⁷ The original state-based understanding of the UN Charter's concept of self-determination is supported by the context. Both Article 1 (2) and Article 55 mention "the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples", and the concept of "equal rights" is traditionally tied to the relationship between states.⁴⁸ The state-based understanding is also consistent with the fact that under the UN Charter, state sovereignty remains the cornerstone of international law.⁴⁹ That the principle of self-determination in Article 1 (2) did not originally imply a right of colonial secession is furthermore unambiguously confirmed by a systematic interpretation of the UN Charter: The specific colonial system in Chapter XI (consciously) neither mentions a right of self-determination for colonial peoples nor refers to independence as an obligatory objective for colonial powers concerning their colonies. This issue will be looked at in more detail in the following main section.⁵⁰

Chapter XI of the UN Charter, entitled "Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories",⁵¹ provided colonies with a special international status for the first time.⁵² However, the special colonial system in Chapter XI does not refer to the right of self-determination. Instead, under Article 73, the administering powers accept as a "sacred trust" the sole commitment to promote welfare and self-government in their colonies:

⁴⁶ Cf. M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* pp. 334-336, note 8; A. Cassese, *op. cit.* pp. 43 & 65, note 2; K. Doehring, *op. cit.* pp. 48f & 51, note 17; M.N. Shaw, *op. cit.* p. 226, note 19. On the other hand, W. Ofuatye-Kodjoe, *op. cit.* pp. 354 & 386, note 10, seems to assume that Article 1 (2) contained independent legal content from the beginning that later UN policies only clarified and defined more precisely; at the same time, however, Ofuatye-Kodjoe cites p. 353 of the Charter's preliminary work, saying that the original contents of the right of self-determination was a right of self-government, but not of colonial secession.

⁴⁷ Cf. W. Ofuatye-Kodjoe, *op. cit.* p. 353, note 10, with citation from the preliminary work; M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* p. 47ff, note 8; A. Cassese, *op. cit.* pp. 40-42, note 2; K. Doehring, *op. cit.* pp. 57 & 60, note 17; U. Fastenrath, "Article 73 and 74", in B. Simma (ed.), *The Charter of the United Nation: A Commentary*, 2nd ed., 2002, vol. II, p. 1090; R. Higgins, *op. cit.*, p. 112, note 20: "The concept of self-determination did not then, originally, seem to refer to a right of dependent peoples to be independent, or, indeed, even to vote".

⁴⁸ According to the Treaty Convention's Article 31 (1), a treaty shall generally be interpreted as being "faithfully in accordance with the customary meaning, which might be added to the stated treaties in this context and throw light on their intentions and purposes".

⁴⁹ Cf. UN Charter, Article 2 (1): "The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members".

⁵⁰ Cf. R. Higgins, *op. cit.*, p. 112, note 20; A. Cassese, *op. cit.* p. 42, note 2; more problematically, M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* p. 58, note 8. However, also see p. 66: "The fact that the Charter which proclaimed the abstract principle and self-determination simultaneously established the two tutelage systems regulated in Chapters XI, XII and XIII, is evidence that the Conferees at San Francisco did not intend to liquidate colonialism immediately".

⁵¹ The UN Charter does not specifically define the term "non-self-governing territories". It was not until 1960 with the passage of GA Resolution 1541 that it was expressly established that the term refers to colonial territories. See also: A. Ross, *op. cit.* pp. 375f, note 43; M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* pp. 115-118, note 8.

⁵² Cf. U. Fastenrath, *op. cit.* p. 1090, note 47. See also the assessment in chapter 4.

Members of the United Nations which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of territories whose peoples

have not yet attained a full measure of self-government recognize the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of these territories are paramount, and accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote to the utmost, within the system of international peace and security established by the present Charter, the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories, and, to this end:

a. to ensure, with due respect for the culture of the peoples concerned, their political, economic, social, and educational advancement, their just treatment, and their protection against abuses;

b. to develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions, according to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and their varying stages of advancement ...

The absence of the term “independence” as an objective for non-self-governing territories from the aims listed in Chapter XI was not an accident. Proposals to this effect from China and the Soviet Union at the meeting in San Francisco were met with massive resistance from colonial powers, notably the United Kingdom and France.⁵³

The old colonial powers would only guarantee colonies (the prospect of) “self-government” without excluding the possibility of independence.⁵⁴ Consequently, under Chapter XI, Article 73 (b), the administering powers are bound solely to “develop self-government”, “take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples”, and “assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions” etc. These stipulations are far from a right of full colonial self-determination, including secession.⁵⁵

Thus, although Chapter XI is clearly linked to the principle of peoples’ self-determination, it nevertheless rests on the basic conviction that, because of their relatively modest state of development, colonial peoples should be subject to a

⁵³ Cf. M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* pp. 58 & 87, note 8; U. Fastenrath, *op. cit.* p. 1090, note 47, with footnotes 9 & 10.

⁵⁴ Cf. U. Fastenrath, *op. cit.* p. 1091, note 47, with footnote 11.

⁵⁵ The international trusteeship system in the UN Charter’s Chapters XII-XIII, on the other hand, has wording that leans toward the right of self-determination. According to Article 76 (b), one of the goals is to promote the trusteeship territories’ “progressive development towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned ...”

special system of development and protection until they are ready for a “full measure of self-government”, i.e. self-determination.⁵⁶

Some scholars maintain that the UN Charter contains an unresolved tension between, on the one hand, reference to a principle on the peoples’ right of self-determination, and on the other, reference to the establishment of a colonial system that basically sanctions the continuance of colonial rule, though with a long-term objective of colonial self-government.⁵⁷ However, the opinion that no conflict exists between the right of self-determination and the colonial system is more generally held, since the peoples’ right of self-determination was not originally aimed at the right of colonies to secede. It aimed at the right of the population of a state to participate in the governance of that state and on the right of self-government without outside interference. Thus, Higgins writes that:

Our contemporary understanding of the concept of self-determination ... does not find its origins in the UN Charter ... In 1946, the focus was on the rights and obligations of sovereign member states ... There were, certainly, recognized duties that colonial powers had towards the peoples governed. But at that time that did not clearly include any duty to grant independence. The common assumption that the UN Charter underwrites self-determination in the current sense of the term is in fact a retrospective rewriting of history.⁵⁸

In sum, in terms of decolonisation, the UN Charter primarily contains a system that makes colonies an international matter by generally placing colonial powers under an obligation to promote a process towards self-government and political development in their colonies, and to report technical information on conditions in the colonies to the Secretary-General. It does not, however, provide colonies with any right to independence. References in the UN Charter to peoples’ right of self-determination originally possessed no operational legal content and were not chiefly aimed at the colonies; at best, the references to self-determination could be viewed as a political-legal programme for future decolonisation.⁵⁹

After 1945: The General Assembly proclaims the right of colonies to self-determination

Around 1950, the General Assembly begins referring to the colonies’ right of self-determination. GA Resolution 421 (V) of 4 December 1950, on a draft of a UN Covenant of Human Rights (the forerunner of the 1966 covenants), states in

⁵⁶ Cf. A. Ross, *op. cit.* pp. 372f, note 43; M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* p. 89, note 8; W. Ofuathey-Kodjoe, *op. cit.* pp. 353f, note 10.

⁵⁷ For example, M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* p. 59, note 8; U. Fastenrath, *op. cit.* p. 1090, note 47.

⁵⁸ R. Higgins, *op. cit.* p. 111, note 20.

⁵⁹ Cf. M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* pp. 66f, note 8.

V. The Trusteeship Council Including the United Nations Functions under Chapter XI of the Charter

The Charter of the United Nations contains three chapters concerned with the destiny of peoples who have not yet attained their independence or self-government. Chapter XI of the Charter deals with Non-Self-Governing

Territories in general, and Chapters XII and XIII deal in particular with the International Trusteeship System, which is applicable to only some of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

A. INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

1. PROVISIONS OF THE CHARTER

Chapter XI, the Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories, is a contribution to the general principles of international accountability in respect of peoples who have no full measure of self-government. The Declaration reads:

Article 73

Members of the United Nations which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government recognize the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of these territories are paramount, and accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote to the utmost, within the system of international peace and security established by the present Charter, the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories, and, to this end:

- a. to ensure, with due respect for the culture of the peoples concerned, their political, economic, social, and educational advancement, their just treatment, and their protection against abuses;
- b. to develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions, according to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and their varying stages of advancement;
- c. to further international peace and security;
- d. to promote constructive measures of development, to encourage research, and to co-operate with one another and, when and where appropriate, with specialized international bodies with a view to the practical achievement of the social, economic, and scientific purposes set forth in this Article; and

- e. to transmit regularly to the Secretary-General for information purposes, subject to such limitation as security and constitutional considerations may require, statistical and other information of a technical nature relating to economic, social, and educational conditions in the territories for which they are respectively responsible other than those territories to which Chapters XII and XIII apply.

Article 74

Members of the United Nations also agree that their policy in respect of the territories to which this Chapter applies, no less than in respect of their metropolitan areas, must be based on the general principle of good-neighbourliness, due account being taken of the interests and well-being of the rest of the world, in social, economic, and commercial matters.

2. THE BACKGROUND OF CHAPTER XI

The history of Chapter XI goes back to the last century, to a gradually developing sense of responsibility on the part of the international community toward those peoples who were not yet independent. The struggle against slavery and the slave trade, growing out of this same sense of responsibility, led to international co-operation in colonial affairs. The Congo Basin Treaties signed at the Berlin Conference of 1885 and the Mandates System established under the League of Nations at the end of the First World War marked new steps in this direction. However, international responsibility remained confined to a mere fourteen territories in Africa, Asia and in the Pacific of which Germany and Turkey had been deprived at the end of the war.

During the Second World War the concept of international responsibility took on more

At first, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs was unsure as to whether Greenland would be regarded as one of the territories covered by the UN Charter Chapter XI, "Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories." In autumn 1946, however, it became clear that it was impossible to avoid being regarded as a colonial power, and Denmark was therefore obliged to work towards advancing self-government in Greenland. (Yearbook of the United Nations 1946/47)

section D that the peoples' right of self-determination must be ensured in the covenant; the resolution passed with a slight majority.⁶⁰ GA Resolution 545 (VI) of 5 February 1952 confirms that the right of self-determination for all peoples, including colonial peoples, must be included as a human right in a future UN covenant.

GA Resolution 637 A (VII) of 16 December 1952, which is especially relevant, recommends that states recognise and promote colonies' right of self-determination, including the right of independence, and it states that this right should be exercised through democratic means. The resolution is adopted with 40 votes in favour, 14 against (Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, South Africa, the UK, and the US), and 6 abstentions.⁶¹ Thus, the states voting against the colonies' right of self-determination include, among others, all of the colonial powers in the UN.

As time passes, the majority in the General Assembly supporting the right of colonial self-determination grows steadily. However, throughout the 1950s, the old colonial powers reject the assertion that the UN Charter contains a legal duty on the part of the colonial powers to give the colonies independence.⁶² Numerous statements from Western states, notably colonial powers, during the 1950s maintain either that the right of self-determination is only a political principle, not a legal one,⁶³ or that the principle is too vague to possess the nature of a legal right.⁶⁴

The decisive breakthrough for the anti-colonialists comes on 14 December 1960 when, without opposition from the colonial powers, the General Assembly adopts the famous GA Resolution 1514 (XV) entitled "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples". The resolution represents a radical departure from the General Assembly's previous approach to decolonisation. This approach, in accordance with Chapters XI-XII of the UN Charter, had been based on the basic view that the colonies' transition to a full measure of self-government, including the option of independence, was a long-term objective contingent on progressive development in the colonies, cf. particularly the General Assembly's list of factors resolutions, which are discussed in the following main section.⁶⁵ GA Resolution 1514, on the other hand, much more firmly and impatiently states that:

⁶⁰ Cf. M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* pp. 344, note 8.

⁶¹ Cf. *Yearbook of the United Nations 1952*, pp. 443f.

⁶² Cf. R. Higgins, *op. cit.* pp. 113 & 124, note 20; A. Cassese, *op. cit.* p. 46, note 2.

⁶³ See, for instance, statements in 1955 by the UK, the Netherlands, and Australia cited in A. Cassese, *op. cit.* p. 50, note 2, and footnote 41.

⁶⁴ See, for instance, statements by Belgium, Sweden, and Denmark cited in A. Cassese, *op. cit.* p. 50, note 2, and footnote 42.

⁶⁵ Cf. M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* pp. 139, 170 and especially 338, note 8: "Prior to 1960, the General Assembly in reality adhered to the theory of the *progressive developments* of colonial peoples as a condition for their exercising self-determination. With the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, however, radicalism appears to have replaced that moderate approach. According to the majority of the United Nations – at least in principle – colonial peoples who have not as

2. All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

3. Inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence.

...

5. Immediate steps shall be taken, in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories or all other territories which have not yet attained independence, to transfer all powers to the peoples of those territories, without any conditions or reservations, in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire

...

GA Resolution 1514 is a law-making declaration whose central claims lack direct basis in the UN Charter. In particular, Chapters XI-XII⁶⁶ do not support the resolution; at best, it is based on a dynamic development of the general principle of the peoples' right of self-determination as set forth in Article 1 (2) of the UN Charter.⁶⁷ Important in this regard, however, is the fact that GA Resolution 1514 is adopted without opposition from the colonial powers: 89 states vote in favour, none against, while 9 states abstain (Australia, Belgium, the Dominican Republic, France, Portugal, Spain, South Africa, the UK, and the US). Despite this strong support, the General Assembly expresses concern a year later⁶⁸ that GA Resolution 1514's call for immediate steps toward colonial independence has largely not yet been implemented.

In 1966, the General Assembly adopts GA Resolution 2200 (VVI) of 16 December 1966, which contains two universal human rights covenants on economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as civic and political rights that called upon the states to sign and ratify the covenants.⁶⁹ Both covenants in Article 1 state the right of all peoples to self-determination,⁷⁰ which expressly pertains

yet been enabled to exercise their right of self-determination should be allowed to do so *as soon as possible* and not withstanding their economic, social and educational progress". See also: U. Fastenrath, *op. cit.* p. 1092, note 47.

⁶⁶ Cf. M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* p. 144, note 8; K. Doehring, *op. cit.* p. 60, note 17; U. Fastenrath, *op. cit.* p. 1096, note 47.

⁶⁷ Cf. A. Cassese, *op. cit.* p. 44, note 2. On page 65 in the same book, Cassese states: "Article 1 (2) had a snowball effect, for it lent moral and political force to the aspirations of colonial countries ... Thus, Article 1 (2) was eventually perceived and relied upon as a legal entitlement to decolonisation". Cf. also M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* pp. 90ff, note 8.

⁶⁸ GA Resolution 1654 (XVI) of 27 November 1961.

⁶⁹ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, *UNTS*, vol. 999, p. 171, effective 23 March 1976, ratified by 55 states at present; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *UNTS*, vol. 993, p. 3, effective 3 January 1976, presently ratified by 152 states. Denmark signed both of them on 20 March 1968 and ratified both of them on 6 January 1972.

⁷⁰ The right of self-determination was included based on the initiative of the Soviet Union and a number of Third World countries, whereas the West, especially the UK, France, and Belgium, was generally either reluctantly or outspokenly against it, cf. A. Cassese, *op. cit.* p. 47, note 2.

also to colonial peoples and includes, among other things, the right to determine their political status.⁷¹

In 1970, GA Resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, which contains the “Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations”, is adopted. The Declaration, which is accepted without a vote, confirms the main elements of GA Resolution 1514 as a principle of international law under the heading “The principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples”:

By virtue of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations all peoples have the right freely to determine, without external interference, their political status ... Every State has the duty to promote, through joint and separate action, realization of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples ... and to render assistance to the United Nations ... in order:

...

(b) to bring a speedy end to colonialism, having due regard to the freely expressed will of the peoples concerned ...

When was the right of colonies to self-determination established as a norm of international law?

It is difficult to precisely date when the colonial peoples’ right of self-determination became a norm of international law. This depends on when state practice, especially practice reflected within the framework of the UN General Assembly, reached a level of unambiguity and consistency sufficient to establish a customary norm of international law, cf. the above-mentioned requirements for the establishment of customary law.

However, it is clear that the earliest this norm could have been established is 1960. In the preceding years, the colonial powers rejected the opinion of the majority of the General Assembly that colonial self-determination was a legal right. The colonial powers were so directly affected by the demand for decolonisation that the formation of customary law against their will must be regarded as out of the question. As Shukri also states:

... not until the Declaration of 1960 did any of the colonial powers vote for recognizing self-determination as a right in such a consistent manner as to indicate their acceptance of it

⁷¹ For a more detailed study of the contents of Article 1, see, for instance, J.S. Castan, *The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, 2000, pp. 99-107.

as a legal obligation on their part. And the pertinent question at this juncture would seem, how effective would an overwhelming anti-colonial vote be in the face of persistent opposition on the part of the states most concerned with recognizing specific rights and acknowledging specific obligations in respect to self-determination.⁷²

In 1960, the General Assembly adopted GA Resolution 1514 on the right of colonies to independence without dissent, and therefore, for the first time, without opposition from the colonial powers. While there is general agreement in both theory and legal practice that GA Resolution 1514 has been of central importance in the establishment of the colonial right of self-determination, some individuals feel that the adoption of GA Resolution 1514 was the actual moment when colonial self-determination became a norm of international law.⁷³ Others (simply) see both GA Resolutions 1514 and 1541 as decisive steps toward the establishment of the norm sometime later in the 1960s.⁷⁴ The latter position is supported by the fact that with GA Resolution 1654 in 1961 the General Assembly had to acknowledge with regret that most colonial states had not lived up to GA Resolution 1514. In 1966, the International Law Commission describes the right of self-determination as an absolute (*jus cogens*) norm of international law.⁷⁵

In 1970, when the General Assembly unanimously confirmed the colonies' right of self-determination with GA Resolution 2625, and when a large group of former colonies had meanwhile become independent states, the customary status of the colonial right of self-determination could no longer be denied. Thus, in its 1971 *Namibia Opinion*,⁷⁶ the International Court of Justice made its first reference⁷⁷ to colonial self-determination as a norm of international law; in its 1975 *Western Sahara Opinion*,⁷⁸ the Court explicitly referred to GA Resolution 1514 as the basis for the decolonisation process.

⁷² M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* pp. 344f, note 8.

⁷³ For instance, M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* pp. 338-345, note 8; R. Higgins, *op. cit.* pp. 101-104, note 14; K. Doehring, *op. cit.* p. 51, note 17; U. Fastenrath, *op. cit.* pp. 1092 & 1096, note 47.

⁷⁴ A. Cassese, *op. cit.* p. 72, note 2, concludes, based on GA Resolutions 1514 and 1541 and the states' opinions before and after their adoption, that: "[I]n the 1960s there evolved in the world community a set of general standards specifying the principle of self-determination enshrined in the UN Charter, with special regard to colonial peoples".

⁷⁵ *International Law Commission, Yearbook 1966*, ii, pp. 2 & 47.

⁷⁶ *South Africa in Namibia, Advisory Opinion*, ICJ Reports 1971, pp. 16ff, para. 52: "Furthermore, the subsequent development of international law in regard to non-self-governing territories, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, made the principle of self-determination applicable to all of them".

⁷⁷ In the case *Right of Passage over Indian Territory*, Judgment, Merits, ICJ Reports 1960, pp. 6ff, the Court does not refer to self-determination as a legal norm even though India had proceeded with that assumption. See A.M. Shukri, *op. cit.* pp. 347f, note 8; K. Doehring, *op. cit.* p. 54, note 17.

⁷⁸ *Western Sahara, Advisory Opinion*, ICJ Reports 1975, pp. 12ff, para. 55: "The principle of self-determination as a right of peoples, and its application for the purpose of bringing all colonial situations to a speedy end, were enunciated in [GA Resolution 1514, as cited]. The above provisions ... thus confirm and emphasize that the application of the right of self-determination requires a free and genuine expression of the will of the peoples concerned"; para. 57: "General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV) provided the basis for the process of decolonization, which has resulted since 1960 in the creation of many States. In certain aspects, it is complemented by General Assembly Resolution 1541 (XV)".

Requirements concerning the implementation of colonial self-determination (around 1953-1954)

The colonial regime in Chapter XI of the UN Charter – the obligation to report to the Secretary-General

Under the UN Charter's aforementioned Chapter XI, entitled "Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories", the colonial powers accepted – in addition to a general obligation to promote welfare and self-government in their colonies – solely a duty to regularly report certain statistical and technical information about the conditions in their colonies to the UN. Thus, Article 73 provides, among other duties, that:

Members of the United Nations which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government recognize the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of these territories are paramount, and accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote to the utmost, within the system of international peace and security established by the present Charter, the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories, and, to this end:

...

e. to transmit regularly to the Secretary-General for information purposes, subject to such limitation as security and constitutional considerations may require, statistical and other information of a technical nature relating to economic, social, and educational conditions in the territories for which they are respectively responsible other than those territories to which Chapters XII and XIII apply [areas subordinate to UN Guardianship].

Chapter XI thus apparently leaves it to the colonial powers to determine on their own whether a colony has attained full self-government, just as the obligation of the colonial powers to submit reports, cf. Article 73 (e), only pertains to the colonies' economic, social, and educational conditions. Chapter XI quickly turned out to be, for the anti-colonialists, an insufficient basis for decolonisation.

After 1945: The General Assembly attempts to extend the authority of the UN based on Chapter XI

Soon after the entry into force of the UN Charter, a majority of states in the UN General Assembly wished to extend the authority of the UN with regard to fur-

thering the decolonisation process.⁷⁹ This development was pushed forward by Third World countries with support from socialist countries, which were all opponents of colonialism and considered the system in the UN Charter's Chapter XI to be much too vague.⁸⁰ Thus, the principle of the self-determination of peoples became the lever for a process of decolonisation that was happening much faster and was more far-reaching than envisaged when Chapters XI and XII of the UN Charter were drafted.⁸¹ Increasingly insistent references to the principle of the right of colonial self-determination, combined with an expansion of the UN's authority to oversee the colonial powers' administration of their colonies, drove the decolonisation process forward.

Gradually, under Chapter XI the General Assembly asserted its competence to demand from the colonial powers both political and constitutional information about their colonies. The General Assembly also asserted its competence to decide whether and under what circumstances a territory is/was no longer covered by Chapter XI and the accompanying duty to submit reports. Throughout the 1950s, however, this practice was met with resistance from the colonial powers, who felt that this competence had no legal basis in the UN Charter.⁸²

As early as 1946,⁸³ the General Assembly asked the UN Secretary-General to include the colonial powers' informational reports, in accordance with Article 73 (e), in his annual report to the Assembly. In 1947,⁸⁴ the colonial powers were encouraged to report on the political developments in their colonies; clearly, these reports were an extension of the duties detailed in Article 73 (e). Moreover, in 1948,⁸⁵ the colonial powers were requested to give notification of every constitutional change in their colonies' status, effectively ending the duty to report information in pursuance of Article 73 (e). In 1949,⁸⁶ the General Assembly asserted its competence to outline guiding principles for defining which territories fell within the scope of Chapter XI and called for relevant factors (criteria) to be drawn up. The first result was GA Resolution 567 (VI) of 18 January 1952, which contains a draft list of criteria for determining when a colony can be said to have attained a "full measure of self-government". GA Resolution 648 (VII) of 10 December 1952 later followed with an interim list of factors.

A final list of factors was adopted with GA Resolution 742 (VIII) of 27 November 1953. GA Resolution 742, like its predecessors, envisaged that full colonial self-government could be realised through 1) independence, 2) free association with, or 3) integration into another state (including the former colonial state), insofar as this choice reflects the free will of the people. According to GA

⁷⁹ Cf. U. Fastenrath, *op. cit.* p. 1091, note 47; R. Higgins, *Problems and Process*, p. 113: "There began in the 1950s to be a moral stand taken on the issue [of colonial self-determination] by the General Assembly ..."

⁸⁰ Cf. for instance A. Ross, *op. cit.* pp. 361 & 374, note 43.

⁸¹ See for instance U. Fastenrath, *op. cit.* p. 1096, note 47.

⁸² See with support M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* p. 148, note 8, which refers to statements from the UK, the US, and France.

⁸³ GA Resolution 9 (I) of 9 February 1946.

⁸⁴ GA Resolution 144 (II) of 3 November 1947.

⁸⁵ GA Resolution 222 (III) of 3 November 1948.

⁸⁶ GA Resolution 334 (IV) of 2 December 1949.

Resolution 742, integration presupposes that the colonial population has sufficiently developed politically to decide its own future, and that the colony continues to maintain its options. In GA Resolution 742, the General Assembly also asserted its competence to make the final decision concerning whether a colony had achieved full self-government. Finally, the General Assembly reasserted that, despite the list of factors, the final evaluation is always concrete:

4. *Reasserts* that each concrete case should be considered and decided upon in the light of the particular circumstances of that case and taking into account the right of self-determination of peoples.

In this connection it is important to note that the colonial states voted against GA Resolution 742 (just as they had voted against the earlier factor resolutions). In their opinion the General Assembly had neither the authority to set up norms nor the authority to decide whether or not a colony had achieved full self-government.⁸⁷ Furthermore, the colonial powers rejected the notion that a former colonial population that had accepted integration retained the right to single-handedly make decisions about the political status of the territory; thus, the insertion of this provision was adopted by a mere 25 votes in favour, 17 against, and 10 abstentions.⁸⁸ GA Resolution 742, in its entirety, was adopted with 32 votes in favour, 19 against, and 6 abstentions.⁸⁹

Also in the context of the General Assembly's concrete resolutions between 1953-1955 on Puerto Rico,⁹⁰ Greenland,⁹¹ and the Dutch Antilles/Surinam⁹² – in which the General Assembly sanctioned the establishment of full self-government, but in the preamble simultaneously confirmed their own competence to decide whether or not a colony had achieved full self-government according to the definition in Article 73 – a number of colonial powers rejected the General Assembly's competence on the matter.⁹³

It was not until 1960, with the adoption of GA Resolution 1541,⁹⁴ that an overwhelming majority of states accepted – without noticeable opposition – a set of

⁸⁷ Cf. *Yearbook of the United Nations* 1953, p. 522.

⁸⁸ Cf. *Yearbook of the United Nations* 1953, p. 525.

⁸⁹ Cf. *ibid.* p. 526. The lists of factors are examined more closely in chapter 10.

⁹⁰ GA Resolution 748 (VIII) of 27 November 1953.

⁹¹ GA Resolution 849 (IX) of 22 November 1954.

⁹² GA Resolution 945 (X) of 15 December 1955.

⁹³ Cf. re GA Resolution 748 (VIII) in GA (VIII), 4th Com., 355th Meeting: Belgium (para. 35); 356th Meeting: Australia (para. 19), France (paras. 10-12), the Netherlands (para. 18), New Zealand (para. 30), and Sweden (para. 21). Statements re GA Resolution 849 (IX) in GA (IX), 4th Com. 430th Meeting: Australia (para. 25), France (para. 28), Sweden (para. 17), and the UK (para. 22). Statements regarding GA Resolution 945 (X) in GA (X), 4th Com., 523rd Meeting: Belgium (para. 42); 524th Meeting: Australia (para. 50); 525th Meeting: Sweden (para. 36) and the US (para. 59); 526th Meeting: France (para. 34) and New Zealand (para. 31).

⁹⁴ GA Resolution 1541 (XV) of 15 December 1960: "Principles which should guide Members in determining whether or not an obligation exists to transmit the information called for under Article 73 (e) of the Charter".

international principles for determining when a colony should be regarded as having attained a “full measure of self-government” pursuant to Chapter XI. The resolution was adopted by 69 votes in favour, 2 against (Portugal and South Africa), and 21 abstentions (socialist countries and some Western states), thus expressing a general agreement about how the colonial peoples’ right of self-determination should be understood and implemented.⁹⁵ GA Resolution 1541 retains many of the principles in the resolutions of the earlier list of factors, including one that states that the principles must always be applied in light of the concrete circumstances surrounding each case (paragraph 3) and that full self-government (self-determination) can be achieved either through 1) independence (becoming a sovereign state), 2) free association with another state, or 3) integration into another state (Principle VI). Apart from complete equality with the rest of the population of the state (Principle VIII), integration requires that the colony has attained a high level of self-government with independent political institutions, and that integration is the result of the free will of the colonial populations expressed through an informed and democratic process (Principle IX).

GA Resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, the “Declaration of Friendly Peoples”, was adopted without a vote. It confirms the chief elements of GA Resolution 1541 as principles of international law. However, any change in political status is now considered an exercise of self-determination insofar as it has been freely chosen by the people:

The establishment of a sovereign and independent State, the free association or integration with an independent State or the emergence into any other political status freely determined by the people constitute modes of implementing the right of self-determination by that people.

In 1975, the International Court of Justice’s *Western Sahara Opinion*⁹⁶ referred explicitly to GA Resolution 1541 as the basis for determining the contents of the colonial peoples’ right of self-determination.

An informed and democratic process

The essence of the right of self-determination is, in the words of the International Court of Justice, “a free and genuine expression of the will of the people

⁹⁵ Cf. A. Cassese, *op. cit.* pp. 69-71, note 2.

⁹⁶ *Western Sahara, Advisory Opinion*, ICJ Reports 1975, pp. 12ff, para. 55: “The principle of self-determination as a right of peoples, and its application for the purpose of bringing all colonial situations to a speedy end, were enunciated in [GA Resolution 1514, as cited]. The above provisions ... thus confirm and emphasise that the application of the right of self-determination requires a free and genuine expression of the will of the peoples concerned”; para. 57: “General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV) provided the basis for the process of decolonization, which has resulted since 1960 in the creation of many States. Certain aspects are complemented by General Assembly Resolution 1541 (XV)”.

concerned”.⁹⁷ The question is: What requirements does this definition imply in terms of the level of the colonies’ political development and the process by which colonial self-determination is implemented?

First, the factor resolutions from 1952-1953 (GA Resolutions 567, 648, and 742) presuppose that for a colony to be able to exercise its right of self-determination by choosing integration into, or a looser connection with, another state, including the former colonial power, the population must be sufficiently developed politically in order to make an informed choice (a corresponding demand is not posed as a requirement for choosing independence). In the landmark GA Resolution 1541 from 1960, the requirements regarding integration were further sharpened, cf. Principle IX:

The integrating territory should have attained an advanced stage of self-government with free political institutions, so that its peoples would have the capacity to make a responsible choice through informed and democratic processes...

However, in practice, the requirement that a colony and its population display advanced political development as a prerequisite for self-determination has had only limited significance. In many cases, the conditions for self-development were not met when the General Assembly – for political reasons – endorsed a change of colonial status as an exercise of the right of self-determination. This includes cases where the resulting status was not independence but integration or a looser association with another state.⁹⁸ The willingness to overlook the requirement of political development and the awareness of the consequences of such a decision became increasingly pronounced alongside the growing demand, after 1960, for a speedy decolonisation process.⁹⁹

Second, as regards integration or a looser association with an existing state it is a requirement that the right of self-determination be exercised through an informed and democratic process. This requirement is already stipulated in the factor resolutions of 1952-1953 (GA Resolutions 567, 648, and 742). In GA Resolution 1541 from 1960, the requirement is set forth as follows, cf. Principle IX:

The integration should be the result of the freely expressed wishes of the territory’s peoples acting with full knowledge of the change in their status, their wishes having been expressed through informed and democratic processes...

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 12ff, para. 55.

⁹⁸ Cf. M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* p. 138f, note 8; M. Pomerance, *op. cit.* p. 34, note 17; A.R. Sureda, *op. cit.* p. 321, note 32.

⁹⁹ A.R. Sureda, *op. cit.* p. 321, note 32, states the following about the background, for instance, of the process regarding South Cameroon and the Cook Islands: “It seems fair to conclude that in most cases the people were not fully conscious of the significance of the issues they were asked to vote for”. A.R. Sureda, *op. cit.* pp. 321f, note 32, nevertheless defends the completed self-determination proceedings (and their adoption by the General Assembly), saying that in and of themselves they contributed to the political consciousness of colonial populations.

The question is whether this requirement can only be fulfilled through a popular vote. Historically, the idea of self-determination has been linked with plebiscites, but they were far from being held consistently in relation to the territorial changes made after World War I.¹⁰⁰ The UN system also seems to emphasise plebiscites as preferable, but not as the only acceptable process.¹⁰¹ Thus, GA Resolution 637 A of 16 December 1952, paragraph 2, recommends that states promote the right of self-determination for colonies in accordance with:

... the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned, the wishes of the people being ascertained through plebiscites or other recognized democratic means, preferably under the auspices of the United Nations.

Hence, the essential demand is that the process must be genuinely democratic. Therefore, the right of self-determination can be exercised not only through a plebiscite, but also through representatives legitimately elected by the people.¹⁰² The (not always consistent)¹⁰³ practice of the General Assembly lends support to this position. While the US held a plebiscite prior to the agreement on Puerto Rico's entrance into a free association with the US, both Greenland's integration with Denmark and the Dutch Antilles/Surinam's home-rule agreement in association with the Netherlands (regional self-government in matters of internal affairs and joint control in matters of common interest) were agreed upon by the colonies' representatives elected by the people. In all three cases, the General Assembly endorsed the procedure used, and stated that the colonial peoples had exercised their right of self-determination.¹⁰⁴

The option of choosing independence

From time to time, the General Assembly put forth an additional requirement: That the colonial population must be presented with a choice between different options, including that of independence.¹⁰⁵ This requirement appears in GA Resolution 742 (VIII) from 1953, II.A.2, on the conditions for choosing other forms of self-government besides independence. The landmark GA Resolution

¹⁰⁰ Cf. A. Cobban, *op. cit.* pp. 70ff, note 35, also points out that during the conclusion of peace in 1919, specifically because of opposition from the allied nations, fewer plebiscites were held than might have been expected. See also: M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* p. 152, note 8; A.R. Sureda, *op. cit.* pp. 18f & 22, note 32.

¹⁰¹ Cf. M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* pp. 154ff, note 8; A.R. Sureda, *op. cit.* p. 295, note 32.

¹⁰² See also: M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* p. 170, note 8; A.R. Sureda, *op. cit.* p. 303, note 32.

¹⁰³ See, for instance, the analysis by A.R. Sureda, *op. cit.* pp. 294ff, note 32.

¹⁰⁴ Regarding Puerto Rico, see GA Resolution 748 (VIII) of 27 November 1953; regarding Greenland: GA Resolution 849 (IX) of 22 November 1954; regarding the Dutch Antilles/Surinam: GA Resolution 945 (X), 15 December 1955. For later practices, examples include the transition of the Cook Islands to self-government in association with New Zealand, its former administering power. This decision followed the holding of a democratic vote arranged by the newly-elected legislative assembly of the Cook Islands and adopted by the UN General Assembly in GA Resolution 2064 (XX) of 16 December 1965.

¹⁰⁵ See also: M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* p. 162, note 8.

1541 from 1960, however, does not refer to a similar requirement in connection with the choice of either free association or integration. Furthermore, another look at the practice of the General Assembly shows that while the population of Puerto Rico, through a plebiscite on their future status, was given the choice of independence, integration with the US, or a looser association (commonwealth) with the US, both Greenland's integration with Denmark and the Dutch Antilles/Surinam's self-government in association with the Netherlands were the result of negotiations between the administering powers' representatives and the colonial population's representatives. These colonial representatives were elected by the people of the colony based on mutual wish of both parties for such a solution. In all three cases, the General Assembly endorsed the procedure that was followed.¹⁰⁶ It is evident that one cannot eliminate independence as an option and still call it colonial self-determination. This is quite different from a specific case in which independence might not seriously have been considered as an option, simply because the colonial population in question clearly had no desire for it.¹⁰⁷

What principles of international law applied in 1953-1954 to the implementation of the right of self-determination?

It was not until 1960, at the earliest, when GA Resolution 1541 was adopted that the General Assembly's guidelines for determining whether a colony has achieved a full measure of self-government (i.e. self-determination) became so generally recognised among states that they could reasonably be considered principles of international law.¹⁰⁸

Until that time, the General Assembly's lists of factors were only of a political nature. Colonial powers rejected the competence of the General Assembly either to formulate such general criteria or to specifically assess a colony's progression toward a "full measure of self-government".¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, the lists of factors from 1952-1953, according to their own explicit content, were solely meant as guidelines to be applied in light of the specific circumstances of each case (see also GA Resolution 1541). In accordance with this position, the General Assembly has applied its own guidelines pragmatically in its practice of endorsement, tak-

¹⁰⁶ Regarding Puerto Rico, see GA Resolution 748 (VIII) of 27 November 1953; regarding Greenland, see GA Resolution 849 (IX) of 22 November 1954; regarding the Dutch Antilles/Surinam, see GA Resolution 945 (X), 15 December 1955.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. A.R. Sureda, *op. cit.* p. 306, note 32: "Generally speaking, if a consultation is going to be meaningful, the questions posed should refer to alternatives between which the wishes of the people concerned are divided". On the other hand, there was a problematic outcome in the case of the trusteeship territory of South Cameroon, cf. A.R. Sureda, *op. cit.* p. 306, note 32: Though a large part of the population ostensibly wanted independence, the General Assembly in GA Resolution 1352 (XIV) of 16 October 1959 recommended that the people in a future plebiscite only be given the choice of becoming a part of either Nigeria or the Republic of Cameroon.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. GA Resolution 1541 as a decisive step. The International Court of Justice in *Western Sahara Opinion*, ICJ Reports 1975, para. 57; A. Cassese, *op. cit.* pp. 69-71, note 2.

¹⁰⁹ There is no support for such competence in Chapter XI of the UN Charter, cf. for instance A. Ross, *op. cit.* p. 374, note 43; M.A. Shukri, *op. cit.* p. 144, note 8.

ing into account the specific circumstances of each case (and – especially after 1960 – also taking into consideration the increased political pressure for a speedy phasing out of the colonies).

Evaluating the process of Greenland's integration with Denmark in 1953-1954

Greenland's integration and General Assembly Resolution 849

As early as 1946, Denmark confirmed its role before the UN as a colonial power over Greenland by undertaking its obligation to report information on Greenland in accordance with Article 73 (e) of the UN Charter. In this manner, Denmark joined the following member states, which had also identified themselves as colonial powers in the same year: Australia, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the UK, and the US.¹¹⁰

In the autumn of 1952, after Denmark and Greenland had agreed to become integrated, and after this integration went into effect with the adoption of the constitutional revision of 5 June 1953, the Danish government informed the Secretary-General on 3 September 1953 that Greenland had become an integral and equal part of the Kingdom with the same legal constitutional status as other parts of the Kingdom. The Danish government thereby considered its responsibility for Greenland in relationship to Chapter XI of the UN Charter as finished, and thus discontinued its reports pursuant to Article 73 (e).

In GA Resolution 849 (IX) of 22 November 1954, entitled “Cessation of the transmission of information under Article 73 (e) of the Charter in respect of Greenland”, the UN General Assembly recognised that the Danish decision was in accordance with the UN Charter. The General Assembly stated that Greenland was no longer a colony (a non-self-governing territory) since, by choosing integration, Greenland's people had freely exercised their right of self-determination through their elected representatives and had thus achieved a full measure of self-government:

4. *Takes note* that when deciding on their new constitutional status, through their duly elected representatives, the people of Greenland have freely exercised their right of self-determination;

5. *Expresses the opinion* that, from the documentation and the explanations provided, Greenland freely decided on its integration within the Kingdom of Denmark on an equal constitutional and administrative basis with the other parts of Denmark;

¹¹⁰ Cf. GA Resolution 66 (I) of 14 December 1946.

6. *Notes with satisfaction* the achievement of self-government by the people of Greenland;
7. *Considers* that due to these circumstances the Declaration regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories with the provisions established under it in Chapter XI of the Charter can no longer be applied to Greenland ...

GA Resolution 849 was adopted with 45 votes in favour, 1 against, and 11 abstentions. In essence, however, the General Assembly's recognition of the change in Greenland's status was nearly unanimous. Both the dissenting vote and most of the abstentions were due to the (mostly colonial powers') objection to the last section of the preamble of the resolution, which confirmed the competence of the General Assembly to decide whether a colony has achieved full self-government.¹¹¹

Gudmundur Alfredsson's critique

International lawyer Gudmundur Alfredsson has studied in depth Greenland's transition from a Danish colony to an integrated part of the Kingdom of Denmark.¹¹² Alfredsson is not only highly critical of the Danish authorities' role in the process, but also of GA Resolution 849 (IX) from 1954, through which, as mentioned earlier, the General Assembly recognised Greenland's integration with Denmark as an expression of the wishes of the Greenland people and thus the exercise of their right of self-determination. In response, Alfredsson attempts to demonstrate that:

- 1) GA Resolution 849 on crucial points is based on (*deliberately*) *erroneous, distorted, or insufficient information* from the Danish authorities on conditions in Greenland, including mainly that Denmark: ¹¹³

¹¹¹ The detailed information about the voting results confirms the correspondence between the opposition to the preambular section on the competence of the General Assembly and the rejection of/abstention in the vote on the text of the resolution in its entirety, cf. *United Nations Yearbook 1954*, pp. 322-323. The results of the vote, specifically concerning the controversial preambular section, were: 38 for, 15 against (Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Turkey, South Africa, the UK, and the US), and 4 abstentions (Brazil, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, and Israel). The results of the votes on the full text of the resolution were: 45 for, 1 against (Belgium), 11 abstentions (Afghanistan, Australia, Canada, France, Greece, Indonesia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, South Africa, and the UK). See also: G. Alfredsson, "Greenland under Chapter XI of the United Nations Charter: A Continuing International Law Dispute"; S. Skaale (ed.), "The Right to National Self-Determination: The Faroe Islands and Greenland", *Nijhoff Law Specials*, vol. 60, 2004, p. 60 with reference to UN Doc. A/PV.499, pp. 306-307.

¹¹² In 1982, Alfredsson received a doctorate degree from Harvard Law School for a dissertation entitled "Greenland and the Right to External Self-Determination". The dissertation formed the basis of, among others, G. Alfredsson, *Greenland and the Law*, and *Greenland under Chapter XI of the United Nations Charter*, pp. 72ff.

¹¹³ G. Alfredsson, *ibid.* pp. 72ff.

- incorrectly noted that Greenland was discovered by Scandinavians 1000 years ago. The Inuit population came to Greenland thousands of years before Greenland was “discovered” by Scandinavians;¹¹⁴
- exaggerated the strength of local Greenland self-government;¹¹⁵
- provided incorrect information about the closeness of religious and cultural ties between Danes and Greenlanders;¹¹⁶
- incorrectly described the population as mixed Inuit-Scandinavian – a large majority was pure Inuit;¹¹⁷
- neglected to mention America’s military bases and strategic interests;¹¹⁸
- played down the initiative and interest it took in (speedy) integration;¹¹⁹
- did not satisfactorily describe the social problems in Greenland, the low level of education etc.¹²⁰

According to Alfredsson, if the General Assembly had known what the actual conditions were, a different decision would have been made (i.e., refusal to recognise Greenland’s integration).¹²¹

2) GA Resolution 849 on crucial points accepts *conditions that do not fulfil the General Assembly’s general requirements on the right of colonial peoples to exercise self-determination* (the lists of factors):

- Greenland was quite under-developed politically;¹²²
- Greenland was under-developed socially, educationally, and economically;¹²³
- Greenland was geographically, ethnically, and culturally separated from Denmark;¹²⁴
- A plebiscite was not held to ask the population of Greenland what it wanted;¹²⁵
- Though the Greenland Provincial Council was elected by the people by 1951, it had no constitutional mandate (integration was not a topical issue during the election);¹²⁶

¹¹⁴ G. Alfredsson, *ibid.* p. 72.

¹¹⁵ G. Alfredsson, *ibid.* p. 75.

¹¹⁶ G. Alfredsson, *ibid.* p. 76.

¹¹⁷ G. Alfredsson, *ibid.* pp. 76f.

¹¹⁸ G. Alfredsson, *ibid.* p. 78.

¹¹⁹ G. Alfredsson, *ibid.* pp. 54, 70 (stated here as showing a tendency towards corruption) & 76.

¹²⁰ G. Alfredsson, *ibid.* pp. 78f.

¹²¹ G. Alfredsson, *ibid.* p. 72.

¹²² G. Alfredsson, *ibid.* pp. 80ff (the General Assembly knew this, but nevertheless gave its approval, cf. *ibid.* p. 82).

¹²³ G. Alfredsson, *ibid.* pp. 87ff (the General Assembly knew this, but nevertheless gave its approval).

¹²⁴ G. Alfredsson, *ibid.* p. 90.

¹²⁵ G. Alfredsson, *ibid.* p. 84.

¹²⁶ G. Alfredsson, *ibid.* pp. 83f (the General Assembly “failed to recognise” this matter).

- The Provincial Council, and hence the Greenlanders, only had two days to discuss and make the decision;¹²⁷
- The Greenland Provincial Council, which (unanimously) approved the proposal for integration in 1952, did not represent the entire population; the (sparsely populated) areas of North and East Greenland were not represented;¹²⁸
- The Greenlanders were not given any alternatives, such as the option of independence.¹²⁹

Based on these points, Alfredsson concludes that GA Resolution 849 is not binding as international law in relation to Greenland's continued right of external self-determination. He concludes that it is only legally binding to the extent that it recognises Denmark's lack of obligation to continue to report in accordance with Article 73 (e). According to Alfredsson this conclusion can also be inferred from the General Assembly's inability to make legally binding decisions on specific legal issues.¹³⁰ Alfredsson's main point, however, is that the lack of international legal effect (= invalidity) of GA Resolution 849 stems from the fact that the General Assembly's approval rested on a factually incorrect and normatively inadequate basis.¹³¹

Evaluation in terms of international law

The underlying basis for an assessment of Greenland's integration in 1953 and its subsequent recognition by the General Assembly in GA Resolution 849 is the prevailing norms of international law applicable at that particular time regarding decolonisation, cf. the previous sections on this subject in the present chapter. In 1953-1954, an external right of self-determination for colonies had not yet been established as a norm of international law since the colonial powers insisted that self-determination was only a general political principle.¹³² In 1953-1954, the

¹²⁷ G. Alfredsson, *ibid.* p. 85 (the General Assembly knew this, but nevertheless gave its approval).

¹²⁸ G. Alfredsson, *ibid.* p. 86.

¹²⁹ G. Alfredsson, *ibid.* p. 87: "[GA Resolution 849] failed, despite abundant evidence, to pay any attention to this lack of alternatives".

¹³⁰ G. Alfredsson, *ibid.* p. 65.

¹³¹ G. Alfredsson, *op. cit.* pp. 305 & 307, note 2; G. Alfredsson, *op. cit.* pp. 68ff & 93f, note 112.

¹³² Alfredsson, on the other hand, seems (albeit with abstruse wording) to assume that by 1954, the colonial right of self-determination had already become a norm of international law, cf. G. Alfredsson, *op. cit.* p. 91, note 112: "The law of political decolonization had in 1954 already been evolved through the UN Charter, general and specific General Assembly resolutions and a limited amount of state practice. Since then, it has taken on a more consolidated and definitive form, establishing beyond dispute the right of overseas colonial entities to external self-determination and the competence of the Assembly to determine when such a situation arises. GA Resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV) and common Article 1 of the two International Human Rights Covenants come to mind as good examples of codification of these practices. If the Greenland case were to appear before the International Court of Justice or to reappear on the agenda of the General Assembly, it is quite possible to maintain that Greenland's status could be revisited, on both the basis of the law at that time, which has only been strengthened since, and new law". Alfredsson's conclusion only seems possible in that within the above passage, he fails to take a clear position on the status of international law in the years 1953-1954 on decolonisation and the right of self-



Undated photo of Eske Brun among Greenlanders at the colonial harbour in Nuuk. Called “Mr Greenland” by the American ambassador Robert Coe, Brun was described as “a big, strong, hearty, red-headed man with a keen eye and a harsh face, but when he smiles and laughs it is a pleasant face. He can be tough and rough, and he is by no means always diplomatic”. Report to the State Department, 1 February 1957. (The Arctic Institute)

same was true for the General Assembly’s alleged competence to lay down general requirements on the implementation of self-determination (the lists of factors) and to endorse specific arrangements regarding colonial self government, given that the colonial powers and others rejected that Chapter XI provided the general Assembly with any authority in this regard.¹³³ Therefore, in 1953, Denmark’s only obligations under international law as a colonial power were

determination. Instead, he conflates earlier state practice from the 1950s with later practice from 1960 onward (GA Resolutions 1514 and 1541, as well as the Covenants of 1966). The latter covenants are represented by Alfredsson as simply “codifications” of earlier practice that “strengthened” the law concerning decolonisation and gave it a “more consolidated and definitive form”. By doing this, Alfredsson blurs the key role of the possibility of the formation of international customary law, namely that, until Resolution 1514 (1960), the colonial powers had opposed colonial self-determination as anything but a political principle with a central role.

¹³³ Alfredsson represents the lists of factors as simply more explicit formulations of the obligations set forth in Chapter XI of the UN Charter, cf. G. Alfredsson, *op. cit.* p. 302, note 2: “[the lists of factors] spell out in greater detail the procedural and substantive guidelines for terminating the non-self-governing status”. On the other hand, he recognises that because of opposition on the part of the colonial powers, the legally binding character of these lists of factors was debatable, cf. G. Alfredsson, *op. cit.* p. 302, note 2: “the legal validity of the lists of factors may be cast into doubt because the Assembly adopted them partly over the objections of administering powers which contended that the lists infringed on their internal affairs. Opinions differ as to whether such resolutions are to be considered mere guidelines and recommendations from a political assembly without legislative powers, authoritative interpretations of the Charter, or rules of customary law as born out by votes cast in the Assembly and by actual practice”.

based on the vague provisions of the UN Charter, Chapter XI, Article 73: A general obligation to promote the welfare and interests of the population of Greenland, and – as its sole specific obligation – to regularly transmit technical information to the UN on the economic, social, and educational conditions in Greenland.

The following comments about Gudmundur Alfredsson's criticism and the possible consequences in terms of international law should be taken into consideration against this background. As previously mentioned, Alfredsson's criticism of the process partly relates to the (allegedly) incorrect information the Danish authorities gave to the UN about Greenland, and partly to the contention that the General Assembly in GA Resolution 849 did not enforce the general requirements concerning the implementation of colonial peoples' right of self-determination that the Assembly itself had formulated.

Re 1): That GA Resolution 849 on crucial points was based *deliberately on erroneous, distorted, or insufficient information* from the Danish authorities on Greenland and the conditions of the people of Greenland.

In principle, this accusation is undoubtedly serious; if correct, it implies that the General Assembly's recognition of Greenland's integration was based on a partially incorrect and incomplete foundation. Even though the phrasing of many of Alfredsson's complaints might appear unreasonably sharp, it must be granted that not all of the Danish information on Greenland and its people was completely precise and adequate; in some cases it might even appear somewhat misleading (especially concerning the ethnic composition of Greenland's population). Nevertheless, identifying ill intentions is difficult unless the following situation can be seen as reprehensible: Denmark, as a colonial power, also had an interest in quickly removing itself from the UN's reporting system while associating itself more closely with Greenland during a period of growing decolonisation.¹³⁴ The extent to which Denmark (consciously or unconsciously) provided the UN with partially incorrect or insufficient information on the conditions in Greenland would constitute a breach of Denmark's obligation, under the UN Charter's Article 73 (e), to transmit statistical and technical information on the colony's social, economic, and educational conditions. However, Alfredsson's argument that the information he enumerates could have had a decisive influence on the General Assembly's decision to endorse the integration is pure speculation. Circumstances offer no basis for such a conclusion. In GA Resolution 849, the General Assembly puts crucial emphasis on the fact that Greenland's change in status was decided through a legitimately democratic process that consequently reflected the wishes of the Greenlanders themselves; who arrived in Greenland first or how many Greenlanders had Scandinavian blood flowing in their veins does not seem to have played quite the same role.

¹³⁴ See, in this regard, G. Alfredsson, *op. cit.* pp. 56 & 93, note 112.

Re 2): That GA Resolution 849 on crucial points accepts *conditions that do not fulfil the General Assembly's general requirements regarding the right of colonial peoples to exercise self-determination* (the lists of factors).

It is easier to take a position regarding this criticism. The General Assembly was free to endorse Greenland's integration regardless of the fact that conditions in Greenland and the population's decision to integrate did not meet in all respects the guidelines set forth in the lists of factors. The requirements that Alfredsson criticises the General Assembly for not having enforced in Greenland's case in 1953-1954 were 1) not recognised as requirements in terms of international law, since (mainly) the colonial powers rejected the competence of the General Assembly to determine them; 2) were in reference to the factor resolutions expressly meant as instructive guidelines; 3) were subject to the proviso of consistently taking into consideration the circumstances of each individual case; and, finally, in accordance with this condition, they were 4) never followed to the letter by the General Assembly, which in practice conducted itself pragmatically in relation to its own requirements (the lists of factors). GA Resolution 849 in itself is only one of several examples.

Thus, although it is, to a certain extent, true that the conditions in Greenland in 1953 did not meet the demands of the lists of factors – especially with regard to political, social, and educational development as well as to independence as a clear option – and although it might be claimed that the political process in Greenland did not fully meet contemporary standards for an optimal democratic process – the requirement for which, as stated earlier, did not, however, necessarily presuppose a plebiscite – this is all without legal significance. Such is the case because the requirements in the lists of factors had not been recognised as binding in terms of international law, and because the General Assembly recognised the integration of Greenland with (complete) knowledge of the aforementioned shortcomings, attaching decisive importance to the fact that integration was the result of the free and democratically expressed wish of the people of Greenland.

To set the record straight, it should also be noted that Alfredsson does not, on certain points, provide an accurate picture of reality. Although the Danish government did not officially propound the option of independence for Greenland, negotiations in the Greenland Provincial Council show that the Greenland decision-makers were well aware that the right of self-determination included the possibility of secession. However, they still dissociated themselves from that possibility.¹³⁵ Concerning the assertion that the Greenlanders had only two days to debate the possibility of integration, it should be noted that the issue of integration had been under discussion since at least 1950.¹³⁶ In February of 1951, Greenland representatives in the Greenland Committee expressed a strong desire for a closer association of Greenland with Denmark.¹³⁷ A speedy decision was

¹³⁵ See, additionally, chapter 7.

¹³⁶ Cf. *Betænkning afgivet af Forfatningskommissionen af 1946* [Report submitted by the Constitutional Commission of 1946], 1953, Appendix 1.

¹³⁷ See, additionally, chapter 7.

desirable from Denmark's perspective at this point, especially since a change in Greenland's status needed to be included in the imminent constitutional revisions that had been under preparation for some time.

In summary, the key point remains that the representatives elected by the people of Greenland (like the representatives of the Danish government) wanted integration, and that the process by which this desire was confirmed was recognised by the General Assembly in GA Resolution 849 as an expression of the Greenlanders' right of self-determination. While GA Resolution 849 cannot be considered binding under international law, it nevertheless has legal consequences in terms of international law by virtue of the states' recognition¹³⁸ of Greenland's change of status. Hence, there is no basis for asserting that other states were tricked and misinformed by the Danish government in such a way that their recognition of Greenland's integration must, for that reason, be considered annulled or invalid.¹³⁹ Consequently, Greenland's integration with the Kingdom of Denmark was, and remains, both politically recognised and valid in terms of international law.

Summary

The development of international law on self-determination and decolonisation

According to traditional international law, colonialism is legitimate. The conquest and annexation of foreign territory (outside the sovereignty of other states) is considered legal, regardless of the wishes of the population of that foreign territory. Ideas concerning peoples' right of self-determination and decolonisation emerged after World War I, but until 1945, these ideas had the sole status of political-moral ideology.

¹³⁸ The question of the recognition of states is, in the final analysis, a political matter decided by the individual state. However, the political decision has legal consequences. Recognition indicates that the state that has recognised another state agrees that the conditions of international law for the formation of a state were met, regardless of whether or not this is in fact the case, cf. M.N. Shaw, *op. cit.* pp. 368ff, note 19. As a rule, recognition carries with it an endorsement in terms of international law of the actual political conditions, cf. M.N. Shaw, *op. cit.* p. 393, note 19. Today, if a state's representatives felt that they had been duped regarding the case of Greenland's integration, it would, in principle, be possible to for the state in question to retract its previous recognition of Greenland's status as an integrated part of Denmark.

¹³⁹ Regarding the question of the validity in international law of the integration, a parallel can be drawn to treaty rights. According to the Convention on the Law of Treaties of 1969, which codified international customary law for integration, a treaty can be considered, among other things, invalid (contested) if one of the parties has (through no fault of its own) been under a real misconception of decisive significance for entering into the treaty (Article 48), and/or if one of the parties has deceived the opposing party into entering the treaty (Article 49). In addition, a treaty is nullified if, at the time it was entered into, it was in conflict with a fixed principle of international law (*jus cogens*). Invalidity is retroactive to the point in time the treaty was first entered into. See, additionally, O. Spiermann, "Moderne folkeret" ["Modern International Law"], second revised edition, *DJØF*, Copenhagen, 2004, pp. 367ff.

It was not until the UN Charter that decolonisation began to be addressed legally. The UN Charter made respect for the principle of peoples' right of self-determination one of the UN's objectives, cf. Article 1 (2). However, the substance of the principle was originally so broad and imprecise that it lacked any operational legal content – in particular, Article 1 (2) did not give colonies the right to demand independence. Instead, with Chapter XI, the UN Charter created a special system of protection for colonies (non-self-governing territories). Chapter XI anticipated a progressive development toward colonial self-government, one to which the colonial powers should commit themselves to promoting as a “sacred trust”. In Chapter XI, the absence of references to the right of colonies to self-determination and secession was due to resistance on the part of the colonial powers. According to Chapter XI, these powers were charged with the task of ensuring gradual, progressive decolonisation; the UN was only intended to have a secondary role as the recipient of regular reports on the economic, social, and educational conditions of the colonies.

After 1945, dissatisfaction among the majority of the states in the world with the vague colonial regime laid down in Chapter XI caused a majority in the General Assembly to exert pressure to have the colonial peoples' right of self-determination recognised and to strengthen the authority of the UN in the administration of the colonies. However, throughout the 1950s, the colonial powers refused to recognise the colonial right of self-determination, including the right of secession, just as (particularly) the colonial powers during the same period rejected, in reference to the content of Chapter XI, the idea that the General Assembly had the competence to determine the criteria for deciding whether or not a colony had achieved full self-government (the lists of factors).

It was not until 1960 that the colonial powers dropped their opposition to the colonial right of self-determination and the international principles for its implementation. GA Resolution 1514 on the right of the colonies to immediate self-determination and independence was adopted without dissent and with few abstentions. GA Resolution 1541, which stated the principles that a territory must fulfil to be recognised as having achieved a full measure of self-government, was similarly adopted (almost) without opposition. During the course of the 1960s, decolonisation in the practice of the states accelerated significantly. In 1966, two universal Covenants of Human Rights were adopted, which in Article 1 refer to the colonial peoples' right of self-determination. In 1970, the General Assembly unanimously adopted GA Resolution 2625, which confirmed the contents of GA Resolutions 1514 and 1541 *vis-à-vis* the peoples' right of self-determination. A year later, the International Court of Justice confirmed, for the first time, that the right of colonies to self-determination had become a norm of international law.

Based on these events, it can be concluded that the earliest the colonial right of self-determination and the principles for its implementation could have been established as norms of international law was in 1960 with the adoption of GA Resolutions 1514 and 1541; until then, the colonial powers refused to recognise the colonial right of self-determination as anything but a political principle, just

as a number of states, including the colonial powers, refused to accept the competence of the General Assembly to determine principles (criteria) for the implementation of colonial self-determination.

The resistance of the colonial powers until 1960 in itself rules out the formation of customary international law on decolonisation prior to that year.

Greenland's integration with Denmark

At the time of Greenland's integration with Denmark (1953) and the General Assembly's endorsement of the integration in GA Resolution 849 (1954), the process of decolonisation was picking up steam. However, neither the colonies' right of external self-determination, including the right of secession, nor the competence of the General Assembly to determine and implement criteria (the lists of factors) for the application of this right, was sufficiently recognised in state practice at the time to be binding as a rule of international customary law. Thus, the only obligations in 1953-1954 that Denmark as a colonial power was subject to in terms of international law were those that followed from Chapter XI of the UN Charter.

As early as 1946, Denmark had acknowledged its responsibility as an administering power in relation to Greenland as a colony (non-self-governing territory), under Chapter XI of the UN Charter. By doing so, Denmark assumed the "sacred trust" of promoting Greenland's development, welfare, and interests, and of assisting the island in the progressive development of self-government and free political institutions, cf. Article 73 (b). Denmark also assumed the specific obligation of reporting to the UN Secretary-General, in accordance with Article 73 (e), (accurate) statistical data on Greenland's economic, social, and educational conditions. After Greenland and Denmark reached an agreement on Greenland's integration with Denmark in 1952, and after the integration came into effect with the constitutional amendment in June of 1953, the Danish government informed the UN that it was discontinuing its reports on Greenland.

In GA Resolution 849 of 1954, the General Assembly agreed that Denmark was no longer required to report information on Greenland pursuant to Chapter XI. The General Assembly recognised, virtually unanimously, that Greenland's integration was an expression of the people of Greenland's free exercise of the right of self-determination. This recognition by the General Assembly notably has relevance in terms of international law as an expression of the states' acknowledgment of the change that had taken place in Greenland's international status.

To some extent, the particulars surrounding Greenland's exercise of self-determination in its integration with Denmark did not meet the General Assembly's general criteria – it can mainly be contended *that*, in many respects, Greenland was not sufficiently developed politically, socially, and educationally in 1953 to exercise self-determination, and that Denmark should have maintained a colonial system, in accordance with Chapter XI, in order to promote a progressive development towards self-government in Greenland; *that* the endorsement from Greenland's Provincial Council was not an optimal democratic process; and it

can be criticised *that* the Greenlanders were not given an official opportunity to choose independence as an alternative to integration (even though the Provincial Council, however, was aware that this alternative existed in terms of the principle of the peoples' right of self-determination) – it must be noted that the General Assembly nevertheless approved integration with knowledge of the conditions mentioned above. This is not especially surprising, keeping in mind that the lists of factors (which were not yet commonly accepted as legally binding) were, according to their contents, only meant as instructive guidelines subject to a specific case-by-case evaluation. In its recognition of Greenland's integration with Denmark, the General Assembly's deciding factor seems to have been the conviction that the change in Greenland's status was in keeping with the wishes of the people of Greenland.

The extent that Denmark (consciously) provided inadequate or misleading information to the General Assembly in connection with the integration of Greenland constitutes, as far as technical information is concerned, a breach of Denmark's obligation under Article 73 (e) of the UN Charter. More crucial, however, is the question of whether or not the communication of incorrect or misleading information could invalidate the General Assembly's endorsement. At this point, judgment is impossible to pass as to whether or not more accurate information, for instance, on the ethnic makeup of Greenland would have influenced the states in the General Assembly to decide differently. This possibility seems unlikely, however, since the main emphasis of GA Resolution 849 was on the democratic process that preceded Greenland's consent to integration. Emphasis was also placed on the fact that, with integration, Greenland and its people were placed on an equal constitutional footing with other parts of the Kingdom of Denmark.

Brief conclusion

Until 1945, colonialism was fully legal under international law. The UN Charter does not in itself establish a requirement for colonial self-determination, including independence, but only an obligation on the part of colonial powers to assist and ensure progress towards self-government, pursuant to Chapter XI. The right of colonies to self-determination, including independence, was established as a norm of international law in 1960, at the earliest, when GA Resolution 1514 was adopted without opposition from the colonial powers. The principles of the right of self-determination were also acknowledged in terms of international law in GA Resolution 1541 during the same year, at the earliest. Thus, Denmark's only obligation towards Greenland in terms of international law in 1953-1954 was laid down in Chapter XI of the UN Charter (as seen in the context of a vague principle of the right of peoples to self-determination in Article 1 (2)). With GA Resolution 849, the General Assembly almost unanimously recognised Greenland's integration with Denmark as a free expression by the people of Greenland of their right to self-determination. There is no basis in international

law for disputing the integration process or the states' political recognition of the integration that took place. In certain respects, the foundation for the integration deviated from the General Assembly's general criteria (the lists of factors), but the states' representatives in the General Assembly were aware of this matter when they nevertheless endorsed the process and its result. No basis exists either for the allegation that the states' representatives were thus tricked and misinformed by the Danish government in the process, or that their endorsement of the integration should, for this reason, be considered annulled or invalid. Hence, Greenland's integration with the Kingdom of Denmark was and remains both politically recognised and valid in terms of international law.

6 · A new policy on Greenland in the pipeline: Danish and Greenland initiatives, 1945-1950

Erik Beukel

Introduction

This chapter describes developments in the Danish policy on Greenland as well as Danish and Greenland initiatives from 1945 to 1950. During this period, consensus grew among decision makers that an entirely new Danish policy on Greenland should be developed. As previously mentioned in chapter 2, major changes had taken place in Greenland and in Greenland's relationships with the rest of the world during the war. After a couple of years of conflicting views regarding the extent of the changes that were necessary and desirable in the Danish policy on Greenland, a broad consensus emerged in favour of beginning a process of the modernisation of Greenland society. This chapter partly focuses on the formulation of Greenland policy within central decision-making bodies – such as the government, administrative departments, and the *Folketing* – and partly on what other actors in Danish politics, notably the press, said about Greenland, as well as the interplay between central bodies and the press. The interplay between the central bodies and the daily newspapers, in particular, played a significant role in Greenland policymaking in the latter half of the 1940s. The opinions and manifestations of Greenlanders are also discussed, both as independent factors in the development of the Greenland issue, and as factors that influenced the opinions and decisions of the Danish decision makers.

The central questions concern the institutional and ideational evolution of proposals for a fundamental renewal of the Danish policy on Greenland. What ideas did the central decision-making bodies and the press entertain about Greenland's social and political development as well as its status as part of the Kingdom of Denmark? What possible alternatives were considered, and what were the key institutions and considerations that shaped these decisions? What views were held in Greenland about the country's future? The first section addresses the emergence of the Greenland issue during the first few years after the liberation when opposing views in different parts of the Greenland administration became politically intrusive, particularly after dramatic press reports from Greenland during the autumn of 1946. The second section describes the way in which Prime Minister Hedtoft went on the offensive in spring 1948 and made a conspicuous trip to Greenland during the summer. Immediately afterwards, the prime minister faced administrative and political problems that are central to understanding the difficulties entailed in the implementation of a completely new policy in a previously isolated and well-functioning policy area. The third section describes how the new Greenland policy was launched by the appoint-

ment of the Greenland Commission in autumn 1948, the publication of the Commission's report in spring 1950, and the passing of the new Greenland Acts later that spring. In this context, the views of the Greenlanders and their reactions to initiatives and events in Copenhagen are reviewed. Finally, the central factors in the emergence of the new policy on Greenland during the period of 1945-1950 are summarised.

The Greenland issue emerges

In Greenland after the war, no openly expressed wishes or demands for independence existed. Even the most independent political movement, *Pekatiqit Kalatdlit* (the Greenlandic Association), which had been established in Copenhagen in 1939 to provide a forum of debate for Greenlanders residing there, focused on the lack of political freedom and opportunities for more independent developments in Greenland rather than secession from the Kingdom of Denmark. Such ideas were apparently beyond the scheme of things for Greenlanders.¹ They wanted greater self-determination, but within the Kingdom. There were, however, regional differences when these ideas were articulated as the people from North Greenland were more sceptical about Copenhagen. In Denmark after the liberation, widespread goodwill existed towards the Greenlanders who, unlike the Icelanders, were perceived as having manifested solidarity with the occupied motherland. Based on these attitudes in Greenland and Denmark, it should have been possible for relations between the two parts of the Kingdom of Denmark to continue without any problems after 1945. However, as noted at the end of chapter 2, developments in Greenland and the island's relationships with the outside world during the war nevertheless posed a powerful challenge to Denmark, meaning that continuance of the more than 200 years of close, unchanged ties to Denmark had become impracticable. Greenland, in the course of a few years after 1945, thus became a political issue in Denmark. It developed through the interplay between opposing internal views in the Greenland administration and the press' new focus on Greenland, which, until then, had been dominated by the prevailing image of Greenlanders as "happy Eskimos". Moreover, commercial interests became involved that also pushed for a new Greenland policy.

Opposing views in the Greenland Administration

After the liberation, when the Danish decision makers in Copenhagen were able to resume relations with Greenland, they encountered a Greenland that differed greatly from the pre-war Greenland, one that they had difficulty comprehending

¹ Based on Jens Heinrich, *Statusændringen i 1953. Grønlandernes forhold til Danmark i perioden 1946-1954*, [Change of Status in 1953: The Greenlanders' Relationship with Denmark in the Period 1946-1954] appendix, pp. 428 & 439. Heinrich reviews the Greenland press and magazines of the period.

and relating to. Particularly for the civil servants in the Greenland Administration, which was headed by Director Knud Oldendow, the war years were a brief interlude. They only had limited knowledge of the major changes that had taken place in Greenland during the separation (see chapter 2) and, therefore, found it natural to pick up where they had left off on 9 April 1940, i.e. ensuring the supply of goods and ships to restore normal conditions in Greenland. However, for the Danish civil servants under Governor Eske Brun who had spent the war years in Greenland, “normal conditions” were part of a long lost world that no one could bring back. In this group’s opinion, it was high time to undertake radical reform. However, the group harboured latent scepticism about the will and capabilities of the Greenland Administration to take the lead in this work. During the summer of liberation, Eske Brun in particular was active in distributing notes to central decision makers that contained his ideas and their basis in the developments in Greenland.² By all accounts, the Greenlanders leaned mostly towards the latter viewpoint, although there was considerable scepticism towards major reforms, particularly in North Greenland. As mentioned in chapter 2, the Greenlanders had experienced World War II as a landmark event and, in general, they endorsed the wish to leave behind the old system and climb onto the development bandwagon. Any hesitation was primarily due to doubts about which path towards a new system should be chosen.³

Differences of opinion within the Greenland Administration can mainly be described as a conflict between reform-advocating *modernists* and reform-sceptical *traditionalists*.⁴ The modernists thought that, after the war, steps should be taken towards an economic and political development similar to what Denmark had undergone over the course of several hundred years. The first steps involved building up an independent business community in Greenland, abolishing the trade monopoly, and contributing to the development of an autonomous political life. On the other hand, the traditionalists did not think that Greenland was ready for such development. A need to protect the Greenlanders still existed. If steps towards major reforms were taken too rapidly, there was the risk of inflicting immense damage on Greenland’s vulnerable society. Supporters of major reforms advocated the continuation of the wartime process of administrative centralisation in Greenland as well as the granting of greater authority to the two Provincial Councils in order to implement the necessary modernisation. Conversely, many sceptics of reform wished to return to the previous form of

² Just one week after the liberation, Eske Brun had expressed certain reform ideas in a memorandum and, in September 1945, after being replaced as governor by C.F. Simony in July, Brun wrote a memorandum at Prime Minister Buhl’s behest. In this document, he called attention to a number of reforms in Greenland, cf. Memorandum to the prime minister of 21 September 1945 from Governor Eske Brun, the Danish National Archives, Greenland Administration archive, journal 10363/1945, Administration in general. See also: Eske Brun, *Mit Grønlandsliv*, [*My Life in Greenland*]. 1985, pp. 102-125.

³ Jens Heinrich, *op. cit.* p. 439, note 1; Niels Højlund, *Krise Uden Alternativ. En Analyse af dansk grønlandsdebat*, [*Crisis without Alternative: An Analysis of the Danish Debate on Greenland*], 1972, p. 19; Mads Lidegaard, *Grønlands Historie* [*The History of Greenland*], 1991, p. 189.

⁴ In the literature, the terms modernist or reformist are typically used to describe those keen on reform. The appellations for the reform sceptics vary more.

administration with two Provincial Councils and two governors. This wish was often combined with the fear that centralisation would promote Greenland separatism.

The sceptics of reform won the first round. This victory became clear after a report was published in June 1946 by a committee appointed by the government at Director Oldendow's suggestion in July 1945.⁵ Work in the committee commenced in early 1946, partly as a continuation of work interrupted in 1939 on the Greenland issue (see chapter 2), and partly to evaluate the changes wrought by the war. The committee comprised eight members of Parliament's Greenland Committee, six representatives of Greenland – who Prime Minister Buhl had requested the combined Provincial Councils to appoint in the summer of 1945 – and four representatives of the Greenland Administration. When individual matters were under discussion, former Danish civil servants in Greenland, including Eske Brun, also participated, but only on a temporary basis.⁶

The Committee began its work in January 1946. From the beginning, the continuation of centralisation and the need for change in Greenland policy topped the agenda.⁷ The two Provincial Councils had held a long joint meeting from the end of August and three weeks into September 1945. They unanimously adopted a resolution strongly supporting centralisation with one governor and one Provincial Council for the whole of Greenland.⁸ Former Prime Minister Vilhelm Buhl, the Committee's chairman, asked why there was a desire in Greenland to retain centralisation. One of the Greenland members, Jørgen Chemnitz, replied that they wished for Greenland to be one country and for the population to feel that it was one people. Other members from Greenland, including Augo Lynge and Peter Nielsen, emphasised that the political life and the administration in Greenland should be changed to follow a more democratic direction. According to the Act on the Administration of Greenland from 1925, this change was not possible; the Act should therefore be revised. From the exchange of words that followed, there emerged two viewpoints that correlate with the above-mentioned divisions between reform-advocating modernists and reform-sceptical traditionalists. The main aspects of these viewpoints also appear in the meetings that followed during the spring of 1946. On the one hand, the modernist faction was orientated towards radical changes in Greenland and in the Danish policy on Greenland, as well as a continuation of the wartime process of centralisation. On the other hand, the traditionalist view was uneasy about major changes and reluctant to see the problems in Greenland as a whole. Oldendow, for example,

⁵ *Report submitted on 12 June 1946 by Parliament's Greenland Committee together with a delegation elected by the Provincial Councils of Greenland and representatives of the Greenland Administration*, 1946.

⁶ For the composition of the committee, see *Report submitted on 12 June 1946 by Parliament's Greenland Committee*, pp. 8-9; see also: Niels Højlund, *op. cit.* pp. 20f, note 3.

⁷ Minutes of the Greenland Committee's meeting, 16 January 1946, and Minutes of the Greenland Committee's meeting, 18 January 1946, the Danish National Archives, Aksel Svane private archive, packet 6.

⁸ Axel Kjær Sørensen, *Danmark-Grønland i det 20. århundrede – en historisk oversigt [Denmark-Greenland in the Twentieth Century: A Historical Overview]*, 1983, pp. 122-126.

stated that a combined Provincial Council could become the seat of separatism, and warnings were made about sudden, radical changes that could inflict great human costs on Greenlanders. In connection with centralisation, however, it is important to note that – in spite of the unanimous resolution of the joint Provincial Council meeting in September 1945, cf. above – no clear dividing line between the supporters of the two viewpoints existed since there were also different opinions within Greenland about the expediency of a unified Provincial Council. Thus, some North Greenlanders were anxious that one Provincial Council might mean that South Greenlanders would govern them. As another example, Augo Lyngé and Frederik Lyngé became the first Greenland members of *Folketinget* in 1953 and were, respectively, an important spokesman in favour of reforms and an important sceptic against reforms. Both disagreed on individual aspects of the proposals about centralisation of the administration.⁹

Consequently, the report was very cautious and non-committal regarding the need for changes in the Danish policy on Greenland within its specified time frame of five years. The report repeatedly confined itself to enumerating, recognising, or approving the Administration's initiatives, making it obvious that the civil servants in the Greenland Administration had succeeded in having their traditionalist approach accepted by the members of Parliament in the course of the committee's work. The members of Parliament's Greenland Committee expressed, like most Danes, a marked goodwill towards the Greenlanders, but they were likely not particularly knowledgeable or interested in the special problems that were under discussion. Nor were the Greenland members then able to have their wishes for the formulation of Greenland policy accepted in Copenhagen, partly because they entertained diverging views. The report was most cautious with regard to centralisation and proposals containing Greenland national-political aspects. For example:

The representatives of Parliament do not dispute the trend towards a more centralised form of government and fully understand the wish for strengthening solidarity among all Greenlanders, which constitutes the basis for the proposal. However, we are of the opinion that the time is not yet ripe for the final consideration of this matter since the decision should not be made exclusively on the basis of the experiences undergone during the War and the related extraordinary state of affairs, but also rest on the experiences gained under more normal conditions.¹⁰

Instead of one governor and one Provincial Council, the report proposed the continuation, provisionally for five years, of two governors and two Provincial

⁹ Minutes of the Greenland Committee's meeting, 30 January 1946, the Danish National Archives, Aksel Svane private archive, packet 6.

¹⁰ *Report submitted on 12 June 1946 by Parliament's Greenland Committee*, p. 12.

Councils that could hold joint meetings as before (the first joint Provincial Council meeting took place at the start of the occupation, cf. chapter 2). Other central aspects of the Danish policy on Greenland, such as the trade monopoly and cordoning off of the country, were mentioned only briefly. In accordance with the Provincial Councils' resolution of the previous year and the position of the Greenland delegation to the Committee, it was recommended that the monopoly and the cordoning off be maintained for a five-year period.¹¹ With regard to commerce and plans for improving education and healthcare, however, the report contained a number of concrete proposals for reforms – without the combined Provincial Councils having made or called for any such proposals.¹²

Among Greenlanders and Danish civil servants in Greenland, the reaction to the report was one of great disappointment. In Greenland, the report was regarded as a bucket of cold water poured on the forces and energy that had sprung from the developments experienced during World War II. During the war, Greenland had been governed without the usual regulation from Copenhagen, resulting in the growth of self-reliance and a hope for a distinctly different course for the future.¹³ Especially those Danes who had served in Greenland during the war found the report completely inadequate and insufficiently affected by the experiences gained from the war years. Those who had returned home after serving under the Greenland Administration proved to be the harshest critics of the report.¹⁴ At a meeting of the Provincial Council in July, Oldendow presented the report as information not up for discussion, which could take place in connection with the submission of concrete proposals included in the report.¹⁵ The press in Denmark, however, greeted the report positively; only a couple of critical comments in *Information* were made.¹⁶

A good four months later – after a press delegation had been given permission to visit towns and settlements on the west coast of Greenland – the press' gentle treatment of the Danish policy on Greenland changed radically. However, before this change occurred, there was a journalist and author who had published a highly critical book about Greenland that had not had any particular impact.

Press reports

In the autumn of 1945, author and journalist Ole Vinding was granted permission by the Danish authorities to visit Greenland on the condition that he did not

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 18. With regard to the trade monopoly and navigation ban, the introduction does, however, state (p. 9) that “one realises” that they must “one day” be revoked.

¹² *Report submitted on 12 June 1946 by Parliament's Greenland Committee*; see also: Niels Højlund, *op. cit.* pp. 20-27, note 3.

¹³ Jens Heinrich, *op. cit.* p. 430, note 1.

¹⁴ See e.g. Finn Gad, “Grønlands Forhold” [Greenland's Conditions], (essay), *Information*, 15 October 1946. From 1937-1945, Gad was posted in Nuuk as a lecturer at a teacher college. Additionally, Axel Kjær Sørensen, *op. cit.* pp. 134-135, note 8. Kjær Sørensen mentions that most of those returning home did not criticise the report and explains this by their continued relations with the Greenland Administration.

¹⁵ Finn Gad, *Grønland [Greenland]*, 1984, p. 284; Axel Kjær Sørensen, *op. cit.* p. 133, note 8.

¹⁶ Axel Kjær Sørensen, *op. cit.* pp. 133-134, note 8.



Photo of a salmon fishing family at a summer camp in Itorq (Isotorq) in 1949, when caves were still used as living quarters. When the press gained access to Greenland in 1946, they gave an impression of the contrasts between colony and motherland, which led to sharp criticism of the Greenland Administration. (Photograph by Arvid Klemensen, the Royal Library, map and photo archive)

report the visit to the press. Instead, Vinding wrote a book about Greenland that was published in autumn 1946 and, together with two other journalistic books, won him the first Cavling Prize, a prestigious Danish journalism award. Vinding presented conditions in Greenland in the harshest possible terms and characterised the Greenland Administration's babysitter policy as the root of evil. Despite flyleaf recommendations by a number of Greenland experts, the book did not attract much attention from the public. Eske Brun reviewed the book in an essay in the daily newspaper *Politiken* on 5 October 1946. The former governor agreed with the criticism against the Administration.¹⁷

This lack of public interest in Greenland changed dramatically a few weeks later. The reason was that in the late summer of 1946, a press delegation had taken a six-week-long trip down the west coast of Greenland on *MS Disko*. The trip had been arranged despite opposition from the Greenland Administration, and the delegation's subsequent reports on conditions in Greenland settlements, villages, and towns caught the public's attention with a vengeance and moulded the conceptions of political decision makers. The predominant image of

¹⁷ Ole Vinding, *Grønland 1945* [*Greenland 1945*], 1946; Axel Kjær Sørensen, *op. cit.* p. 135, note 8; Johannes Lindskov Hansen, "Da Grønland blev frit" ["When Greenland Became Free"], H.C. Hansen and Jul. Bomholt (eds.), *Hans Hedtoft. Liv and virke* [*Hans Hedtoft: Life and Work*], 1955, p. 215.

Greenland as “the home of the happy smile” changed to one characterised, according to some sections of the press, as “a collection of allotment-sized huts perched on muddy rubbish dumps and housing a population plagued with tuberculosis and venereal disease”.¹⁸ There were significant differences between newspaper reports and their editorials, and these differences reveal a great deal about the differing objectives and perceptions of reality in the early phases of change in the Greenland policy. The dividing lines were neither partisan nor for or against the government. The harshest criticisms of conditions in Greenland and the Greenland Administration were found in *Information* and *Politiken*, and, to a considerable extent, in *Berlingske Tidende*, *Land og Folk*, and *Nationaltidende*. Conversely, *Socialdemokraten* and a number of provincial newspapers, including the extensive Liberal Party press, were more cautious. With the exception of *Socialdemokraten*, the differences thus existed mostly between the press in the capital and the press in the provinces.

Information expressed the view that the administration of Greenland was nothing short of a scandal. The Administration was antediluvian and Oldendow was incompetent. Since the Americans were keeping a watchful eye on Denmark’s, i.e. the Greenland Administration’s, incompetence, Greenland was being pushed into the arms of the US.¹⁹ *Politiken* was especially critical of the Administration, whose thinking was retrospective and whose work was inadequate: Shutting out public criticism and control was a major mistake that was now taking vengeance.²⁰ *Berlingske Tidende’s* correspondent was less outspoken in his critique, but he nevertheless pointed out that Greenland was not the rose-coloured fable that people in Denmark had believed. The rigid trade monopoly was particularly criticised for inhibiting energy and competitiveness, and the Administration embodied narrow-mindedness and wasteful operations. Only the mining in Ivittuut was praised as an example of a successful private initiative. The newspaper ran an editorial whose coverage left the impression that Denmark was guilty of irresponsibility and neglect.

However, it was advisable to hold one’s horses and await a more comprehensive and thorough scrutiny of the conditions in Greenland. It was concluded that the attacks on Oldendow were unwarranted since he had been appointed director of the Administration before the war and therefore did not have the opportunity to attend to his duties and implement reforms that, according to the paper, were “probably” necessary.²¹

¹⁸ Cf. wording from Johannes Lindskov Hansen, *op. cit.* p. 215, note 17.

¹⁹ “The Greenland Administration Removes Greenland from Denmark”, *Information*, 25 October 1946. *Information* was also dissatisfied with not having been invited to join the press delegation’s trip to Greenland, cf. editorials of 25 & 28 October 1946.

²⁰ “Denmark’s Responsibility for Greenland”, (editorial), *Politiken*, 27 October 1946.

²¹ Mogens Barfoed, “Major Confusion in Today’s Greenland”, *Berlingske Tidende*, 18 October 1946; “Greenland”, (editorial), *Berlingske Tidende*, 8 November 1946. Also, a conservative provincial newspaper such as *Fyens Stiftstidende* published critical news reports from Greenland; see e.g. “Tuberculosis Is Greenland’s Scourge”, *Fyens Stiftstidende*, 12 November 1946.

Nationaltidende focussed – like *Information* – on the risk of driving the colony away if conditions did not change. Iceland was mentioned as a negative example. Warnings were issued against Denmark becoming a self-absorbed people indifferent to the country's greatness. The health and strength of a people are tied together with plenty of room to operate and plenty of challenging tasks. *Nationaltidende* also found holes in the report and cautiously criticised the Administration. That the Greenlanders might wish to secede was a decisive danger. The newspaper therefore proposed that there should be an investigation into whether one should go much further than the report's five-year plan and "step up the pace". Furthermore, an inquiry should be made concerning where the responsibility for mistakes and deficiencies should be placed; the nature of national policy was possibly to blame rather than the people who administered it.²²

News reports, articles, and editorials in *Socialdemokraten* stated that a great many things in Greenland were not as they should be, but the newspaper was not especially critical of the Administration when it came to assigning responsibility. In Greenland, the situation regarding public health, nutrition, clothing, and longevity was catastrophic and action should be taken, whereas – according to the reporting – reforms in the political arena were not so urgent.²³ In *Socialdemokraten* a couple of weeks later, an editorial followed up on these views by pointing out that criticism of the Administration had not always been impartial. It was unfair to criticise the Administration for conditions that it was not able to change during the war. The editorial also pointed out that the Administration had not attempted to prevent the press delegation from obtaining information on Greenland. On the contrary, it had done its best to provide information on everything possible. The Social Democrat's central mouthpiece also wrote that use of the Greenlanders' complaints as the guiding principle was problematic since they were often contradictory, whereas conditions truly meriting protest, such as the state of public health, were seldom mentioned.²⁴ In mid-November 1946, the newspaper published an interview with Director Oldendow. In this interview, he said that everyday life posed the most important problems for Greenlanders while all the armchair politics, which mostly originated from Danish circles, were of no interest. Greenlanders were only impatient about teaching in Danish – proof of their strong ties to Denmark.²⁵ Reports in the pro-

²² "Greenland", (editorial), *Nationaltidende*, 26 October 1946; see also: "Have We Read the Writing on the Wall?", (editorial), *Nationaltidende*, 9 October 1946. In addition, three articles by Steen Albrechtsen: "Greenland in the Danger Zone I: Denmark Must Increase Contact with Greenland: What Has the War Changed?", *Nationaltidende*, 16 October 1946, "Greenland in the Danger Zone II: Denmark Must Increase Contact with Greenland: Three Holes in the Report", and "Greenland in the Danger Zone III: Danish Just As Rare in Greenland As French Is Here", *Nationaltidende*, 21 October 1946.

²³ See three articles by E. Schelde Møller: "Greenland – For Better and for Worse" *Socialdemokraten*, 16 October 1946, "Greenland Problems in 1946", (feature article), *Socialdemokraten*, 17 October 1946, and "Greenland Problems in 1946 II", (feature article), *Socialdemokraten*, 18 October 1946.

²⁴ "Criticism of Greenland", (editorial), *Socialdemokraten*, 6 November 1946.

²⁵ E. Schelde Møller, "Armchair Politics Are of No Interest to the Greenlanders", interview with Knud Oldendow, *Socialdemokraten*, 16 November 1946.

vincial press, particularly in the numerous Liberal Party newspapers, were substantially similar in tone to those in *Socialdemokraten* and were far less dramatic and full of demands for reforming Danish policies on Greenland than the press in the capital. The articles were more discursive than bombastic and, even though the Liberal Party papers also described the inadequate state of health-care in Greenland, they were obviously more willing to accept the Administration's explanations for the deficiencies. In some instances, Liberal Party newspapers directly quoted how the main social democratic mouthpiece's "sensible" article repudiated those who had "overstepped the mark".²⁶

On the same day *Socialdemokraten* published its interview with Knud Oldendow, Finn Gad – who had been a lecturer at a teacher college in Nuuk from 1937 to 1945 – had a feature article in *Information*. He attempted to put the journalists' dramatic images of conditions in Greenland into a wider perspective, both in terms of time and development. Gad combined the long-term perspective with the criticism of the Greenland Administration and the demand for a new Danish policy on Greenland. Gad wrote that "painted with a journalist's flashy pen, the image of the modern Greenland [appears] horrid in all its icy grimness". The journalists, however, based their comparisons on their own society, which, of course, meant that it was correct to call the conditions shocking. Greenland's conditions, however, should also be seen in light of what they had been like earlier. In 1946, Greenlanders were faring twice as well as fifty years ago. Compared to seventy-five years ago, they lived a much richer life.²⁷

The Greenland debate and political interests relating to Greenland

The numerous press reports and newspaper commentaries resulted in the mention of conditions in Greenland during Parliament's Budget debates that autumn. The conservative Christmas Møller briefly mentioned that many individuals had read with dismay the journalist delegation's articles about the conditions in Greenland, while Paul Holt from the centre political party Dansk Samling mentioned the American bases on the island and the terrible hygiene conditions. Prime Minister Knud Kristensen replied that the government intended to follow the programme that had been detailed in the Greenland Committee's report in collaboration with the Greenland delegation, and that it would be followed at the pace the economy allowed. With regard to the criticisms of conditions in Greenland, Knud Kristensen emphasised that during the war Denmark had not been able to change them. He announced a report coming from the Greenland

²⁶ *Viborg Stifts Folkeblad*, 25 October and 7 November 1946. The paper's editor, T. Wellejus, covered the trip for the Liberal press. One of the Liberal press' main mouthpieces, *Vestkysten*, 28 October 1946, included a very critical editorial on conditions in Greenland. See also Niels Højlund, *op. cit.* pp. 32-33, note 3.

²⁷ Finn Gad, "Greenland's Development Evades the Law", (feature article), *Information*, 26 November 1946.

Administration.²⁸ All in all, Greenland was a minor topic in the Budget debate, but the press reports had undoubtedly made conditions in Greenland a public concern in a way they had never been before.

Among individuals with particular interest in Greenland, the discussion about the report and the conditions in Greenland intensified as of the autumn of 1946. It gradually became more and more dominated by modernistic supporters of reform. This domination became more than evident at two meetings of the Greenlandic Society held in December 1946 and January 1947. At the first meeting in particular, the report was met with harsh criticism by a number of leading participants in the developing debate on Greenland. They included Eske Brun, Aage Bugge, Mikael Gam, Kristoffer Lynge, and Frederik Nielsen.²⁹ At the meeting, only Knud Oldendow defended the report and called for caution with respect to rapid changes that Greenland was definitely not ready for. According to Oldendow, the report was in line with the previous work achieved in Greenland and the frame of reference on which that work had been based. In the area of commerce, Oldendow emphasised that the report represented a decisive break from the past. He downplayed the importance of the matter of centralisation, which, in reality, was only of interest in Nuuk. Eske Brun stressed, in a sharply worded contribution, that it was no longer Denmark's task to protect Greenlanders from the outside world by building a wall behind which they could hide, but to bring them into contact with the world so that they could become citizens with equal rights and equal responsibility. The entire society of Greenland was facing a radical and unavoidable transformation – a change that was completely ignored in the report. In addition, in Brun's opinion, the need for fundamental changes to the economic conditions and the trade monopoly were also side-stepped. On the other hand, Brun did not think anyone could be dissatisfied with the report's concrete proposals.³⁰

²⁸ "1st Reading of the Budget for 1947-48", *Rigsdagstidende. Debates in Parliament 1947/48*, 23 October 1946, col. 164, and 4 December 1946, col. 1402-1403 (Christmas Møller); 24 October 1946, col. 233-235, and 5 December 1946, col. 1448 (Paul Holt); 30 October 1946, col. 339 (Knud Kristensen).

²⁹ On 1 January 1947, Eske Brun was appointed vice-director of the Greenland Administration. When this news was announced at the meeting, it was received with a great deal of applause, cf. Axel Kjær Sørensen, *op. cit.* p. 137, note 8. The other debaters were closely connected to Greenland's schools, churches, and press: Aage Bugge was affiliated with Greenland's church from 1921; Mikael Gam had various teaching positions in Greenland from 1925 and was, from 1960-1964, elected to the *Folketing* from Greenland and minister for Greenland; Kristoffer Lynge was the editor of *Atuagagdliutit* and the first speaker on Greenland's Radio when it began broadcasting in 1942; Frederik Nielsen had a number of teaching appointments in Greenland from 1931.

³⁰ The discussion at the meeting on 12 December is reported in *The Greenlandic Society: Yearbook 1947, 1948*. See also the minutes in Axel Kjær Sørensen, *op. cit.* pp. 136-137, note 8. Following the harsh criticisms of the report at the meetings of the Greenlandic Society, Oldendow resigned from the Society, cf. Axel Kjær Sørensen, "Lifting Greenland's Colonial Status: A Demand from Greenland?", *Historie*, vol. 12, nos. 1-2, 1979, p. 168.

BLAA BOG



Satiric portrait of K.H. Oldendow in *Blæksprutten*, 1947. Oldendow was under strong pressure after a press delegation in 1946 had described a Greenland which did not conform to the earlier idyllic picture. In the discussion about preserving traditions or modernising Greenland, he came to represent the “old” colonial administration. (unknown artist, *Blæksprutten*, 1947).

In the late summer of 1947, Knud Oldendow published a book on the conditions in Greenland.³¹ The book was published by the Prime Minister’s Office and contained – as announced by Prime Minister Knud Kristensen in the *Folketing* in October 1946 – a rebuttal to the criticism that the press delegation’s visit to Greenland had stirred. The

first section of the book reviews the circumstances concerning the press delegation’s trip and scrutinises the reports. The book takes particular exception to the more critical stories in the capital’s newspapers, whereas the provincial press, in Oldendow’s opinion, took a more sober and dispassionate approach to the issue.³² Oldendow especially argued that Denmark should be careful about giving extensive subsidies to Greenland since past experience from earlier Danish colonies had shown that if the colonies’ deficits were too large, they would, in the end, be sold. “After the failures we have suffered over the course of history with the Danish Crown’s overseas possessions”, it was therefore extremely important to treat the Greenland problem correctly and skilfully.³³ Oldendow also warned against assigning further independent tasks to Greenland. He opined that Greenlanders did not want the trade monopoly to be rescinded. Living conditions in Greenland needed improvement, but any steps towards economic or administrative changes should take place at a very slow pace, if at all. Furthermore,

³¹ Knud Oldendow, *Conditions in Greenland 1946*. Published by the Prime Minister’s Office, 1947; the book should have been released in the early spring, but was delayed by the typographers’ strike. See also “About the Developments in Greenland”, an interview with Knud Oldendow. Reprint in *Grønlandsposten*, 1 April 1947, no. 3, p. 62. ABA or Arbejderbevægelsens Bibliotek og Arkiv (The Labour Movement’s Library and Archives), Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 21, folio 4.

³² Knud Oldendow, *op. cit.* pp. 9-15, note 31. This opinion was also voiced in the radio newscasts broadcast by the Greenland Administration in Greenland, cf. Radio News, 20 January 1947, Greenland National Museum Archives, Radio News in Greenland January-December 1947.

³³ Knud Oldendow, *op. cit.* pp. 18-21, note 31.

Oldendow opposed the idea of appointing a commission to discuss development in Greenland. Such a commission would disturb the work of the Greenland Administration, and Oldendow criticised the “zealous informers and loyal agitators cloaked in secrecy, glowing paladins for ‘the new, modern Greenland’”.³⁴ The book was given extensive coverage in the press, and some of the capital’s newspapers commented on it most critically. It was also noted that the book constituted a barely concealed attack on Eske Brun.³⁵

In a description and review of the meaning of different principles, ideas, and interests in the Greenland political process, it is worth noting that the conflicts about the Danish policy on Greenland were woven together with commercial interests. As a result, an active commercial interest group collaborated with the modernist faction of the Greenland Administration to realise a new Greenland policy. In order to relieve the pressure on the North Sea, fishermen in Esbjerg began to take an interest in fishing Greenland’s waters with their large, sea-going trawlers and considered the possibility of establishing industrialised fishing stations along the west coast of Greenland.³⁶ In Greenland, the press expressed the view that Danish fishermen should not be granted access to fishing Greenland’s coastal waters and fjords. The Provincial Councils were criticised for not protecting the interests of Greenland’s fishermen.³⁷ In line with the previous Greenland policy, the Greenland Administration in Copenhagen was unable to go ahead and grant permission for this allowance. As mentioned earlier, when the Administration went on the defensive in late summer of 1947, sharp criticism of the Administration was consequently intensified by the assertion that it had also ignored reasonable and understandable Danish business interests. The fishermen of Esbjerg were able to tell the press about the fantastic wealth of fish abounding in Greenland’s waters, and how this gold mine could solve Denmark’s eternal currency problems if the export of Greenland cod fillets to the American market could expand.³⁸ The interests of the fishermen and fishery organisations in gaining access to the fisheries of Greenland were thus coupled with the modernists’ desire for opening up the economy and commerce of Greenland as well as with the need to solve Denmark’s core economic problem – namely, the lack of foreign currency.

³⁴ Knud Oldendow, *op. cit.* pp. 82-83, note 31; see also: pp. 20, 31 & 54f.

³⁵ See *Berlingske Tidende, Politiken*, and *Socialdemokraten*, 12 August 1947. *Information’s* editorial wrote thus about the book: “Knud Oldendow is a master in the arts of pretence and the use of gentle, calming adjectives ... He understands how to explain away, reassure, turn upside down, perform a U-turn and apparently ... always land on his feet”. See also: *Politiken*, 13 August 1948, which contains an editorial both long-winded and critical.

³⁶ Two fishing skippers in particular, Claus Sørensen and Christian Venø, both of Esbjerg, often appeared on the Greenland political stage during this time. They were very active in the campaign for Danish fishermen to gain access to Greenland waters, and Venø later became a member of a subcommittee of the Great Greenland Commission (cf. below), Axel Kjær Sørensen, *op. cit.* 1983, p. 140, note 8.

³⁷ Jens Heinrich, *op. cit.* p. 7, note 1.

³⁸ Niels Højlund, *op. cit.* p. 57, note 3. Radio News, 9 August 1947, Greenland National Museum Archives, Radio News in Greenland January-December 1947.

At one point, the fishermen began to reformulate their demands to also include a wish to train and cooperate with the Greenland fishermen. For example, the Fishing School in Esbjerg had already promised in the summer of 1946 to provide free space for a young Greenlander.³⁹ This change was especially noticeable after negotiations with the Greenland Administration, led by its new vice-director, Eske Brun. The result was that it became substantially easier to combine economic and business wishes with the new Hedtoft government's plans for wide-ranging changes in the Greenland policy.⁴⁰

The coupling of general principles, political requirements, and specific economic interests in Greenland politics became even more complicated after the Hedtoft government assumed power in November 1947.

Hedtoft goes on the offensive

Earlier in his political career, Hans Hedtoft had not given the impression that he was particularly interested in the Greenland issue. As the matter grew into a political issue, however, he admitted that the former policy on Greenland was no longer adequate. As described in the above section, what inspired Hedtoft could not have been a simple adoption of tendencies and conclusions from the social democratic mouthpiece. Whatever the cause, shortly after the formation of his first government in November 1947, he committed himself strongly to the Greenland issue and worked for a fundamental reform of the Danish policy on Greenland.⁴¹ As the prime minister from 1947 to 1950, his role as Greenland's reformer was influenced by diverse personal and political factors.

Greenland's reformer

Hedtoft described Denmark's efforts in Greenland as being sustained by a love of the country. The population and the magnificent scenery appealed to something in Hedtoft's political temperament, which was characterised by strong national and social feelings and by the conviction that politics was, above all, a matter of morality. Shining through Hedtoft's political speeches and articles about Greenland is a cheerful, almost happy quality. In this regard, he could take a break from domestic worries and involve himself in a task the validity of which no political opponent could contest.⁴² The Greenland issue was also an ideal one for Hedtoft because within it, he was free to get carried away by his predilection for expressing himself in high-flown terms. Consequently, part of the explanation for Hedtoft's political

³⁹ Greenland National Museum Archives, Radio News in Greenland January - December 1946, Radio News, 8 June 1946.

⁴⁰ Axel Kjær Sørensen, *op. cit.* pp. 140-142, note 8. Greenland National Museum Archives, Radio News in Greenland January-December 1947, Radio News, 17 June 1947.

⁴¹ Johannes Lindskov Hansen, *op. cit.* p. 215, note 17.

⁴² This aspect of Hedtoft's commitment to the Greenland issue is based on, for example, the section "Hans Hedtoft, Greenland's Reformer", Niels Højlund, *op. cit.* pp. 37f, note 3.

offensive on Greenland lies in the meeting between the man Hans Hedtoft, and Denmark's foreign and domestic political realities at the end of the 1940s (the start of the Cold War, Denmark's economic problems etc.).

In order to understand Hedtoft's commitment to Greenland politics, it is also important to note that it comprised contradictory feelings. A few days prior to departing for Greenland in the summer of 1948, Hedtoft expressed one aspect of his commitment to Greenland thus: "Much has been said about what we have done for the population up there over the years. That is nothing to boast about. We have done our duty as a democratic nation and as a humanist people".⁴³

But Hedtoft was not above boasting. At a dinner in Nuuk during his trip to Greenland he said:

We have the right to be proud of the efforts of our countrymen over the centuries and to say that we Danes, in the spirit of humanity, have sought to guide the development from primitiveness to civilisation.⁴⁴

Hedtoft's visions of Greenland's development and Denmark's role in it were formulated in numerous speeches. In their basic form, they remained unchanged throughout these years. In a contribution to a two-volume book on Greenland published after the passing of the new Greenland Acts in the spring of 1950, Hedtoft wrote the following:

The policy on Greenland that Denmark has conducted for approximately 175 years has been characterised by an idealised wish to help the Greenlanders live and develop under the best conditions the country permitted. Our goal has never been to exploit but, on the contrary, to protect and advance this primitive people who have been entrusted to us. We have had the moral duty to show by our example the other nations of the world how we have succeeded in a humane way of guiding the Greenlanders from the primitive stage up to the level we find ourselves in. This has been our justification to the world for possessing Greenland.⁴⁵

⁴³ Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft's speech at the launching of *MS Umanak* in Elsinore on 15 July 1948, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 21, folio 4.

⁴⁴ Telegraphic report about the prime minister's speech at a dinner in Nuuk, 7 August 1948. The Danish National Archives, Hans Hedtoft official archive, speeches and articles, packet 1, folio: The prime minister's secretariat. Hans Hedtoft's speeches, statements, interviews etc., August 1948.

⁴⁵ Hans Hedtoft, "Fremtidens Grønland" [Greenland of the Future], Kaj Birket-Smith (ed.), *Grønlandsbogen* [*The Greenland Book*], II, 1950, p. 335.

Hedtoft often consulted Eske Brun for help in the practical shaping and realisation of his political visions for Greenland.⁴⁶ Shortly after Hedtoft took office as prime minister on 13 November 1947, he requested that Brun draw up a review of the tasks awaiting the Danish administration of Greenland. In the resulting memorandum,⁴⁷ Brun made it clear that the starting point for his considerations was the belief that the population of Greenland should be guided forward to a stage of maturity and development sufficient for them to be capable of ordinary interaction with the outside world without any harmful consequences. From this starting point, Brun specified the conditions that should be thoroughly investigated – without making any concrete proposals. Interpretation of the words “thoroughly investigated” reveals a clear invitation to set up a commission.

One of the problems to be investigated was how self-government in Greenland could be promoted and how the Danish role as “provider” could be eliminated. The worst complaint that could be made against the Danish government was that Denmark had been much too preoccupied with “helping” (again, Brun’s inverted commas) the Greenlanders by means of comprehensive subsidies, provision of cheap goods etc. By doing so, Denmark had done the Greenlanders a disservice. The main objective was to create a self-sustaining economy in Greenland. In connection with this objective, the trade monopoly enjoyed by KGH (the Royal Greenlandic Trading Company) was the main problem. For Brun, the other major problem was the unity of the country’s government. Here, the suitability of a division of the government into two administrative units – north and south – should be examined. He added that feelings among Greenland’s population were divided on this matter, but with the development of modern communications, reform was just a matter of time. It was, however, important that the reform be carried out in collaboration with the Greenlanders and should not, under any circumstances, be forced onto the country. Even though Brun was cautious in his memorandum to Hedtoft and wrote that some things should be “further investigated” in lieu of his making any concrete proposals, the modernist tendency was unmistakable: The need for reforms, and not the associated risks involved, was repeatedly emphasised.

Following the accession of the Hedtoft government, the prime minister spoke on a number of occasions about the necessity for change in Greenland and for a

⁴⁶ In Eske Brun, *op. cit.* p. 126, note 2, the author relates that, in November 1946, Hedtoft asked him to accept a newly-created position as vice-director in the Greenland Agency Administration Administration. Niels Højlund, *op. cit.* p. 35, note 3, describes how Prime Minister Knud Kristensen requested in the autumn of 1946 that Eske Brun continue his work with Greenland and persuaded him to accept by tempting him with the post of vice-director, which meant that, as early as in January 1947, he was the actual leader of the Greenland Administration. Højlund’s source is based on a conversation with Eske Brun on 29 March 1971. It is likely that the prime minister consulted the leader of the Social Democrats in the autumn of 1946, and the two of them agreed that Eske Brun was needed in the Greenland Administration. (However, this observation does not eliminate the disparity between Eske Brun’s two interpretations).

⁴⁷ Eske Brun’s memorandum of 1947. The note is undated, but it was likely written shortly after Hedtoft became prime minister on 13 November 1947. The Arctic Institute Archives, N.O. Christensen archive, archive store A121, folio 24.

new Danish policy on Greenland. In the Christmas speech to Greenland in December 1947, as well as on the radio one month later, Hedtoft especially emphasised that the wishes of Greenland's population would be taken into consideration.⁴⁸ In the first months of 1948, Hedtoft received support from all parties in the Greenland Committee – from the Conservative People's Party to the Communist Party – for a completely new Greenland policy that was dominated by modernist viewpoints, particularly regarding the development of business in Greenland.

A decisive development occurred in February 1948 when a group of fishermen from Esbjerg, including the above-mentioned Christian Venø, was given permission by the Greenland Administration to conduct a fishing survey inside the closed portions of Greenland's territorial waters. They were also allowed to take some Greenlanders with them so that they could learn about the industry. Although it was not strictly necessary, the Administration had submitted the application from the Esbjerg fishermen along with their recommendation to the Greenland Committee, which had, albeit with reservations, given its consent even though asking the Greenlanders first would have been preferable. Claus Sørensen, one of the previously mentioned Esbjerg fishermen, submitted one other application for permission to construct a plant for freezing, salting, and producing whale oil on the west coast to the Greenland Committee with the Administration's recommendation. However, this application had been turned down for fear of opposition in Greenland. The political essence of these decisions was thus: Hedtoft, who had appeared before the Greenland Committee with Eske Brun and had spoken in favour of the former permission, promoted the modernists' demands for a new commercial policy on Greenland, complied with the Danish fishermen's wishes, *and* stressed the need to protect the Greenlanders from exploitation (a necessity that the traditionalists always called attention to) – all simultaneously. Hedtoft was constantly aware of the need to ensure that Greenlanders did not view Danish business initiatives as neglecting Greenland interests. Therefore, he stood firm even though the applicant (Claus Sørensen) tried to persuade the Committee to reverse the rejection. This case was closely followed in Greenland, and both the permission and the rejection were immediately publicised there.⁴⁹

Later, in the spring of 1948, the prime minister presented the new Greenland policy at a public meeting of the Greenlandic Society and the National Council of Danish Women held to mark the implementation of women's suffrage and

⁴⁸ "Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft's Christmas Speech to Greenland", the Danish National Archives, Hans Hedtoft official archive, speeches and articles, packet 1, folio: The prime minister's secretariat. Hans Hedtoft's speeches, articles etc. December 1947.

⁴⁹ Axel Kjær Sørensen, *op. cit.* pp. 143-145, note 8. Kjær Sørensen calls it "a masterpiece of politics" (p. 144). Actually, the prime minister, who knew how to deliver grandiloquent speeches about Greenland, handled this case with considerable political dexterity. Greenland National Museum Archives, Radio News in Greenland January-December 1947, 17 June 1947, 7 July 1947, 9 August 1947, and 25 August 1947. See also the Radio News on 13 March 1948 and 3 April 1948, Greenland National Museum Archives, Radio News in Greenland, January-December 1948.

eligibility to stand for elections in Greenland. The need for an alternative business policy was also emphasised at this event.⁵⁰ Hedtoft's speeches reiterated the theme that change should be affected without the exploitation or exclusion of the Greenlanders, and that the opinions of the Provincial Councils and the Greenlanders should be heard. This theme was especially stressed in statements made just before Prime Minister Hedtoft embarked on a month-long journey to Greenland on 22 July.⁵¹

Journey to Greenland

From 22 July until 23 August 1948, Hedtoft travelled around Greenland to see the country and speak to Greenlanders and Danish employees in Greenland about options for the future. This was only the second visit to Greenland by a prime minister, with Stauning's visit in 1930 being the first, cf. chapter 2. Hedtoft had great expectations for the journey, and also Greenlanders clearly looked forward to the visit.⁵² The trip's high point was the meeting with the two Provincial Councils that had gathered for a joint meeting in Nuuk from 4-5 August. In addition to the prime minister and the two Provincial Councils, director Oldendow and two members of Parliament's Greenland Committee participated, namely MPs Lisbet Hindsgaul and S. Stegger Nielsen, chairman of the committee. The meeting, which was chaired by vice-director Eske Brun, was a symbolic highlight of the transformation of Danish policy on Greenland that had taken place in the five years following liberation.⁵³

For Hedtoft, his speech to the joint Provincial Council was a ceremonious opportunity to confirm the close ties between Greenland and Denmark and to present visions for a new Danish policy on Greenland. The prime minister commenced his speech by conveying the greetings of the Royal Family and Parliament's Greenland Committee. He also thanked the Greenlanders for keeping faith in Denmark during the war. He expressed gratitude for the "growing feelings for the motherland" that existed in Greenland, and he affirmed that there was much interest in Denmark concerning the Greenland issue. That the centuries-old bond between the two countries should be maintained and ex-

⁵⁰ "Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft's speech on 15 April 1948 to the meeting of the Greenlandic Society and the National Council of Danish Women". ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 21, folio 4.

⁵¹ Interview about the journey to Greenland, 22 July 48. The Danish National Archives, Hans Hedtoft official archive, speeches and articles, packet 1, folio: The prime minister's secretariat. Hans Hedtoft's speeches, statements, interviews etc., July 1948.

⁵² Cf. the report in an undated article by Truels Albertsen, who was the editor of *Struer Socialdemokrat* and was in Greenland during the summer of 1948. The Danish National Archives, Hans Hedtoft official archive. Journey to Greenland 1948, packet 1, folio: The prime minister's secretariat. Hans Hedtoft's Journey to Greenland 1948.

⁵³ *The Greenlandic Society: Yearbook 1949*, p. 9. The fact that only two members of Parliament's Greenland Committee had bothered to take part in this trip was often noted and criticised in the press, e.g. the editorial in *Berlingske Tidende*, 6 August 1948. The Greenland Committee's absence, however, could also be exploited as was, for example, the case in *Information's* editorial on 11 August 1948, which called the Committee senile. According to *Information*, the Committee had never understood Greenland's problems and had now made itself redundant.

tended was the wish of all of Denmark. Hedtoft made a point of clearly emphasising that Denmark wished to retain sovereignty over Greenland and added that “any talk otherwise was absolutely inconsistent with the will and wishes of the Danish people”.⁵⁴ With regard to concrete policy measures, Hedtoft undoubtedly prioritised change in the commercial policies. This prioritisation is apparent both in the speech itself and in a list of key words provided to the press in advance, and also in the subsequent press release.⁵⁵

However, the prime minister also made it clear that he had not brought a finished programme. With regard to the trade monopoly, the ban on navigation, and the cordoning off, he remarked that the Greenland delegation at the talks held in Copenhagen in 1946 had unanimously wished for these measures to be retained. The delegation’s standpoint constituted, “until another wish was expressed”, the direction that commercial policy must follow. However, after that proviso, Hedtoft opened the door for rescinding the measures that had been central to more than 200 years of Danish policy on Greenland. He opened this door – again with caution – by mentioning a speech made to Parliament by Knud Rasmussen in 1925. Rasmussen had remarked that the monopoly gave both the competent and incompetent businessmen in Greenland the same opportunities. In Knud Rasmussen’s opinion, Greenland, under the control of the Danish state, therefore needed to be opened up to a certain degree. In this light and after the impact of the war years on Greenland, Hedtoft asked whether future business policies in Greenland “should not, to some degree, be based on somewhat different viewpoints than hitherto expressed”.⁵⁶ The prime minister’s conclusion was as obvious as his caution. This feature of his speech to Greenland’s Provincial Councils was presumably related to the absence of the high-flown language Hedtoft often employed in speeches about Greenland

Towards the end of his speech, Hedtoft proposed the appointment of a rapidly working commission composed of representatives from Parliament, the Administration, and experts and representatives of the people of Greenland elected by the competent assemblies. The prime minister concluded by repeating that he did not have any finalised plans for the future, but had come to Greenland to give Greenland’s people assurances of beneficial collaboration in the future and to hear the opinions of the Provincial Councils. As formulated in the draft press release about the meeting, Hedtoft summarised his questions to the Provincial Councils by asking: “What are your intentions? Give us a *foundation* for building up a new Danish policy on Greenland”.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ The speech is reproduced in *The Greenlandic Society: Yearbook 1949*, pp. 10-16. The mention of sovereignty over Greenland is found on p. 12; see also “Minutes of the Provincial Council’s negotiations”, Greenland National Museum Archives, governor of South Greenland archive, 1948, packet 150.

⁵⁵ Cf. “Key words for statement to the Danish press after the Journey to Greenland July-August 1948”, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 21, folio 4. Additionally: Message to Ritzau’s Bureau from Nuuk, 4 August 1948, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 21, folio 4.

⁵⁶ *The Greenlandic Society: Yearbook 1949*, pp. 13-14.

⁵⁷ “Key words for statement to the Danish press after the Journey to Greenland July-August 1948”, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 21, folio 4.

After the prime minister's speech, Eske Brun concluded the meeting by highlighting its historic significance:

I do not believe that any meeting of the Provincial Councils has looked forward to a speech with greater expectations than they have today, nor do I believe there can be found, in the long history of Greenland's Provincial Councils, any example of a speech that has been listened to with greater interest. The prime minister's words were thought-provoking, and the prime minister hoisted new signals, but he has hoisted them on an old mast ... that is founded on Denmark's long-standing policy towards Greenland, the policy of Greenland for the Greenlanders' welfare and progress.⁵⁸

When the meeting resumed on the following day,⁵⁹ Provincial Councillor Gerhard Egede declared that the Provincial Council attached the greatest importance to meeting a prime minister for the first time in its history. The Provincial Council fully understood the justification for and supported the prime minister's new plans as well as the direction for the future government of Greenland. This direction, remarked Egede, deviated sharply from the plans outlined in the 1946 report. Now, however, in Egede's words, the Provincial Council was:

convinced that there are sufficient grounds for implementing sweeping changes since the desire on the part of the population to attain an economic and cultural level equal to other nations has become so strong that the Provincial Council cannot ignore it. Private Danish enterprise makes it even more urgent than before to train Greenlanders in how to run the industry by employing modern fishing methods, and the free Greenland enterprises wish to take this opportunity to cooperate with the private Danish enterprisers.⁶⁰

Therefore, the Provincial Council supported a change in the monopoly system to allow, as Egede said, "Danish private enterprise under state control" to gain access to Greenland. Dansk legislation as a whole could not be applied to the Greenlanders, particularly not to criminal law, but the disparity between the civil rights of Danes and Greenlanders ought to be balanced out. With regard to rep-

⁵⁸ *The Greenlandic Society: Yearbook 1949*, pp. 16-17.

⁵⁹ Twenty-four hours elapsed between the two meetings. The first meeting took place on 4 August from 3-4 p.m., while the second began at 4 p.m. on 5 August, cf. *The Greenlandic Society: Yearbook 1949*, pp. 9 & 17.

⁶⁰ The report of the Provincial Councils' reply to the prime minister is based on the minutes of Gerhard Egede's speech, cf. *The Greenlandic Society: Yearbook 1949*, pp. 17-20.

resentation in Parliament, the Provincial Council could not agree to the idea of a single member representing the widely scattered Greenland population, but they thought it important for Greenland to have representatives in Parliament's Greenland Committee elected by the Provincial Council for each electoral term. In addition, they wished for a commission to be appointed as soon as possible. As presented in a speech by Gerhard Egede, the Provincial Councils' reply to the prime minister's question was thus affirmative. Hedtoft apparently did not receive this answer until just before the meeting, so he was very moved when he read it.⁶¹

After Gerhard Egede's speech, Hedtoft expressed the hope that the meeting's unanimity would go a long way towards "strengthening the centuries-old ties between the Danish and Greenland peoples". The prime minister promised to appoint a commission as soon as possible with representatives from the Greenland Administration, Parliament, and the peoples of Denmark and Greenland.⁶² Chairman Eske Brun concluded the meeting by pointing to its historic significance and the special role the prime minister had played:

We stand today at the dawn, at the beginning of something new in Greenland's history ... It can be said of very few people that they have made a turning point in their country's history, but in Greenland's history, this is the case with Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft ... The people of Greenland will henceforth appreciate that the person leading the work on Greenland is someone they can trust, and this must comprise the necessary basis for the work that will carry it forward.⁶³

In the wake of the meetings with the joint Provincial Council from 4-5 August, Hedtoft continued his journey along the west coast of Greenland for two more weeks in order to meet the population. Judging by contemporary reports and telegrams, he was greeted with great festivity everywhere he went. These meetings ended on a high note at Julianehåb (Qaqortoq) in South Greenland.⁶⁴

The two Provincial Councils held another meeting eight days after those with Hedtoft, i.e. in the middle of August. After committee discussions and talks behind closed doors, and with the unanimous support of all twenty-five members, a declaration was adopted that supplemented and elaborated on Gerhard Egede's speech on the Provincial Councils' behalf on 5 August. The declaration

⁶¹ Mads Lidegaard, *op. cit.* p. 194, note 3, relates that K.B. Andersen – who was the correspondent for Denmark's Radio on this trip and later became foreign minister – told him that, twenty minutes prior to the meeting, Hedtoft got the opportunity, with the help of K.B. Andersen, to read Egede's speech so that he could prepare his own reply. According to K.B. Andersen's account, Hedtoft replied "visibly moved". See also Niels Højlund, *op. cit.* p. 39, note 3.

⁶² *The Greenlandic Society. Yearbook 1949*, p. 19.

⁶³ *Ibid.* pp. 20-21.

⁶⁴ More telegrams. Greenland National Museum Archives, governor of South Greenland archive, 1948, packet 139.

referred to the Provincial Councils' direct answer to the prime minister and reiterated the need for the appointment of a commission that "shall define the guidelines for Greenland's future development in economic, political, social, and cultural respects". Furthermore, with the introduction of private enterprise, the declaration backed a change in the economic system in Greenland. Unlike the reply given eight days earlier, the effectuation of "a powerful, centralised government in Greenland" was considered necessary. Therefore, a revision of the 1925 law was desired.⁶⁵

The seemingly unanimous support for Hedtoft's visions quickly turned out not to be based on any genuine agreement among the Greenlanders. A few months later – at the end of 1948 and the beginning of 1949 – there was a heated exchange of views in the Greenlandic newspaper *Avangnamiok* (*The North Greenlander*) between Frederik Lynge and Gerhard Egede. This exchange hinted at some of the considerations and conclusions in the internal discussions among the Greenlanders about the reply to Hedtoft's question. In general, the exchange indicated what views were held regarding the new policy on Greenland.⁶⁶ Prior to the resumption of the Provincial Council meeting on 5 August, talks among council members had taken place in the twenty-four hours between the meetings (cf. above). These talks were, of course, internal and there is no official record, but although Gerhard Egede had presented the reply on behalf of the joint Provincial Councils, it is unlikely that complete unanimity among the members had existed. In any case, it soon became clear that there were differing opinions outside the Provincial Councils concerning a response to the Danish prime minister's question. In *Avangnamiok*, Frederik Lynge called Hedtoft's question "an ultimatum", a term that the Provincial Councils had all too quickly accepted in nearly all respects. By giving in so quickly after insufficient deliberations, the Provincial Councils faced such consequences as, in Lynge's opinion, the immediate expansion of the Danish fishermen's activities along the coasts of Greenland at the expense of the Greenlanders. Gerhard Egede, on the other hand, called Hedtoft's question "an outstretched hand". The Provincial Councils could not reject this question without provoking dissatisfaction within the population, particularly among the "aspiring Greenland youth". Egede wrote that the Provincial Councils' reply was given after mature deliberation and numerous talks and discussions that had begun months earlier. These discussions were why it was possible to compose an immediate reply to the prime minister's question. According to Egede, the Greenlanders wanted to attain full responsibility in order to enjoy

⁶⁵ *Provincial Council's negotiations in 1948*. See also "Minutes of the Provincial Council's negotiations", Greenland National Museum Archives, governor of South Greenland archive 1948, packet 150.

⁶⁶ Frederik Lynge was a member of North Greenland's Provincial Council over the course of a number of terms from 1922-1954, but not from 1943-1949. In 1953, he became one of Greenland's two MPs. Gerhard Egede replied – as explained previously – to Hedtoft's question on behalf of the Provincial Councils. The discussion in *Avangnamiok* was reported in *Grønlandsposten*, year 8, no. 3, 1 February 1949, pp. 51-52. See also Axel Kjær Sørensen, *op. cit.* p. 148, note 8.

the same rights as the Danes in Greenland. It would require fortitude to remove any obstacles as well as a great deal of responsibility.⁶⁷

This disagreement is a Greenland variant of the disparity between modernists and traditionalists. Where Gerhard Egede saw an opportunity for faster development in Greenland, Frederik Lynge was concerned that new development would create harmful competition with Danish fishermen. The disagreement is also related to the regional variance of the differing opinions since Lynge was from North Greenland (Egedesminde) and Egede was from South Greenland (Narsaq). Thus, among Greenland's politicians there were divergent opinions about Greenland's economic and political modernisation. A few of these politicians were very sceptical about the concept of modernising Greenland.⁶⁸ All in all, however, hardly any doubt exists that, in the summer of 1948, a sizeable majority of interested Greenlanders was positive about Hedtoft's initiative.

In Denmark, the press praised Hedtoft for the new Greenland policy and confirmed that it would find full support in Denmark. Clearly, however, it received varying degrees of enthusiasm. Not unsurprisingly, *Socialdemokraten* was the most enthusiastic, closely followed by *Nationaltidende*, whereas *Politiken* and especially *Information* mixed their satisfaction with remarks about how it was incomprehensible that the new policy had taken so long. A few papers, such as *Berlingske Tidende*, valued the prime minister's emphasis that Denmark would maintain sovereignty over Greenland. However, they were unanimous in their severe criticism of the absence of the Greenland Committee.⁶⁹ The only criticism from politicians came from Aksel Larsen, who was angry about the "triumphal procession that had been held for Hedtoft". Larsen was extremely dissatisfied about not being permitted to participate in the trip – despite being a member of the Greenland Committee – and implied that the Prime Minister's Office, the Greenland Administration, and the Americans had not wanted a communist MP in Greenland.⁷⁰ This suggestion was not entirely unfounded since the incipient Cold War also affected the consideration of the Greenland issue in this way. It so happened that in the summer of 1948, vice-director Eske Brun notified Aksel

⁶⁷ *Grønlandsposten*, year 8, no. 3, 1 February 1949, pp. 51-52.

⁶⁸ Former municipal and provincial council member Hans Lynge wrote in a letter to Aksel Svane on 3 August 1948: "My position on the current upheaval in Greenland is probably very conservative, since I am inclined to believe we were happier back then. And I wish that the Danish authorities would remember how much has come about as a result of the newspaper campaign and from the indignation of a Danish public, ignorant about Greenland affairs, over discovering through journalists that Danish conditions have not yet been implemented in Greenland!" Hans Lynge also criticised Eske Brun's leadership during the war years. The Danish National Archives, Aksel Svane private archive, packet 6.

⁶⁹ In August 1948, there were innumerable newspaper articles and editorials about Hedtoft's trip to Greenland; only a couple of examples will be mentioned here. *Socialdemokraten* printed an editorial on 6 August 1948 thus: "It was as if he spoke from the heart of all Danes when Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft said at his first meeting with the Greenland Provincial Councils that it was Denmark's desire to maintain Greenland's centuries-old bond to Danmark"; "Greenland Sets New Course", editorial in *Nationaltidende*, 8 August 1948; "Good Results", editorial in *Politiken*, 9 August 1948; "The Greenland Keyhole", editorial in *Information*, 11 August 1948, describing Hedtoft's visit as "a quite small triumphal procession"; "Danish Initiative in Greenland", editorial in *Berlingske Tidende*, 6 August 1948.

⁷⁰ "Aksel Larsen on Why He Did Not Go to Greenland", *Information*, 16 August 1948, ABA, the Social Democrats archive, packet 514, folio 7, 1948.

Svane, head of personnel in the Greenland Administration, that the Hedtoft government had decided that no communists were to be sent to Greenland. This instruction had subsequently been complied with in collaboration with PET (the Danish Security and Intelligence Service). In the wake of the coup in Czechoslovakia that spring, the government's decision was based on the fear that communists would infiltrate Greenlandic society.⁷¹ Documents also indicate that, since 1946-1947, the Communist Party of Denmark (DKP) had sought to place one or more party members in Greenland in positions where they could agitate among Greenland workers.⁷²

After the journey: Administrative and commercial problems

Doubtlessly, a hopeful atmosphere on both sides prevailed in the wake of Hedtoft's visit. Just a few days later, Hedtoft received a letter from Governor Simony confirming that his visit had left a positive mood and that it was Simony's impression that the people stood behind the Provincial Councils.⁷³ In subsequent interviews and articles, Hedtoft did not go easy on using grandiloquent words when speaking about the hopes for Greenland's future and the importance of his journey. In an article in *Billedbladet*, for example, he said:

The journey attained historic significance and will mark an epoch in the history of Greenland and Denmark. Major reforms will now be made with the result that the wishes expressed by the Greenland poet, Henrik Lund, in Greenland's national anthem, are fulfilled: "To live as people, live up and grow – begin to believe in your own capabilities".⁷⁴

Nor was there any doubt that the journey had left an indelible personal impression on Hedtoft. On the Christmas cards he printed for Christmas 1948, there was a very symbolic picture of a Greenlander and a pack of sledge dogs.⁷⁵ Shortly afterwards, however, Hedtoft found costly complications involving the new line and the desire for greater collaboration between Greenland and Denmark. Just a few days after the journey, efforts to develop a completely new Greenland policy met with two difficulties. First, there were internal divisions in the Greenland Administration. Second, problems arose concerning the combination of the implementation of a new commercial policy in Greenland and in-

⁷¹ The Danish National Archives, Aksel Svane private archive, packet 1, folio 6.

⁷² ABA, the Social Democrats archive, packet 514, folio 7.

⁷³ Letter from Simony to Hedtoft, Nuuk, 27 August 1948. The Danish National Archives, Hans Hedtoft's Official Archive, Journey to Greenland 1948, packet 1, folio: The prime minister's secretariat. Hans Hedtoft's Journey to Greenland 1948.

⁷⁴ Hans Hedtoft, "My Trip to Greenland", *Billedbladet*, September 1948, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 21, folio 4. A number of similar articles can be found in this folio.

⁷⁵ The Danish National Archives, Hans Hedtoft official archive, 1947-1954, Christmas and New Year's Greetings, packet 1, folio: Christmas and New Year's Greetings 1948.

creased influence for the Greenlanders.⁷⁶ These two problems illustrate how underlying administrative and economic conflicts of interest can emerge when the political leadership takes the first steps towards pursuing a completely new policy for an area where a small, distinct group of civil servants had historically handled the majority of problems independently.

The first problem concerned the difficulties with involving the administrative bodies functioning under the new conditions in the formulation and implementation of Greenland policy. In reality, the question was how to handle a most inadequate management of the Greenland Administration. In the above-mentioned letter from Governor Simony to Hedtoft, sent just four days after Hedtoft concluded his successful visit to Greenland, the governor was concerned with some aspects of Greenland's administration that needed rectification if the new policy were to have a chance.⁷⁷ Above all, Simony called for consistent leadership of the Greenland Administration since the director and the vice-director, Oldendow and Brun, respectively, had sharply differing opinions about Greenland's future. Their cooperation with one another was also very poor. In Simony's opinion, this lack of uniformity in the Administration's line was detrimental to the work. The governor did not consider Oldendow suitable as a leader of the Administration. He was "a sick man in mind and body". According to Simony, this description was based on Oldendow's fondness for drink and the resulting breaches in trust. Oldendow was only in contact with a few people; his contact with the Provincial Councils was almost non-existent or based on untruths. For example, Oldendow had given the Provincial Councils the impression that the prime minister was not interested in hearing their opinions on suitable candidates for the Greenland Commission (cf. below). However, Brun was likewise criticised by the governor: He was a capable and competent man, but his style of leadership was too arrogant and self-sufficient for Simony to recommend him for the post of director of the Administration. In Simony's opinion, he had "dictatorial" tendencies. Other civil servants in the Greenland Administration were also described in harsh terms by the governor.

The governor's letter to the prime minister presented unusually sharp criticism of working conditions in the Greenland Administration. The governor clearly indicated that the solution involved the director's resignation, but he did not recommend that the vice-director replace him. This criticism must have given Hedtoft cause for serious considerations about changing the administrative corps in an area of policy he was so actively involved in. The prime minister, however, did not follow the governor's advice. At the beginning of November,

⁷⁶ A third problem that also surfaced immediately after Hedtoft's meeting with the Provincial Councils comprised concerns about the composition of the heralded commission. This issue is treated below in the section on the Greenland Commission.

⁷⁷ Letter from Simony to Hedtoft, Nuuk, 27 August 1948. The Danish National Archives, Hans Hedtoft official archive, Journey to Greenland 1948, packet 1, folio: The prime minister's secretariat. Hans Hedtoft's Journey to Greenland 1948. All the following quotations come from this letter.



Farewell reception for K.H. Oldendow in the Greenland Administration, 1949. Oldendow, the dark-haired man second from the right, had worked with conditions in Greenland since 1924. (The Arctic Institute)

after Oldendow resigned as the director of the Greenland Administration effective 1 January 1949, Eske Brun was appointed as the new director.

The second problem involved the flaring up, once again, of the commercial dispute over fishing rights off Greenland's coasts after Hedtoft's visit. Ten days after his return, the prime minister and Director Oldendow received a telegram from Governor Simony protesting against the plans of fisherman Claus Sørensen from Esbjerg. Sørensen had begun to make preparations for setting up a private fishery with a freezing plant ("the Nipisat project") before the contours of private enterprises in Greenland had been determined in collaboration with the Greenlanders.⁷⁸ Annoyance over this protest can be detected in Hedtoft's reply; he warned against attempts to block private enterprise because individuals taking such initiatives might lose interest in Greenland. Simony responded that the Provincial Councils were very dissatisfied about having decisions submitted for approval that had apparently already been determined. He stressed that Greenlanders were "extremely sensitive" about this process.⁷⁹ Director Oldendow – who was still in Greenland – also informed the prime minister that this matter had fomented unrest, insecurity, and discontent in Greenland. Furthermore,

⁷⁸ Telegram of 2 September 1948 to the prime minister and the director from Simony, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 52, the Greenland Commission, folio: Telegrams 1948. The matter had already been mentioned in the letter from Simony to Hedtoft dated 27 August. See also Axel Kjær Sørensen, *op. cit.* p. 150, note 8.

⁷⁹ Correspondence reported in a telegram of 9 September to the governor of the North from the governor of the South, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 52, the Greenland Commission, folio: Telegrams 1948.

Oldendow expressed his displeasure to Hedtoft over Eske Brun's unannounced departure to the US and, consequently, Brun's unavailability for discussion of the matter.⁸⁰ During the next few days, an extensive exchange of telegrams between the prime minister and the director of the Greenland Administration took place. This exchange demonstrated that the actual implementation of a new commercial policy in Greenland, despite the apparent unanimity of the Provincial Council meetings, had become entangled in a complicated net of economic, administrative, and political interests and ideas.⁸¹

The case was settled a few days later in the middle of September when the prime minister gave notice that no permit could be given for the Nipisat project.⁸² One of the decisive obstacles was that Greenlanders were very anxious both about decisions forced on them and that the grandiloquent words uttered on Hedtoft's journey did not really matter. Hedtoft was surprised and disappointed by the forcefulness of the reaction to an initiative he believed would kick-start a new commercial development in Greenland and thus benefit the Greenlanders. Moreover, at the meetings held on 4-5 August, the Provincial Councils had given their full support, in Hedtoft's opinion, to the introduction of private enterprise in Greenland. In the end, Hedtoft gave in, presumably because he did not want to give the impression that the Danish government did whatever it found best without taking into account the Greenlanders' wishes.⁸³ In this situation, it was Oldendow who often reminded the prime minister – in keeping with the pronouncements of the Provincial Councils and the governor – that the implementation of a new commercial policy in Greenland entailed prior talks with the Provincial Councils, and that it would be better to await the commission's talks before initiating new measures. According to Oldendow, there was widespread mistrust of Eske Brun, who had been aware of the matter without informing the Provincial Councils. Following Hedtoft's decision to stop the Nipisat project, the affair still led to communications between Provincial Council members and the Greenland Administration.⁸⁴

Further problems for the new Greenland policy offensive surfaced in the autumn of 1948. Among other things, press reports from Greenland focused on

⁸⁰ Telegram of 11 September 1948 to the prime minister from Oldendow, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 52, the Greenland Commission, folio: Telegrams 1948.

⁸¹ Telegram of 13 September to Oldendow from Hedtoft, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 52, the Greenland Commission, folio: Telegrams 1948; Telegram of 13 September to the prime minister from Oldendow, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 52, the Greenland Commission, folio: Telegrams 1948; Telegram of 14 September to the prime minister from Oldendow, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 52: the Greenland Commission, folio: Telegrams 1948.

⁸² "The Prime Minister's Statement to Greenland's Radio News", 16 September 1948, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 21, folio 4.

⁸³ Hedtoft explained his view to the people of Greenland on the radio news. Radio News 18 September 1948, Greenland National Museum Archives, Radio News in Greenland January-December 1948.

⁸⁴ Telegram of 20 September to Oldendow from Provincial Council members Johs. Filemonsens, Nik Rosing, S. Kaspersen, Fr. Jensen, Mart. Siverson, H. Mathæussen, and Per Nielsen, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 52, the Greenland Commission, folio: Telegrams 1948.

Telegram of 23 September from Oldendow to the prime minister, ABA, Hedtoft archive, packet 52, folio: Telegrams 1948; Telegram of 23 September from Oldendow to the prime minister, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 52, folio: Telegrams 1948.

new, problematic aspects concerning the relationship between Danes and Greenlanders. For example, Editor Truels Albertsen wrote in articles from Greenland (mentioned above) that there was genuine “apartheid” between Danes in Greenland and native Greenlanders, and that the Danes often expressed “contempt” for the Greenlanders. It is ironic that the Danes were outraged by racial segregation in America when the same conditions prevailed in Greenland. “We too have a ‘Negro problem’”, noted Albertsen.⁸⁵ Hedtoft commented on this assertion, saying that segregation would be one of the most difficult issues for the coming Greenland Commission to deal with, but that it was a “nettle that must be handled firmly”.⁸⁶ In a speech made a few days later, the prime minister remarked, however, that:

There is no doubt that the Danes have made mistakes in Greenland, but it is to the credit of those countrymen who have served in Greenland that the population today applauds Denmark’s name with genuine devotion.⁸⁷

On the same occasion, Hedtoft revealed an important aspect of his thinking concerning what was wrong with Greenland when he described Greenland’s monopoly system as “a nanny system”. The task of the commission would then be to show the way out of something almost everybody agreed was a nanny system.

The new policy on Greenland gets off the ground

From the autumn of 1948 onward, the actual legislative work in preparation for the new policy on Greenland progressed quickly. The Greenland Commission was appointed in November 1948, its report was submitted after only fifteen months in February 1950, and one month later the report was printed and published. At the end of April, eight bills were laid before the *Folketing*. The entire legislation was passed by Parliament during 23-25 May and then signed by the King on 27 May 1950. Below, the major features of this process are reviewed. Covered are the initiatives, decisions, and resolutions in Copenhagen, as well as their interaction with positions and reactions in Greenland that were shaped by both support for and uncertainty about the Danish initiatives. The interaction between the disparate

⁸⁵ Various articles by Truels Albertsen. The Danish National Archives, Hans Hedtoft official archive, Journey to Greenland 1948, packet 1, folio: The prime minister’s secretariat. Hans Hedtoft’s Journey to Greenland 1948.

⁸⁶ Summary of Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft’s speech: “Greenland and Denmark” to the Students’ Association and the Greenlandic Society in the National Radio’s main concert hall on Saturday, 27 November 1948. The Danish National Archives, Hans Hedtoft official archive, speeches and articles, packet 1, folio: The prime minister’s secretariat. Hans Hedtoft’s speeches, statements, interviews etc., November 1948.

⁸⁷ “Notes for speech to the Association of Navy Officers on the Journey to Greenland”, 1 December 1948. The Danish National Archives, Hans Hedtoft official archive, speeches and articles, packet 1, folio: The prime minister’s secretariat. Hans Hedtoft’s speeches, statements, interviews etc., December 1948.

traditions and expectations in Greenland and Denmark was, in this phase, affected by a number of disagreements and problems that were difficult to handle, even if they did not derail the process.

The Greenland Commission and the new Greenland Acts

In the autumn of 1948, Hedtoft was intent on appointing the Commission as quickly as possible and by that autumn he had hoped to have already commenced the work.⁸⁸ When Parliament opened on 5 October 1948, Hedtoft stated that a commission would be appointed without delay. This appointment occurred on 29 November after it was adopted at a ministerial meeting on 9 November.⁸⁹ The prime minister wrote a letter to the members of Parliament's Greenland Committee a few days later and notified them that, at his own initiative, he had brought forward the start of the sub-commissions' work from April-May 1949 (as planned) to the very beginning of 1949. To make this move feasible, he had arranged for the members in Greenland to be flown to Denmark at the beginning of January, instead of (as planned) finding them passage on a ship sometime during the spring.⁹⁰ The Commission did, in fact, hold its opening meeting at Christiansborg on 20 January.

The Provincial Councils' statement, adopted in August 1948, was the Commission's point of departure "to examine the problems existing in Greenland today with regard to social, economic, political, cultural, and administrative tasks, and then to submit a report with proposals for future guidelines in these matters".⁹¹ The Provincial Councils' statement became the direct model for the Commission's work and thus emphasised Hedtoft's desire to shape this work in agreement with the Greenlanders' wishes. In a speech held just before the commission was appointed, the prime minister also mentioned that one of the Commission's most important tasks was to consider Greenland's position within the Kingdom and the measures that should be taken regarding the position of Greenland's political bodies in this connection.⁹² This task meant that the Commission's terms of reference, in practice, covered all aspects of Greenland society.

⁸⁸ Editor Therkildsen's interview with Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft (recorded on Saturday, 16 October 1948, 10 am), ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 21, folio 4.

⁸⁹ "79th meeting 9/11/48, 3 pm", ABA, the Social Democrats archive, packet 1565, Ministerial Meeting Protocols.

⁹⁰ Letter from Hans Hedtoft to the members of Parliament's Greenland Committee, 3 December 1948, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 52.

⁹¹ "Terms of reference for the commission appointed by the prime minister concerning Greenland problems and proposals for the commission's composition", undated, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 52.

⁹² Summary of Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft's speech: "Greenland and Denmark" to the Students' Association and the Greenlandic Society in the National Radio's main concert hall on Saturday, 27 November 1948. The Danish National Archives, Hans Hedtoft official archive, speeches and articles, packet 1, folio: The prime minister's secretariat. Hans Hedtoft's speeches, statements, interviews etc., November 1948.



Members of the Greenland Commission photographed in the Danish Parliament at the start of negotiations in January 1949. In the main Commission, 5 of the 16 individuals were Greenlanders. In the subcommittees, between 23-44% were Greenland representatives. (The Arctic Institute)

The Commission comprised a head commission that included relatively few members – namely sixteen, five of whom were Greenlanders. Under this head commission, there were nine sub-commissions. Sub-commission IV, which dealt with commercial and economic conditions, was the largest with a total of fifty-three members. Of these, sixteen represented private organisations and companies.⁹³ In total, about 150 people participated in the discussions within the framework of the Commission's work. Permanent undersecretary H.H. Koch, who was appointed chairman, possessed no significant prior experience with the Greenland issue.⁹⁴ He was also chairman of all the sub-commissions, opening up the possibility of consistency in the Commission's work. Other than that, only Eske Brun and three of the four members appointed by the Provincial Councils were members of all of the sub-commissions.⁹⁵ The sub-commissions' work was centralised around the Commission's secretariat, which consisted of seven civil servants from different departments and was already established before the Commission began the actual negotiations. The seven civil servants were at the

⁹³ "Introduction. Location and Design of Buildings: The Future Anfolios Company", *Greenland Commission's Report 1*, 1950, pp. 6-14; Axel Kjær Sørensen, *op. cit.* p. 159, note 8. Fishing skipper Christian Venø was a member of this subcommission.

⁹⁴ Eske Brun, *op. cit.* p. 127, note 3, writes of H.H. Koch: "... his greatest advantage was that he did not know anything about Greenland when the work began. From time immemorial, Greenland has suffered from experts who knew all about Greenland".

⁹⁵ Knud Oldendow was not a member of the commission.

full disposal of the Commission, contrary to normal secretarial work for commissions in Denmark that was considered only as a sideline. After one or more discussions in the sub-commissions, the secretariat prepared proposals for the report. These proposals were then revised and approved by the relevant sub-commission and finally by the head commission. This centralised way of working, with a full-time secretariat and a chairman with effective means of control, promoted efficiency and, in the final analysis, proved its worth when the report was adopted unanimously without any minority statements.⁹⁶

Sub-commission I, which handled the political and administrative matters, dealt with the question of centralisation and held its first meeting on 9 February. On this occasion, the discussions concerning Greenland's future status commenced; the main objective was clear from the beginning: Greenland would enjoy higher status within the Kingdom of Denmark.⁹⁷ Broad consensus also existed for implementing a centralised administration and studying the matter of the Greenlanders' representation in Parliament. As early as the 17 March meeting, Sub-commission I's members agreed to abandon the division of Greenland into a north and south region in favour of a more centralised administration. In the future, the Provincial Council would have greater influence and the division of labour between the administration in Denmark and Greenland would be made more expedient. Furthermore, Greenlanders would be familiarised with the parliamentary system.⁹⁸

In accordance with the Provincial Councils' wish, which was expressed in August 1948, cf. above, Greenlandic representation in Parliament was not considered of immediate importance. However, in the proposal for a new constitution, the Constitutional Commission was to adopt a clause that gave the legislative body the competence to decide. The unanimity is emphasised by the fact that Sub-commission I had already prepared a preliminary report containing these modernistic proposals by July 1949.⁹⁹ Moreover, regarding the commercial structure, the report's main idea involved a release from the KGH monopoly and the introduction of private enterprise in Greenland. The modernistic bias concerning the production side was, however, embedded in a mindset that emphasised gradual development and regulation of the market. This regulation involved setting up a counter-cyclical equalisation fund to prevent major fluctuations in sales prices that could cause catastrophic consequences for the population of Greenland.¹⁰⁰ The main objective was to develop business in Greenland for the

⁹⁶ H.H. Koch, "Grønlandskommissionen og dens forslag" ["The Greenland Commission and Its Proposals"], Kaj Birket-Smith (ed.), *Grønlandsbogen* [*The Greenland Book*], II, 1950, pp. 291f; Axel Kjær Sørensen, *op. cit.* pp. 151f., note 8.

⁹⁷ Subcommission I, 9 February 1949, "Minutes of the subcommission's meeting, Wednesday 9 February 1949", the Arctic Institute Archives, N.O. Christensen archive, archive store A 025, folio 4.

⁹⁸ "The Greenland Commission. Minutes of Parliament's meeting, Thursday 17 March 1949, 10 am", ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 52.

⁹⁹ The Greenland Commission, Sub-commission I, *Report concerning the political and administrative conditions, including Greenland's status in the Kingdom and the Greenland political bodies*, approved by the head commission on 15 July 1949.

¹⁰⁰ "Commercial and Economic Conditions I", *The Greenland Commission's Report 5*, 1950, pp. 33-39.

benefit of Greenland's population. Therefore, the emphasis on the *Greenland* perspective was combined with the need for conjunctural and market regulation, which was gaining a foothold at this time in Western economic and political thinking.

In the summer of 1949, some members of the Greenland Commission and Parliament's Greenland Committee undertook a four-week trip to Greenland.¹⁰¹ Both the prelude to this trip as well as the visit to Greenland were attended by a number of complications. Originally, Hedtoft had wanted to send all of the Commission members to Greenland, but that would have incurred substantial expense. Therefore, at a cabinet meeting it was decided that the prime minister would lay the case before the finance committee.¹⁰² In advance, DFDS had consented to charter the ship *A.P. Bernstorff* for the sum of DKK 900,000.¹⁰³ When the finance committee turned down the prime minister's request for this amount, Hedtoft, disappointed, had to report that only Parliament's Greenland Committee and a limited number of Commission members would travel to Greenland on one of the Greenland Administration's vessels.¹⁰⁴ This matter provoked a certain indignation in the Danish press. In Greenland, the members of the Provincial Council were disappointed at being "fobbed off" with the usual civil servants. Instead, they had hoped to be able to speak with the Commission's rank and file members while they were familiarising themselves with conditions in Greenland.¹⁰⁵

During their stay in Greenland, there were numerous talks with, among others, the Provincial Councils. However, these talks were often difficult and inconclusive, especially since expectations and viewpoints differed more than anticipated. While H.H. Koch was quite capable of managing the Greenland Commission's work in Copenhagen, it appears that he sometimes failed to appreciate the mood prevailing in the Provincial Councils. As for Eske Brun, he was not especially diplomatic. They both, therefore, evidently offended the Provincial Councils.¹⁰⁶ Hedtoft realised that there were sticking points in the talks between the Provincial Councils and the Danish politicians in Greenland. This realisation is indicated by his corrections to a draft statement to the Radio

¹⁰¹ "Notes from the trip to Greenland in the period of 20 July-21 August 1949". From the Greenland Commission's secretariat. Prepared by H.H. Koch, Copenhagen, 7 September 1949. The Arctic Institute Archives, N.O. Christensen archive, archive store A 121, folio 12.

¹⁰² "97th meeting 26/2/49 - 10 am", ABA, the Social Democrats archives, packet 1565, Ministerial Meeting Protocols.

¹⁰³ Letter from Director J.A. Kørping, DFDS, to H.H. Koch dated 10 February 1949. ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 52, the Greenland Commission.

¹⁰⁴ "105th meeting 29/4/49 2:30 pm", ABA, the Social Democrats archive, packet 1565, Ministerial Meeting Protocols.

¹⁰⁵ Radio News 2-7 May and 19 May 1949. Radio News in Greenland, 8 June 1949, Greenland National Museum Archives, Radio News in Greenland January-December 1949. See also the letter from the temporarily appointed governor of North Greenland, Niels Otto Christensen, to "Grethe and Uncle Herbert", 30 October 1949, the Arctic Institute Archives, N.O. Christensen archive, archive store A 121, folio 3.

¹⁰⁶ See e.g. the letter from Niels Otto Christensen to "Grethe and Uncle Herbert", 30 October 1949, the Arctic Institute Archives, N.O. Christensen archive, archive store A 121, folio 3.



Photo from the Greenland Commission's departure in the summer of 1949 on the "Umanak". From the left is pictured: The head of the Greenland Administration, Eske Brun; Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft; and a member of Parliament's Greenland Committee, Halfdan Hendriksen. (The Royal Library, map and photo archive)



The caption to Bo Bojesen's satiric cartoon of the four-week visit to Greenland made by the Greenland Commission and Parliament's Greenland Committee reads: "Greenlanders bemoan that the Danish Parliament delegation was too busy". The cartoon shows, from the left: The Conservative Halfdan Hendriksen, the Commission's secretary, department head Andreas Møller, Social Democrat Julius Bomholt, and Social-Liberal party member Oluf Steen. (Bo Bojesen, Blæksprutten, 1949)

News in which he toned down optimistic phrases.¹⁰⁷ All in all, the visit was hardly more than a limited success – any success that was achieved was due mainly to the opportunities the two sides were given to better acquaint themselves with each others' differing viewpoints on the coming reforms.

On 28 February 1950, the Commission's members signed the unanimously adopted report comprised of a total of 1,100 pages in six volumes. The report was published on 27 March. On that occasion, Hedtoft expressed his sentiments about the "devotion and feeling of belonging" the Greenlanders felt for Denmark. They could now leave behind a system pervaded by protection from the motherland and acquire a freer system in which each individual felt personal responsibility for his or her society, family, and self. According to Hedtoft, Greenland's population would, over time, consequently attain full equality with other Danish citizens. At the same time, Hedtoft expressed the wish that everyone, irrespective of political denominations, would unite around the "national duty to help our Greenland countrymen". The coming years' work would mark a watershed, the prime minister said.¹⁰⁸ In a speech held a few days later, the prime minister again emphasised that the ultimate results of the work for Greenland's reforms would not be realised for many years.¹⁰⁹ The press received the report with acclamation. Everyone praised the excellent work carried out under H.H. Koch's authoritative leadership.

Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft would never again receive the same degree of approbation from a united press.

On 27 April, the prime minister laid eight bills before Parliament concerning the following: Greenland's Provincial Council and municipal councils etc.; public funding for Greenland; the church, school system, and healthcare system in Greenland; KGH; commerce in Greenland; and a Greenland fund for commercial loans.¹¹⁰ The bills closely complied with the Commission's report, which was frequently referred to for further details and explanations.¹¹¹ After a few modifications, the bills were passed during 23-25 May.¹¹² On 23 May, after the third reading, the *Folketing* passed the bills with votes numbering between 93 and 95 for each of the eight bills and with 13 to 15 abstentions. There were no votes against. The votes in favour comprised a coalition of the Social Democrats, the Liberal Party (with the exception of two members), the Conservative People's

¹⁰⁷ Statement to the Radio News regarding the close collaboration of Greenland and Denmark, 3 August. The Danish National Archives, Hans Hedtoft official archive, speeches and articles, packet 3, folio: The prime minister's secretariat. Hans Hedtoft's speeches, statements, interviews etc., December 1949.

¹⁰⁸ "Prime Minister Hedtoft's statement to *Aktuelt*, Tuesday, 28 March 1950 on the occasion of the Greenland Commission's report", ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 21, folio 4.

¹⁰⁹ "Prime Minister Hedtoft's speech at the Greenlandic Society's meeting in Radiohuset's concert hall, 31 March 1950". The Danish National Archives, Hans Hedtoft official archive, speeches and articles, packet 3, folio: The prime minister's secretariat. Hans Hedtoft's speeches, statements, interviews etc., March 1950.

¹¹⁰ The prime minister's presentation speech can be found in *Rigsdagstidende: Talks in Parliament 1949/50*, 27 April 1950, col. 3817-3839.

¹¹¹ *Rigsdagstidende. Appendix A. 1949/50*, col. 5499-5598.

¹¹² *Rigsdagstidende. Appendix C. 1949/50*, col. 1557-1646.

Party, and the Social Liberals. The Communist Party, the Justice Party, and the two Liberal Party MPs abstained. During the parliamentary debates, the supporters generally adhered to the report's reasoning, while the opponents' arguments were more varied. The Communist Party recognised that many of the Commission's proposals represented considerable progress, but its members were uneasy about abandoning the Greenlanders to the mercy of "capitalism's exploitation". The two Liberal Party MPs – Elin Appel and (in particular) Jens Christian Jensen-Brobby – were the only remaining opponents of Greenland's modernisation left in Christiansborg.¹¹³ The debate showed, however, that there were other MPs who, to varying degrees, shared some of their concerns.¹¹⁴

Support and uncertainty in Greenland

In the spring of 1948, *Greenlandsposten* referred to a poll taken to illustrate Greenland views concerning the appointment of a commission.¹¹⁵ The majority of responses were positive about a commission that could offer a route towards a new and better form of government as well as a solid foundation for the future of Greenland. In May, the newspaper printed a summary of the poll: 80.5% of responders were in favour of a commission, while 11.5% were against.¹¹⁶ Regardless of the questionable validity of such a survey and its concrete figures, the majority of Greenlanders who had heard about the Commission's proposals were doubtlessly in favour of it at that time. However, after Hedtoft made a promise to the Provincial Councils concerning the appointment of a Greenland commission at the meeting on 4-5 August, the situation changed, however, since a number of Greenlanders began to express their uncertainty, reservations, or direct opposition to this appointment. One of their reservations concerned the composition of the commission. As early as the above-mentioned closed meeting of the Provincial Councils, which was held one week after the joint meeting with the prime minister, a number of Provincial Council members expressed concern that they would not have any influence on the commission's composition.¹¹⁷ Consequently, they agreed to nominate a number of suitable candidates: Four from inside and ten from outside the Provincial Councils. Of these candidates, all of the chosen Provincial Council members were given a spot on the head commission and three members were given

¹¹³ *Rigsdagstidende. Talks in Parliament 1949/50*, 23 May 1950, col. 4762-64. The contributions of the spokespersons of the four supporting parties can be found in the minutes of the first reading on 3 May, col. 4012-4069, and 3rd reading on 22 May, col. 4704-4733. Inger Merete Nordentoft's contribution (Communist Party) is in col. 4048. Elin Appel, who also spoke at the first reading on 3 May, is found in col. 4055-4060, while Jensen-Brobby spoke at the second reading on 22 May, col. 4711-4713 & 4732-4733.

¹¹⁴ Immediately after Jensen-Brobby's first speech, the Liberal Party's spokesperson, Simon From, commented: "I am not in the least unsympathetic towards the reservations expressed by the right honourable member Mr Jensen-Brobby; I share them in part myself", *Rigsdagstidende: Talks in Parliament 1949/50*, 23 May 1950, col. 4713.

¹¹⁵ The following is based on Jens Heinrich, *op. cit.* pp. 432-433, note 1.

¹¹⁶ Jens Heinrich, *op. cit.* p. 433, note 1.

¹¹⁷ "Minutes of Greenland Provincial Councils' closed meeting, 11 August 1948, 2 pm, in connection with item 6 on the agenda: Greenland's future form of government". Confidential. The Arctic Institute Archives, N.O. Christensen archive, archive store A 121, folio 12.

a spot on each of the sub-commissions. None of the other candidates was included. In addition, a female representative, Kathrine Chemnitz, was appointed.

When the new commission was appointed in November, things really began to stir in Greenland. Numerous district councils sent telegrams to the prime minister protesting against the commission's composition and recommending that its appointment be postponed should their protests not be complied with.¹¹⁸ These telegrams were the result of numerous meetings held in various Greenland districts at the end of November 1948. In general, they expressed the wish that representatives from outside the Provincial Councils be included in the commission. Among other things, they wanted the inclusion of commission members, both salaried staff and workers, from all branches of industry and commerce – the so-called “free enterprisers”.¹¹⁹ Even more specific wishes were included in the telegrams. For example, Julianehåb wanted its own representative on the commission since the “district's special climate offers completely different commercial opportunities” from the rest of Greenland.¹²⁰ East Greenlanders also sent a telegram in which they argued in favour of having their own commission member because their interests differed from West Greenlanders'.¹²¹ Similarly, North Greenlanders, the fisher folk of Kangaamiut, and the women of North Greenland all wanted their own representatives.¹²²

On 27 November 1948, the editor of Greenland's Radio sent a telegram to Eske Brun at the Greenland Administration in Copenhagen to report that great unrest existed in Greenland over the Commission's composition. According to this telegram, confidence in the prime minister could be undermined and the solution was to quickly communicate an official explanation of the Commission's working structure with its head and sub-commissions.¹²³ Other telegrams stated that the protests were not particularly serious and that they gave the impression that certain individuals had incited them.¹²⁴ On the other hand, dissatisfaction with the Greenland Commission can also be seen in the context of an overall discontent over living conditions in Greenland in 1948. At the same time the protests against the Commission were made, dockers began striking in Nuuk on account of the low wages and the constantly rising cost of living in Greenland. In

¹¹⁸ ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 52, folio: Telegrams.

¹¹⁹ Personal telegram to the prime minister, from Councillor Kutdligssat, 26 November 1948, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 52, folio: Telegrams.

¹²⁰ Personal telegram to the prime minister from Julianehåb, 24 November 1948, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 52, folio: Telegrams.

¹²¹ Telegram to the Greenland Administration from Angmagssalik, 26 November 1948, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 52, folio: Telegrams.

¹²² Since one woman was not considered as “sufficient to represent all of the women of Greenland”. (Kathrine Chemnitz had been appointed by the Provincial Councils.) Personal telegram to the prime minister from Michael Egede, Nuuk, 27 November 1948. See also Telegram to the prime minister from the Kangaamiut Fishery Association, 25 November 1948, and the personal telegram to the prime minister from Councillor Kutdligssat, 26 November 1948. All three telegrams are from ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 52, folio: Telegrams.

¹²³ Telegram from Therkildsen to Brun, 27 November 1948. The Danish National Archives, GS journal no. 10064/1948, Parliamentary cases and Greenland Commission cases.

¹²⁴ Sender unknown, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 52, folio: Telegrams.

connection with these strikes, Governor Simony wrote to the Greenland Administration describing how discontent was “beginning to smoulder” in a number of places.¹²⁵ The strikers stressed that “we Greenland workers can no longer ignore the fact that they are making fools of us”.¹²⁶

Clearly, Hedtoft took the protests seriously and was anxious to curb them. In a speech made at the end of November, the prime minister emphasised that the protests were being taken seriously in Copenhagen. In his Christmas speech to Greenland, Hedtoft used the opportunity to “once again assure all of you up there in Greenland that down here we approach this assignment with utmost gravity and with the firmest determination to carry out this work”.¹²⁷ This attempt to pour oil on troubled waters was only partially successful. A telegram to the prime minister thanked him for his kind speech, but reiterated the Greenland people’s fervent demand for the opportunity to choose representatives for the Commission themselves.¹²⁸

The Greenlanders’ intense interest in getting participants onto the Commission was discussed at the head commission’s initial meetings in February. In these meetings, members agreed that there might be unfortunate consequences if individuals who did not represent any particular organisations were to take part in the Commission’s work. However, in individual cases, people with specialised knowledge could participate in its work.¹²⁹ The unrest in Greenland did, nevertheless, make an impression on the Commission and the Greenland Administration. Consequently, immediately after work started early in 1949, major efforts were made in Greenland to disseminate the minutes of the Commission’s meetings.¹³⁰

In the spring of 1949, unrest over the Commission flared up again in Greenland.¹³¹ Unlike before, Danish press coverage now suggested that the demands from Greenland should be rejected due to Greenlanders’ lack of understanding of democratic conventions with elected representatives. On 4 March, *Ekstra Bladet* published an article under the headline “Every Greenlander Would

¹²⁵ Letter no. 294 “Re: Strike in Godthåb”, 29 November 1948. From Simony to the Greenland Administration. The Danish National Archives, GS journal no. 10451/1948, the Administration in Greenland in general, folio: Godthåb strike.

¹²⁶ “Transcript of the demands of the paid workers”, signed by “the 55 pieceworkers”. The Danish National Archives, GS journal no. 10451/1948, the Administration in Greenland in general, folio: Godthåb strike.

¹²⁷ “Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft’s Christmas Speech to Greenland in 1948”, undated, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 21, folio 4.

¹²⁸ Personal telegram to the prime minister from Laurent Christensen, Julianehåb, 30 November 1948, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 52, folio: Telegrams.

¹²⁹ “The Greenland Commission. Minutes from the head commission’s meeting in Parliament on 8 February 1949”, ABA, Hans Hedtoft archive, packet 52. The minutes can also be found in the Greenland National Museum Archives, governor of South Greenland archive, 1949, packet 161.

¹³⁰ Telegram from Eske Brun to Governor Simony on 18 March 1949, Greenland National Museum Archives, governor of South Greenland archive, 1949, packet 161.

¹³¹ Again Therkildsen reports: “The Radio News receives daily numerous telegrams containing protests against the sitting commission and members. Great unrest and ignorance”. See telegram from Therkildsen to Brun, 3 March 1949, the Danish National Archives, GS 10064/1948.

Preferably Like to Sit on the Greenland Commission".¹³² On the following day, *Information* was even more critical when it stated that criticism of the Greenland Commission was unreasonable and was founded on a lack of knowledge about events in Copenhagen as well as a lack of trust in the Greenland members of the Commission. Using a sharp tone otherwise reserved for the Greenland Administration in this matter, *Information* wrote: "Currently, it is the Greenland population's opinion that each settlement must have a number of, preferably male, delegates down here. They would rather have all 20,000 Greenlanders here".¹³³ It was widely believed by the Danish press that the individually oriented, geographically dispersed sealer population had difficulties understanding the representative system. There was general agreement that the Greenlanders' demands could not be granted, yet the newspapers presented different solutions to the conflict. *Berlingske Tidende* thought that the time had come for Hedtoft to "put his foot down hard if order and good sense were to prevail in Greenland".¹³⁴ *Ekstra Bladet's* solution was to downplay the crisis and thus hush up the problem.¹³⁵ *Information*, on the other hand, wanted the discontent to be surmounted "through comprehensive educational work among the Greenlanders".¹³⁶ The Commission clearly wished to follow the latter suggestion.

It is difficult to evaluate the extent, character, and depth of the unrest and anxieties in Greenland over the Greenland Commission's composition and work procedures. The protests did not reflect any disagreement between the Greenland Provincial Council members and the Danish civil servants. On the contrary, they showed that the debate held in August by the Provincial Council concerning the composition of the Commission was genuine; in Greenland, conflicting views on the Commission's work really did exist, ones that were not reflected in the Provincial Councils. The conflicting Greenland and Danish viewpoints regarding this work reflect very different approaches to representative government in Greenland and Denmark.

In the last months of 1950, developments in Denmark gave Greenlanders a completely different cause for concern. At the end of October, Hedtoft's government resigned and was replaced by Eriksen-Kraft's. The new government was a coalition comprised of the Liberal Party and the Conservative People's Party with Erik Eriksen (Liberal Party) as prime minister and Ole Bjørn Kraft (Conservative People's Party) as foreign minister. Provincial Council members in Greenland became anxious that with Hedtoft's departure, the work of reform would be discontinued. A couple of Provincial Council members therefore sought to gather support to approach the new government and express their hope that the change in government would not result in changes to Hedtoft's work for Greenland. This

¹³² "Every Greenlander Would Preferably Like to Sit on the Greenland Commission", *Ekstra Bladet*, 4 March 1949.

¹³³ "The Greenlanders Do Not Have Faith in Their Elected Men", *Information*, 5 March 1949.

¹³⁴ "The Greenlanders Cannot Quiet Down", *Berlingske Tidende*, 4 March 1949.

¹³⁵ "Every Greenlander Would Preferably Like to Sit on the Greenland Commission", *Ekstra Bladet*, 4 March 1949.

¹³⁶ "The Greenlanders Do Not Have Faith in Their Elected Men", *Information*, 5 March 1949.



The Greenland Commission's recommendations were adopted unanimously on 28 February 1950, and their report was praised by a united press in Denmark. Although Prime Minister Hedtoft said he was touched by the "expressions of kindness and loyalty" the Greenlanders felt for Denmark, there were protests in Greenland, mainly against the composition of the Commission, which was not regarded as representative of all of the Greenland people. The picture shows, from the left: Provincial Council member Gerhard Egede, chairman of the Commission H.H. Koch, and Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft when the report was released. (The Arctic Institute)

initiative was widely supported by the members. Simultaneously, these members proposed to send a telegram to Hedtoft thanking him for his great and determined work on the behalf of Greenland: What this man had accomplished would always be remembered by the people of Greenland.¹³⁷ Nothing came of this approach, however, when, in his New Year's speech at the beginning of January 1951, the new prime minister eliminated any fears that Hedtoft's policy on Greenland would be relinquished.

¹³⁷ Exchange of telegrams and proposals from Provincial Council members in October-November 1950 in connection with the change in government in Copenhagen, 31 October 1950, Greenland National Museum Archives, governor of South Greenland archive, 1950, packet 183.

Conclusion

Danish policy on Greenland underwent a radical transformation during the first five years after World War II. This transformation was essentially a reorientation in a much more modernistic direction. This direction was formalised when Parliament passed the new Greenland Acts in the spring of 1950. In comparison to the traditional Danish policy on Greenland, the new one clashed with the central pillar of the old (namely, the monopoly). However, it carried with it many of the deeply held notions of a Greenland surrounded by a special halo. For the politicians who, under the leadership of Prime Minister Hedtoft, shaped the new policy, Greenland was still cloaked in a special aura. However, it badly needed modernisation through welfare and the benefits of prosperity that Danish society had evolved over many generations.

During the latter half of the 1940s, the political process surrounding the development of a new Danish policy on Greenland distinguished itself from other political spheres. Above all, it was characterised by the fact that the usual intermediate level between the political leadership and the public, Parliament, and the political parties did not play any independent role. The most important explanation for this lack of an independent role was the broad consensus on the new policy in the *Folketing* and among the parties. Development of the new policy on Greenland was unique in that it never became part of the normal conflicts between the parties in Parliament. Interest organisations played a certain role, but apparently without ever having an independent and influential role in the Danish policy on Greenland, which would have been significantly different otherwise. The press, on the contrary, was important – especially in the early phases of the policy-making process – when the Greenland issue grew into a controversial topic in the wake of dramatic press reports on conditions in Greenland. Internal divisions in the Greenland Administration and among those with special interests in Greenland were also important in the early phases. However, these divisions had little consequence because the sceptics of reform were frozen out in favour of a modernistic consensus. Reformist dominance and consensus occurred among the groups with a special interest in Greenland a couple of years before the broader consensus at the parliamentary level. The consensus among the parties favouring a modernistic policy on Greenland, which was established with the Greenland Commission and the passing of new Greenland Acts, was as conspicuous as the former consensus for a traditionalist policy.

In Greenland at that time, modernisation proposals appear to have earned widespread support. However, this support was never unanimous, and opinions in Greenland were more heterogeneous than was supposed in Copenhagen. During Hedtoft's visit in the summer of 1948, the process was dominated by the prime minister's ability to appeal to both the joint Provincial Councils and the public. In light of Greenland's history, the prime minister was breaking new ground when he travelled around the country and won a great deal of support for his visions. Nevertheless, Hans Hedtoft's individual significance in the evolution of the Greenland issue should not be misjudged or overestimated. Hans

Hedtoft, as a politician and a man, was able to display his deep political commitment to Greenland and to gather great support in both countries for a new policy on Greenland since developments in Greenland during World War II and the country's role in the war had created the necessary background.

7 · The Greenland issue in the UN, 1945-1950

Frede P. Jensen

In 1946, when the United Nations began collecting reports on non-self-governing territories (former colonies), Danish authorities had to face the issue of what status Greenland actually had. The prevailing view held by the responsible authorities (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Greenland Administration) was that Greenland was not a colony in the traditional sense, primarily since it had not been the object of economic exploitation. The authorities believed that, where Greenland was concerned, their hands were clean. However, they felt pressured by the US (as well as France) to consent to submitting information about Greenland and thereby recognise its status as a non-self-governing territory. In 1946, Denmark began reporting and continued to submit annual reports until 1954 on Greenland's social, educational, and economic conditions.

Denmark became involved in the struggle for decolonisation by participating in the committees the General Assembly appointed to deal with conditions in the non-self-governing territories. The processing of the submitted reports played an important role in this struggle. During the debates, Denmark was regarded as a "liberal colonial power" that largely followed America, who during those years positively viewed the UN's role as the mediator of the colonies' transition to self-governance. Denmark supported reporting and other activities viewed as useful tools in the improvement of conditions for the peoples in the non-self-governing territories. Denmark also backed plans for the continuation of the work of the subcommittees, whose activities were continually criticised by the major colonial powers.

The increasingly intense debate in the UN over the future of the non-self-governing territories made an impression on the Danish diplomats and officials who represented Danish interests in the UN (Hermod Lannung and Eske Brun). They were undoubtedly motivated by this debate in the UN in their efforts to change Greenland's status. In 1948, Hermod Lannung asserted (following the example set by the US), in opposition to trends developing in the UN, that every administering power had the right to decide the constitutional position and status of territories under its sovereignty. From 1948, Denmark also used the reports submitted to the UN to describe changes in Greenland's conditions, including those in the political arena.

The Danish authorities and reporting to the UN

In the summer of 1946, it became necessary for the Danish authorities to clarify the matter of Greenland's constitutional status because of a circular letter re-

ceived by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 29 June sent by UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie to all member states. In his letter, the Secretary-General referred to the General Assembly's resolution of 9 February 1946 regarding reports on non-self-governing territories and stated that he would undertake a summation of the reports in 1947. The Secretary-General's letter was not, however, a call to submit reports to the General Assembly in 1946 – although they would have been welcome – but a request that member states consider “certain preliminary problems”, especially due to the fact that the Assembly, by September 1946, wanted to know what progress had been made in that area and what methods the governments should use to submit information about colonies.

The Secretary-General asked member states to list the “factors” or criteria that placed a territory within Chapter XI of the Charter. Hence, the so-called “factor” issue, which would become an important matter in the decolonisation debate and would strongly impact Denmark, was raised. The member states were also asked if they were able – at this time – to state which territories under their jurisdiction had not yet achieved a full measure of self-governance. Finally, the member states were asked how they intended to submit the information about the economic, social, and educational conditions of the territories as required by the Charter.¹ Thus, the request was carefully worded, reflecting an understandably tentative approach to the institutionalisation of the new reporting system.

The archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs show that opinions differed in the Ministry about how to respond to the Secretary-General's requests when the matter was taken up. In a paper dated 22 July 1946, head of section Finn Friis wrote that Chapter XI of the Charter, which concerned territories, without a doubt must apply to Greenland; he could see no reason not to “expressly acknowledge this”. Friis elaborated his opinion as follows: “Denmark has no interest in avoiding full publicity about the administration of Greenland, which would be the consequence of regular submissions of information on the subject. We have nothing to hide and must, on the contrary, welcome the opportunity we have been offered through the provisions of the Charter to submit our administrative principles and practices to the scrutiny of international opinion”. Concerning the criteria issue, Friis advised against speaking out prematurely about criteria for other territories; he also believed that any discussion about the structure of the reports ought to originate with the major colonial powers that had experience in that area.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' expert in international law, Dr Georg Cohn – who received the rank and title of Envoy Extraordinary in 1946 – viewed the matter differently. In a response to Friis' paper, he wrote: “In my opinion, Greenland cannot be regarded as a colony in the terms of Chapter XI of the

¹ The circular letter is in the Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2.a., packet 1. The following chapters about Denmark and the UN elaborate on Denmark's role within the general presentation in chapter 4 of this book.

Charter, and the circular letter from the Secretary-General gives no occasion to discuss the matter at this time. GC 7/8".²

Dr Cohn did not elaborate on his statement on that occasion, but his opinion apparently prevailed in the Ministry. On 5 September, he sent a letter to the Greenland Administration stating – somewhat subtly – that the circular letter had been sent to all member states. Therefore, no assumption was made that the addressee controlled such territories. He further wrote that: "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs believes there is no reason to allude to Greenland in this connection, as it is not felt that this country falls under the concept of non-self-governing territories as defined in the provisions of the United Nations Charter". The Greenland Administration was requested – assuming they shared the opinion of the Ministry – to prepare arguments supporting that view for use by the Danish delegation at the UN General Assembly.³ As is described below, the Administration naturally regarded the letter from the Ministry as a request to formulate arguments for a decision that had already been made.

Denmark's unwillingness to discuss Greenland's status was expressed already at the 29th International Labour Conference in Montreal in September 1946. At this conference, Denmark was represented by a delegation led by H.H. Koch, the permanent undersecretary in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Since the conference agenda included working conditions in the colonies, the delegation had brought considerable material from the Greenland Administration about such conditions in Greenland. However, at the start of the session, they received a telegram from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ordering the delegation to leave Greenland out of the debate. The telegram also stated that none of the Greenland films brought by the delegation were to be shown. According to later remarks by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, this restriction meant that Denmark participated in the labour conference only as an observer.⁴

The Greenland Administration's argument as to why Greenland could not be regarded as a colony was delivered to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 7 October in a paper marked "Confidential". It was based on the presumption – that the Administration assumed the Ministry shared – that the purpose of Articles 73 and 74 was "presumably" to ensure the advancement of colonised peoples, protect them against harm, and encourage self-governance appropriate to the "degree of development" of the inhabitants. In this regard the

² The paper is titled "Denmark and the trusteeship system", *ibid.* – The two gentlemen also disagreed on another point. In a paper titled "Denmark's position on possible membership in the Trusteeship Council", *ibid.*, 30 July 1946, Finn Friis recommended that Denmark try to join the Council, whose members would be selected by vote in the UN. He reasoned that members who were "independent of both ordinary doctrines and special interests" could help the trusteeship system function more smoothly and efficiently. His reasoning was based on experience with the League of Nations mandate system. Georg Cohn wrote a note on 3 August stating that Denmark did not have any special interests in this regard and advised against promoting Danish candidacy.

³ Draft and copy of letter. The letter was to be signed by Foreign Minister Gustav Rasmussen. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2.a., packet 1.

⁴ Copy of letter from Ministry of Labour and Social Policy to the Greenland Administration, 20 December 1946. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2., packet 1.

Administration asserted that Danish policy made it impossible to take economic advantage of Greenland or deprive Greenland of the social benefits discussed in Article 73 of the Charter. This assertion was supported by an assessment of Danish-Greenland relations, where it was pointed out that:

- private persons were prohibited entry into Greenland, thereby preventing exploitation by them;
- the state had never exploited Greenland, as demonstrated by public financial accounts;
- the state’s so-called trade monopoly with Greenland was not a genuine monopoly, but rather a corporative venture that compensated for climatic and economic fluctuations;
- local self-government had been developing since 1860, and after adoption of the Act on the Administration of Greenland of 1925, Municipal Councils, District Councils, and Provincial Councils had been formed;
- according to the agreement of 1946, considerably larger sums would be granted to Greenland than the amount of income the country would generate.

Apart from the last point, these were official Danish positions that had been used for many years in defence of government policy on Greenland. These points were elaborated upon in the paper. Regarding the last point, the argument concluded: “Greenland and Denmark are henceforth more than before to be regarded as an economic unit, where the more affluent part contributes to the development of the less affluent part”. In conclusion, it was emphasised that this approach in Danish-Greenland cooperation was neither new nor the result of a new perception of international cooperation. Instead, it had been laid down and maintained for over a century.⁵

In brief, the declared position was that a colony was regarded as an area that could be the object of state or private exploitation. Denmark had applied various measures to prevent such a development, and so Greenland fell outside Chapter XI of the UN Charter.

The question about what position the Danish delegation – under the leadership of Envoy Henrik Kauffmann – should take during UN negotiations was settled on 18 October at a meeting led by Director Hvass in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The decision was made to try to avoid bringing Greenland into the discussion at the General Assembly; however, the archives show that not all participants at the meeting took this position.⁶

⁵ The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 1. Signed by Philip Rosendahl and P.P. Sveistrup. Marked in pencil by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “Confidential enclosure to the instruction”.

⁶ Cf. minutes, “On Greenland and the United Nations Charter, Chapter XI”, the Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 1. The minutes are dated 4 November 1946 and signed “Harth” (with a new note from 5 November). According to the minutes, envoy William Borberg – who became Denmark’s permanent UN delegate the following year – observed at the meeting “that he found the arguments made by the Greenland Administration to be insufficient”, *ibid.*

The UN General Assembly, 1946

During the plenary session in the autumn of 1946, it soon became apparent that Denmark's position on the issue of reporting could not be maintained. On 28 October, Kauffmann reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that other major colonial powers, such as the US, Australia, and France, had submitted reports or would soon do so. He also reported that the majority of the delegation believed that Greenland fell within the provisions of the Charter. The delegation would not take the initiative to submit a report, but it warned the Ministry that the question of whether or not reporting applied to Greenland could easily come up. It was also mentioned that if solely the arguments from the Greenland Administration were put forth, then it would be difficult to argue against applying the obligation of reporting to Denmark. If the delegation was pushed, Kauffmann vaguely remarked that it would "possibly consider it right" to commit to submitting information.

On 1 November, Kauffmann sent a telegram stating that several inquiries had convinced the delegation that it would be "most opportune" to submit information about Greenland. On 4 November, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs promised that information would be forthcoming should the matter arise in the UN, and it asked the Greenland Administration to gather materials for forwarding.⁷ The report prepared by the Administration was sent along with a collection of printed materials in late November.⁸

As was evident from a report on 28 October, when the Danish UN delegation arrived in New York, it had not left the disagreement over Greenland's status behind in Copenhagen; this was not surprising since both Georg Cohn and Finn Friis were members.⁹ The internal differences of opinion probably formed the basis for an item printed in *Politiken*: The newspaper's correspondent in New

⁷ Cf. the aforementioned minutes for 4-5 November 1946; report by Henrik Kauffmann on 28 October and telegram on 1 November 1946; in a 5 November letter, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked the Greenland Administration to quickly send "an overview of statistics and other information of a technical nature about economic, social, and educational conditions, which the cited resolution requires be reported to the United Nations Secretary-General". Already on 8 November, the Administration sent the Ministry a package with enclosures of printed information about Greenland. Footnote 16, below, lists the contents. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 1.

⁸ Copies of the report and English translations. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 1. This was the first report on Greenland and consisted of about fifteen typed pages; it focused on health, labour, and – especially – educational conditions. According to a note, the text was received in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 25 November and sent to the delegation in New York on 27 November 1946; the translation provided by the Ministry was sent to New York on 30 November 1946.

⁹ This opinion was also expressed by Georg Cohn in his letter dated New York, 27 November 1946, to President Frants Hvass, with whom he was seemingly close. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 1. The letter read: "Regarding Greenland, there are different views within the delegation, about which I can best report verbally when I come home". According to Cohn, the main issue at the moment was the Russian proposal to submit information about troops based outside their home countries, to which he remarked: "We are interested in getting rid of the foreign forces, but must consider how that viewpoint will appear in the broad political game played here". His point is not entirely clear; the Russian troops had left Bornholm in April 1946. Is he talking about the American forces in Greenland?

York, Sven Tillge-Rasmussen, after speaking with members of the Danish delegation, believed that he had happened upon a good story about the Greenland Administration. His article appeared in *Politiken* on 8 November. Included was a brief note stating that the UN Mandate Commission had asked for the submission of information about conditions in all non-self-governing territories, including Greenland, but “the Danish delegation insists that the Greenland Administration oppose this in principle, claiming that submission is unnecessary. I assume that this standpoint will have to be abandoned”. This story naturally caused a ruckus in the Administration, who felt attacked on false premises. The following day – after communication took place between the Administration and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – a disclaimer from the Administration appeared in the same newspaper, stating briefly: “It must be due to a misunderstanding that *Politiken* stated yesterday that the Greenland Administration did not wish to submit information about conditions in Greenland to the Mandate Commission”.

However, the matter was not yet dead and buried. On 15 November, Tillge-Rasmussen, in a new article printed in *Politiken*, reported from New York that conflict existed between the Greenland Administration and other Danish authorities over reporting to the UN about governing Greenland and the conditions of the populace. The day before, however, Hermod Lannung had told the Mandate Commission that the material was currently being prepared.¹⁰

The Greenland Administration was furious at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about being slandered once again through no fault of its own; the acting director, Ph. Rosendahl, took action the same day. He telephoned the Ministry to say that “it was extremely damaging and unpleasant” that, time after time, reports from New York claimed that the Administration opposed the submission of information to the United Nations. The Administration received countless phone calls from journalists about the matter and could not continue to disregard them. The Administration assumed that the false stories spread by Tillge-Rasmussen originated from the delegation, and therefore it would be prudent to give suitable instructions. Rosendahl also said that the Ministry “suffered from poor cooperation among the different departments”. After this torrent of words, he demanded a meeting with the Ministry.

At the meeting, Rosendahl pointed out that when the Greenland Administration had argued that Greenland could not be regarded as a colony, it was based on the belief that such an argument was advisable from a foreign policy perspective. He referred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ decision as to how the Danish delegation should act at the International Labour Conference in Montreal, and he referred to the Ministry’s letter to the Commission from 5 September. Finally, he said that the Administration was in an uncomfortable position and he re-

¹⁰ The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 1. Report entitled “On Greenland and the United Nations Charter, Chapter XI”, undated.

quested the Ministry to issue a press release in line with a draft he had brought along.

A revised press release appeared in *Politiken* as a Ritzau bulletin, but it was printed under Rosendahl's name. Tillge-Rasmussen's articles were recapitulated. The closing statement mentioned that back in August, the Greenland Administration had sent a report accompanied by statistics on Greenland conditions to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. This report was intended for use by the Danish delegation at the International Labour Conference in Montreal in September 1946. This material had also been sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and, as always, there had been full agreement between the Administration and the other Danish authorities. The referenced material would be made available to the UN Secretariat.¹¹

On 14 November, the Danish delegate to the UN and Member of Parliament (the *Landsting*), Hermod Lannung, spoke to the Fourth Committee about the trusteeship system. He confirmed that Denmark, too, would submit reports about Greenland and said that "I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to state that as far as Greenland is concerned, Denmark has taken the necessary steps to furnish the information called for in the Charter". On the same occasion, Denmark assumed a seat on the subcommittee that would deal with matters concerning Chapter XI and the Southwest Africa problem. This subcommittee was composed of a representative from each of the eight colonial powers, plus members subsequently appointed from eight other countries without colonial possessions.

Considering the internal disagreement described in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs over the reporting issue, it is ironic that, with Lannung's speech – which was duplicated and distributed – and his later actions, Denmark became a pioneer where the reporting issue was concerned. In his speech on 14 November, Lannung stressed the importance that the exchange of information based on Article 73 (e) "... should take place in an adequate and systematic manner". He noted with satisfaction that information had been, or would be, submitted for over seventy territories. According to Lannung, it would be regrettable if all of this information were only compiled, stored, and presumably forgotten. He expressed appreciation that the Secretariat had initiated a preliminary study of not only the problems involved in submitting the documents, but also of their use. He stressed that it was ultimately the General Assembly's decision as to how the materials were best used.¹² The Danish position, as expressed by Lannung, was that the collected materials clearly could and should be used to advance living

¹¹ Review of events in note dated 15 November 1946; thoroughly prepared draft for Ritzau Bureau. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 1. Philip Rosendahl later became the governor of North Greenland. He died in 1974.

¹² Two copies of Lannung's speech are included in Henrik Kauffmann's report, dated New York, 15 November 1946 and are in the Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 1. One of them is a mimeograph sent by the "Danish Information Office".

conditions in the colonies, but that member states must try to prevent the materials from becoming objects of political controversy.

The Danish minutes of the committee's deliberations reveal strongly divergent opinions about how submitted materials should be treated. Some countries felt that the Trusteeship Council should deal with them, while others wanted to hand them over to an ad hoc committee appointed for that purpose. The Danish position was clearly to avoid making the handling of the information a political issue, a goal best achieved by assigning the task to the UN Secretariat. Therefore, Denmark joined with the US, Great Britain, and the Netherlands to back a proposal that the Secretariat assume the task, which included analysis of the materials. In the end, on 14 December 1946, the General Assembly passed an amendment proposed by Cuba (Resolution 66 (I)) to appoint an ad hoc committee. As a compromise, the colonial powers agreed to the amendment on the condition that the committee would perform only a *technical* examination of the information. Denmark abstained from voting when the amendment to the resolution was adopted.

The committee was tasked with examining the Secretary-General's analysis of the information on the non-self-governing territories. It would also help the General Assembly in its deliberations about the information and suggest what procedures to follow in the future.¹³ The colonial powers were urged to annually submit the newest available information about non-self-governing territories by 30 June.

Denmark was automatically made a member of the new ad hoc committee along with the other seven colonial powers. Moreover, Brazil, China, Cuba, Egypt, India, the Philippines, the Soviet Union, and Uruguay were appointed to the ad hoc committee. A number of international organisations (FAO, ILO, UNESCO etc.) were also invited to send representatives to serve as advisors during committee meetings.

On 14 December, the General Assembly approved Resolution 67 (I) on regional conferences for representatives from non-self-governing territories. Members who were responsible for such territories were encouraged to hold conferences where representatives of the territories' populations were ensured access to express the "hopes and aspirations" of their people. This was a controversial, though gradually watered-down proposal originally put forward by the Philippines. In its original version, the proposal aimed at a worldwide conference organised by the UN's Economic and Social Council. The proposal survived by being withdrawn from the UN framework and reduced to an invitation to hold

¹³ Undated incomplete minutes from the Danish UN delegation: C. Information about administration of non-self-governing territories (Charter, Chapter XI). A Danish translation of the resolution is attached. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 1.

regional conferences. Early on, however, Denmark had indicated that it was not interested in arranging such a conference.¹⁴

It is also a bit ironic that the report on Greenland, sent from Copenhagen on 30 November to the UN delegation for forwarding,¹⁵ was apparently never delivered to the UN. The Danish delegation suggested postponing delivery of this report until 1947. In a note, they reasoned that the subcommittee had written in its report that Denmark had promised information on Greenland. It was still possible, of course, to alter this text to state that Denmark had provided the information, but, according to the government official, the “psychological opening” for that year had passed. Since the Greenland Administration had worked hard and might be disappointed if the information was not delivered, a compromise was made to recommend postponing delivery until 1947, before the 30 June deadline. However, the printed materials about Greenland that Copenhagen had sent could be delivered to the UN immediately. In this regard, it was emphasised that the nature of the report was mainly “background material”, and that several other countries were expected to deliver comparable background materials in 1947. It was noted that postponement would also allow corrections to some items in the report, and the addition of new information about the situation in Greenland as well as the various plans for reform.¹⁶

Finn Friis’ advice was probably taken, but it has not been possible to determine what the delegation finally decided.

The UN General Assembly, 1947

As expected, in the summer of 1947, Denmark was asked to submit information about Greenland by 30 June 1947. This request was communicated by a note from the Secretary-General’s secretariat on 9 June 1947. In the same note, Denmark was called to a meeting in the ad hoc committee on 28 August 1947 in New York. A preliminary agenda was included for this meeting.¹⁷

¹⁴ Cf. Finn Friis’ minutes in the paper, “Regional conferences about non-self-governing territories”, *ibid.* According to the minutes, during discussions in the Fourth Committee, Subcommittee 2, Lannung “with regard to Greenland” had stressed that “one” would not consider holding regional conferences in remote areas where there were no other non-self-governing territories nearby. This remark was, according to the minutes, included in the subcommittee’s report. It is not clear from the minutes whether or not Lannung had mentioned Greenland specifically.

¹⁵ Copy of Danish and English text. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 1.

¹⁶ Note by Finn Friis titled “Information about Greenland”, signed “F.F. (New York) 6-12-46”, the Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 1. The note is included in the list of materials mentioned about Greenland, consisting of *Assessment for use by the delegation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, sent to the International Labour Conference in Montreal, 1946*; *Reports and announcements from the Greenland Administration* (eight issues starting with no. 3, 1914); *Reports about the Greenland Administration* (seven issues, 1938-1946); *Reports about the Greenland Administration: Collected statistics about Greenland* (seven issues, 1942-1946); *Official notices from the Greenland Administration*, no. 7, 1946; *Deliberations from 12 June 1946 by the Danish Parliament’s Greenland Committee*.

¹⁷ Note from the Secretary-General to Foreign Minister Gustav Rasmussen, 9 June 1947. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 1.

At the end of June 1947, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent the Danish UN delegation the information prepared by the Greenland Administration about Greenland for forwarding to the UN Secretariat. The text sent to New York was more or less the same one that had been drafted in 1946. As with the year before, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs wanted to ensure that the information was not of a “political” nature. It therefore instigated a few corrections.¹⁸ The delegation was also instructed to state that Hermod Lannung would represent Denmark at the coming meeting of the ad hoc committee.

When the meeting in the ad hoc committee approached, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had to decide on Denmark’s position during the meeting. It was decisive that the British took the initiative. In late July, E. Schram-Nielsen from the London legation was contacted by a civil servant (A.H. Poynton) from the Colonial Office. The civil servant wanted to explain the intention behind an *aide-mémoire* that he gave to the Dane and to the other members of the ad hoc committee. At the meeting, the British official made it clear that Great Britain was dissatisfied with the ad hoc committee and wanted to transfer its work to the Fourth Committee. They felt that the ad hoc committee was not a suitable instrument for dealing with colonial issues. It was feared that political issues would be raised, for example, about the administration of the individual colonies, which the British did not believe the committee was competent to handle. Nor was the committee able to deal with technical questions. During the meeting, the British official requested that Denmark take the minutes at the coming committee meeting. He also asked about Denmark’s position, but since Schram-Nielsen had not yet received instructions from Copenhagen, he responded in a vague manner.¹⁹

In August 1947, when instructions were being prepared for Lannung, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ position was emphatically for Denmark to support the British standpoint.²⁰ This matter was conveyed to Lannung as a kind of instruction, and the Colonial Office in London was also notified unofficially.²¹ The decision to back the British position was not elaborated or commented upon.

During the meetings in the ad hoc committee in August and September, a number of countries worked to broaden the committee’s authority so that it

¹⁸ A revised version of the English translation explained that, among other things, a description – listed under living conditions – of the Americans troops, who, according to the text, were stationed on “provisional bases” in accordance with the treaty of 9 April 1941, had been deleted. – In a letter to Lannung on 28 June 1947 *ibid.*, Georg Cohn pointed out that the text failed to state that East Greenland had special status with regard to entry to the country and jurisdiction, which he explained in detail. There was not enough time to change the text, but he could, if necessary, explain it at the UN. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 1.

¹⁹ Minutes of meeting by E. Schram-Nielsen, dated London, 29 July 1947. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 1. A.H. Poynton was the British delegate in the ad hoc committee.

²⁰ This guideline is expressed in a note from Georg Cohn and President Hvass on a paper by Finn Friis dated 18 August 1947, titled “Non-self-governing territories: Instructions drawn up for the Danish delegate (barrister H. Lannung) at the meeting of the Special Committee on 28 August 1947”. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 1.

²¹ Cf. telegram to the embassy in London, 27 August 1947. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 1.

could handle questions about political progress in the non-self-governing territories. Quite evidently, their intention was to give the UN the same authority in colonial affairs as the UN Charter had given the UN over the mandate territories. The argument was that it was impossible to separate economic and social factors from political considerations. This view was supported by China, India, Egypt, the Philippines, and the Soviet Union, while the US, Great Britain, France, Brazil, Belgium, and the Netherlands were opposed to it, claiming that any analyses of political issues lay beyond the authority of the committee. Denmark apparently did not take a stance in the debate. However, it was agreed that colonial powers could voluntarily send information about the development of self-governing institutions to the Secretary-General. This agreement led to the adoption of Resolution 144 (II) on 3 November 1947. One response to the criticism that came from several directions concerning the submitted reports was the decision to use – after the content had been revised to some degree – a standardised questionnaire proposed by the Americans.

As mentioned, the result of the work conducted on the issue of reporting that year by the ad hoc committee and the Fourth Committee was the General Assembly's adoption of a series of resolutions (142-146) on 3 November 1947 designed to lead to improvements. The most important resolutions were 142 (II), which introduced the above-mentioned standardised questionnaire for submission of information, and 146 (II), which led to the appointment of a Special Committee to deal with the submitted information as specified by Article 73 of the Charter. Denmark automatically became a member of this committee. The appointment of the committee was an evident compromise, one that the colonial powers only agreed to on the specific condition that the committee would only make technical assessments of the information. The committee would examine the information submitted in compliance with Article 73 (e) concerning economic, social, and educational conditions in non-self-governing territories and prepare reports for deliberation by the General Assembly. The reports could include recommendations that were deemed relevant, but not for specific territories.²²

The standardised questionnaire mentioned above would also be used by the Secretary-General in his analysis and summation of the information. The questionnaire was attached as an appendix to the resolution and covered:

- I. General information (no need to fill out)
- II. Social conditions
- III. Educational conditions
- IV. Economic conditions

²² A lengthy review of the committee's background, tasks, and responsibilities are included in the minutes taken on 24 May 1948 by Finn Friis and continued by E. Schram Nielsen, 25 May 1948. It is titled "Committee for information on non-self-governing territories: The committee's tasks and Denmark's delegate in the committee". The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 1.

Each of these main categories was carefully divided into subcategories. For example, health conditions contained entries for the number of hospitals and hospital beds in the territory; the number of doctors, dentists, nurses, midwives, and veterinarians available, and the number of educational facilities for each group; moreover exact information about mortality rates, infant mortality, birth statistics, and so on, should be stated.

In Copenhagen, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was mostly interested in learning what the various UN initiatives meant for Greenland. As early as October 1947, the Ministry had informed the UN delegation that it would like an overview of the practical significance of the annual work on non-self-governing territories as it concerned Greenland. Lannung promised to provide such a report to the Ministry.

In January 1948, Lannung informed the Ministry that he had verbally given vice-director Eske Brun additional information, as well as detailed comments on the adopted resolutions. He also said that he was prepared to advise and guide in the preparation of the report for the UN Secretariat.²³ Thus began the close cooperation between Lannung and the Greenland Administration/Greenland Department that characterised the following years.

The UN General Assembly, 1948

In early 1948, the Greenland Administration did not feel it had the capacity to provide the expanded amount of information stipulated by Resolution 142 (II). In February 1948, Eske Brun wrote to Deputy Under-Secretary of State J.R. Dahl in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stating that he had given some thought to how the request from the UN should be handled. He wrote: "The problem is that the information required is very comprehensive and detailed and, in fact, requires a statistical organisation that we simply do not have. As I am aware that performing the task in a proper and thorough manner can have the utmost importance for our international prestige as a colonial power, this matter causes me a good deal of worry". Unable to see any solution other than having the Administration expand its staff by hiring an economist, he added that this statistician might perform countless other jobs of great economic importance to the development of Greenland's business community. He closed by asking whether or not the Administration could count on the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when an application was made to the Ministry of Finance to fill the position.²⁴

²³ Copy of Georg Cohn's letter to the Greenland Administration, 3 October 1947; Lannung to Ministry of Foreign Affairs UN office, dated Copenhagen, 15 January 1948, with a copy of the letter to director K. Oldendow, Greenland Administration, 12 January 1948. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 1.

²⁴ Eske Brun's private letter to J.R. Dahl, 10 February 1948. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 1. In a letter of 27 February 1948, the Greenland Administration formally asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs if it would support the application. A draft suggests that the Ministry, at some time in March 1948, promised support. *Ibid.*

Denmark's attitude toward the ad hoc committee became apparent in the spring and summer of 1948 when the Ministry considered the composition of the Danish representation. Denmark was clearly interested in the committee's work because of Greenland, and wanted its work to remain non-political in nature. In his minutes of 24 May 1948 about the committee, Finn Friis stressed the latter point, observing that the committee could make matter-of-fact recommendations but only concerning technical issues, and not for individual territories. According to Friis, the committee's most important task would "probably be to facilitate the exchange of experience between colonial powers and specifically point out methods that have proven to be especially useful". However, he was not blind to the existence of countries that sought to politicise the work.²⁵ To emphasise the non-political nature of the committee, Friis suggested that a civil servant from the Greenland Administration (given the nature of the case) assume the representative task at committee meetings. Where matters of general interest were concerned, the possibility of sending a civil servant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs could also be considered.

To promote continuity, the outcome was that Hermod Lannung was asked to participate once again in the delegation, while chief of section P.P. Sveistrup would attend as "technical advisor". Hans Jakob Hansen, the Danish envoy in Berne, was to head the delegation.

The annual report to the UN was, as before, prepared by the Greenland Administration and a draft sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 21 July. The Administration used the standardised questionnaire that the General Assembly had adopted in 1947 for information about the non-self-governing territories. The new form, as could be expected, greatly increased the size of the report.²⁶ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not comment on the substance of the report since the content was non-political and since nothing was mentioned about the relationship between the US and Greenland or any other issues that could potentially make the Ministry uneasy. The Ministry thought, however, that the English translation used old-fashioned terms and was too direct. This criticism resulted in a number of language revisions.²⁷

²⁵ *Ibid.* In a note on 30 June 1948 about appointing the delegates, F. Rechendorff from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UN section, wrote: "Denmark's interest in the Committee's work is mainly due to Greenland, so it would be natural for the Greenland Administration to be represented at meetings". The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 1.

²⁶ Copy of the annual Greenland report with many penciled-in corrections. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 1. That year, the report consisted of forty-six typed pages.

²⁷ Note by Paul Fischer, 23 July 1948 with continuation by E. Schram-Nielsen, 24 July 1948. The latter complained that some parts of the text "lacked discernment". For example, p. 10, sec. 3: "no labour organisations exist"; p. 11, sec. 5: "no regulations concerning labour protection"; p. 20: "no social insurance scheme exists"; p. 23: "no penal code exists". Schram-Nielsen felt that it would have been better to write that there was no need for these measures.

In a letter sent on 13 August 1948, the Danish UN delegation forwarded the English version of the report.²⁸ Nine official and two non-official scientific publications (all in Danish) were included. On 20 August, the UN published an unclassified English summary of Denmark's report (General Assembly A/570 of 20 August 1948, comprised of nine pages). The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave this version to a journalist from the newspaper *Land og Folk* who wished to write about the matter.

In the 1948 report to the UN about conditions in Greenland, the conclusion to the section on administrative conditions stated that, in 1948-1949, the Danish government planned to conduct in-depth studies "of whether or not to change the entire Greenland administration in order to make it possible to consider the matter of establishing Greenland as an equal part of the Kingdom of Denmark". In the condensed version of the report that the UN made public (the main report was classified), this plan was expressed as: "It is the intention of the Danish Government to inquire during 1948-1949 into the question of establishing Greenland as a part of Denmark on an equal footing with the rest of the Kingdom". Thus, the indication to the members of the UN was that the intention was to seriously consider a change in Greenland's colonial status.

Responsibility for the wording of the report concerning a change in Greenland's status rested with Eske Brun and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but in the last instance it was probably Brun's superior, Prime Minister Hedtoft, who was responsible. As shown in chapter 6, Brun had pleaded for change for years. In January 1948, he told *Ekstrabladet* that the goal was to make Greenland the political equivalent of a Danish county. As late as 1 June 1948, he concluded in an article in *Grønlandsposten* that Greenlanders ought to have completely equal status with Danish citizens.²⁹

As a fellow player in the public arena, Brun had argued, much like Hermod Lannung at a previously mentioned political meeting in April 1948, that it was time to give Greenland equal rights. At the very least, the new constitution ought to include a promissory clause about Greenland's eventual representation in Parliament. At the national congress of the Social Liberal party in June 1948, Lannung again stated the need for a promissory clause in the new constitution about Greenland's representation in Parliament. Lannung's reasoning was the same as before, namely that the threatening trend regarding the colonial issue could endanger the sovereignty over the colonies.³⁰

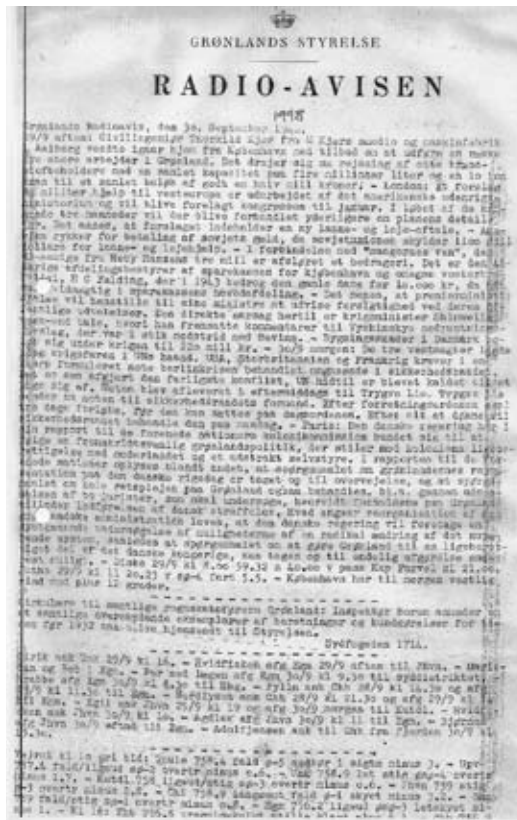
²⁸ In May 1949, UN official Wilfrid Benson informed Hermod Lannung that the 1948 report had arrived late. Lannung immediately passed the message on. Copy of letter to Lannung, 16 May 1949. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 2.

²⁹ Axel Kjær Sørensen, "Lifting Greenland's Colonial Status: A Demand from Greenland?", *Historie*, vol. 12, 1977, p. 172. The reference to *Ekstrabladet* is based on *Grønlandsposten*, 16 February 1948, p. 69.

³⁰ Axel Kjær Sørensen, *ibid.* p. 172.



Inhabitants in Christianshåb listening to the radio news broadcast from loudspeakers in front of the governor's home. (Photograph by Jette Bang, 1945, the Arctic Institute)



In many places in Greenland, news was spread solely by hanging up a sheet of paper in the settlements. The Greenland Administration was responsible for the radio news, which was one of the few ways Greenlanders became informed about the outside world. This broadcast from 30 September 1948 tells about the Danish report to the UN in 1948, among other items.

Meetings in the Fourth Committee

According to the Danish evaluation, the meetings in the Fourth Committee in 1948 were characterised by greater confrontation than ever before. The communist camp had clearly taken a harsher stance regarding the colonial issue. The Danish impression was that the Soviet delegation in the Special Committee used the reports about the colonial territories as a point of attack; they complained about the contents of the reports and tried to expand the reporting duty. The Soviet Union wanted future reports to include data about the development of and local participation in self-governance institutions in the colonies. They also wanted private persons and groups to be able to contribute to the reports. The Soviet suggestions were, however, rejected.

Denmark played a significant role in this dispute, given that Hermod Lannung was appointed *rapparteur* for the Special Committee meetings in Geneva from 2-17 September and in Paris from 23 September 1948. The appointment proved that Lannung had risen in international rank, thanks to his knowledge of the colonial issue and his network. Judging from the wording of Lannung's contributions, he tried in the reporting to downplay the undisguised hostility that was present. On 6 October, he presented "at the president's request" the report of the Special Committee (A/ 593 from 1 October 1948) to the Fourth Committee. In his speech, he emphasised the compromises that had been made during the preparation of the report, and touched on the discussion as to whether or not the Committee should continue its work. He concluded his speech by commenting on the four resolution drafts that were presented (see below). He did not discuss the Greenland issue.³¹

When Hermod Lannung addressed the Fourth Committee on 14 October 1948 (in Paris) during the general debate about reporting to the Special Committee on non-self-governing territories, he used the occasion to mention Greenland. However, he specifically referred only to economic plans for Greenland and did not delve into politics, saying: "In this connection I should like to refer to the information transmitted this year by the Government of Denmark to the Secretary General under Chapter XI of the Charter. This document contains, I believe, a satisfactory and comprehensive indication of the Danish Government's plan for the political development of Greenland". He continued with:

In our view, political development must go hand in hand with economic, social, and cultural development so that a useful interaction between one and the other may take place. Accordingly, it is the aim of the Danish Government to continue to improve

³¹ Cf. Lannung's report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated Paris, 6 October 1948. Lannung attached the report from the Special Committee (A/593) and a copy of his speech to the Fourth Committee. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 1.

the economic conditions in Greenland along the lines of a freer economy. A far-reaching plan for developing and strengthening the economic life of the country is already in the execution, as may be clearly seen from the information transmitted by my government.

He closed with: "In conclusion, I am glad to be able to say that the welfare of the people of Greenland has been and always remains the first consideration of the Danish Government, Parliament, and People". The speech included positive remarks about cooperation in the Special Committee and also about Article XI of the Charter, which, according to Lannung, had contributed to the improvement of economic, social, and educational conditions in the territories. He further stated that Denmark agreed that submission of political information in reports to the UN was voluntary. However, he stated that Denmark looked forward to providing such information in the future, as it had in the past.³²

This speech was one of the longest up to that point that Denmark, as a colonial power, had given in the UN concerning its visions for Greenland. The speech primarily focused on economic issues. In this forum, there was, of course, no mention of the problematic aspects of the Greenland reality. In smooth, generalised terms, a picture was drawn of a beneficent administering power helping a small society into a new era. There is no evidence that Hermod Lannung's remarks were commented on or contradicted. His speech mainly reveals that the fate of 20,000 Greenlanders had unsurprisingly little importance in the great reckoning with the colonial past that was brewing. Nowhere is it evident that other powers questioned the picture of the situation that the Danish emissaries drew in those years.

Resolution 222 (III), which had an important impact on the issue of decolonisation in the following years, was passed on 3 November 1948. The resolution authorised the General Assembly to demand that, in the future, countries submit relevant documentation for approval six months before the date they wished the reporting duty to cease. The resolution was based on an idea proposed by India and was put forward after the Special Committee had completed its work. India pointed out that France and Great Britain had failed to submit information about certain territories in 1947 due to constitutional changes that, according to the responsible governments, meant that these territories were no longer non-self-governing (A/385 of 18 September 1947). At the meetings, India mentioned that the US submitted information of a political nature to the UN and did not

³² Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories. Statement by Mr H. Lannung (Denmark). According to the delegation's cover letter, dated Paris, 14 October 1948, the contents of Lannung's speech were "thoroughly discussed by the Danish delegation" the same day. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 1.

– like Great Britain – hide behind a literal interpretation of Article 73 (e).³³ Among the colonial powers, Denmark, the US, and the Netherlands voted in favour of the resolution. It is clear, however, from remarks in one of Lannung’s reports that the resolution was unwelcome. He wrote that the US and Denmark had participated in an informal subcommittee to change and improve the suggested text in the resolution “so that it was comparatively acceptable”.³⁴

Danish reservations toward the proposal were expressed when the Fourth Committee voted on the resolution. Denmark supported an American statement declaring: “When my government votes for this resolution, it does so on the assumption that submission of the requested information does not change the right of each administering country to exercise its sovereignty and determine a territory’s constitutional position and status”.

This statement by the US played a major role in the Danish UN policy with regard to Greenland in the coming period.

Resolution 219 (III) was of immediate importance for the Danish authorities. It established that the Special Committee would also meet in 1949 without prejudicial consequences in the future. Resolution 218 (III), which had also been adopted on 3 November 1948, had practical importance for Denmark. It invited member states to send the Secretary-General “the newest information available” as early as possible, no later than six months after expiration of a territory’s fiscal year. For Denmark, this invitation meant that the report on Greenland had to be delivered by 30 June at the latest. The resolution stated that materials previously submitted did not need to be resubmitted.

Defining the concept of a “non-self-governing territory”

During preparations for the UN meetings in the autumn of 1948, the meaning of the concept “non-self-governing territories” was discussed.

In a letter dated 20 September 1948 to international law expert Dr Jur Georg Cohn from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hermod Lannung – who took the minutes for the Fourth Committee and expected the definition of “non-self-governing territories” to be discussed at the meetings of the Fourth Committee and in the plenary session – asked for some “good advice” from Georg Cohn. The reason was that India, in a working paper of 15 September 1948 (in which India also complained that the committee was pressed for time and ought to meet twice yearly) had pointed out that an unnamed administering power – actually France – had withheld information from the UN. This administering power had

³³ Cf. UN report on work in the Fourth Committee (A/695: Information from non-self-governing territories. Report of the Fourth Committee), 26 October 1948. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 2. Lannung took the minutes.

³⁴ The UN delegation’s report by H. Lannung dated Paris, 10 November 1948, sent with a letter signed by F. Hvass and dated Paris, 11 November 1948. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 2.

claimed that the expression “non-self-governing people” needed a legal definition. Therefore, a clarification was proposed to allow the administering country to acknowledge its binding obligation according to Article 73 (e).³⁵

In his letter to Cohn expressing his opinion, Lannung wrote that he believed the issue was “of interest to the colonial powers in general and in particular to Denmark, because, hopefully, we will soon grant Greenland a status that removes it from Chapter XI; the proposed definition should set reasonable or modest requirements for the conditions required for exemption from Article 73”. According to Lannung, some of the “anti-colonial” powers (his quotation marks) – the Soviet Union, India, and China were mentioned – insisted that for such territories the only alternatives to continued colonial status were a) self-governance (with a fair amount of independence) or b) full independence. France and Denmark, however, persisted in maintaining “that achieving the status of an equal member of the Realm was, of course, also an alternative”. Lannung requested an answer within a few days.³⁶

Lannung’s letter led to deliberations in both the Greenland Administration and in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On 28 September, the Administration replied to the Ministry that it “would appreciate if the definition could be such that a change in Greenland’s constitutional status would result in Greenland falling outside the provisions in Article 73 (Chapter XI)”.³⁷

In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the head clerk, Schram-Nielsen, wrote a note about the matter on 5 October 1948. He opened his note by referring to what the Greenland Commission had expressed it wanted and then wrote:

Considering that the text (Article 73) of the Charter uses the words ‘a full measure of self-government’, it would be difficult to define the concept ‘non-self-governing territory’ such that less than a total change of Greenland’s status would result in the country meeting that definition. Any effort to achieve such a goal must presumably focus on defining the term ‘self-government’ and contrasting it to ‘independence’ and in that way try to make purely local governance be regarded as meeting the condition for self-government.

On 8 October, Cohn sent his reply to the letter of 20 September to Lannung in Paris. His answer quoted the above comment from Schram-Nielsen’s note and briefly summarised the position of the Greenland Administration as described

³⁵ The working paper from India is printed in *Draft Report of the Rapporteur A/AC.17/13/Add. 1* of 15 September 1948. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 1.

³⁶ Hermod Lannung to Georg Cohn, dated Paris, 20 September 1948. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 1.

³⁷ Letter signed by deputy director Eske Brun, 28 September 1948. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 1.

above.³⁸ Cohn thus did not offer any contribution of his own towards elucidating the problem.

What did the somewhat abstruse language of the Danish authorities communicate? First, they had said that freedom from the obligation to submit information to the UN as specified in Article 73 (e) could not happen as a consequence of a modest change in Greenland's status. A change in Greenland's status to that of a self-governing territory had to be claimed. This requirement immediately raised the question of what a self-governing territory was according to international law based on the UN Charter. On the premise that the concept of "self-government" was ambiguous and could apply to many circumstances – and could be construed as a counter concept to "independence" (a concept not discussed in Article 73) – it was suggested that a sufficiently broad definition of "self-government" be applied so that it could be construed as having been achieved by local self-government.

The UN General Assembly, 1949

The Greenland report of 1949 was sent in sections from the Greenland Administration to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On 25 May 1949, the English version was sent to the UN delegation for forwarding to the UN Secretary-General.

The report discussed the climate change that had caused the waters around Greenland to fill with fish. This change had also made the reorganisation of economic life from hunting to fishing possible, but it required a greater concentration of the population than before. In this regard, the report mentioned that the Danish government and the Provincial Council were deliberating about limiting or abolishing the monopoly and the shipping prohibitions. Concerning internal matters, the report discussed the question of a separation between the judicial and executive authorities, and the desire of the Provincial Councils to abolish differential treatment between Danes and Greenlanders in legal matters. The Greenland Administration, on this point, had declared that there was "some dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs" in Greenland's population. This statement was, not surprisingly, too strongly phrased for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was replaced with "certain wishes for change in the current state of affairs".³⁹

In 1949, it was necessary once again to correct the wording of the report after it had been delivered to the UN. When Lannung reviewed the report, he felt it

³⁸ Note of 5 October 1948 by Schram-Nielsen with an addition by C.A.C. Brun ("The case is assigned to Dr Cohn"); Cohn's reply to Hermod Lannung on 8 October 1948. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 1.

³⁹ Danish version of the annual Greenland report. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 2. An English version is in the Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a./49-54 with enclosures; note of 23 April 1949 by Birger Kronmann. C.A.C. Brun, who headed the Ministry's political-legal section, was responsible for the suggested change. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 2.

lacked (on page 81 of the draft) a mention of last year's promise that the population of Greenland would, in principle, achieve equality. He then sent a correction of the passage ("... in such a way that the Greenland population in principle will be placed on an equal footing"). In late August 1949, it was necessary to send a correction sheet to the UN when an expert discovered two significant errors in the section on disease.⁴⁰

In 1949, Hermod Lannung and P.P. Sveistrup also represented Denmark on the Special Committee. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs believed, as it had before, that the task of representing Denmark could be performed by a single civil servant from the Greenland Administration, one who was familiar with UN procedures. However, when the matter of representation was settled, the Ministry nevertheless recommended that Lannung and Sveistrup continue their cooperation, because – as stated in the Ministry minutes – “the gentlemen Lannung and Sveistrup’s experiences complement one another in an exceptionally useful manner”. As a prerequisite, however, Lannung’s presence would be required at the General Assembly in his capacity as a Danish UN delegate, and he was thus appointed.⁴¹ Note that Lannung and Sveistrup were both politically active in the Social Liberal party.

The Special Committee’s meeting was held that year at Lake Success, New York, from 25 August to 12 September. Lannung reported that he and Sveistrup had found that opposing viewpoints were more sharply drawn between the “traditional” colonial powers – among which he did not count Denmark – and countries such as India, China, Egypt, and parts of South America than the year before.⁴² It was noted that Belgium, which was normally the most “hard-boiled” colonial power (Lannung’s wording) and which took the stance that Article 73 described only a duty to report, was supported that year by Great Britain. The report on the committee meetings indicates that the British, in a long, principled speech, strongly protested that the committee – through resolution proposals – now addressed substantive issues. They claimed that the committee was appointed to deal only with matters of procedure. The UN Charter had established an apparatus for the administration of the trusteeship territories, but not for the non-self-governing territories. The creators of the Charter had intentionally established that difference. Nothing in the Charter required colonial powers to account for the non-self-governing territories. Great Britain seemed ready for a showdown on the principles underlying the work of the Special Committee, and

⁴⁰ Corrections of two translation errors as follows: They wanted the expression “tuberculin-negative children” to be used – instead of “tuberculosis-negative children” – to show that every child in Greenland had been tested for tuberculosis. Even worse, the report used the expression “typhus” in a way that gave the highly unfortunate impression that there had been a spotted fever epidemic in Greenland. The expression was replaced by “typhoid fever”. Greenland Administration to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 19 August 1949, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs to UN delegation, 25 August 1949. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 2.

⁴¹ Note from Finn Friis, 21 January 1949. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2., packet 2.

⁴² Hermod Lannung to Finn Friis, dated New York, 13 September 1949. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2., packet 2.



Attorney Hermod Lannung was the Danish delegate to the UN in 1947-1957 and again in 1961-1970. In 1947-1952, he represented the government in the Special Committee. He also served as chairman of the UN High Commission for Non-self-governing Territories, and was held in high esteem and greatly respected during his long career in the UN. (Pressehuset, March 1949, the Royal Library, map and photo archive)

was supported by France and Belgium. France, however, had no objection to the committee meeting being scheduled the following year to finalise a last procedural issue.⁴³

According to Lannung, Denmark kept to the middle ground during the meeting, as did the US, New Zealand, Sweden, and, to some extent, Australia. The

⁴³ The various speeches are published in the "Report of the Special Committee: United Nations General Assembly A/923", 15 September 1949. A copy is in the Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2., packet 2.

only one of the committee's six proposals that was – according to the report delivered by Lannung and Sveistrup on 13 September – “very strongly debated” was the resolution proposal about the future of the Special Committee.

On 3 September, when the decision was imminent about whether the Committee should be dissolved or continued – permanently, or for one, two, or three years – the Danish delegation asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for instructions. The delegation asserted that Great Britain, France, and Belgium were undoubtedly in favour of dissolving the Committee. The Americans, however, had said “in confidence” that they preferred an extension of two or three years because they feared that the plenary session would otherwise make the Committee permanent. The US had also said that they wanted Denmark, due to its “good standing”, to put forth its preferred proposal.⁴⁴ The Americans had, in other words, taken the initiative to win time concerning the issue about the Special Committee's future and intended to give Denmark a small part in that game.

A quick decision in Copenhagen was necessary, but as before, opinions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were divided. Finn Friis wrote a draft for the instruction in which he advised that the Committee should be dissolved; it had had three years to complete its main task – which, according to Friis, consisted of settling a number of important procedural issues. He changed his position, however, after talking with Eske Brun and Lannung, who had not yet departed. Both Brun and Lannung were in favour of a three-year continuation. The instructions accordingly read that the option of a Danish proposal should be kept open for a few days. If it was necessary to take a position before that, the vote should then be for a three-year continuation, or alternatively, for dissolution.⁴⁵

The tactical considerations were decisive for the chosen position, a point that Lannung did not try to hide. He elaborated on this point in the report quoted above (of 13 September) that he and Sveistrup submitted after the committee meetings came to an end, writing:

There is much to be said for holding discussions in an intimate joint Special Committee that meets prior to the Assembly and for that reason, for example, is not exposed to the public, instead of in the Fourth Committee and the Assembly, who otherwise would be the only forum if no committee were appointed. Consequently, discussions are, despite everything, more objective and less propaganda-ridden than otherwise would have been the case.

⁴⁴ Telegram from UN delegation to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 3 September 1949. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2., packet 2. The contents of the telegram were reported to Eske Brun and Hermod Lannung on 5 September.

⁴⁵ Minutes for the UN Office, “Non-self-governing territories”. Written by Paul Fischer and dated 15 August 1949, with continuation by the author on 7 September 1949. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 2.

During the Committee's discussion about its future, where several Third World countries proposed a resolution that the Committee be made permanent, it was crucial that the US – probably in an effort to avoid giving the Eastern Bloc a propaganda advantage in the increasingly sharp conflict between East and West – did not want a showdown over the Committee. The US defended its position by arguing that the nature of the Committee's work did not justify permanent status. Therefore, an additional trial period was needed. A three-year programme was proposed, during which concrete economic, social, and educational subjects would be treated. One year would be devoted to each category.

After the proposal for a permanent committee was rejected, a majority could be formed for the American proposal that Denmark also supported. Hence, there was no need for Danish contribution. Judging by the report describing the work in the Special Committee, Denmark did not participate in the debate.⁴⁶ The American proposal was passed with eight votes in favour (including the Soviet Union), four votes against (Great Britain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands), and four abstentions, among them Sweden. The American proposal on prioritising tasks guided the work in the coming years.

In the Fourth Committee, which Hermod Lannung had the honour of chairing that year, sharp exchanges about fundamental issues continued concerning the draft resolution proposals.

Intense differences of opinions were especially prevalent in the factor issue, which was highly relevant to Denmark. According to Poland, which apparently had been given the task of leading the attack on behalf of the Eastern Bloc, the colonial powers did not understand how significantly the UN Charter had changed their position. Poland claimed that the colonial powers were now trying to hide behind the principle of sovereignty. Opposing the colonial powers' belief that they alone were entitled to decide whether or not a territory was self-governing, Poland referred to Resolution 66 (I). Poland claimed that once the General Assembly stated which territories were non-self-governing, only the Assembly could, by transferring such a territory to the self-governing group, free a colonial power from transmitting information about that territory in the future. Among Poland's supporters was Egypt, which observed that if the colonial powers could decide which territories were or had become self-governing, then the provisions in the Charter would be illusory.

Great Britain, France, and Belgium sharply countered these remarks. Great Britain opposed the expanded interpretation of Chapter XI of the Charter, and Belgium protested against the Special Committee trying to assume authority within the Trusteeship Council's area. The British parting salute took place in the General Assembly on 1 December when the British delegate, Hector McNeil, strongly protested against the many efforts to change the UN Charter by "back-door methods". McNeil said that the Fourth Committee had become "a byword

⁴⁶ Report of the Special Committee. United Nations General Assembly A/923 of 15 September 1949. Copy in the Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2., packet 2.

for irresponsible criticism". Great Britain regretted having to vote against all ten proposals. In 1949, the UN General Assembly experienced some of the most violent confrontations witnessed by the organisation. It is not surprising that the Danish UN delegation's message, expressed in its final report to Copenhagen, described an extremely sharp division between the colonial and non-colonial powers. Apart from the expectation that there would be "considerable difficulties in the future in this area", the report stressed the significance of the fact that three Western European colonial powers had voted against the resolution to prolong the Special Committee and against conducting a factor study.⁴⁷

On 13 September, William Borberg asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for an account of the plans for Greenland's future development for possible use in the general debate. Consequently, the Ministry asked the Greenland Administration to provide such an account. Since this account could not be found in the source material, it is not especially likely that Borberg's request was fulfilled.

Actually, it appears that there was no need for an account at the UN, either. During negotiations that year, the only mention of Denmark as a *colonial power* was positive. According to the Special Committee's report, quoted above (A/923 of 15 September 1949), in the General Assembly the vice chairman of the Special Committee, B. Shiva Rao of India, referred to the liberal position of the US and Denmark with regard to supplying information about the non-self-governing territories. He remarked that this trend ought to be encouraged. This remark led to a draft proposal that was adopted on 2 December (Resolution 327 (IV)) to add general information about geography, history, population, and human rights to reports when the standardised UN questionnaire mentioned earlier was to undergo revision. Consensus could not be reached, however, on whether or not to include governing as a permanent element in future reports. The upshot was that the same resolution ended by requesting the voluntary submission of details about "the governing of Non-Self-Governing Territories". Denmark shared responsibility for the creation of this point, having sent information (like the US) of its own free will, as mentioned above, to the UN that did not touch on the educational, social, and economic conditions in the non-self-governing territories.

After vehement debate about the future of the Special Committee and its activities, a temporary prolongation was ensured by a resolution that passed with 44 votes in favour (including Denmark), five against, and four abstentions. By virtue of Resolution 332 (IV) of 2 December 1949, a special committee was appointed for three years to deal with information submitted in accordance with UN Charter Article 73 (e). As was previously the case, the committee comprised countries that submitted reports and an equal number that did not. At the meeting on 5 December 1949, Brazil, India, the Soviet Union, and Egypt were elected

⁴⁷ Minutes of discussions in the Fourth Committee, 25 February 1950, by Holten Eggert. Cover letter from William Borberg. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 2.

to sit for three years; Mexico and the Philippines for two years; and Sweden and Venezuela for one year.

Even fiercer opposition arose against Resolution 334 (IV), whose first point confirmed that it was within the General Assembly's area of responsibility to make known the relevant principles – now and in the future – when identifying territories subject to the obligation to report. The second point called upon a future Special Committee to study the factors to be considered when determining whether a territory was or was not a territory whose people had not yet achieved a full measure of self-government. This resolution created a basis for the analyses of factors that greatly occupied the UN in the coming years. For the vote, 30 countries were for the resolution, 12 were against, and 10 abstained, among them Denmark. Denmark's abstention perhaps reflects the rather vague position held by the Danish authorities concerning the factor issue.

After the close of negotiations on 12 December 1949, envoy Borberg sent a report prepared by the delegation to Copenhagen. This report mainly consisted of a reproduction of the resolution proposals. After the year's heated, fundamental debates in the UN, this report was understandably not sufficiently informative for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The numerous strong clashes made it doubtful that Great Britain, France, and Belgium would participate in this work ever again. Great Britain and France had plainly declared that they would not be bound by resolutions that sought to introduce international control of the administration of the non-self-governing territories. If they boycotted the Special Committee and refrained from submitting reports as specified in Article 73, the UN would suffer a major crisis which would unavoidably have consequences for Denmark. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' minutes of 5 January 1950 stated that it appeared "unsatisfactory" that the report "in reality" hardly touched on the lengthy discussions in the Fourth Committee and the General Assembly about the non-self-governing territories. It also barely touched on whether or not the Western European colonial powers would even participate in the committee established for three years. Another member of the Ministry staff, M.G.I. Melchior, agreed. He missed the politically relevant information and "lack of atmosphere", as he put it.⁴⁸

Dissatisfaction with the report led the UN delegation – after a refusal of responsibility in the matter – to write a paper about the political background for the discussions in the Fourth Committee. In late February 1950, this paper was sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for use in preparing the annual report on the Danish contribution to the UN.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Report no. 86 of 12 December 1949 from the UN delegation; minutes by Finn Friis, 5 January 1950 with short explanatory comments by M.G.I. Melchior. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M. 2., packet 2.

⁴⁹ Cf. footnote 47 above.

The UN General Assembly, 1950

The Greenland report for 1950 described the completion of the work in the Greenland Commission in March 1950; key proposals were discussed in the appropriate chapters of the report. An English translation of excerpts from the report of the Greenland Commission was promised in the introduction.⁵⁰

As resolved by the General Assembly in 1949 (Resolution 333 (IV) of 2 December 1949), Special Committee meetings in 1950 would focus on education in the non-self-governing territories. Special attention would be paid to training in social fields and trades (e.g. agriculture). This emphasis was evident in the Greenland report of 1950 in its detailed descriptions of the Commission's proposals to improve the Greenland educational system: The curriculum should be changed, teaching staff expanded, and the school system separated from the church. A local educational authority should be established. As practiced in Denmark, the schools would introduce showering, as well as medical and dental care. In addition, kindergartens would be available in places other than Holsteinborg.

The "Report on Greenland 1950" was delivered in sections to the UN. On 31 May, sections I and II were sent by airmail to the Danish UN delegation. When the delegation forwarded them to the UN Secretary-General, they were told to explain that sections III and IV would arrive shortly. Since the report should have been delivered by 1 June, it was late that year. It was also sent to 47 Danish delegations abroad – with the larger delegations receiving two copies. It should be mentioned that in August 1950, the Greenland reports were discussed in the UN at a meeting, about which no details are known, between UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie and director Eske Brun.⁵¹

The American UN initiative

While preparing for the annual General Assembly, the Danish embassy in Washington was asked to come to the State Department on 19 July. Here, they were told by a small group of American civil servants led by Mr G. Hayden Raynor that a few days earlier the Americans had met with Great Britain, France, and Belgium about "Dependent Territories". Denmark had not been invited to these meetings because, according to Mr Raynor, Denmark was known to hold the same views as the US about most of the problems dealt with in the Fourth Committee. The

⁵⁰ The English version of the report is available in the Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a./49-54 plus enclosures, packet 3.

⁵¹ Cf. note in the newspaper *Børsen* on 27 August 1950 about Eske Brun's trip to Greenland, Canada, and the US. According to the newspaper, Brun felt that the Greenland reports were well received "with great satisfaction" in the UN. Newspaper clipping in the Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 2.

Americans had observed that Denmark had voted differently from the US in only three out of seventy instances.⁵²

According to Mr Raynor, the US did not want to put pressure on the three Western European countries. It did, however, want to clarify the American position on various disagreements that had arisen between the countries about the tasks of the Special Committee. Since a number of countries – for political or idealistic (e.g. India) reasons – had tried to obstruct the UN’s work with the non-self-governing territories, the US believed it was important that the group of countries administering such territories remain united. The US appealed for solidarity within the circle of countries that administered dependant territories. If a member of this circle was subjected to unfair attacks regarding its administration, the others should lend support, which they had not, unfortunately, always done in the past. Efforts should be made to influence “the Middle Group” in the UN, which included several South American countries (Peru, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela) as well as Lebanon, Greece, and Sweden).

After the confrontations in the UN in 1949, Great Britain, France, and Belgium had expressed doubt as to whether or not they would participate in the future work of the Special Committee. However, after the discussions that had taken place during the recent meeting with the US, these countries agreed to participate after all. The US then urged these three countries to try to make the Committee’s work more constructive. In other words, strong evidence exists that the US took the initiative to ensure that these three Western European countries would, in fact, continue to work in the Committee. Their continued involvement had been uncertain after the clashes and threats of the 1949 Assembly. The US also appealed to them to yield a more constructive effort. The US – perhaps as a gesture towards the three colonial powers – also acknowledged readiness to discuss whether or not the Special Committee should continue after the three years had passed. It was thus uncertain whether or not the US would later support the establishment of a permanent committee.

The Americans then tried to persuade these three colonial powers to follow a less confrontational strategy in the factor issue. The US admitted that it would be difficult to agree on a clear definition of the concept of a “non-self-governing” territory, but it would hardly be expedient to say so expressly. The minutes went on to state that “All parties agreed during the discussions that an administering country must, in any case, be able to decide independently whether or not a given definition applies to a territory under its administration”.

This understanding was, of course, also important for Denmark. It meant that the colonial powers agreed that an administering country had the right to decide whether or not a dependent territory fell under a given definition.

The Americans also said that the four participants at the meeting had agreed that the International Court in The Hague could not help to settle the question

⁵² The position held by the US regarding the colonial issue is discussed in the section “The US and decolonisation” in chapter 4 of this book.

about the definition of the concept “non-self-governing territory”.⁵³ This remark presumably meant that the four countries did not want the case to be assigned to the court in The Hague.

From a broader perspective, it is obvious that the US consciously tried to steer Western behaviour during the upcoming General Assembly. The US probably did so as a consequence of the aggravated international situation that arose after the Korean War had broken out. The war necessitated that the US stop or postpone confrontations that could only weaken the West at the time. The controlling hand appeared again on 1 September when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs received a note from the American embassy in Copenhagen about the positions the Americans would take at the next UN General Assembly. It stated that the US would work constructively regarding the Trusteeship Council and the Special Committee, and that the US hoped this work would contribute positively to improving the situation of non-self-governing peoples. A proposal was made that, in 1951 and 1952, the Special Committee should focus on social and economic problems.⁵⁴

The Meetings in the UN

In 1950, each country could send only one delegate to Special Committee meetings. Denmark sent Hermod Lannung; the substitutes were P.P. Sveistrup and Pie Barfod, a secretary in the Greenland Department.

The meetings were held at Lake Success from 18 August to 12 September. They were unique in that the delegate for the Soviet Union did not appear. This absence was undoubtedly due to the boycott organised in January 1950 by the Soviet Union and the other Eastern countries against the UN. This boycott was sparked by their discontent that the Chiang Kai-shek government in Taiwan represented China in the UN (and continued to do so until 1971) after the communist victory in China. But this absence from the Special Committee was unexpected since the Soviet member of the Security Council had reclaimed his seat on 1 August 1950, and since there was, of course, no Chinese representative in the Special Committee. The Soviet absence ensured that the sharp exchanges between the Soviet Union and the three Western European NATO countries in 1949 would not be repeated. In addition, it was probably significant that the more conciliatory approach the Americans, Great Britain, France, and Belgium had agreed upon at the aforementioned Washington meeting of July 1950 could be maintained.

When the meetings began, Belgium, France, and Great Britain expressed their willingness to participate, but they carefully repeated the conditions they

⁵³ Note from the Washington embassy (no. 1500) dated 1 August 1950. Cover letter signed by Henrik Kauffmann. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2., packet 2. A copy of the note was sent to the Greenland Department and to Hermod Lannung on 12 August 1950.

⁵⁴ Copy of note of 1 September 1950 from the American Embassy in Copenhagen. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2., packet 2.

had declared earlier. The British once again stated their general reservation against the so-called “doctrine of accountability”. Great Britain would not accept the idea – presented previously by certain non-administering countries – “that the Charter gave the United Nations the right to supervise the administration of Non-Self-Governing Territories or to make Metropolitan Governments accountable to the United Nations in respect of such territories”. According to the minutes, no objections were made to the remarks made by the three Western European countries when the meeting started.⁵⁵

The meetings in 1950 focused on education, as was the General Assembly’s wish in 1949, and led to the preparation of a special report for the Assembly (Doc. A/1303/Add. 1), unanimously approved by the Special Committee. The agenda listed thirteen other topics that could only be dealt with sporadically as time was sparse. Among these topics was the factor issue, which involved establishing criteria for whether or not a territory had achieved a full measure of self-governance. For use in the Committee’s deliberations, the UN Secretariat had provided an overview of the subject (A/AC.35/L.8). This overview included the various remarks made by member states on the matter since 1946. The survey revealed that a number of members opposed any change to the definition of the concept of “non-self-governing territories” as stated in Chapter XI. This topic quickly proved to be too complex and was not sufficiently clarified to be the object of negotiations in the short time available. Therefore, the colonial powers, including Denmark, were pleased when Egypt suggested a postponement until 1951. In connection with this postponement, a request was made for additional documentation on the topic, including excerpts from scholarly commentaries on the UN Charter.⁵⁶

According to the report by the Danish delegates, the negotiations in 1950 – unlike those in 1949 – were mainly peaceful. Lannung and Sveistrup’s overall comments when the meeting ended were: “On the whole, this year’s negotiations were more business-like and the atmosphere was very good”. The two Danes ended their report on the annual work in the Special Committee by noting that “no one criticised Danish work in Greenland. In fact, in private conversations in particular, there were expressions of sympathy and appreciation”.⁵⁷

During the autumn meetings in the Fourth Committee, Denmark and Greenland briefly became objects of international attention. The UN Deputy Secretary-General, Dr Victor Hoo, and the head of the UN Division of Information for Non-Self-Governing Territories, Dr Wilfrid Benson, had visited

⁵⁵ General Assembly A/1303 of 20 September 1950: Information from non-self-governing territories. Copies in the Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2., packet 3.

⁵⁶ The request resulted in a new working paper from the Secretariat, dated 10 April 1951, titled “Non-Self-Governing Territories: Factors Relating to the Application of Chapter XI of the Charter”. (A/AC.35/L.30). The Secretariat had examined eight works on international law, but referred mainly to Hans Kelsen, *The Law of the United Nations* (New York 1950). The Danish National Archives, Hermod Lannung private archive, packet 14, folio VI.

⁵⁷ Undated report from P.P. Sveistrup and H. Lannung delivered to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 30 September 1950. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2., packet 3.

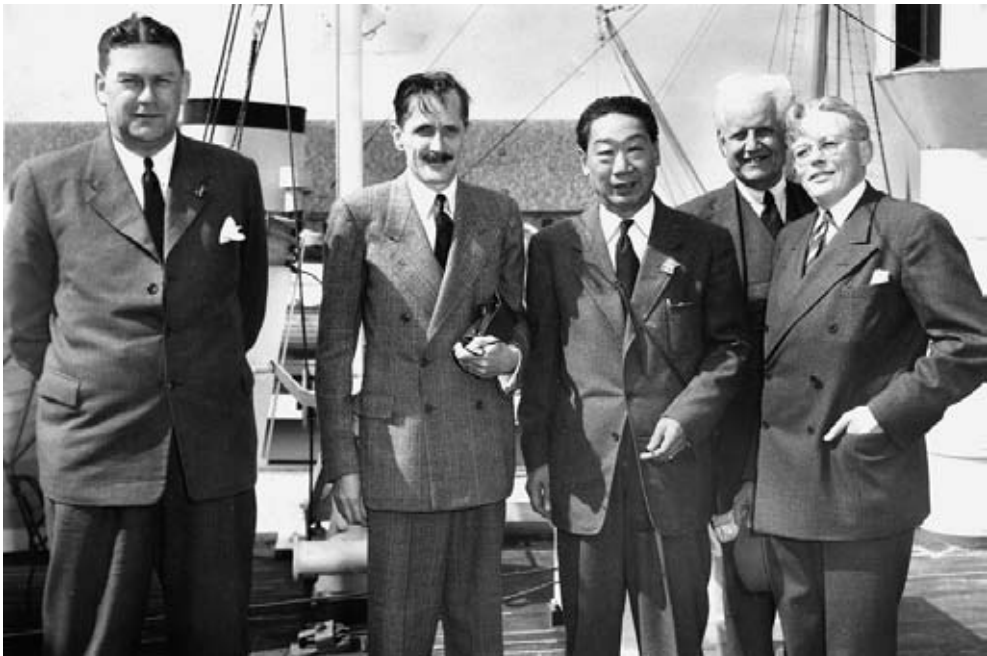
Greenland between 15 June and 8 July 1950 – accompanied by chief of section P.P. Sveistrup. They subsequently wrote a report about their visit that was very flattering to the Danish administration of Greenland. The report referred to the various proposals made by the Greenland Commission and painted a rosy picture of Greenland's future under Danish administration. Among other remarks, the report pointed out that Greenland was one of the very few non-self-governing territories that offered old-age pensions. The authors distanced themselves from the Danish government's criticism of housing conditions, referring to their visits in Greenland homes. The events leading to the two prominent UN officials' rather untraditional visit to Greenland are not quite clear, but it was apparently the result of an invitation from Hermod Lannung and P.P. Sveistrup that the Danish authorities thereafter had to back.⁵⁸ Incidentally, the aforementioned Division of Information for Non-Self-Governing Territories, led by Dr Benson, was quite an energetic UN body unafraid of taking the initiative.⁵⁹

The visit had immediate political implications in the context of the UN. Above all, the visit – which was widely discussed in the UN – brought Denmark considerable goodwill from the UN apparatus and from the non-administering powers, who interpreted it as a sign of Danish openness and recognition of the UN's role as defender of the interests of non-self-governing peoples. This sentiment was reflected, for example, in the previously mentioned report (A/1303) from the Special Committee of 20 September 1950, where Egypt praised the visit and expressed the hope that other administering powers would follow Denmark's example.

In November 1950, the visit was exploited in a political offensive by the non-administering countries. On 25 November, Cuba proposed a resolution that thanked Denmark for inviting leading UN officials and stated that future visits by UN officials would benefit the territories as well as the administering powers and the UN. The resolution directed the attention of the other administering

⁵⁸ Finn Friis wrote from New York to his colleague M.G.I. Melchior that Mr Benson and his superior, Mr Hoo, had shown surprise upon reading comments in the newspapers made by Hermod Lannung (presented at a UN meeting in Copenhagen around 1 February 1950) that the Danish government would invite the two gentlemen to Greenland. No such invitation had been extended before the matter was discussed in Denmark. Finn Friis to M.G.I. Melchior, New York, 7 March 1950. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 2; copy of Eske Brun's invitation to Victor Hoo to visit Greenland, Copenhagen, 25 March 1950. In the invitation, reference is made to the talks Lannung and Sveistrup held with Hoo in the autumn of 1949. The Danish National Archives, Hermod Lannung private archive, packet 12. The UN report was translated to Danish: "Report on Dr Victor Hoo's and Mr Wilfrid Benson's Trip to Greenland 1950", the Danish National Archives, Greenland Administration archives, delivered in 1987, packet 15, folio 1. Another example is available at the Arctic Institute. The visit to Greenland is not mentioned in Victor Hoo's biography (Mona Yung-Ning Hoo, *Painting the Shadows: The Extraordinary Life of Victor Hoo*, Eldridge & Co., London 1998).

⁵⁹ Dr Wilfrid Benson (born 1899) had worked in ILO's (International Labour Organisation) secretariat in Montreal during WWII before switching to the UN. He was an expert in social conditions in the Third World, had written theoretical works (e.g. *Social Policy in Dependent Territories*, 1944), and coined the expression "underdeveloped areas" in 1942. The concept was turned into a political buzzword by the Truman administration in 1949. In a letter dated 3 August 1950, Benson sent a version of the report to Lannung. He asked to meet Lannung to discuss the report informally, and the issue of publishing it. The Danish National Archives, Hermod Lannung private archive, packet 15, folio 3.



On 15 June 1950, Politiken published this picture with the caption “Department head Eske Brun and attorney Hermod Lannung attend the departure of the “Umanak” to wish Dr Hoo and Mr Benson a good journey. From left are the department head (Eske Brun), Mr Benson, Dr Hoo, and chief of section Sveistrup from the Greenland Department, who will accompany the two UN officials on their trip, and attorney Hermod Lannung”. (Polfoto)

powers to the Danish initiative, and concluded with the request that the Secretary-General make the report from the visit public, in compliance with Resolution 335 (IV) about information on non-self-governing territories.

The Cuban proposal, which was not made known to the Danish UN delegation beforehand, put Denmark in a difficult position. If the Danes supported the proposal, it would appear that Denmark was putting moral pressure on the other colonial powers to also invite prominent UN officials to their dependant territories. Even more problematic, however, was that the resolution might ostensibly lead to a practice of putting reports on internal UN visits on the same footing as the reports the colonial powers submitted in accordance with Article 73 (e). Such practice could greatly strengthen UN authority at the expense of the administering powers.

In the Danish delegation, a majority wished to vote against the resolution for the reasons given above. The delegation had also learned that the US, Great Britain, and France would vote against it. Lannung partly disagreed with his colleagues, feeling that it would be too demonstrative to vote against. He therefore suggested that Denmark simply abstain from voting. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs held the same opinion as the majority of the delegation, however. At the meeting in the Fourth Committee on 28 November, Lannung made a carefully worded speech. On the one hand, he thanked the authors of the report and

praised its high standards, and on the other hand, he explained why Denmark could not support Cuba's resolution. He said that reports from visits such as the one to Greenland were not on the same "constitutional level" as reports from the governments themselves. The reports were internal Secretariat documents; there was no reason to create a practice that required their submission to the committees or to the General Assembly.⁶⁰

The matter ended with Cuba withdrawing the proposal on 29 November after having indicated that it did not fully understand the Danish position.

Summary: See chapter 8, pp. 243-246.

⁶⁰ Telegrams from the UN delegation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 25 and 26 November 1950; Report of 2 December 1950 signed by Borberg and enclosed with Lannung's "Statement" in the Fourth Committee. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2.a./annex, packet 3.

8 · The Greenland issue in the UN, 1951-1952

Frede P. Jensen

In 1951 and 1952, the work of the Fourth Committee's subcommittee (Special Committee/73 (e) Committee) focused particularly on the so-called "factors" issue, i.e. the matter of laying down the factors that would be used to determine whether or not a territory had attained "a full measure of self-government". The issue was vitally important in the UN context as it dealt with the criteria for determining when a colonial power could suspend reporting on a former colony and the criteria for whether or not the General Assembly could approve the change in a territory's status. The factor debate in the UN was complicated by the lack of a political will to agree on a binding definition of the phrase "a full measure of self-government". Moreover, the states could not reach a consensus about who should have the final authority to decide (the colonial power, the General Assembly, or both). Despite numerous obstacles, considerable progress was made in 1951 and 1952. As a result, UN resolutions were passed in January and December of 1952 with a draft of the lists of factors, which contained the above-mentioned criteria.

The Danish representative, Hermod Lannung, participated actively in the development of the first list of factors in the autumn of 1951. During the process, the concept of a "factor" was to some extent weakened at the colonial powers' request because the factors were established as advisory and because each factor would be considered equally important. The greatest significance of Lannung's work is presumably his contribution to ensuring that the first list of factors contained not only the criteria for attaining self-government, but also for free association with the metropolitan country. This contribution constituted a fundamental breakthrough, which meant that a full measure of self-government could also be achieved by the territory's full integration with its metropolitan country. During the entire process, Lannung's efforts were driven by his consideration of Greenland. In an extended speech at the UN on 15 November 1952, he presented the various positions that the Danish Greenland policy in the UN was based on, including the Greenlanders' request for integration and guaranteeing full equality with the population of Denmark.

The Greenland report

The Greenland report of 1951, filed under "Government", describes the Greenland Commission's new legislation that altered the administrative picture in Greenland. The Act of 27 May 1950 on the Provincial Council and the municipal councils of Greenland was particularly important as it instituted a new

administrative regional system in the country, one that comprised West, East, and North Greenland (the latter two regions were administrated by the Prime Minister's Office). Moreover the report also outlines the establishment of the new position of governor, replacing the former two gubernatorial positions for North and South Greenland. This paragraph describes voluntary reporting that went beyond the requirements of the UN Charter.

Healthcare was copiously described. Included was an analysis of the severe developments in healthcare that took place in 1949 as a result of the widespread whooping cough and influenza epidemic, which led to an increased mortality rate from 24.2 per thousand in 1948 to 41.5 in 1949. Despite the high number of deaths, the vaccination was estimated to have saved many lives.¹

Similar to previous occasions, the direct language of the Greenland Department (as the Greenland Administration was called after 1950) resulted in minor alterations and revisions from Hermod Lannung and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when they studied the draft. Significantly, a section (seventeen lines on page nine in the draft) dealing with the Greenlanders' discontent over their criminal law system, also expressed previously, was omitted. According to the Department, this discontent was caused by the fact that the provisions for criminal offences and penalties were not recorded in the statute books. Consequently, according to the complaints, legal procedures were arbitrary. Furthermore, the authorities had no measures for controlling convicted persons, and suitable detention centres did not exist.² On the other hand, the report contained an extraordinarily thorough examination of the new criminal law system in Greenland and emphasised the comparison of Greenland's conditions to those in Denmark.

From 31 May to 25 June 1951, the Report on Greenland of 1951 was submitted little by little to the UN delegation for forwarding to the UN.

The meetings in the UN

In 1951, internal discussions were held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about who should represent Denmark on the Special Committee. The opposition against Hermod Lannung seemed greater in 1951 than in previous years. Finn Friis in particular was opposed to Lannung; sure enough, he recommended that the head of the UN Representation in New York, Borberg, be asked during his

¹ The Danish text is available in the Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 3; the English version is available in the Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a/49-54 including appendices, packet 3.

² Notice by Aa.C., dated 29 May 1951. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 3. – Examples of sentences that were lightly embellished include: (p. 24) "... the sanitary conditions in the houses are generally (very) poor" was altered to: "... the sanitary conditions in the houses could generally be better". On p. 35, the statement about the old hospital in Upernavik, "... the old, (very) inadequate hospital", was altered to "the old, inadequate hospital". At the same time, the new and completely modern hospital about to be opened in Upernavik was mentioned.

forthcoming visit to Copenhagen. Friis also pointed out that Lannung and Sveistrup had taken the floor in the Committee only on a few occasions. As before, Friis favoured the UN's emphasis on the Committee's technical tasks, which could be expressed by endorsing representation solely through government officers. Other people in the Ministry had a greater understanding of what the assignment entailed. They made it clear that it was important to maintain a solid relationship with Lannung, who was expected to be appointed as a member of the General Assembly that year as well. C.A.C. Brun most likely brought matters to a head when he called attention to two issues: 1) the fact that the minister of foreign affairs had the final say in this matter, and 2) that although he respected the position that Borberg should be heard in order to "maintain the domestic peace" in the Ministry, as he so cryptically expressed it, he was not happy to recommend a delegation that excluded Lannung.³ Therefore, Ole Bjørn Kraft, the minister of foreign affairs, kept Lannung on the team.

Not until 10 August did the Ministry of Foreign Affairs request that the UN delegation assign Lannung as the Danish representative. Permanent Secretary Eske Brun and P.P. Sveistrup were recommended as substitutes. The unexpected appointment of Eske Brun was presumably a result of the contacts he had established during his visit at the UN headquarters in the summer of 1950.⁴

New Danish deliberations

In 1951, the agenda of the Special Committee, here referred to as the 73 (e) Committee, included the factor issue, which concerned the factors that should be referenced when determining whether or not a territory had achieved "a full measure" of self-government as laid down in the Charter. A related issue on the agenda was the question of the preconditions for ceasing colonial reporting to the UN.

In preparation for his participation in the 73 (e) Committee, which assembled in Geneva on 2 October 1951, Lannung contacted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

³ Report: The Secretary-General's note dated 10 May 1951 on the Article 73 (e) Committee. The original report, dated 4 June 1951, was prepared by Troels Munk with input from Finn Friis dated 16 June, Paul Fisher dated 19 June, C.A.C Brun dated 19 June, and "WB" dated 6 July 1951. The Danish National Archives, UM.119.m.2., packet 3.

⁴ It cannot be ruled out that the aforementioned Dr Wilfred Benson of the UN's Division of Information for Non-Self-Governing Territories could have initiated the appointment of Eske Brun. Dr Benson had met Eske Brun before, and he also knew Hermod Lannung quite well. An interview in *Politiken* with Benson in the summer of 1950 (undated press cutting) reveals that he was very impressed with Eske Brun. The Danish National Archives, Hermod Lannung private archive, packet 14. Eske Brun wrote to Dr Benson on 6 August 1951: "I have been looking into the possibility of my coming to Geneva during the meeting there in October. I have also discussed with Mr Lannung". From this letter, it appears that Lannung had advised Eske Brun to defer his departure until the plenum met and to arrive in Paris by the time the issue regarding the non-self-governing territories was on the Fourth Committee's agenda. Eske Brun to Dr Wilfred Benson, dated 6 August 1951. Copy in the Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2., packet 3.

to learn its position on the factor issue. For the first time since 1946, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had to articulate its stance on the fundamental issue concerning Greenland's position in terms of the UN Charter.

On 19 September 1951, Troels Munk recapped the entire issue from 1946 to the present. He explained why Denmark submitted information on Greenland to the UN, despite Denmark's lack of available guidelines for when a territory should be considered a non-self-governing territory in terms of the UN Charter. It was emphasised that in 1946 both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Greenland Administration did not consider Greenland to be a non-self-governing territory as defined by the UN Charter. The governmental bodies regarded Article 73 as an instrument for the protection of the population. The Greenland Administration argued that the population of Greenland was protected against exploitation and that great efforts were made to develop the island's social, economic, and cultural conditions. The UN Delegation, however, did not feel capable of defending this position in the UN in 1946 and instead obtained new instructions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Moreover, it was emphasised that Danish membership in the Committee that dealt with the reports submitted on non-self-governing territories had "always" been justified by Denmark's submission of information in accordance with Article 73 (e) of the UN Charter.

The report stated that in 1946, Denmark had not responded to the Secretary-General's enquiry about the factor issue. Three different positions in the UN were outlined, namely that a) criteria should be established (Canada, India, the US, and Egypt); b) criteria were unnecessary or inapplicable (Great Britain and New Zealand); and, finally, c) it was strictly a national matter (France, Australia, and Cuba). Finally, Munk connected the factor issue to the resolution of 3 November 1948, which stated that the UN must be given information about changes in the constitutional status of the specific territories that justified an end to the obligation to submit information. Simultaneously, Munk's report cited America's objection (one that Denmark had endorsed), which stated that the resolution did not alter the right "of each administering state to determine the constitutional position and status of a territory under its sovereignty". In conclusion, it was stated that "scarcely Denmark or anyone else had established a solid and usable criterion to determining whether a territory should be considered non-self-governing territory in terms of the UN Charter".

The issue was sensitive, and it was understandable that a young secretary was reluctant to submit proposals knowing that a great difference of opinion regarding the issue existed among his superiors. The immediate superior who continued working on the issue (head of section Frederik Rechendorff) stated that "quite a lot supports the British position". Rechendorff was not optimistic about the outcome of the implementation of the practice. Article 73 was vaguely formulated, and he anticipated a negative result if specific rules were established in the UN to determine the meaning of the phrase "territories whose people have not yet attained a full measure of self-government". He anticipated that some countries would claim that their territories were not subject to the article; thus, they were not obliged to submit information about them. On the other hand, in the

event that the criteria remained indefinite, the situation would then virtually maintain status quo.

The last part of the report indicates that key players were in disagreement. Referring to his comments of August 1946, cf. chapter 7, p. 130, international law expert Georg Cohn still felt that Greenland was not subject to Article 73 (e). Just as before, he based his opinion on the interpretation that Article 73 of the UN Charter was intended to protect against exploitation from the metropolitan country, and that Denmark had never exploited Greenland. He concluded his defence of this position by writing that if Denmark, “for political reasons”, was still interested in presenting Greenland as a colony, it could simply continue submitting reports on Greenland. If cessation of reporting was Denmark’s goal, then the new constitutional system, under which Greenland could not be regarded as a territory whose people had not yet attained a full measure of self-government, could be referenced.

Nevertheless, this defence failed to convince the head of the political-legal department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Under-Secretary of State C.A.C Brun, the last person to contribute to the report. He believed that it was inadvisable to claim that the people of Greenland had attained a full measure of self-government and clearly disagreed with and made several comments regarding Cohn’s stance. In Brun’s opinion, it was essential that a territory govern its own *internal* affairs without having an administrative body appointed by the metropolitan country – the government or a governor – that had a right to interfere, and without the metropolitan country having *responsibility* (Brun’s emphases) for the administration. The Faroe Islands are an example of this situation. But did the islands mirror Greenland’s situation? Brun concluded that the Prime Minister’s Office presumably needed to settle this matter. He was aware that he had introduced more than a mere rhetorical question and that he was already in deep water. Remarkably, the head of the prestigious political-legal department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was ostensibly endorsing a Faroe Islands solution for the Greenland issue. Thus, Brun’s position was not dissimilar to the proposal submitted by Professor Alf Roos to the Constitutional Committee in the summer of 1952, cf. chapter 9.

Brun also viewed the British (and Canadian) standpoint on whether or not criteria should be established in the factor issue as the most reasonable. In practice, the wording of Article 73 (e) gave sufficient guidance, and this issue had to be resolved in each individual case. One could hardly agree, Brun wrote, with France’s claim that every state possessed complete sovereignty in this matter.⁵

The debate among government officials illustrated the substantial differences of opinion, which still existed in Denmark, on the extent to which new develop-

⁵ Minutes by Troels Munk dated 19 September 1951, with input from Frederik Rechendorff dated 26 September, Georg Cohn dated 26 September, and C.A.C. Brun dated 27 September. The Danish National Archives, UM.119.M.2., packet 3. Parts of the minutes were sent to Lannung afterwards, including a cover letter by Troels Munk dated 9 October 1951. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2, packet 4.

ments in international law should influence Danish decisions. According to Cohn, Denmark was free to do as it wished concerning the Greenland issue since Copenhagen held the sole competency to make such decisions. In this case, Brun, like Lannung, for, example, felt that the developments in international law that had taken place in the UN restricted Denmark's freedom of action concerning the Greenland issue. Danish government officials, still reluctant to deal with complex factor issues, did not see any Danish interest in the establishment of the above-mentioned criteria.

Prior to departing for the 73 (e) Committee meetings, a meeting was held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 28 September 1951. During this meeting, the appointed delegation and a number of ministry employees discussed the agenda of the forthcoming meetings in the Committee, especially the factor issue and the cessation of submitting reports to the UN. Counsellor Dons Møller chaired the meeting in C.A.C. Brun's absence.⁶ It is reasonable to assume that the meeting was convened due to the significance of several issues on the agenda for Denmark. Apart from the previous lack of meetings of this nature, proper instructions had never been drawn up for the Danes participating in the Special Committee/73 (e) Committee's meetings.

The participants in the meeting acceded to Brun's standpoint that, at present, Greenland must be seen as a non-self-governing territory according to the UN Charter. They disagreed with Georg Cohn's position that "Greenland in every respect could be viewed as a completely self-governing territory" and that no obligation to submit information on Greenland existed. During the meeting, Lannung emphasised that it would be impossible to get this standpoint through in the 73 (e) Committee. Concerning the factor issue and the establishment of criteria, it was agreed that the Danish delegation should make an effort to ensure that the formulation allowed for the cessation of submitting information – e.g. in the event that Greenland representatives gained seats in the Danish Parliament. Problems would best be solved, however, if the British approach was pushed forward and if the text of the Charter (in Article 73) formed the basis for the practice that would be adhered to. The French standpoint (that it was strictly a national matter) was barely tenable and therefore should scarcely be supported. Finally, it was agreed that the Article 73 (e) Committee should not be made a permanent institution.

Debate over the factor issue generated numerous somewhat personal comments. According to the chairman of the meeting, the states were in heated dispute over the issue; the only item they were in apparent agreement on was the fact that Article 73 applied to territories that were situated outside the metropolitan

⁶ Minutes of the meeting "Møde i Udenrigsministeriet med den danske delegation til artikel 73 e-udvalgets session i Geneve. Den 28 September 1951" ["Meeting in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the Danish delegation of the Article 73 (e) Committee session in Geneva, 28 September 1951"]. Signed by Troels Munk on 29 September 1951. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2, packet 3. Apart from Dons Møller, other participants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the meeting included chief of section Finn Friis, head of section Frederik Rechendorff, and secretary Troels Munk. Afterwards, the minutes were sent to Lannung, Sveistrup, and the Greenland Department.

country's territory. Lannung pointed out that this unconditional support was waning compared to previous years. He provided the example of a Belgian study championing the idea that Indian tribes in Brazil should be subject to Article 73 (e). Conversely, he mentioned the Soviet standpoint, which argued that the existence of seas between the metropolitan country and the territory was essential. This led Eske Brun to point out that it was unreasonable that Denmark was obliged to submit information on its treatment of Eskimos in Greenland, while Canada was not obliged to do likewise merely because the Eskimos lived in a territory connected to the mainland. According to Brun, the key issue was whether Denmark was interested in continuing its submission of information to the UN. He recommended that any criterion concerning the Danish obligation to submit information should be framed so that the criterion did not obstruct Danish objectives for Greenland. This recommendation was equivalent to the one the Greenland Administration had already submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 28 September 1948 (cf. chapter 7, note 37).

Lannung stated that during his talks with the Indian and Egyptian representatives, they had shown a positive attitude towards the obligation to submit information coming naturally to an end one day due to developments in Greenland. He pointed out that it would therefore be unwise for Denmark to exert excessive pressure on the limitation of the obligation to report during the forthcoming negotiations in Geneva. According to Lannung, Denmark enjoyed goodwill from both colonial and non-colonial powers concerning colonial issues and should strive to maintain this goodwill. Lannung's intriguing comments shed light on the policy Denmark pursued in the UN about the Greenland issue, especially when it came to creating goodwill for Denmark and achieving results through personal contacts and discreet negotiations behind the scenes.

Meetings in the 73 (e) Committee: The factor issue

Denmark was represented at the 73 (e) Committee meetings of 2-27 October 1951 by Lannung and Sveistrup; Eske Brun did not show up. The Soviet Union was represented once again that year. Although the Soviet representative, Soldatov, made two harsh presentations, Denmark's final evaluation stated that on most issues the meetings were conducted in "an objective and relatively peaceful manner".

The main topic of the meetings in 1951 was economic conditions, especially economic development, in the non-self-governing-territories. During the general debate, Denmark gave an account of its economic efforts to promote the development of Greenland's society and, in particular, its economy. In addition, Denmark gave a presentation on the development of the business sector in Greenland with special emphasis on the fishing industry and the processing of its products. Denmark also gave a presentation on educational issues and the state of human rights in Greenland.

Meanwhile, the factor issue was the key point of discussion since it was of vital importance to all of the colonial powers. Lannung's report of 19 October reveals

that prior to negotiations in the Committee the administering powers had conducted meetings on the factor issue both with each other and in separate discussions between interested members of the Committee. According to the report, the administering states were “in complete agreement” about the key points of the factor issue.

The consensus reached at these preliminary meetings was that it was not possible – because, for political reasons, interest was non-existent – to establish a definition or definitive criteria or rules for determining whether or not a territory belonged to the category covered by Article 73 (e); that the stipulations in Article 73 (e) should remain the guideline in this matter; and that the most the states could possibly agree to was the establishment of “indicators” that determined whether or not a territory fell under Article 73 (e). The term “indicators” most likely originated from Western European input. The American instructions for the meeting, given to Hermod Lannung confidentially, discuss the “factors” exclusively. Great Britain, France, and Belgium likely got their way in the terminological discussion since they were eager to find a term weaker than “factor”. However, as the following section will explain, the factor concept proved indispensable and soon reappeared.

France’s opinion that the factor issue was a national matter (i.e. that only the administering powers were entitled to determine whether a territory had become fully self-governing) presented a substantial obstacle. If this position was sustained, then the entire factor charade would become pointless. Lannung’s report suggested that as part of the compromise, the French position could not be discussed. Lannung does not state, however, that this lack of mention implied that France should give up a key point in its colonial policy. Such an option, however, was not a possibility unless a *quid pro quo* circumstance existed.

According to Lannung’s interpretation of the report, the non-administering states sympathised with the position of the colonial powers. This point, however, was not substantiated by concrete commentary.

The Danish delegation informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Greenland Department that it anticipated its endorsement of this compromise if the majority of the administering states agreed on it.⁷ The delegation acted without instructions, but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was unable to submit instructions in a timely manner, agreed with the delegation’s actions.

The colonial powers reached a compromise with the other states after both sides had made and received concessions. The non-administering states ensured that the factor issue was legitimised in the UN. They also ensured that Article 73 was clarified by establishing a comprehensive list of factors that could be used effectively in the ongoing debate on decolonisation. The reason the colonial powers did not withdraw from the proceedings – an option that constantly threatened continued work on the factor issue – was probably chiefly because of general po-

⁷ Hermod Lannung to Dons Møller and Finn Friis, dated 19 October 1951, Geneva. Appended are excerpts from the American instructions. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2., packet 4.

litical considerations in the tense international situation during the Korean War. Also, to some extent, their requests were accommodated, i.e. the demand for a transparent definition regarding the factor issue was rejected, and the term factor was weakened in various ways. For example, prioritisation of the weight of each factor in comparison to the others had not been undertaken. Thus, the Americans succeeded in achieving the solution they had outlined the year before, which ensured that the Special Committee – possibly even the entire Fourth Committee – would survive the crises the UN was experiencing.

On 22 October, the Committee appointed a subcommittee of six members to write the guidelines for the “indicators”. Denmark, Great Britain, and Belgium represented the colonial powers in the subcommittee while Lannung was appointed as the *rapporteur*.⁸ The negotiations in the subcommittee, which, according to Lannung’s report of 28 October 1951, continued late into the evening and “were protracted and sometimes very emotional”, were based on a working paper that the UN Secretariat had submitted on its own initiative.⁹ The working paper was based on fifteen questions in the following subject areas: General, Status, Internal government, Local administration, and International cooperation. The questions were mainly meant to clarify the competences of the dependent territory in terms of the metropolitan country’s government. They asked, for instance, whether it was the inhabitants’ wish, “expressed by informed and democratic process”, that the territory should or should not be covered under Chapter XI. They also asked: Where did sovereignty rest? To what extent did the inhabitants control legislative, judicial, and executive power? Did the inhabitants possess the right to vote? Was taxation under local control? Could the territory interact with other countries, and so forth? Finally, the working paper of the Secretariat accentuated the declaration of the League of Nations of 4 September 1931, which concerned the preconditions for abolishing a mandate regime.

The working paper obviously could not take a stand on the key practical problem in the matter, namely, who should ultimately determine whether or not a territory was self-governing. This political decision resided with actors at the highest level and had major precedential significance for the entire UN system. The working paper naturally only enumerated the *theoretical* options available: 1) that competence rested with the administrating power alone; 2) that it rested with the administrating power, but was “subject to supervision by the General Assembly”; 3) that the decision should be made in accordance with general principles established by the General Assembly; and 4) that the decision required agreement between the administering country and the General Assembly, and relied on “the

⁸ Letter from Hermod Lannung to Dons Møller and Finn Friis, dated 23 October 1951. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2., packet 4. – Appended to the 19 October letter is a transcript of packets 4 and 5, something Lannung felt had “specific interest”, from the submitted American instructions. Also appended to the letter is a working paper prepared by the UN Secretariat (A/AC.35/SC.3/L.1), dated 22 October 1951, cf. the following footnote.

⁹ Sub-Committee on Factors Indicative of Degree of Self-Government. Working paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.35/SC.3/L.1), dated 22 October 1951. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2., packet 4.

extent to which the informed opinion of the people concerned should be decisive". In other words, the establishment of more definitive procedures for this matter was a highly political issue. Therefore, consensus was unlikely to be reached. The issue was postponed, and only an appeal for "good faith" was stated.

The working paper of 22 October prepared by the Secretariat launched negotiations in the subcommittee. Thus sections of the working paper were reprinted in the subcommittee's preparatory draft (Draft Report), which Lannung presented as early as 24 October.¹⁰ There were, however, two essential areas where the working paper and the draft report differ. The first disparity concerns the working paper's item six, which deals with *the significance of the factors*. Cuba, the Philippines, and Egypt accepted almost verbatim the relatively short text the Secretariat provided. This text stated that, regarding the application of Chapter XI of the Charter to a given territory, "a number of elements" should be considered when determining whether Chapter XI was relevant. None of these factors or any combination of them needed to be considered as particularly predominant or decisive per se. As it was stated, the application and the interpretation of the factors should be carried out by means of the good will and judgement of the responsible authorities.

The wording was too indefinite, according to the three colonial powers in the subcommittee (Belgium, Denmark, and Great Britain), who presented a significantly longer, and in several instances, more precise text for item six. According to the three countries, "numerous elements" (not just "some" of them) needed to be considered when determining whether a specific territory was subject to Chapter XI of the Charter. None of these factors or any combination of them should be considered as particularly predominant or decisive per se. The factors should furthermore be considered as "a guide to conclusions rather than determining such conclusions". The three countries did not find it necessary to establish the "relative importance" of the factors, or establish that a list of factors comprised all of the ones deemed relevant. The weakening of the factor concept agreed upon by the administering states was thus maintained in the phrasing of item six.

According to Denmark and several other colonial powers, the second key point was that the factor paper should also reflect the idea that progress towards self-government could be achieved not only through a territory gaining independence – but also through the association of a territory on equal status with the metropolitan country. This idea was emphasised in item six, which stated that relationships between territories and their metropolitan countries were undergoing rapid changes and that progress toward self-government could be achieved in two ways, either by: 1) independence, or 2) full participation in government

¹⁰ Draft Report of the Special Committee (A/AC.35/L.69/Add.3), dated 24 October 1951. Rapporteur: Mr Hermod Lannung (Denmark). The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2., packet 4.

through assimilation with the former administering power or some other state.¹¹ Depending on the chosen path, various factors – some of which excluded others – would come into play. Denmark had thus succeeded in introducing its preferred solution to the Greenland issue as a distinct and legitimate choice. This matter was quite new compared to the Secretariat’s working paper.

Since the subcommittee was unable to reach consensus on the wording of item six, both positions were placed together in the draft of 24 October.

In the final item, where, according to Lannung, significant improvements had been made to the Secretariat’s draft, was the description of the specific factors. Lannung’s report, however, failed to elaborate on what these improvements were. Consequently, it is necessary to compare how the individual factors in the Secretariat’s draft are referred to with the corresponding paragraphs in the subcommittee’s draft of 24 October.

This comparison reveals that generally speaking the subcommittee followed the divisions of the Secretariat’s draft, but the main points were changed to: General, Status, Internal self-government, Other internal conditions, and International co-operation. Significant alterations were established, however, with regard to the headings under which the specific factors were grouped. For example, some of these alterations were made under “Status”, where the item on independence and association with the metropolitan country was modified. The heading “Independence or self-government”, taken from the Secretariat’s version where the two terms could be interpreted as synonymous, was altered to “Independence or eligibility for membership of the United Nations”.

Likewise, “Status” dealt with an essential issue for Denmark: The assimilation of a territory with the metropolitan country. The heading “Incorporation in the metropolitan country” was altered to the less offensive and henceforth used “Association with the metropolitan country”. Significant alterations were also made to the content. For example, the text focused more on the democratic aspect since the inhabitants covered under the main point “General” had to be asked whether or not they felt that they had achieved – as expressed by an informed and democratic process – a full measure of self-government. Even more importantly, under “Status”, the inhabitants had to be asked whether or not association with the metropolitan country was a result of their freely expressed will. If it was not, could the inhabitants freely opt out of such association?

When the final report of the 73 (e) Committee was submitted to the Fourth Committee on 28 October, Denmark, Belgium, and Great Britain had succeeded in creating a majority for their version of item six during an additional all-night meeting in the 73 (e) Committee. In retrospect, this all-night sitting was evidently a breaking point in the entire factor issue and, for that matter, in the entire inter-

¹¹ The text stated that (p. 5): “The pattern of relationship is changing rapidly and progress may be achieved in the direction of advance through self-government either to independence or to full participation in government in assimilation with the former administering authority or some other state”.

national development on dependent territories. As a result, the reservations mentioned about the factor concept were respected in later negotiations. Most significant, however, and not only from a Danish perspective, was the fact that the association model was now regarded as a specific and legitimate one in the solution for the colonial issue at that time. According to Lannung, India helped push forward this progress. By accepting an Indian amendment, the administering powers ensured that India abstained from casting its vote on the report in the final round before it was submitted to the Fourth Committee. The administering states thus achieved their majority.¹²

So far, the most vehement exchanges about the colonial issue in the UN took place during the subsequent meetings of the Fourth Committee. France, among others, was fiercely confronted because of its possessions in North Africa (Tunisia and Morocco). In his speech on 26 November¹³ in the Fourth Committee, which was based on the Special Committee's report, Lannung attempted to pour oil on troubled waters by emphasising the valuable work on colonial liberation that the Special Committee and the Fourth Committee had performed. The spirit of cooperation had promoted a change that had been underway for some time. However, it was hardly a coincidence that Lannung spent most of his allotted speaking time defending and stating the reasons for the factor list that he had co-authored.

The list of factors was the result of a compromise, said Lannung. Denmark would have preferred a more systematic division of the factors, one that took into account which of "the two different models for achieving a full measure of self-government" they were applied to. Not surprisingly, Lannung mainly focused on the path of association. He strongly advocated the path's main idea, namely that an increased measure of self-government can be achieved by equal and full participation with the other parts of the, until then, administering metropolitan country. Lannung, clever tactician that he was, chose the non-self-governing territories of Alaska and Hawaii as illustrative examples. They aimed, according to Lannung, to become equal members of the United States of America as the forty-ninth and fiftieth states of the Union, respectively (this was first implemented in Alaska in 1959.)¹⁴ Lannung stated that:

¹² Hermod Lannung to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated 28 October 1951. Endorsed: "I agree. P.P. Sveistrup". The Danish National Archives, UM.119.M.2., packet 4.

¹³ Text of statement by Hermod Lannung (Denmark) before the Fourth Committee, Paris. Press release PM/80 of 26 November 1951. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2., packet 4.

¹⁴ Denmark carefully examined America's statements on the status of their territories. Items under examination included excerpts from the American reports published by the UN. Page four of the directory from 1949 states the following about Alaska: "On 24 August 1912 Alaska became an incorporated Territory and has since enjoyed considerable self-government. Alaskans have long contemplated statehood as the ultimate goal" (Summary of Information transmitted by the Government of the United States of America. A/907/Add. 1, 12 July 1949. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2., packet. 2).

There should, of course, be no doubt whatsoever that if these territories attain such status, they will thus have realised the aim of the Charter and have obtained that full measure of self-government which brings them outside the scope of Chapter XI:

There is in the Charter a clear distinction between self-government and independence, the latter representing the higher status. There is no doubt that the territories just mentioned will obtain more than self-government by being admitted to membership of the USA, as membership on equal terms of the USA, with regards to status, is equal to the status of independence, the territories will thus be in possession of all sovereign rights collectively with the rest of the Union.

Based on an idea of collective sovereignty, Lannung compared integration with the metropolitan country to independence, which constituted a main point of his interpretation of the lists of factors.

Subsequently, Lannung referred to Greenland – although not by name – when he stated:

It ought not to be lost sight of that for some small territories whose population, for instance some twenty thousand, is not large enough to permit them to form alone an independent state, integration or association is the (Lannung's emphasis) realistic possibility to achieve a full measure of self-government.

If ever you want such a territory to be self-governing in accordance with its aspirations it must in most cases be by integration or association with another territory or quite naturally in integration with the country with which it was associated hitherto.

Thus, although put in camouflaged terms, Denmark put forward a major point for the first time to a larger UN forum concerning its position on the Greenland issue, namely that the population figures of Greenland discouraged the establishment of an independent state.

During the negotiations in the Fourth Committee, the entire factor issue was once again debated because of the Special Committee's report, but no new perspectives surfaced. According to Lannung's report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at the end of the debate the administering states strongly preferred to postpone the matter until the following year. They hoped to resume the debate based on the written material submitted by interested states. Along with Pakistan, Denmark put forward – with Great Britain's strong encouragement, according to Lannung – a resolution aiming at postponement. According to the proposal, any affected countries were to submit their comments before 1 June 1952.

Several Third World states opposed this resolution. They felt that the present assembly should continue the negotiations; Guatemala and Venezuela presented a resolution to support this idea. This opposition led to additional difficult discussions resulting – after the meeting had been suspended on Denmark’s initiative – in a compromise between the four parties that had submitted the resolutions. On 3 December 1951, they agreed to form a subcommittee under the 73 (e) Committee. The new subcommittee consisted of Australia, Cuba, Denmark, France, Guatemala, Iraq, the US, and Venezuela. This group immediately commenced work based on the report of the 73 (e) Committee and the negotiations in the Fourth Committee.¹⁵

Besides analysing “the basic and general factors”, the subcommittee should – “in the event that the expected progress was not achieved”, as Lannung stated in his report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 4 December – propose procedures for further examination of the issue. In accordance with a previous draft resolution, it was agreed that the members should submit their comments on the factors before 1 May 1952.

Although Danish expectations about the subcommittee’s work were fairly low, Denmark appears to have played a key role in consolidating the two different models it had helped place in the report of the 73 (e) Committee. According to Lannung’s report – which was imprecise on this matter – “they had succeeded in directing attention to the view that states should make an effort to establish a more systematic grouping of the factors, in particular, into two main groups”. To substantiate this idea in the report, Lannung added that it would be “quite essential” for consensus to be reached on the establishment of these two primary groups, because “there had always been a distinct tendency, also this time, in the Fourth Committee” among non-administering states (especially the Latin American and Arab states) to claim that independence was the only alternative to colonial status.¹⁶

Initially, the Secretariat prepared a new working paper on 4 December 1951. According to Borberg’s report to Copenhagen two days later, in the paper the Secretariat had prepared, “in accordance with the recommendation of especially Denmark and Cuba”, a list of factors in two groups based on material from the Special Committee.¹⁷

Behind the scenes, the Danish delegation certainly struggled to exert their influence on the Secretariat’s new working paper. In any case, it was entirely based on the above-mentioned two-part model in its purest form. According to the working paper, a full measure of self-government, which was defined as the basic goal, could be achieved either through 1) “the ongoing progress towards local autonomy”, or through 2) the people’s freely expressed will to ensure association on

¹⁵ Hermod Lannung’s report, dated Paris, 4 December 1951. Brief cover letter signed by William Borberg. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M2., packet 4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Working paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/C.4/SC.9/L.1), dated 4 December 1951. Appended to the UN working paper is a brief report signed by William Borberg, dated Paris, 6 December 1951. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 4.



The Danish UN delegation had the important task of participating in the negotiations on the so-called “factor lists”. During those years, the Danish UN delegation was headed by the skilled diplomat William Borberg, seen here (left) with former and future Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft (second from the left), Deputy Secretary-General David Owen, and Hedtoft’s wife, Ella Hedtoft, at the UN in July 1952. (UN Photo and Film Collection, Roskilde University Library)

equal footing with the metropolitan country. Corresponding to these methods were two sets of factors that were established under the following headings: 1) Factors indicative of the attainment of an autonomous system of self-government – the working paper did not use the term “independence” – and 2) Factors indicative of the free association of a territory on equal status with the metropolitan or other country.

The working paper emphasised that it was essential for the territory to freely express its view by “informed and democratic processes”. To express this view, the territory could declare that it had achieved a full measure of self-government as “an autonomous entity” or that the population, by exercising its right of self-determination, had chosen association with the metropolitan country. The concept of the right of self-determination appeared for the first time here in the factor documents.

Although many of the working paper’s points were amended, cf. the following, the new system that introduced two different models for the factor issue significantly influenced the subsequent factor debate in the UN.

When Borberg transmitted the UN Secretariat’s working paper on 6 December, he requested the opinion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Consequently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs examined recent developments, especially those that dealt with the factor issue. The Ministry, however, was unable to contribute any new suggestions, and neither was the Prime Minister's Office. An extended paper, dated 19 December 1951, was prepared in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Apart from an account of the events that had occurred, it contained a carefully formulated, yet completely candid, recognition of the efforts of the Danish delegation on the factor issue since October. The paper stated that the delegation "has played an important role in dealing with the issue, and apparently from the beginning has participated actively in the development of the criteria discussed". In its argument for not contributing to the list of factors, the Ministry referred to the fact that the established criteria, "which appear to be founded on a valuable new idea", had been consistently endorsed by Denmark. Moreover, it was emphasised that the Danish representatives had continually taken precautions to gain the support of the other administering states. Their position did not invoke antipathy from the non-administering states either. The Greenland Department did not offer any comments on the criteria either.¹⁸

During the meetings in the subcommittee, which ended on 20 December 1951 (the report was dated 22 December), the participants, contrary to expectations, succeeded in making headway on the factor issue. The Secretariat's working paper of 4 December was revised, but most important from a Danish perspective, the two-part model was retained. The model was only retained, however, after an adjustment – at the suggestion of some delegations, as stated, – made it possible to divide the association model into two parts, depending on whether the association was part of a federal state or a unitary state. This adjustment was reflected in the revised headings. The first string of factors now adopted the term "independence" in the heading "Factors indicative of the attainment of independence or other separate system of self-government". The other list of factors had the following heading: "Factors indicative of the free association (in a federal or unitary relationship) of a territory on equal terms with other components of the metropolitan or other country".

Lannung most likely played a role in the introduction of the distinction between a federal state and a unitary state in the list of factors. In any case, this item certainly constituted a very significant part of his later arguments, probably due

¹⁸ Extended notice by Otto Borch, dated 19 December 1951; letter from the Greenland Department to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, signed by Eske Brun and P.P. Sveistrup on 14 December 1951. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 4. – A letter from Eske Brun to Permanent Undersecretary of State Nils Svenningsen in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated 12 December 1951, is interesting because it testifies to the perception that the ministries had of themselves as advisers where Greenland was concerned. Eske Brun wrote that the Greenland Department did not have any comments on the current list of factors, but that the Ministry had discussed whether to propose a new factor with a criterion about whether states had exploited the colony to their own advantage. This type of criterion would be advantageous for Denmark "because our relationship to Greenland in this regard is presumably above criticism". In the meantime, the issue was not brought up because it could have jeopardised Denmark's relationship with several of the other colonial powers "and make it difficult for us to continue playing a mediating role in the Fourth Committee, which we have done up until now with a certain amount of success". *Ibid.*

to the fact that it was more complicated to prove that a full measure of self-government had been achieved in a centralised unitary state (such as Denmark) compared to a more carved-up federal state.

An examination of the content of the new list of factors shows that the work continuously done in December 1951 resulted in further clarifications and greater systematisation. While the working paper of 4 December containing the first string of factors was clearly based on a territory's potential development towards "autonomy", and presupposed circumstances in which the metropolitan country still held competence in relation to the territory, the report presented on 22 December presupposed that the territory had achieved *independence*. The factors that were established as criteria for achieving this status were linked to the concept of sovereignty and its typical characteristics (autonomy in terms of external and internal politics, for example). In this regard, another criterion was that the territory should display a level of political development that meant it could safeguard its own destiny, and that the territory wanted this development to take place.

For the second string of factors, i.e. the factors indicative of the association model, the heading from 4 December was maintained. However, a number of clarifications were made. As in the working paper of 4 December, a question was asked about the population's wishes and level of political development, as well as whether the association was established as a result of the metropolitan country's constitution, or as a result of a treaty or a bilateral agreement. The paper of 22 December, however, elaborated on this issue by accentuating and safeguarding the equal rights aspect so that it also enquired about the following: Whether the constitutional rights applied to the associated territories to the same degree, whether specific constitutional conditions existed that only applied to the territories, and likewise whether the territories' participation on equal footing when changes in the constitutional system took place was ensured. Under "Status", the working paper likewise enquired whether the territory had attained a full measure of equality in parliamentary representation, citizenship, and the appointment of government officials.

The establishment of an ad hoc committee with eight members to implement further studies of the factor issue was also agreed upon. The subcommittee's report would form the basis of the committee's continued work. Furthermore, member states also had the opportunity to submit their comments on the factor issue before 1 May 1952. The adopted resolution was proposed by Cuba, Denmark, the US, and Venezuela on 17 December.¹⁹

When the issue resurfaced in the Fourth Committee in January 1952, the Committee decided to add two new members to the ad hoc committee (Burma

¹⁹ Report of the subcommittee (A/C.4/L.180), dated 22 December 1951. Rapporteur: Mr Guy Perez Cisneros (Cuba); Draft Resolution of 17 December (A/C.4/SC.9/L11). – These two papers were sent by William Borberg to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a letter dated 4 January 1952 (Section no. 98). C.A.C. Brun's certification of 5 January 1952 shows that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made no comments on the list of factors and that head of department Eske Brun had been informed of this matter. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 4.

and Belgium), which maintained the balance between administering and non-administering states. No one voted against the proposal, although a number of Eastern Bloc countries abstained from voting. During the debate in the Fourth Committee, Denmark, once again represented by Lannung, played a highly active role and presented numerous statements of fundamental significance to the factor issue. During a presentation, Lannung, who made detailed comments on the diplomatic efforts of the previous months, seized the opportunity to express his gratitude for the “spirit of co-operation and compromise” that had prevailed during the subcommittee’s work.

During this period, many milestones, as Lannung put it, had been achieved. The last milestone was the subcommittee’s report, which contained revised factors. The progress that was initiated in Geneva in the autumn was propelled “an essential step forward”. This forward progress was particularly true in the systematic grouping of the factors. Lannung subsequently emphasised that the Danish delegation attached great importance to the fact that the conditions for achieving “a full measure of self-government” could be met through independence from, unification with, or association on equal terms with the metropolitan country. Various factors were relevant depending on the model chosen, and the factors were therefore listed under two different headings in the factor report. The Danish delegation had already spoken in Geneva in favour of a more systematic division of the factors. Accordingly, the Danish delegation derived “special satisfaction” from observing that this systematic division was part of the present list of factors.

Lannung concluded his presentation by pointing out that further studies of the factors would probably show – a point Denmark had already made – that it would be necessary to divide the part about association into two sub-paragraphs, depending on whether a territory was associated with a state of the federal or unitary type. He specifically mentioned factor C4 (on internal legislation) in the part about association. According to Lannung, this factor concerned states of a non-unitary type, which he had confirmed by its proponent, Guatemala. Lannung was very cautious in handling this item since it could imply an obstacle for a potential Greenland solution. He ensured that the confirmation was recorded in the summary records of the meeting. He clarified his point, and consequently the Danish policy for the international assembly, as follows:

The decisive test in the case of a unitary type is and remains whether or not equality is established, i.e. equal rights and status compared with other component parts of the country.

The extent of the local self-government in a unitary state may be greater or smaller according to whether the government of the state is built to a greater or smaller degree on the basis of centralisation or decentralisation.

What is decisive, however, is that a territory which is united with a unitary state has the same rights and, especially, does not have less self-government than that which is enjoyed by other component parts of the country.

During the voting a short time later, Lannung seized the opportunity to express the fundamental Danish view of the relationship between factors and sovereignty. He drove home the idea that the factors, from Denmark's perspective, were equally important in the commencement of transmitting information and in ceasing the transmission of information. He further added that each state should listen to its conscience and determine whether or not it should transmit information on territories for which it had not yet submitted reports. He repeated the position that Denmark had declared on previous occasions – a position that had also been expressed by the US – when he stated that “any administering state is entitled to determine independently the constitutional rights and status of a territory under its sovereignty. Nothing in Chapter 11 of the Charter can be interpreted as having altered anything in this regard”. He added: “My country will furnish information to the UN on any change of status which might take place with regard to the territory for which it is responsible, but in doing so does not consider that any action taken by our constitutional organs is subject to review or revision by the UN”.²⁰

As will become evident, in this case, Denmark quite pointedly presented its position on the issue of sovereignty. This position does not appear to have come from the two ministries involved, but presumably must have been conceived by the delegation instead. It implied that, on this matter, Denmark was not restricted constitutionally by the obligations of the UN Charter.

The omnipresent Lannung later presented the report of the Fourth Committee on 15 January 1952. This report also dealt with developments in the Committee's other areas of responsibility (the mandated territories, the termination of the Netherlands' obligation to submit reports on Surinam to the UN etc.).²¹ The final resolution on the factor issue, 567 (VI), i.e. the first list of factors, dated 18 January 1952, is almost identical to the proposal of 17 December 1951 that Denmark had helped propose.

²⁰ Lannung's account of the negotiations and a copy of his speech in the Fourth Committee on the factors are appended to William Borberg's letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 13 January 1952 (part no. 123). Borberg writes in his letter, which resembles a cover letter: “As will be demonstrated, Mr Lannung has presented various statements during the negotiations that have specific principal significance for Denmark's obligations regarding Greenland”. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 4.

²¹ Information from non-self-governing territories: Report of the Fourth Committee. Rapporteur: Mr Hermod Lannung. General A/2057, dated 15 January 1952. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 4.

Outlook in 1951

During the assembly of 1951, the treatment of the factor issue was set in motion after several years at a standstill. A highly politicised and sensitive matter, the states nevertheless succeeded in establishing indicators for determining when a territory had attained a full measure of self-government – whereupon the duty to report would terminate – or not. This outcome was accomplished in a hostile atmosphere where the colonial powers were attacked vehemently and the existence of the Fourth Committee was threatened.

As demonstrated, Denmark had played a significant role in the development of the factor issue in the assembly of 1951. The two-part model for attaining self-government cannot be accredited to Denmark alone, but circumstances suggest that Hermod Lannung, through, for example his association with the leading colonial powers and the Secretariat, made a considerable contribution to the creation of the model and its acceptance in the UN. His behaviour was influenced by a keen single-mindedness concerning the creation of a solution, one that would be recognised by the international community, based on international law for Greenland's integration with Denmark. His repeated appointment as *rappporteur* and committee chairman confirms that he was respected for his integrity and judgement.

Lannung, who was not without vanity, did not forget to draw the attention of the Danish authorities to the results achieved. In an extended concluding report,²² he describes the hostile atmosphere that had characterised the negotiations in the Fourth Committee, where voices against colonial rule, according to him, had been more aggressive than in any previous plenary session. It was therefore gratifying that they had succeeded in achieving “a comparatively highly satisfactory result on the factor issue. It was unquestionably far better than one could have expected beforehand if familiar with the views that had recently been expressed prior to the assembly from leading representatives of non-administrating states ...” Furthermore, he pointed out that no direct attacks had been made on Danish colonial rule. On the contrary, Denmark was once more highlighted as a shining example because it did not suffice with reporting obligatory statistical information, but had transmitted information on political developments in keeping with the greater amount of self-government in Greenland.

He concluded several months' worth of intensive work with an almost pathetic appeal to the Danish authorities:

²² Report prepared by Lannung, dated 3 February 1952, Paris. The report included a cover letter signed by Borberg on 4 February 1952, Paris. According to the certification, a copy was submitted to the Greenland Department on 7 February 1952. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 4. – In his cover letter, Borberg writes: “The report has been presented at a delegation meeting; all delegates agreed that the views presented by barrister Lannung were of such import that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be informed about them”.

[T]he time has come to ensure the establishment of a constitutional guarantee so that when the day comes where we and our fellow Greenland countrymen agree upon making Greenland an equal part of the Kingdom of Denmark – Greenland can move up from being a colony to having the same fundamental position and status as the other component parts of the Kingdom. (In practice this would of course mean – also when considering the factors now in place – that Greenland should have equal rights and in particular no less a degree of local self-government than other parts of the country ordinarily have, including representation in the Danish Parliament with participation on equal footing in the governing of the Kingdom).

Given the experiences from the work on the Special Committee and the Fourth Committee over the years, and especially this year, it is only reasonable, in fact an obligation, that the Danish representative on these committees emphasises this view as strongly as possible.

Clearly, Lannung was deeply concerned about developments in the colonial issue, and was appealing to decision makers in Denmark to terminate Denmark's status as a colonial power.

The UN assembly in 1952

The report on Greenland

The report on Greenland for 1952 was not submitted to the UN Secretariat until July 1952. As before, the report prepared by the Greenland Department was sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Hermod Lannung for comments and revisions.²³ The documents examined do not reveal the reason for the delay.

Under the heading of "Government", the report mentions the election in June 1951 for the Provincial Council and the Municipal Councils (in accordance with

²³ Two manuscripts were prepared in Danish, one of which contains a few corrections. The Danish National Archives, subsequently delivered in 1987, packet15; the manuscript that contains a few corrections. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 4. – As on previous occasions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attempted to moderate the Greenland Department's explicit language. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for example, suggested that the phrase in the English translation, "enormous importance", concerning tuberculosis in Greenland be altered to "of great importance", which the Greenland Department accepted. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not in a position, however, to change the Danish phrase "gonorrhoea is still widely spread" as the Greenland Department would not agree to the change, stating that: "Mr Hoo has been informed about the situation". Deputy Secretary-General Hoo had presumably received enough information about the spread of gonorrhoea during his visit in Greenland in the summer of 1950 that it would be pointless to meliorate the facts. Notice by Troels Munk, dated 4 July 1952. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 4.

the new Act of 27 May 1950).²⁴ According to the report, the population had shown “great interest” in these elections. The report also mentions Greenland requests concerning an alteration of the Provincial Council electoral system, which was based on election by majority vote in single-member constituencies and aimed to introduce supplementary seats. Apart from describing the meeting of the newly elected Provincial Council that took place from 26 September to 23 October 1951, the report also outlines all the key issues that were discussed during the meeting.

Under the item on economic conditions, the report mentions that the old navigation embargo of 18 March 1776 (!) had been lifted with the passing of the Greenland Commerce Act. Hereafter, as stated, Greenland was no longer a closed economy. The report also mentions that the trade monopoly was being phased out. Furthermore, the report describes the considerable increase in the costs of construction that resulted from the Greenland Commission’s proposal to develop various areas of Greenland society.

Reply to the United Nations Secretary-General on the factor issue

As a result of the resolution of 18 January 1952 concerning the continuing work on the factor issue, Denmark received a memo from the Secretary-General of the UN, dated 6 February 1952. This memo stated that Denmark had been chosen as a member of the ad hoc committee for further studies on the factor issue. It also stated that Denmark was invited to submit its opinion on the factor issue to the UN before 1 May 1952.

The preliminary work done on the reply to the memo took place in the Greenland Department. After consulting with Hermod Lannung, the Department sent a draft to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for final editing. Within the Ministry, the draft from the Department was criticised for being too forthright about Greenland. The Ministry also maintained that since the UN had only requested Denmark’s fundamental view of the factor issue, the inclusion of internal Danish motives was hardly necessary. In light of the statement in the draft describing the retention of the two-part division of the factors, which was aimed at either independence or assimilation, and was “of the greatest importance to Greenland”, it was suggested that the reference to Greenland be excluded. Furthermore, the paper emphasised the distinction between a unitary state and a federal state,

²⁴ The report did not provide information on voter turnout for the Provincial Council because the election committee’s records had not yet arrived in Copenhagen when the report was completed. A notice dated 23 June 1952 from Pie Barfod to Sveistrup, the chief of section in the Greenland Department, stated that they had received the numbers for twelve of the thirteen constituencies. Voter turnout had been calculated to make it available for UN meetings. The average voter turnout for the twelve constituencies was approximately 73 percent. The Danish National Archives, Greenland Administration, delivered subsequently in 1987, packet 15.

something Lannung had fought to maintain during the last assembly in the UN. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not suggest any new issues.²⁵

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent Denmark's comments on the factor issue to the UN delegation with a month's delay (24 May 1952) because sending them had become complicated. Great Britain wanted more time to respond and had contacted Denmark and the other colonial powers (including the US) in April and, surprisingly, had requested them to postpone their responses until they were acquainted with the British government's standpoint. This request implied that Great Britain had something important to announce. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was prepared to comply with the British request, but Lannung – whose opinion was solicited by the Greenland Department – felt that the General Assembly's deadlines should be complied with as much as possible, and that the response should not be postponed unless there were serious reasons to do so. His opinion carried weight and his advice was followed, but in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' classic fashion, Great Britain's request was nevertheless taken into consideration and Denmark's response to the UN was sent confidentially to the British. The British were informed that, as a result of their request, the response contained no definitive Danish stance on the significance that each aspect of the factor issue should be given.²⁶ As shown, the Danish authorities had had difficulties articulating their position on precisely this issue, so the British request gave them an additional excuse for submitting a relatively non-committal response. In reality, Denmark fought exclusively for the maintenance of the two-part model.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' final response to the UN stated that the list of factors in the annex of the resolution of 18 January 1952 "may generally be considered acceptable as a basis for further discussion". For a short period, the wording of the first drafts "may generally be considered acceptable", but Lannung, who was involved in the process, felt that this statement was too definitive. Presumably fighting for the maintenance of a well-defined distinction between unitary states and federal states, Lannung indicated that he wanted this formulation weakened, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs complied by inserting the additional phrase "as a basis for further discussion". This insertion fulfilled Lannung's wishes and made the alleged consideration given to the British more plausible.

²⁵ Letter from the Greenland Department to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated 7 April 1952; Ministry of Foreign Affairs report ("Reply to note dated 6 February 1952 from the UN Secretary-General on "factors") prepared by Troels Munk with additional comments by Finn Friis, dated 18 April 1952. Troels Munk's draft of a letter to head of department Eske Brun and the UN Secretary-General, dated respectively 18 and 22 April 1952. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2., packet 4.

²⁶ Report from the Danish Embassy in London to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 29 April 1952 (including a copy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' letter dated 22 April 1952): The Greenland Department to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated 13 May 1952; copy of a letter to the London embassy dated 24 May 1952, signed by Foreign Minister Ole Bjørn Kraft. – The final decision in this matter was made by C.A.C. Brun on 16 May 1952; cf. his endorsement dated the same day as the letter from the Greenland Department of 13 May 1952. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 4.

The substantive portion of this response complied with the Greenland Department and emphasised the importance of maintaining the division of the factors, as expressed in the resolution's annex, into two main groups. Denmark asserted – referring to the statement of the Danish representative in the Fourth Committee of 9 January 1952 – that it was advisable to subdivide the paragraph “Factors indicative of the free association of a territory on equal status with other component parts of the metropolitan or other country”. Special consideration, Denmark stated, should be given to whether the association existed with a unitary state or a federal state. Most of the factors applied to both types of states, but some of them required separate treatment and justified the application of this distinction.

Finally, Denmark expressed its reservations about whether it was necessary or expedient to include item II A4, “Ethnic and Cultural Considerations”. It reserved the right to return to this matter as part of the Committees’ work.

The Dutch initiative

On 13 June 1952, the Dutch envoy appeared by appointment at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Copenhagen and “unofficially” (quotation marks added by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) handed C.A.C. Brun a memorandum²⁷ containing a proposal stating that the administering powers should agree to coordinate their policy on colonial issues in the UN. The Netherlands proposed that the administering powers should take a uniform position on a number of issues to resist the attacks against them, particularly from Arab states, South American states, and states in the Eastern Bloc. The memorandum was sent to all administering powers.

Colonial powers were a minority in the General Assembly, but the memo stated that through a degree of unity, they could modify or eliminate attempts to pursue unacceptable anti-colonial viewpoints. Consequently, substantial disagreements, such as those expressed during the last UN assembly, should thus be avoided. To illustrate how differently the colonial powers acted in the UN, the voting record in the Fourth Committee of the last assembly was referred to. During this assembly, Denmark had voted fourteens times in favour, once against, and had abstained only once. In comparison, Belgium had voted four times in favour, seven times against, and had abstained nine times. This example was listed with the utmost neutrality in the memo, but it unmistakably criticised Denmark for its compliance with the non-colonial states on too many occasions.

The Netherlands therefore proposed to convene a coordinating meeting, e.g. during the next gathering of the 73 (e) Committee. In particular, it was impor-

²⁷ “Suggestions of the Netherlands Ministry on Foreign Affairs concerning the policy to be followed by the Administering Powers in the Committee on Information from non-self-governing territories and in the General Assembly of the U.N.”. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 5. *Ibid.* supplementary Dutch memorandum submitted to William Borberg in New York on 10 June 1952. It contains the Dutch position on the factor issue that Denmark had reservations about.

tant to agree on what sanctions should be prepared in relation to the anti-colonial majority in the General Assembly. The Netherlands had obviously decided to adopt a more confrontational strategy on the colonial issue, and apparently it was not afraid to go all the way – if it could obtain the support of the other colonial powers. Whether the Netherlands had acted on its own behalf or – more than likely – had consulted other colonial powers is not clear from the examined material on this matter.

The Dutch memo presented clear, radical solutions to many of the colonial issues that were debated in the UN during that time. These solutions forced Danish authorities to immediately take a position on the colonial issue in general, which they had previously dealt with only on the surface. By 14 June, Troels Munk had already completed an extended account in which he referred to the points in the Dutch paper one by one, presenting a “preliminary comment” on each point.²⁸ The following section describes the Dutch viewpoints on the basis of the Dutch paper, not on the basis of the Danish secretary’s summary.

Item one: The Dutch proposed that the administering powers should recommend that the 73 (e) Committee be retained in the future because it had, admittedly, made an “excellent and useful contribution”. Moreover, it emphasised the advantages of the equitable composition of the Committee. In this case, the Danish comment briefly stated that the Danish position, up to this point, was that the Committee should only be provisional.

Item two: The administering states should all agree that the administration of the non-self-governing territories was solely their responsibility. They were not answerable to the General Assembly on this matter. They were only obliged to transmit information. The preliminary Danish response to this point was thus: “The Danish government can presumably take the same view”.

Item three: The General Assembly should discuss the submitted information, but it should generally limit its work to observations. Resolutions on the non-self-governing territories should not be binding in nature. The administering power’s compliance was strictly voluntary. This item contained a harsh response to the Cuban draft resolution from the year before, which proposed that every fourth year, the General Assembly should examine the degree of compliance with the various resolutions. The paper stated that the administering states should unanimously oppose any such extraordinary assembly. The administering states should not answer questions about whether they had complied with the resolutions. In extreme cases, they should refrain from participating in such an assembly. Finally, they could respond to the abuse of power by ceasing the transmission of information to the UN. It was suggested that the colonial powers refuse participation in such a session or neglect to transmit information. Denmark commented that the Danish delegation had agreed to respond unsympatheti-

²⁸ Report by Troels Munk, dated 14 June 1952. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.2, packet 5. – Stated in Troels Munk’s endorsement: “Has been submitted (according to counsellor Dons Møller) to the permanent undersecretary TM”.

cally to the Cuban draft resolution. It was noted that, in principle, Denmark supported compliance with plenary resolutions.²⁹ Whether Denmark would go so far as to participate in the proposed sanctions remained uncertain.

Item four: The administering states should agree that the “factors” should never have binding status. According to the Danish comment, this point corresponded with the Danish government’s position. It was also noted that the memo written to the UN Secretary-General (in May) did not deal with this point; the idea that the “factors” should be divided into two main groups was emphasised.

Item five: Political development in the non-self-governing territories was exclusively a matter for the administering power and should generally not be discussed in the UN. The comment in this case was that Denmark was presumably able to support “trying to break up the aggressive, almost hostile anti-colonial front”, especially since the attacks formed an element in the East-West conflict.

Item six: The administering powers should agree to view “visiting missions” from the UN in the non-self-governing territories as undesirable. If they were accepted, they would be prejudicial to the sovereignty of the metropolitan country. Proposed sanctions included a refusal to participate in Fourth Committee discussions of such reports as well as a refusal to allow missions of this nature entry into the non-self-governing territories. The preliminary comment stated that Greenland had not yet received any visits from an actual “visiting commission”. The next topic mentioned was Dr Hoo and Dr Benson’s visit to Greenland, which, at barrister Hermod Lannung’s suggestion, had been invited by the Greenland Department. The two officials were accompanied by chief of section Sveistrup. It was furthermore noted that the two UN officials had prepared a report after their visit that “described the Danish efforts made on behalf of the population of Greenland in a highly flattering way”. To avoid creating a precedent, Denmark opposed the report’s publication as a UN document.

Items seven and eight: In general, the presentation of oral reports to the General Assembly by representatives of non-self-governing territories should be resisted. Such presentations should not be allowed, especially after an administering power had ceased to transmit information to the UN. Allowing states to walk out during hearings was proposed as a sanction. The preliminary comment stated that, in principle, Denmark could presumably support the Dutch point of view. On the other hand, caution should probably be exercised regarding the use of the proposed sanction.

Item nine: The administering powers should agree that non-self-governing territories could only participate in the work of the Special Committee as members of the national delegation, not, as was proposed during the last assembly, as associated members without the right to vote. As a sanction, withdrawal from the work in the 73 (e) Committee was proposed. In the Fourth Committee, according to the Danish comment, Denmark had voted in favour of examining the

²⁹ C.A.C. Brun wrote this in the margin: “Not if the Plenum acts *ultra vires*”. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.2, packet 5.

possible linkage of the non-self-governing territories to the Committee's work. In the General Assembly, however, Denmark had abstained from voting because it was unsure whether the anti-colonial states were loyal to the resolution. Moreover, Denmark wanted to have a free hand when the issue came up for discussion in the 73 (e) Committee that autumn.

In his conclusion, Troels Munk aired the idea of expanding the proposed alliance with kindred Western countries, including the other Nordic countries and Canada. This expansion of the alliance could potentially drive a wedge between the Soviet Bloc and the Arab and Asian states, whose colonial policy was gradually pushing them closer to the Soviet camp. Troels Munk wrote: "With regard to colonial issues in the UN, it seems that an anti-Western bloc is slowly emerging. By creating an alliance, one may succeed in putting an end to this development which ultimately could disrupt the UN". He added that a condition for Denmark's participation would be that "the US, known for its liberal policy on colonial issues, also participated". It was noted that up until that point Denmark had benefited from good "standing" with both parties. Hence, Denmark should not preclude itself from continuing to mediate. It was furthermore noted that the Netherlands was one of the most conservative representatives of the old colonial rule. Accordingly, Denmark should not be linked to the Netherlands.

The report formed the basis of a far-reaching investigation that took place over the course of the summer of 1952. It included a variety of people who had dealt with the Greenland issue in the UN, such as Eske Brun and Hermod Lannung, both of whom received the Dutch memo for further comments. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the case was first handed over to Finn Friis, who also analysed the items one by one. However, his contributions were not significant compared to those of his younger colleague. Friis' somewhat critical opinion of Hermod Lannung surfaced several times, most clearly when he deliberately tried to have Borberg appointed as the leader of the delegation to the 73 (e) Committee.³⁰ Furthermore, Friis advised against discussing the Dutch request with the other Nordic countries. He was also sceptical of the alliance proposed by the Netherlands. Tactical considerations concerning the Greenland issue seem to have influenced his view on this point. He wrote:

³⁰ Finn Friis' report "Non-Self-Governing Territories", dated 2 July 1952. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 5. The criticism directed at Lannung is apparent in the report's treatment of item five of the Dutch paper, where Friis writes that by voluntarily submitting information on the political development in Greenland, Denmark had "given an inch", and now "the South American and Asian states are taking a mile". If Denmark wanted to be demonstrative in this matter, it could voluntarily cease to submit information on political issues. Regarding item six of the Dutch report, it stated that by "spontaneously" inviting the UN employees, Mr Hoo and Mr Benson, Denmark had gone a step further than any of the other colonial powers. A quote from a confidential letter to head of office Frode Schøn, dated 17 June 1952, the Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 5, illustrates Friis' efforts to somewhat dampen Lannung's display. It states: "I think that it is definitely an issue that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be in control of and not just the Greenland Department and Lannung. Both personal and tactical points of view can easily have an influence and – with all due respect to Lannung's expertise – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs surely ought to have the opportunity to exert some influence through Borberg and/or myself".

It is a reasonable assumption that our relatively liberal position and the independent approach of our representation in the Fourth Committee have contributed to keeping Greenland out of the line of sight; there have been no attacks at all so far on our policy for Greenland.

However, Friis added, it is quite conceivable that Denmark could be attacked if it declared its solidarity with the more ‘heavy-handed’ colonial powers. Finally, he suggested that the Dutch should be informed that Denmark could support their proposal to have a separate discussion when the 73 (e) Committee next convened.

Lannung and the Greenland Department openly coordinated the presentation of their comments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As expected, they advised against the Dutch proposal, which involved stronger opposition to non-administering states. According to Lannung’s letter, the administering powers should be cautious about launching any type of “strike” since repercussions and unfortunate consequences could stretch far beyond the colonial issue. His main point was that it was essential for Denmark to safeguard the goodwill it had built up. To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he wrote:

Because of the possibility in the near future that Denmark will inform the United Nations that Greenland has attained equal status with the rest of the metropolitan country, and will therefore cease submitting information, it is in my opinion essential that Denmark still maintain the goodwill it has attained, and for this reason especially, it would be well-founded to take as reserved an approach as possible to the Dutch proposal.³¹

The Greenland Department had the same opinion. It emphasised the importance of cooperation in the Special Committee, and was “rather concerned” at the thought of a policy where the contrasts between the administering and non-administering states were drawn more sharply than was necessary.³² Borberg of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs likewise advised “to the greatest possible extent” against taking part in severe demonstrations. He agreed with Lannung and felt it was important for Denmark to maintain the goodwill it enjoyed. Since Denmark had thus far avoided criticism about Greenland, he felt it would be regrettable to expose Denmark to animosity at a time when enduring the consequences of “the full integration of Greenland in the Kingdom” (Borberg’s quotation marks) was under consideration. He did not think that Denmark should remove political issues from the Greenland report, but making them less inter-

³¹ Hermod Lannung to counsellor B. Dons Møller, Copenhagen, 3 July 1952. Marked as “Confidential”. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 5.

³² Finn Nielsen to counsellor B. Dons Møller, dated 3 July 1952. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 5.

esting and less copious should be considered. He was not interested in becoming Denmark's principal spokesman in the 73 (e) Committee. He wrote that it could easily be interpreted as a criticism of the gentlemen who had represented Denmark until then.³³

In a second account from 29 July 1952, Troels Munk recapitulated the different viewpoints gathered on the Dutch initiative, forming what would eventually become the main document on the Dutch memo. Four people studied and commented on the account: Finn Friis, C.A.C. Brun, Nils Svenningsen, and Foreign Minister Ole Bjørn Kraft. The latter concluded the list of comments by complimenting the young secretary who had done the majority of the work on the paper.³⁴

In the new account, Troels Munk concluded that Denmark could basically endorse all nine items in the Dutch paper and could therefore also support item 1 on retaining the 73 (e) Committee. The Danish position had thus changed. He did not, however, support the Dutch paper's section on sanctions, in particular the walkout item. On this last point, he noted that Denmark, for a variety of reasons, should avoid encouraging ill-will in the UN immediately prior to a possible decision about submitting information on Greenland. Simultaneously, reluctance was expressed toward allowing tactical considerations about Greenland to predominate. It was clearly emphasised that Denmark should not become an uninterested observer in the dispute over the colonies because of the attention that Greenland's integration was receiving. Much like the first report, the pros and cons of the key issue of creating an alliance in the UN were considered. The main conclusion was that Third-World countries could be driven into the arms of the Soviet Union if the policy was too rigid. The final approach was that Denmark should support the Dutch proposal on collaboration insofar as it contributed to developing the ideals of the UN Charter. Moreover, Denmark, in the interest of the whole, should try to remove the sting from any controversial proposals and thus prevent coordinated efforts regarding the alliance of colonial powers from appearing too uncompromising and reactionary. Finally, Munk recommended that Denmark continue its previous policy of acting as a mediator and of having a moderating effect.

Notably, the viewpoints presented in the account were clarified and certain items were made more stringent due to the recommendations added to the paper by high-level government officials and the Foreign Minister. Such was the case, for example, with item two (about how the administering powers should stand firm on the fact that they alone had authority over the administration of the

³³ William Borberg to Counsellor B. Dons Møller, dated 10 July 1952, New York. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 5. – Borberg also stated significantly that he was aware that Great Britain would not hesitate to walk out on the meeting if the nature of the deliberations went against the UN Charter.

³⁴ Report by Troels Munk dated 20 July 1952 and marked as "Confidential". According to the endorsement, Permanent Undersecretary of State Svenningsen had seen the report on 14 August 1952. Foreign Minister Ole Bjørn Kraft made numerous endorsements on 8 August 1952 and concludes by writing: "In my opinion, the report's recommendations are very clear and well-founded". The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2., packet 5.

non-self-governing territories and had no responsibilities to the UN).³⁵ Concerning items seven and eight (that representatives for non-self-governing territories should not be allowed to make oral reports in the plenary sessions), Finn Friis would not exclude the option of a walkout if the matter was ever brought to a head. The Foreign Minister also completely supported this addendum. In the margin of the text that summarised the individual items, Finn Friis, C.A.C. Brun, and Ole Bjørn Kraft indicated that, depending on the circumstances, the option of a walkout could not be excluded.

The final preparations for the meetings of the Factor Committee and the 73 (e) Committee were made during a meeting in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 27 August 1952. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Greenland Department, and Hermod Lannung were all present at this meeting.³⁶

As C.A.C. Brun explained at the beginning of the meeting, the aim of the meeting was not to provide any specific instructions, but merely to allow an exchange of views on the treatment of the issues involved. The stage was thus not set for modifying Denmark's position on existing issues. Not surprisingly, the meeting was marked by a new phase that the constitutional negotiations had reached on the issue of Greenland's integration. According to the minutes, Brun began the meeting by saying that: "In the near future, Greenland will be incorporated into Denmark, at which point the obligation to transmit information in accordance with Article 73 (e) will cease, but the incorporation would occur in such a manner that did not cause offence". Brun's statement was simply another way of expressing the policy that Lannung had pursued for several years – and was to continue pursuing until the Greenland issue was resolved. Essentially, the decision was strictly a Danish matter, but Denmark should build on the goodwill achieved and comply with the new rules the UN had passed.

Subsequently, Finn Friis discussed Denmark's position on the factor issue. He based this discussion on the response submitted to the UN Secretary-General earlier that year. This response stated that Denmark's special interest in Greenland should, above all else, serve to guide the efforts of the Danish delegation. Regarding other more general issues, the circumstances were still so unclear that providing specific instructions would have been extremely difficult.

According to the minutes, Lannung, not surprisingly, expressed how pleased he was with Cuba's proposal to divide the second part of the lists of factors into two subsections. He felt that the Danish delegation should strongly support this proposal, and in doing so emphasise that it was a Cuban proposal. He also stated that the main general focus should be placed on Greenland as much as possible because circumstances there did not correspond with the problems of other co-

³⁵ Next to this point, Finn Friis wrote: "It is absolutely essential that this general point is upheld". Foreign Minister Ole Bjørn Kraft gave his approval by writing "Yes OBK" and by underlining the words "absolutely essential".

³⁶ Report presented by Jørgen Adamsen and Finn Friis, dated 28 August 1952. Marked as "Confidential". The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 5.

lonial powers. Unfortunately, he failed to develop this position, which constituted one of Denmark's fundamental premises about Greenland.

The meeting also meant that British and American reactions to the Dutch initiative would be updated. Preparatory to the meeting, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had made contact with the British and the Americans, and their replies had been passed on to those taking part.³⁷ As expected, the Americans strongly opposed the Dutch proposal to impose sanctions. The US would, under no circumstances, participate in walkouts or offer any threats to do so. According to America's point of view, the administering states should remain as patient as possible in all UN bodies. The British shared most of the Dutch views on individual issues, but likewise had misgivings about the creation of an alliance with all of the issues in the Dutch memo present. The Dutch proposal for a coordinated effort was thus in reality rejected, but the initiative would still have significance in its consideration of all of the most sensitive issues. Both Denmark and Great Britain agreed in principle with the Dutch.

Sveistrup, the chief of section in the Greenland Department, asked whether Denmark as a general guideline could comply with America's views, which were more liberal than those of the Netherlands, France, and Great Britain. C.A.C Brun of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed this possibility, but added that this compliance presupposed that the Americans agreed in principle on the Dutch memo's main issues. If the US endorsed visiting missions, for instance, Denmark would have to vote against the proposal.

Meetings in the UN

Ad hoc Committee on Factors

The committee that was specially established to continue the last UN assembly's intense work on the factor issue met at the UN headquarters in New York in September. Six meetings were held from 4-9 September 1952. Mr Awni Khalidy of Iraq was appointed chairman, and the American representative, Benjamin Gerig, was appointed vice-chairman and *rapporteur*. Hermod Lannung did not represent Denmark; P.P. Sveistrup, the chief of section in the Greenland Department, participated instead. Beginning with the fourth meeting, chief clerk Christian Holten Eggert represented Denmark, and Eske Brun was the Danish representative at the last meeting. According to the minutes, the Danish representatives did not take the floor during these meetings.

At these meetings, the factor list of 18 January 1952 was reviewed and commented on in light of the remarks the Secretary-General had requested from participants in February 1952. This review resulted in the adoption of new and

³⁷ The London Embassy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated 16 August 1952; the UN delegation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated 14 August 1952 (contains the State Department's response to the Dutch proposal). The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 5.

somewhat revised text in the list of factors that later passed almost unchanged through the Fourth Committee and the General Assembly. The list of factors is identical to the one in the final General Assembly Resolution 648 (VII) of 10 December 1952, which was the UN's resolution on the factor issue that was in force when the status of Greenland was changed by the new Constitution of 1953. William Borberg probably hit the nail on the head when he stated in his account of the meetings that the revisions were, borrowing the words of chief clerk Eggert, of "an extremely academic nature". This was presumably due not only to the participation of many experts, but also to the working method. After a short preliminary exchange of arguments, the Ad Hoc Committee then dealt with the items on the list of factors one by one, taking into consideration the comments submitted by the various states. The efficient management of the meetings and the determination to develop text the majority could support comprised one decisive factor. Consequently, the need to vote, with the exception of the final obligatory vote of approval, did not arise.³⁸

During the opening remarks, many of those present once again emphasised that the final list of factors would only be advisory. This position matched America's, which was nevertheless modified by a comment – characteristic of the colonial policy of the American administration at the time – made during the second meeting: "No single factor could be regarded as decisive in every case, except perhaps the freely expressed opinion of the populations concerned, which was the one overriding factor".

Discussion during the first meetings, which dealt with the indicators of independence or other forms of self-government, was marked by difficulties in reaching agreement on the indicators that applied to both categories. A decisive, logical breakthrough occurred during the second meeting of 4 September when Victor Rivas, the Venezuelan representative, suggested distinguishing between indicators of independence and indicators of other forms of self-government, including the voluntary limitation of sovereignty. In his explanation, Rivas emphasised that asking the population about independence was not necessary since independence was considered the highest form of self-government. On the other hand, the population should have the opportunity to freely express its views on other forms of self-government and voluntary limitations of sovereignty.

Therefore, two sets of indicators should exist: One for independence, and one for territories that were not fully sovereign, but nevertheless had attained "a full measure of self-government" – and for which there would be no duty to report in accordance with the Charter. As a logical approach, the Venezuelan proposal quickly met with approval. At the close of the third meeting, representatives agreed to use this method. At the fourth meeting, the French representative

³⁸ The account is based on the following source material: The minutes (Summary Records, 1-6) from the six ad hoc committee meetings. They are signed A/AC.58/SR 1 to SR 6. The final report of the ad hoc committee (Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Factors (Non-Self-Governing Territories)) signed with A/2178 of 16 September 1952; Report from the Danish UN delegation dated 10 October 1952, New York. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 5.

proposed an additional refinement of the Venezuelan proposal that included dividing the factors into two main categories: One that applied to independent states, and one that applied to all other forms of self-government. He proposed that the latter category should be further divided into: 1) separate systems of self-government, and 2) freely-entered association. However, this transparent structure, which probably closely mirrored Danish views, was not accepted. The final report simply retained an American proposal from an earlier draft simply to add the paragraph on association to the second item of the Venezuelan proposal. Even though this decision was hardly satisfactory with regard to systematic considerations, it was adopted. The portion about integration that Lannung had fought so hard for was thus reduced to something more like an addendum and was not covered by the title of the new factor list.

Limited interest in the discussion of the indicators for achieved independence quickly became apparent. They were well known from the literature on sovereignty and were hardly explicitly relevant for the main task of the Committee, which was to determine when the duty to report could be terminated. In accordance with an Iraqi proposal, a new item was, however, added on national defence.

By virtue of the new categorisation, attention was now focused on another “separate system of self-government”. On this point, most members of the UN wanted to ensure that autonomous territories that had in one way or another voluntarily renounced *full* sovereignty had done so freely and had attained enough self-government to cease the duty to report. At the second meeting, the US significantly pointed out that many forms of autonomy existed without absolute independence. The obligation to transmit information to the UN depended on the territory’s ability to manage its own affairs, which, according to the US, was something that could not be decided absolutely.

With these distinctions on the table, it was decided to move the two items on the “political advancement” of the population and its opinion (“freely expressed by informed and democratic processes”). These items belonged under other forms of self-government and were not relevant for states that had attained full independence.

Discussion in the meetings especially focused on conditions for internal self-government. As a result of the above-mentioned Venezuelan proposal, and in recognition of the fact that legitimate limitations to self-government could exist – which was already stated in an old heading in the list of factors (“Voluntary Termination of Sovereignty”) – C1 (“Freedom from control or interference by the government of another state”) was changed to a stipulation for the careful clarification of the “Nature and means of control or interference, if any, by the government of another state ...” Crucially, this item was expanded with the aid of formulations from the British report published in July. This expansion meant that a state requesting the termination of the obligation to report should be tested with detailed questions about the legislative, executive, and judicial authority acquired. That summer, the British proposal’s ideological aim especially surfaced in connection with the detailed questions designed to ensure the establishment of a democratic electoral system.

Denmark's chief interest rested with the second main group of factors ("Factors indicative of the free association [whether in a federal or unitary relationship] of a territory on equal status with other component parts of the metropolitan or other country") since Denmark planned to use these factors to legitimise Greenland's wish for association with Denmark. The American vice-chairman – perhaps at the request of the Danish representative – made a resolute attempt during the discussion on this section to support the Danish model. He suggested a consistent division of the indicators depending on whether they applied to a unitary state or a federal state, but his attempt ultimately failed. France was strongly against his suggestion, and since none of the other states showed any interest in a consistent two-part division, Denmark gave up the battle.

Under the item "Geographical considerations", the Belgian representative attempted to gain a hearing for the "Belgian model", which was presented at an earlier UN assembly. This model attempted to place isolated minorities, e.g. those in the Brazilian jungle, on the same footing as the classic colonial territories defined by the water separating the colony and the metropolitan country. The intent was to extend the concept of a colony and the duty to report, and thus relieve the few states defined as colonial powers in the UN. However, Belgium did not succeed in gaining a hearing for this interpretation – which had met with some approval from countries such as Denmark. Denmark was compared to Canada, a country that was not subject to the duty to report (Eske Brun).

Only a few amendments were proposed during this review of the second main group of factors. The most significant amendment was made to C2 ("Local rights and status"), where the distinction between a unitary state and a federal state was clarified in accordance with text suggested by Belgium.³⁹

The Danish delegation made several errors of judgment on the duration of the meetings (they were expected to continue until sometime in October), as well as on the possibility of achieving results.⁴⁰ Clearly, the delegation lacked Lannung's

³⁹ C2's wording thus ended up as: "In a unitary system equal rights and status for the inhabitants and local bodies of the territory as enjoyed by inhabitants and local bodies of other parts of the country; in a federal system an identical degree of self-government for the inhabitants and local bodies of all parts of the federation".

⁴⁰ A written statement from the meeting of 6 September 1952 sheds light on the efforts of the Danish delegation. Chief clerk Christian Holten Eggert, who attended many meetings as the Danish representative, wrote that the delegation had not received actual instructions. The meetings were of a decidedly academic nature. He indicated that the meetings were not expected to produce any significant results. Previously active states (Cuba and Guatemala) had sent "new, quiet people" and a general feeling existed that the real deliberations would not commence until the Fourth Committee assembled. Consequently, he found it doubtful that Denmark should say anything at all. Regarding Lannung's opinion that the list of factors' section on association should be divided into two categories (unitary state versus federal state), chief clerk Eggert recommended that this issue, which "also from several perspectives is described by the minute taker as being more of an issue of personal interest for Mr Lannung than a standpoint of the Danish government", be suspended for the time being. However, it should also be left open to allow further discussion. The Danish National Archives, Greenland Administration, correspondence concerning the UN, 1946-1955, packet 16. – The written statement is not listed in the documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

expertise and *savoir-faire*. Based on this experience, the Danish representatives must have been surprised at the Committee's success in creating a new and improved list of factors after only six meetings.

The final wording of the list of factors was not completely perfect from the Danish standpoint, but Denmark – according to Sveistrup, the chief of section – did not object out of consideration for the opinion of the other colonial powers. Subsequently, in its report on the Committee's meetings to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the UN delegation stressed that the diplomatic process had corresponded with Danish interests. The objectives Denmark wished to pursue in the list of factors' wording were in principle taken into account in the Committee's edits of the list. The Danish request to divide the second part, which was labelled as “formally a Cuban proposal”, was not achieved. The attempt to remove the paragraph on ethnic and cultural considerations was also unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the main conclusion was that the revisions the list of factors had undergone meant that the Danish government would not encounter difficulties in its wish to assimilate Greenland into the Kingdom of Denmark.⁴¹

The meetings in the 73 (e) Committee, the Fourth Committee, and the plenary meeting

The meetings in the 73 (e) Committee, titled the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories as of 1952, were, as in previous years, marked by the clash of interests between the administering states and the non-administering states. The Dutch proposal from the summer of 1952 had set the stage for a confrontation, but according to a Danish report, the Netherlands was “surprisingly passive”; on the other hand, among the administering powers, Belgium and France took an aggressive approach.

These meetings lasted from 11 September to 7 October. A relatively uncontroversial draft resolution on race discrimination and a draft resolution to extend the existence of the Committee by three years were both adopted.⁴² Meanwhile, Great Britain, France, and Belgium wanted to abolish the Committee, while many of the non-administering states wanted the Committee to become permanent. Clearly, this proposal was politically explosive and flare-ups could not be ruled out when the issue came up for debate in the Fourth Committee.

The Fourth Committee dealt with issues concerning the non-self-governing territories from 21 October to 18 November. According to a Danish report of 5 December 1952, these meetings were marked by the same anti-colonial atmosphere as the previous year. The non-administering states became increasingly

⁴¹ Minutes by Troels Munk, dated 7 November 1952. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 6.

⁴² Minutes by Holten Eggert, dated 10 October 1952, New York. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 5.

vehement in their opposition to colonial rule. They gained support from countries such as Norway, Sweden, and Canada. According to the report, the trend towards harsh criticism and interference became progressively more noticeable and ruthless. However, it cannot be ruled out that Lannung slightly exaggerated the situation. In January 1953, when the major colonial powers reviewed the Fourth Committee's meetings in the previous assembly, their evaluation stated that the criticism of the non-colonial states had been significantly weaker and less effective in comparison to that of former assemblies. There were various reasons for this weakening, not the least of which was poor leadership.⁴³

In the Fourth Committee, Lannung represented Denmark. On 23 October, he gave a long speech on social progress in the non-self-governing territories. He pointed out that economic development was a precondition for social progress. This statement led him to the main point of his speech, which was to give a briefing on the plan adopted by the Council of Europe in September 1952 on the economic development of overseas territories.⁴⁴

On 30 October, Lannung used Poland's pointed attack on the colonial powers to promote the Danish policy on Greenland.⁴⁵ The Polish representative had carelessly claimed that not a single one of the colonial powers was fulfilling its obligations under the UN Charter. In response, Lannung repeated the official Danish version of its policy on Greenland (a policy that had been in force for more than a hundred years). This policy stated that all revenue from Greenland should be used exclusively for the benefit of Greenland's people. He went on to exploit the propaganda value of the initiatives the Danish state had recently implemented in the healthcare system and economy of Greenland. He explained that Denmark was currently spending considerable amounts of money on Greenland in order to raise the population to the same level of development as the rest of the Kingdom of Denmark. As an example, he noted that the government had spent two and a half times more on the healthcare system per inhabitant in Greenland than in Denmark. Discrimination, therefore, did exist, but notably benefitted the population of Greenland.

Lannung failed to mention that Danish efforts in healthcare were, among other things, a result of strong domestic criticism of conditions in Greenland, but Poland did not respond. Points in goodwill had unmistakably been won by Denmark in the public relations offensive it had embarked on where Greenland was concerned.

⁴³ Annex 1 of the report, dated 5 December 1952. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 6; the colonial powers' evaluation is described in: "Minutes of meeting in the British delegation of representatives for the administering powers regarding trusteeship issues, Tuesday 28 January 1953". Classified as "Strictly Confidential". Submitted by the Danish UN delegation on 28 January 1953. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 6.

⁴⁴ The speech was submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a cover letter dated 24 October 1952, New York. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 5.

⁴⁵ The speech was sent with a cover letter signed by Borberg and dated 12 November 1952, New York. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 6.

However, this contribution was only a warm-up for Lannung's important speech in the Fourth Committee on 15 November, when he took advantage of the Ad Hoc Committee's report to present a long statement on Denmark's Greenland policy.⁴⁶ This speech was so far the longest and most detailed presentation of Denmark's plans for Greenland in this international forum. No indications show that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ordered this speech, which means the Danish delegation must have initiated it. It is very possible that Lannung took the initiative himself. In any case, the speech certainly reflected his views.

First, the speech began by expressing the hope that the report was "the last milestone" – Lannung often used this term – in the efforts to study and establish the factors. Without taking much notice of the structure of the new draft of the list of factors⁴⁷ prepared by the Ad Hoc Committee, Lannung expressed his satisfaction that the Committee, as expected, had retained the fundamental division of factors into two parts, one part for the achievement of independence or some other form of self-government and one of a list of factors indicative of a territory's free association with the metropolitan or other country. The decisive leap of thought reflected by the structure of the list of factors – especially due to his efforts – was the notion that integration into the metropolitan or other country was equivalent to "a full measure of self-government". Lannung pointedly expressed this notion as follows: "The Ad-Hoc Committee thus realizes that the former non-self-governing territories may enjoy self-government either in form of independence or in the form of association with another state, be it metropolitan or another country".

He went on to defend and recommend the distinction between unitary states and federal states. This distinction had been omitted from the text due to French opposition; therefore, it did not play a part in the structuring of the list of factors. However, Lannung was not deterred. He stated that it was of subordinate importance whether or not the distinction was made! According to Lannung, what really mattered was the general agreement in the UN that if a population in an administering territory had, by its own request and through democratic processes, attained the same rights as other parts of the metropolitan or other country, it had certainly attained a full measure of self-government.

⁴⁶ Two copies of the speech were sent to Denmark with a cover letter by Borberg dated 20 November 1952, New York. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2.a, packet 6. – On 2 December 1952, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a copy of the speech to the Prime Minister's Office and the Greenland Department. A handwritten note by Troels Munk included with the submitted copy of the letter shows that people knew that the speech was in the Greenland Department's possession, but that it was recommended that an official dispatch be executed "considering the significance of the speech". The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2.a, packet 6.

⁴⁷ This circumstance drew Troels Munk's attention to a handwritten comment on one of the copies of the speech sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Next to Lannung's section on dividing up the factors, he wrote: "Strictly taken, is it not rather disingenuous (but probably tactically wise) to maintain that a 'principal distinction ...' etc." has been upheld – see the make-up of the list of factors? TM, *ibid.*

Based on these developments, he cleared the way for a presentation of the fundamental view of Danish politicians and opinion makers (if Alf Ross is left out) on the future status of Greenland. According to them, due to natural conditions on the island and the limited size of its population, Greenland had no other option for attaining “a full measure of self-government” than through full integration with Denmark. Just as he had done on previous occasions, Lannung presented this notion as follows:

As I have had the opportunity of stressing in this Committee, we should not lose sight of the fact that for a territory with a very small population, which for practical reasons hardly permits them to form their own independent state, integration or association with another state is the (only) realistic possibility for achieving a full measure of self-government.

If one ever wants such a people to be self-governing in accordance with its aspiration, it must be in association with some other territory and if it is in accordance with their wish freely expressed, quite natural is association or integration with the country with which it was hitherto attached.

The only aspect not yet covered in this well-composed speech was the presentation of the Greenlanders’ aspirations. To cover this aspect, a long piece – item four – was read from Augo Lynge’s recent speech in the Greenland Provincial Council. The speech will be discussed in more detail in chapter 9.

This speech strongly advocated Greenland’s integration with Denmark, which had been one of Lynge’s main political objectives for many years. In his speech, Lynge stated that Greenland’s population greatly desired integration. He then emphasised the need to distinctly define the constitutional status of Greenland in the new Constitution. Lannung next referred to Lynge’s appeal to the Provincial Council to accept Greenland’s incorporation as a Danish county as well as its representation in the Danish Parliament. Finally, he mentioned that the Provincial Council unanimously accepted the proposal.

Lannung was of course aware that Greenland would soon appear on the agenda in the UN and thus took the opportunity at the end of his speech to repeat Denmark’s main position on the competence issue, which, just as previously, was that an administering state had the right to determine the constitutional status of the territories under its sovereignty. The implication was that the issue should not concern UN bodies. He went on to say that Denmark would submit information to the UN on every alteration in the status of Greenland, but it would not let decisions made by its constitutional bodies be subject to the UN’s revision and control. In other words, the position that Lannung put forward was that the forthcoming announcement on the alteration of Greenland’s status should be regarded as notification to the UN and not as an item for discussion. His presentation of this position was uncompromising. The equally unbending

American attitude on this issue had presumably once again shaped his approach.⁴⁸

According to Lannung's report, reactions to his speech were "very propitious and entirely positive".⁴⁹ J.V. Scott, New Zealand's representative and *rapporteur* in the Fourth Committee, reported that he had sent a detailed account of the speech to his government in order to show how Denmark had taken the right approach – that of duly notifying the Fourth Committee and the UN about developments. States had previously presented the Fourth Committee and the UN with a *fait accompli* concerning the termination of their reports. The Danish approach was far superior and the only truly advisable way to proceed.

In the UN, Lannung's speech perfectly illustrated the two-sided Danish policy on the Greenland issue. On the one hand, Denmark gained sympathy from the anti-colonial bloc by taking the UN seriously and by expressing its intentions in a probably unprecedented manner. On the other, Denmark took a fundamentally tough stance on the fact that competence in this issue lay with Denmark, not with the UN. Consequently, Denmark also ensured support from the colonial powers. This was demonstrated – according to Lannung's account – in the response by Australia, which had privately emphasised how the final statement in the speech had carried great weight because it had been presented by Denmark, a country known for its liberal approach. The speech was thus extremely beneficial for the other colonial powers.

The uncompromising approach to the issue of principles was maintained during the final stage of the UN assembly. The continuance of this approach was particularly clear on 15 December 1952, when the Netherlands' notification of its intention to cease reporting on the Dutch Antilles and Surinam was discussed. Surinam attained self-government in 1954 and became independent in 1975. In Lannung's opinion, the Netherlands' case was clearly analogous to Denmark's.

A resolution proposal formed the background. Based on Lannung's hunch, this proposal was put forward with the Netherlands' agreement and stated that

⁴⁸ Cf. the letter Finn Friis submitted to the Greenland Department and Hermod Lannung, dated 9 February 1953. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 6. – The letters contain press releases on America's decision to suspend its submission of reports to the UN on Puerto Rico after the implementation of its own constitution. The letters state that the American representative, Benjamin Gerig, had informed the Danish delegation that the US would submit the new Puerto Rican constitution to the UN "for information" and not "for discussion". The American and Puerto Rican governments alone were entitled to determine whether the former non-self-governing territory had attained a full measure of self-government and was thus no longer subject to the categories designated in Article 73 (e).

⁴⁹ Lannung's account, dated 8 December 1952, of the reactions to the speech was sent as an annex to a report submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This report was signed by Borberg on 9 December. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 6. The positive feedback mentioned in the report came from Venezuela, Australia, other colonial powers, Norway, Sweden, India, Indonesia, "and some Arabic and Latin American countries". No negative comments were given after the speech, including those from the Eastern Bloc, which did not make use of the opportunity to criticise the American bases in Greenland.



Danish Prime Minister and Foreign Minister H.C. Hansen speaking in the UN in June 1955 about helping developing countries. It became Denmark's favourite cause to take a liberal position on the colony issue and to try to serve as a mediator. In March 1951, P.P. Sveistrup wrote to Eske Brun about Denmark's position in the UN, saying that "we are regarded as being the most humane colonial power and most supportive of the UN. (...) This has, of course, unavoidably caused some bitterness among the other colonial powers". Sveistrup then suggested that future Greenland reports to the UN should be fashioned so as to not irritate the other colonial powers "i.e., that we be a bit discreet when emphasising all the positive traits of the Greenland Department". (UN Photo and Film Collection, Roskilde University Library)

the new factor committee (in 1953) should thoroughly review the documents and reports that the Dutch government submitted to the assembly.

Lannung maintained that this proposal conflicted with an agreement made by the colonial powers that the UN did not have the competence to review a colonial power's decision about the constitutional status of a territory. The other colonial powers confidentially explained that they agreed with Denmark, but since the Netherlands could live with the resolution – which provided a postponement of the issue for the Dutch government – Denmark had no other alternative than to abstain from voting on the resolution proposal. According to Lannung's report, Belgium, Great Britain, Australia, the US, New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa supported the Danish representative's explanation of his vote. He worded it as follows:

My delegation will abstain in the voting on the operative part of the resolution.

We do so for reasons of principle, in which connection I may confine myself to referring to my statement in my question of the competence of the United Nations when we considered the question of factors.

My delegation does not find there is *any need* (Lannung's emphasis) for a further examination of the documents submitted by the Netherlands Government relating to the Netherlands Antilles and Surinam in the light of the factor resolution or any other resolution or of a new report to the General Assembly.

We are ready to take note of the communication of the Netherlands Government without any further delay.⁵⁰

The resolution was adopted with 29 votes for, none against, and 13 abstentions.

The last major issue Denmark was involved in during this UN assembly was concluded during the plenary meeting on 10 December 1952. The vote dealt with the future of the 73 (e) Committee; in the Fourth Committee, Belgium, France, and Great Britain had threatened previously to withdraw from the 73 (e) Committee if it was extended for an indefinite period at the wish of many of the non-colonial states. Great Britain wrote directly to leading non-colonial powers to inform them that they would withdraw from the Committee if the indefinite extension was granted.

In accordance with Denmark's altered position on the Committee's future – with its emphasis on the advantages of dealing with colonial issues in this limited forum – Lannung worked behind the scenes to arrange a compromise. According to his report, the compromise was only arranged when Great Britain and the US expressed their understanding. It was “strongly supported by the latter”. A decisive issue for the two states, as well as for Denmark, was unquestionably the avoidance of a crisis in the UN system as a result of the dispute over the 73 (e) Committee.

The proposal stated that the continuation of the Committee's work should be restricted to a three-year period. Lannung suggested a procedure he had once used to weed out unwanted text in a resolution, i.e. the division of votes whereby a resolution was divided into separate sections with each section subject to indi-

⁵⁰ This presentation can be found in appendix 1 of the report for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is signed by Borberg and dated 15 December 1952, New York. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M2., packet 6. On the report, C.A.C. Brun wrote: “To be shown to the director. Quite interesting. 19/12Br”. The stamps show that it was submitted to the Minister and the director.

vidual voting. During the voting, this procedure could be used to guide the proposal back to the original proposal of a three-year extension. On the other hand, the plenary assembly would, based on a suggestion from India, review the matter again in 1955.

Once again, a way out had been found in a critical situation for the Fourth Committee, which had prevented a breakdown in international collaboration on colonial issues. To the British, the outcome was a victory for their standpoint. However, Lannung also took pride in his efforts and did not hesitate to report back home that he had received recognition for his contribution.⁵¹

On 10 December when Denmark voted against Resolution 648 (VII), which established an ad hoc committee of ten members to re-examine the factor issue and provisionally approved the new factor list of September 1952 (A/2178), it was again on grounds of principle. The factor list had not been amended during its pass through the Fourth Committee and the General Assembly. It took Danish interests in Greenland into account because the section on integration was retained. While it could therefore accept the factor list appended to the resolution, Denmark and the other colonial powers could not accept the operative section of the resolution. This section, according to the Danish interpretation, implied the right of codetermination by the General Assembly on the application of factors and therefore it was unacceptable.⁵²

At this point, Denmark declared that it did not wish to be re-elected on to the Factor Committee; instead, Great Britain had taken its seat. In Denmark's official opinion, it was not necessary to establish a new committee because improvements to the list of factors, after further discussion, were not likely to be made. This opinion was obviously conditioned by the role of the list of factors in the Danish policy on Greenland, where Denmark constantly strove to avoid placing itself under too great an obligation. Presumably, Denmark wished to withdraw from the discussion now that it had achieved its objective: Gaining acceptance for the option of integration.⁵³

⁵¹ Lannung's report was sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a cover letter dated 13 December 1952. C.A.C. Brun wrote the following on the cover letter: "Should probably be shown to the Minister. See page 3. 19/12 Br". The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 6. – In response to the acknowledgment, Lannung wrote: "For the sake of completeness, it shall be noted that Great Britain and the US, after the referendum in which the desired change in Section 1 went through, expressed great appreciation to the Danish representative concerning the Danish effort in achieving this as well as for both 'influencing' the Arabic, Latin American and other votes, and for the tactical preparation of the case". Lannung's report, dated 5 December 1952, provides details on the standpoints of the colonial powers and the Danish efforts behind the scenes to continue the 73 (e) Committee (sent to Denmark the same day with report no. 68).

⁵² Annex no. 1 of report no. 68, dated 5 December 1952, New York. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 6. – Item five of the resolution described the main problem that implied that the General Assembly was entitled to examine reports submitted to the Secretary-General on administering states suspending reporting.

⁵³ Troels Munk's report, dated 7 February 1953, addresses the argument. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 6. – The new tasks the ad hoc committee was given at the meeting in 1953 were hardly attractive to Denmark. The committee had to consider, among other things, the possibility of defining the concept of "a full measure of self-government". It also had to examine the features that guaranteed the principle of self-government in relation to Chapter XI of the UN Charter.

During his last few days in New York, Lannung took the opportunity to remind the authorities in Denmark that in February 1952 he had concluded that the time had come to make a constitutional amendment that allowed Greenland to move up from being a colony to having “in principle the same position and status as other parts of the Kingdom”. This gathering in the UN only reinforced this conclusion. If no such change was made in the Constitution, “very strong reasons” would exist for making at least a “minor constitutional amendment”. For example, this amendment would include a change in the status from a colony to an equal part of the Kingdom. In the end, after making the suggested constitutional amendment, Denmark’s aim should be to cease transmitting information to the UN. In conclusion, Lannung recommended that the constitutional change explicitly stipulate that Greenland was now an equal part of the Kingdom. This stipulation would save Denmark from lengthy negotiations and a great deal of suspicion in the UN. He would, as he put it, gladly substantiate this fact verbally.⁵⁴

At this point, Lannung had made two appeals to the authorities in Denmark on the Greenland issue; his impatience in this matter is detectable. Once again, his renewed appeal was testimony to his strong commitment to implementing the solution to the Greenland issue that he believed was essential in the international situation of the day. His appeals did not impact the writing of the new constitutional amendments, which contained no explicit wording on the equal status of Greenland with the other parts of the Kingdom.

Summary of chapters seven and eight

Danish politicians and government officials basically assumed that Greenland was not a colony – not a traditional colony, at least – and that Denmark was thus not a colonial power over Greenland with a colonial power’s burdensome past to reflect upon. Based on this assumption, most senior government officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (including its expert on international law) and in the Greenland Administration in 1946 believed that it was not necessary to register Denmark as a colonial power. Denmark would thus not be obligated to submit information to the UN on non-self-governing territories as prescribed by the UN Charter. However, senior government officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were divided on the issue.

Denmark quickly abandoned its position concerning the obligation to report when faced with the one taken by the US and several of the major colonial powers. Beginning in 1946, Denmark commenced submitting annual reports on Greenland in accordance with the questionnaire prepared by the UN. Denmark deemed that non-compliance with the obligation to report would be politically

⁵⁴ Lannung’s account was submitted with Borberg’s cover letter dated 8 December 1952, New York. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M2., packet 6.

unwise. Ironically – and particularly due to Lannung’s efforts – Denmark soon emerged as a liberal colonial power that exceeded the obligation to report since it also reported on the political conditions in Greenland. The Greenland Administration, however, regarded the obligation to report as a burdensome task and mainly desired to have the procedure eliminated as soon as possible.

As of 1948, the chief objective of the leading Danish decision makers and opinion makers (Hans Hedtoft, Eske Brun, and Hermod Lannung) was to terminate the colonial status of Greenland and integrate it into Denmark. Brun and Lannung were in any case certainly very concerned about developments in how colonial issues had been dealt with in the UN since 1948. They anticipated increasing interference from the non-colonial powers, also concerning the situation in Greenland if its colonial status was not changed. This frightening spectre undoubtedly influenced their recommendations and their actions. In the report of 1948, Denmark had informed the UN that it would examine the option of Greenland’s incorporation and equal status with the Danish Kingdom. In subsequent years, this principal objective was utterly decisive for Danish policy in the Fourth Committee, which examined the colonial reports. During the increasingly aggravated discussions on colonial issues in the UN between the colonial powers and the non-colonial powers, Denmark chose a “liberal” approach. Denmark thus acted in accordance with America’s (even more liberal) line on predominant issues, although Denmark was careful to avoid a falling out with the traditional, more conservative colonial powers (the Netherlands, Belgium, and France). At the same time, Denmark maintained fruitful relations in the Fourth Committee with a number of important Third-World countries, especially India.

With this approach and the well-developed network of contacts that chief Danish negotiator Hermod Lannung had, Denmark earned goodwill for the Danish UN policy. This policy was considered a necessary precondition for the implementation of the strategy for Greenland. It proved successful, even though on the crucial issue of competence, Denmark was clearly in close agreement with the US. In principle, Denmark only recognised its obligation to simply *inform* the General Assembly of any change in the status of Greenland.

At the same time, the Danish administration of Greenland was not entangled in the increasingly aggravated dispute in the UN between the administering states and the non-administering states. Greenland was hardly ever mentioned in this context. Only the Eastern Bloc countries offered criticism, which concerned the expansion of the American military bases in Greenland. Denmark instead won international praise in 1950 for inviting, most unconventionally, two senior officials of the UN administration for an extended visit to Greenland. The officials subsequently prepared a very positive report on developments in Greenland.

Hermod Lannung played a key role in the realisation of Denmark’s objectives. His knowledge, commitment, and network of contacts, which included officials and politicians in many camps, raised the standard of the Danish policy on Greenland and colonial policy in the expert committees, the Fourth Committee,

and the General Assembly to an international level. Lannung thrived in the UN's complex negotiations. He undoubtedly gave Danish policy more impact and purposefulness than any other Danish government official at the time could have accomplished. In an area where the negotiations were not controlled by instructions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (contrary to the general UN policy), Lannung, with his knowledge and great tactical skills, managed to leave his mark on UN diplomacy. Lannung's influence was particularly visible in the preparation of the initial list of factors during the first, decisive phase. Lannung was the prime mover behind the conceptualisation of the paragraph in the list of factors on association with the metropolitan country; thus, he made a significant contribution to the development of this section – which was by no means a matter of course – and helped ensure that integration into the metropolitan or other country was put on the list of factors as a genuine form of self-government on the same footing as independence. Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs closely watched developments concerning the Greenland issue, its creative contributions were limited and its role was reduced merely to commenting upon and usually approving Lannung's improvisation in the UN. Lannung's distinctive role is accentuated by the fact that he was also a Danish politician and opinion maker. From about 1950 onward, he was probably motivated by unease about the increasing American activity in Greenland, which he likely feared would lead to an American takeover of the country.

Danish UN policy on the Greenland issue before the adoption of the new Constitution culminated in Lannung's speech in the UN on 15 November 1952. This speech contained almost all of the positions the Danish policy on Greenland was based on:

- Integration with the metropolitan country is equivalent to self-government;
- The placement of unitary states (such as Denmark) and federal states (where self-government is more apparent) on the same footing;
- Greenland's wish to become an integrated part of Denmark;
- Assurance that the population of Greenland was on equal footing with the population of Denmark;
- Competence on the issue resting with the Danish government and not the UN.

The notion that a “full measure of self-government” was equivalent to integration with the metropolitan country constituted a decisive leap in thought. This notion did not exist behind the text of the UN Charter, and it clearly represented a new development. Through this notion of equivalence, an international acceptance – developed during the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Factors – was guaranteed, one that recognised that absolute independence – which was undoubtedly the principal form for many states – was not the only option for self-government. In the autumn of 1951, Lannung played a key role during the preliminary phase when the first list of factors was prepared. It is immediately obvious that his work was driven by the desire to create a framework for Greenland's integration into Denmark that was recognised by everyone.

From a commonsensical perspective, the equivalence of integration and self-government was clearly a construction – albeit one acknowledged internationally in several UN resolutions. Nevertheless, it is important to make clear that it was unmistakably in the spirit of the UN Charter that a colony could associate with the metropolitan or other country if that was what the population wished. However, a territory on the UN’s list of colonies could only attain association with the metropolitan country through the UN system and through Article 73 (e) of the Charter as well as its associated resolutions. Therefore, Article 73 (e) was pressured into covering a variety of forms of self-government and making allowance for many different considerations and interests. This development was furthermore conditioned by the fact that no international consensus existed on what “a full measure of self-government” meant. This concept was thus opened up for creative interpretation.

9 · Greenland on the path to constitutional equality, 1951-1953

Erik Beukel and Frede P. Jensen

Introduction

Five months after the adoption of the Greenland Act in spring 1950, Hedtoft's Social Democratic government was succeeded by the Eriksen-Kraft Liberal-Conservative coalition government, with Erik Eriksen as prime minister and Ole Bjørn Kraft as foreign minister. As mentioned at the end of chapter 6, the new government aimed to continue the Hedtoft government's Greenland policy, and the change of government had no impact on the implementation of the new Greenland Act. However, one particular aspect of the Liberal-Conservative government's parliamentary situation helped pave the way towards Greenland's constitutional equality in the final years up to the 1953 Constitution. The Liberal-Conservative government relied on support from the Social Liberal Party and, in order to secure this support, it was beneficial to focus on the question of the constitution as the key issue. This strategy also very much suited Prime Minister Erik Eriksen, who was one of the Liberals who wholeheartedly endorsed the most important new creation in the constitution, namely the unicameral system. Eriksen was not passionate about Greenland to quite the same extent as Hedtoft, but there is no doubt that he approved of the changes that had been set in motion. The fact that Eske Brun remained head of the Greenland Department also ensured a certain continuity. For example, shortly after the change of government, it was Brun who drafted a manuscript for a speech to be held by Eriksen at the Danish Parliament's Committee on Greenland.¹ It was also Eske Brun who pointed out that it was the custom to send Christmas greetings to Greenland and that the necessary preparations ought to be made.²

The new prime minister fully supported the major changes in Denmark's policy on Greenland. However, in Erik Eriksen's view, the most important aspect of his premiership was to bring about the adoption of the new constitution. Consequently, the prime minister's commitment to the issue of the constitution and the possible implications this had with respect to maintaining the government's parliamentary support had a considerable impact on the Liberal-Conservative government's attitude toward the matter of Greenland's constitutional equality. At the same time, Danish politicians and officials began to realise that it was important for Greenland to be granted a new status as an integral part of Denmark and for this status to

¹ Manuscript for a speech at the Danish Parliament's Committee on Greenland. Annex to letter from Eske Brun to private secretary Elkjær Larsen, 18 November 1950. The Danish National Archives. Erik Eriksen archive, group I, packet 1, folio 1.

² Memorandum from Eske Brun to private secretary Elkjær Larsen, 14 November 1950. The Danish National Archives. Erik Eriksen archive, group I, packet 1, folio 2.

become recognised as soon as possible. Danish politicians were acutely aware that Denmark's role as a colonial power had become more and more problematic.

This chapter takes a look at the developments in the Greenland issue in the last few years before the Constitution was adopted in 1953, and it discusses how the decisions made on the part of both Greenland and Denmark can be interpreted. The assessment is divided into five sections: First, negotiations in the Danish Parliament's Committee on Greenland in 1952, which led to a definitive consensus on Greenland's future constitutional status; second, the various phases of the controversy surrounding Professor Alf Ross' expert opinion on Greenland of June 1952; third, communication between Copenhagen and Nuuk in the summer and autumn of 1952, which took place on both an official and unofficial level; fourth, the role of the Greenland issue in the debate in the *Folketing* on the proposed revision of the constitution in spring 1953. Finally, the chapter looks at how different background factors had a bearing on the development towards constitutional equality.

Consensus on Greenland's future: Meetings of the Committee on Greenland in 1952

Three meetings of the Committee on Greenland, which took place in February and March 1952 (2 February, 21 February, and 17 March),³ played a key role in the process leading up to the constitutional provisions on Greenland. Unlike earlier statements about Greenland's status made in the commissions or by various political actors, this time a consensus was reached between the Greenlanders and the Danes – during what Hans Hedtoft described as “negotiations” – on the main conditions for Greenland's future association with Denmark. This consensus paved the way for the ensuing, more technical, phase involving the work of legal experts, which, however, did not actually get under way until June 1952.

It should be noted that right at the start of the meeting on 2 February the members from Greenland marked out the field when Augo Lynge highlighted the fact that the elections that had been held for the Provincial Council of Greenland had for the first time created direct representation of the people of Greenland. More than before, the Provincial Council's debate had to be viewed as an “expression of the wishes and demands which the people of Greenland have put forward and which they wish to be discussed and implemented by the Provincial Council and the government”. This was an unprecedented demonstration of self-confidence on the part of the Greenlanders! There were signs of the same self-confidence in Frederik Nielsen's refusal to listen to the head of the department (Eske Brun) on the matter of Greenland's economic position with respect to Denmark, which was

³ Typewritten minutes from the meetings are available from the Danish National Archives. Prime Minister's Office, Constitutional Commission of 1946, the 1946-1953 minutes from plenary sessions, packet 2. All statements quoted in the following section have been taken from this source. No opportunity was available for interpreting the shorthand minutes.



In 1953, Provincial Council members Augo (right) and Frederik Lynge became the first Greenland members of the Danish Parliament. They had both participated in the prior negotiations about Greenland's future. (Photograph Palle Jarner, the Royal Library, map and photo archive)

discussed in the Committee. The Greenlanders wanted to hear the government's position, not that of an official. These were new times for Eske Brun.

It was decided that there would be a proper debate about Greenland's constitutional status at the Committee's next meeting. Hans Hedtoft, who was also a member of the Danish Constitutional Commission, was requested to present the matter at the meeting. It is apparent from the minutes that Hedtoft, at the end of the meeting on 2 February, sought to gauge the mood of the two Greenland members by enquiring about what questions the Greenlanders wished to have answered on the matter and whether they had any *new requests*. The minutes, which are somewhat unsatisfactory, indicate that the Greenlanders requested information about what status Denmark would accord Greenland in the revised Constitution and how it was envisaged that Greenland should be represented in the Danish Parliament. Thus, the Greenlanders very reasonably requested to be informed about Denmark's considerations concerning the issue of Greenland, well aware that a Constitutional Commission had already been established several years ago. A new request, not heard on previous occasions, was put forward by Augo Lynge, namely that the parties seek to reach the same solution as for the Faroe Islands, with representation in the Danish Parliament. Nevertheless, it seems that there was no specific request by the Greenlanders concerning Greenland's status, but it was stated (by Frederik Nielsen) that there had been a discussion about whether Greenland should have the status of a Danish county.

On 20 February – according to the minutes – the two Greenland members requested that a special item concerning Greenland’s “constitutional status” be included in the agenda at the meeting the next day, which is somewhat odd, since, as mentioned earlier, this item had already been placed on the agenda. At the meeting on 21 February, Hans Hedtoft summed up the viewpoints on the issue so far and referred specifically to Augo Lynge’s statements in the Provincial Council in 1951 and to the considerations of the Greenland Commission. Referring to previous talks with Erik Eriksen, he explained that the Constitutional Commission had not yet addressed the issue. He did not mention that, compared to other more serious and problematic matters such as the succession laws, the abolition of the *Landsting* etc., the Greenland issue had been given low priority in the work on the revision of the Constitution. In light of these circumstances, he presented his own analysis, his starting point being that the principle that Greenland was an inseparable part of the Kingdom of Denmark should be written into the revised constitution. It is very clear from the minutes that he wanted statements from Greenlanders on this matter. Referring to the meeting on 2 February, he said that it was now his understanding that, as far as the question of representation was concerned, a solution similar to that of the Faroe Islands, with direct representation in the Danish Parliament, was wanted. He said: “I believe we should be guided by what the Provincial Council wishes”. The other Members of Parliament agreed with Hans Hedtoft’s idea and several of them emphasised the importance of moving away from the term “colony”. Given the weight of the matter, it would have been reasonable to expect, everything taken into consideration, a somewhat more substantial contribution from the Members of Parliament than was the case.

The Greenland members subsequently elaborated on the statements they had made at the meeting on 2 February. Augo Lynge said that increasing and strengthening the ties with Denmark had constituted the most important point on the agenda at the most recent meeting of the Provincial Council. He cited the desire expressed at that meeting for Greenland to have its own representatives in the Danish Parliament in the future so that the people’s concerns could be represented directly, without any intermediary party, as was the case for the Faroese people. Greenlanders wanted to have a direct influence on bills concerning Greenland, not least on the annual finance bill. The two requests for increasing and strengthening ties with Denmark and achieving representation in the Danish Parliament were undoubtedly the message that the Greenland members had been instructed to convey to the Danish politicians. It seemed that the prime issue was the matter of representation and thus the ability to exert a direct influence on the allocation of resources to Greenland. Judging by Augo Lynge’s statements, the Provincial Council had not clarified what form the closer association between Greenland and Denmark should take.

Augo Lynge himself was not in any doubt. The Greenlanders should strive for “the full incorporation of Greenland into the Kingdom of Denmark”; however, the issue was to be the subject of further debate in the Provincial Council “at a later point”. Thus, according to Augo Lynge, the Provincial Council of Greenland had not yet reached a conclusion in its debate about what form the closer association

between Denmark and Greenland should take. Due to the way it is recorded in the minutes, it is not easy to interpret what exactly Augo Lynge meant by this statement. Did he mean that Greenland wished to have a more concrete proposal from Denmark on the matter? Or should his words perhaps be interpreted as a reference to a constitutional solution whereby Greenland would only initially be given direct representation in the Danish Parliament, while the question of its association with Denmark would be clarified after renewed debate in the Provincial Council? This was certainly not his own personal view on the matter, since he later distanced himself on several occasions (such as at the Provincial Council meeting on 8 September 1952, cf. below) from the idea of having merely a promissory clause in the constitution. As the following will show, he did not feel bound by this point. It is possible that he was simply faithfully reporting what the others in the Provincial Council had stated at the meeting on 21 February.

By contrast, Frederik Nielsen was very unambiguous about the issue. According to the minutes, he said: "I can agree with what has been said. It should be established that Greenland is a part of the Kingdom of Denmark and that, as a natural consequence, Greenland should be directly represented in the Danish Parliament". He did not talk of a renewed debate in the Provincial Council, but rather, it seems, of what should be stated in a future text in the constitution.

This seems to have been a significant statement. In light of what had been said, the chairman of the Committee (Hans Hedtoft) ascertained that there was full consensus and suggested that it would be natural for the Provincial Council to discuss the issue that year. In saying this, he in actual fact ruled out the possibility of separating the two main issues that were on the agenda and postponing the matter of Greenland's status for consideration at a later stage. Both the issue of status and that of representation were to be decided during that very year. Hedtoft concluded by requesting that the Committee contact the prime minister and inform him that "negotiations" had taken place, that the Greenland Provincial Council had a "strong desire for a closer association with Denmark" and that it would be beneficial for a draft statement on this to be discussed at the coming meeting of the Provincial Council. Strangely, he did not mention in his request the single concrete wish from the Greenlanders, namely direct representation in the Danish Parliament. Hedtoft pointed out the importance of unanimous approval by the Provincial Council with regard to the wording in the constitution; he also said that it would be necessary to call on constitutional expertise for wording the provisions of the draft constitution. This request was approved.

Following the decision of the Committee on Greenland at the meeting of 21 February, a letter was sent by the Committee to Prime Minister Erik Eriksen, dated 17 March 1952. It stated:

During the negotiations that have taken place it has been stated by the members from Greenland that the situation is now such that there is a general desire in the Greenland Provincial Council to be more closely associated with Denmark constitutionally through a provision in the future constitution that es-

establishes the fact that Greenland is no longer a Danish colony but an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark and that the people of Greenland, in accordance with the more specific provisions laid down in the Elections Act, are represented in the Danish Parliament on an equal footing with the population in the rest of the Kingdom of Denmark.⁴

Here, the Committee made its position more explicit by translating the stated desire for a closer association with Denmark into a desire to become an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark – wording that was not in fact far removed from Frederik Nielsen’s words. The wording cleverly combined both the Greenland and the Danish points of view and interests and, in effect, the words were put into the Greenlanders’ mouths. The text of the letter was presented to all the members of the Committee on Greenland and the Greenland members thus accepted both the text and its description of their role. The Committee requested that the prime minister ensure that the Constitutional Commission, with its expertise on constitutional matters, discuss the issues and formulate draft provisions for the constitution and the Elections Act. It was proposed that the drafts be presented to the Greenland Provincial Council at its discussions in summer 1952.

As will be mentioned in chapter 10, the meetings of the Committee on Greenland in February-March 1952, and, to a large degree, the main wording of the letter to the prime minister of 17 March 1952 played a significant role in the Danish memorandum of September 1953 to the UN in connection with ending Greenland’s status as a colony, in which the letter was used as evidence of Greenland’s initiative in the matter.⁵ It cannot be said for sure whether or not the letter’s potential impact on a foreign audience was a consideration from the start.

To sum up, the important meetings of the Committee on Greenland that took place in February and March bear witness to a new self-confidence on the part of the Greenlanders and mark a new step forward by Greenland concerning the Greenland issue. The Greenlanders, very understandably, had become impatient

⁴ Copy of a letter from the Danish Parliament’s Committee on Greenland to the prime minister, dated 17 March 1952. The Danish National Archives. Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 3; draft of the letter from the Danish Parliament’s Committee on Greenland to the prime minister, dated 17 March 1952. The Danish Parliament’s Committee on Greenland. Draft of Committee’s letter of 17 March 1952 to prime minister concerning amendment to the Constitution, Library, Archives and Information Service of the Danish Parliament, archives of the Committee on Greenland, box 7, folio 4 (7). The draft shows that the expression “... that Greenland is no longer a Danish colony but an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark” was inserted in pen to replace the expression “... that Greenland is an inseparable part of the Kingdom of Denmark”.

⁵ Cf. chapter 10, footnote 21. In the memorandum to the UN Secretary-General, it was stated, with covert use of wording from the letter of 17 March 1952 – and with a slightly distorted description of the sequence of events – that the members from Greenland had said “that on the basis of the developments that had taken place, a general desire had arisen in the Provincial Council for Greenland to be more closely associated with Denmark through a constitutional provision that establishes the fact that Greenland is constitutionally no longer a Danish colony but an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark and that the people of Greenland, in accordance with the more specific provisions laid down in the Elections Act, would be represented in the Danish Parliament on an equal footing with the people in the other parts of the Kingdom of Denmark”.

during the lengthy process of constitutional amendment and, apparently fearing that they might be left out of the revision of the Constitution, raised objections. Within the framework of cooperation with the Danish members of the Committee on Greenland and, in particular, Hans Hedtoft, agreement was reached in a very short time on the conditions for Greenland's closer association with Denmark, which was later written into the constitution.

Poul Andersen and Alf Ross' expert opinion on Greenland

Almost four months passed before the legal expertise referred to by Hans Hedtoft in the meetings of the Committee on Greenland was actually commissioned. It eventually featured on the agenda at the meeting on 11 June 1952 of Committee 5 (editorial committee) of the Danish Constitutional Commission, which was chaired by Erik Eriksen. The prime minister declared that the present time afforded a "rare opportunity" to recognise Greenland as an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark. He proposed that the Commission members with expert knowledge on constitutional law formulate an expert opinion concerning the problems connected with the issue and that they elaborate proposals for amending the constitution on this point.

More interesting are the statements made by Hans Hedtoft at the meeting. According to the minutes, he pointed out that he had been raising the Greenland issue since 1948 because the constitution did not contain any up-to-date provisions relating to the matter. Any reference to Greenland as a colony or territory under possession should be removed. *He fully agreed with the Greenlanders' desire to make Greenland an integral part of the kingdom with independent representation in the Danish Parliament* (italics added). He proposed that the Commission's legal experts work together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and elaborate the necessary proposals, taking into consideration Britain's experience since World War II. He felt that *it would be beneficial to make Denmark's position on Greenland very clear, particularly with respect to the US* (italics added). The Committee gave its approval. It also endorsed Hedtoft's suggestion that the experts' proposals be submitted as soon as possible so that the Provincial Council could discuss the proposal for a new constitutional provision at the meeting in August. There was also endorsement for his proposal that the governor of Greenland be instructed and authorised to negotiate the proposal on behalf of the government so that Greenland's consent to the proposal would be given, to the extent possible, before the autumn.⁶

What is particularly interesting about these statements from a man who was one of the key players in the Greenland issue is the emphasis placed on the role of the Greenlanders with respect to the wording of the planned amendments to the constitution. Presumably Hedtoft had in mind the decisions made by the Committee on Greenland earlier in the year. However, at the same time, it is significant that he

⁶ Constitutional Commission, minutes of first meeting, Wednesday, 11 June 1952. The Danish National Archives, Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 3.

also underlined the importance of clarifying the issue of Greenland's constitutional status with regard to the US. This was very much a topic that was taboo and only very few, with the exception of the Danish Communists, ventured into that territory.

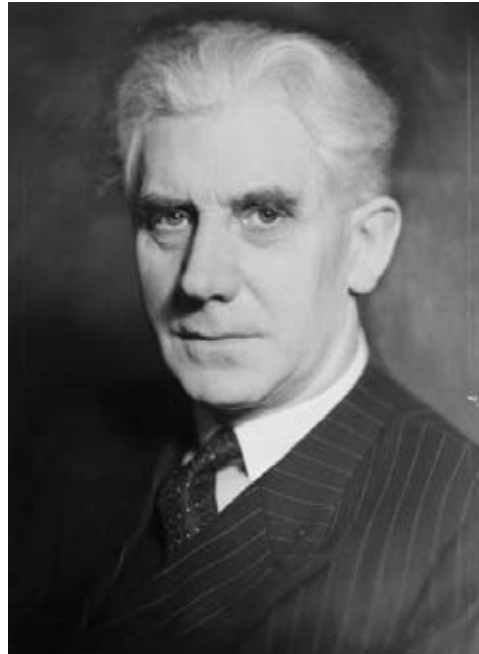
Following the consensus reached at the meeting, the two law professors Poul Andersen and Alf Ross, who had been assisting the Constitutional Commission in an advisory capacity for many years, were requested to jointly elaborate an expert opinion – in other words, an expert statement – concerning the problems that could arise if Greenland's constitutional status was changed when the country became an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark with representation in the Danish Parliament. The two men were also requested to elaborate an expert opinion on the amendments to the constitution that “might be desirable after adoption of the so-called Faroe Home Rule Act”. There was a further request for “proposals concerning the wording of such new paragraphs in the constitution”. This text was the main content of the letter signed by the prime minister, which was sent to the two professors the same day as the meeting.⁷ The professors, in other words, were to help overcome any constitutional problems that might arise in connection with the planned change to Greenland's status as a colony. The letter to the professors contained a reference to the letter sent by the Committee on Greenland to the prime minister, dated 17 March 1952, and it was noted that Committee 5 of the Constitutional Commission was able in principle to endorse what the Danish Parliament's Committee on Greenland had stated.

In a very short time, the two professors prepared a statement for the prime minister, which was entitled *Responsum vedrørende Grønlands og Færøernes statsretlige stilling* [*Expert opinion on the constitutional status of Greenland and the Faroe Islands*]. It was dated 17 June 1952 and consisted of a joint expert opinion as well as a separate statement by each professor.⁸ In the joint expert opinion the two lawyers said that changes in Greenland's constitutional status could only be implemented if there was a new provision in the constitution stating that the constitution was applicable to all parts of the Kingdom of Denmark and that consequently, Greenland should be represented in the Danish Parliament. With respect to the Faroe Islands, the professors did not find that any amendment to the constitution was required since the Faroe Home Rule Act had been based on the prerequisite that the solution was in line with the current constitution and they found that there was no reason why this prerequisite should no longer be valid. The next part of this chapter will focus in particular on the two separate statements, which, in their original wording, reveal that the two professors partly disagreed on what kind of status Greenland should have in the future.

The *Expert opinion on the constitutional status of Greenland and the Faroe Islands* was published in *Betænkning afgivet af Forfatningskommissionen af 1946* [*Report by the*

⁷ The letter to the two professors is quoted in *Betænkning afgivet af Forfatningskommissionen af 1946* [*Report by the Constitutional Commission of 1946*], 1953, p. 86; copies of the identical letters sent to the two professors are in the Danish National Archives. Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 3.

⁸ *Betænkning afgivet af Forfatningskommissionen af 1946* [*Report by the Constitutional Commission of 1946*], 1953, pp. 86-88.



The two law professors Alf Ross (left) and Poul Andersen (right) joined to present an expert opinion on Greenland's integration into Denmark. They disagreed somewhat, however, on which integration model served the Greenlanders best. (The Royal Library, map and photo archive)

Constitutional Commission of 1946], submitted on 29 January 1953 as annex 2. A footnote from 17 June 1952 shows that the expert opinion was “later amended”.⁹ Thus, it was decided not to mark the expert opinion with a date that was close to the date of the final version of the expert opinion in January 1953. It is remarkable that a document, which – as shown in the following – contains references to a UN resolution of 10 December 1952, is dated 17 June 1952. The explanation for this discrepancy presumably lies in the fact that part of the expert opinion – the joint statement by the professors – was to be used straight away in the further process of Greenland's integration. Before the final version of the text of the expert opinion was released in January 1953 to be published in the report by the Danish Constitutional Commission (which, as mentioned, is dated 29 January 1953 – the day of the last meeting of the Commission), there was a major commotion about its wording. The rumpus was due to Alf Ross' separate statement on Greenland of 17 June 1952, which immediately met with hefty resistance from politicians and officials. They believed that Ross' separate statement conflicted with the policy pursued hitherto with regard to Greenland as well as with Denmark's policy at the UN. As a result, neither of the two professors' separate statements was included in the government's official letter to Governor Lundsteen in August 1952 or featured in the briefing of the Provincial Council of Greenland during the negotiations in September 1952.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 86.

Disagreement on Ross' separate statement entered into the second phase in January 1953 when the Danish Constitutional Commission's report was to be published, cf. below.

What was all this about?

The two professors' original, separate statements on what the form of self-government in Greenland should be show that the authors had diverging views on the issue. In their joint statement, they agreed with each other as far as the integration aspect was concerned; however, while Ross, in his separate statement, expressed certain reservations about a pure and simple integration solution, Poul Andersen did not wish for a constitutional provision on "special self-government in Greenland". He explained his position in his remarkably brief separate statement by stating that it was "unnecessary and inappropriate". He felt that the issue was not of current relevance and that a provision on self-government could perhaps lead to "unfortunate consequences". He did not elaborate further on this point, so it is not known what exactly the professor had in mind when he talked of possible negative consequences. Furthermore, he stated that the economic situation and other conditions in Greenland were considerable impediments to the introduction of self-government in Greenland beyond local self-government.¹⁰ Poul Andersen held this view from the start and, unlike Alf Ross, did not change his separate statement in the final version, which, moreover, unlike Ross, he was not asked to do. Professor Poul Andersen, as the following section will demonstrate, followed the same line on the issue as officials in the Greenland Department and at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

*Alf Ross' original legal opinion*¹¹

So what had Alf Ross written about self-government in Greenland in his original legal opinion? The full version of his text was first published fifty years after it was written, but now that the original wording is available, it is evident that Poul Andersen's short, separate statement is presumably drawn up as a counter statement to Alf Ross' original legal opinion. The two professors disagreed on whether the revised constitution should contain, in addition to the already proposed constitutional provision that ended Greenland's status as a colony, a specific "reference to special self-government in Greenland", as Poul Andersen put it in his separate statement.

The mere fact that Ross participated in formulating a joint opinion is an indication that he accepted the solution of integration. He did not deviate from this idea in his separate statement, in which, in his proposal, he talked of the Faroe Islands

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 87.

¹¹ A copy of the expert opinion can be found in the Danish National Archives. Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 3. The copy of the expert opinion of 17 June that was sent to the governor can be found in the Greenland National Archives (GNA) (but is currently with the chief administrative officer in Greenland) under: Provincial Council of Greenland 1952. Journal no. 0005.5. 1-8. The text is also available on the Internet – along with many other documents: <http://www.nanoq.gl/imageblob/showimage.aspx?type=image&id=63598>, November 2006.

and Greenland as self-governing societies within the Kingdom of Denmark. However, it is only possible to gain an accurate picture of his viewpoint by also taking into account the other considerations set out in his original separate statement. He argued on three levels: With respect to international law, to UN policy, and to ideology. According to Alf Ross' original separate statement, the plan to integrate Greenland into the Kingdom of Denmark raised the question of whether such integration would be recognised by the United Nations as being in compliance with Denmark's obligations according to Article 73 (b). Ross wrote that regarding this point, the Charter contained the notion of progressive development towards higher forms of self-government. According to Ross, this statement could constitute an argument against the integration solution in which a colony is absorbed into a larger community. He wrote, "to the best of my knowledge, various points of view have been established during debates within the United Nations, without the organisation so far having taken a stance on the issue".

Based on the legal and political uncertainty he deduced from the situation based on his understanding of the UN Charter's notion of a self-governing territory, and – even more broadly – based on what he found could best be reconciled ideologically with the UN Charter and "which was presumably also what coincided with the Danish point of view", he reached the conclusion that it would be appropriate to write a provision into the constitution stating that "Greenland constitutes a self-governing society within the Kingdom given that the scope and structure of self-government are laid down by law". The wording he used was almost identical to that of the Faroe Home Rule Act of 1948. His view was that, by following this line, Denmark would be in the strongest position to face criticism from other fronts. Ross further wrote that the question of self-government per se was not currently relevant but that he felt that fundamental recognition of the Greenlanders' right of self-government would in the long term be the best basis for both sides to settle Greenland's situation. His solution, as stipulated in the letter from the prime minister, involved integration, but with the addition of a fundamental, preliminarily of no interest, component of self-government.

Ross' wording shows that his attitude was in many ways flexible and pragmatic. He did not write that his solution was the only one possible but preferred rather to present his proposal using phrases such as "would be for the best", would "feel satisfactory", or Denmark would "be in the strongest position in the face of criticism" if it followed his proposal. Ross' considerations were within the framework of integration but culminated in a proposal for a revised Article 1 in the constitution that should state:

The Kingdom of Denmark constitutes one entity. All of its parts are represented in the Danish Parliament. Because of their special position in national, historical and geographical respects, the Faroe Islands and Greenland each constitute a self-governing society within the entity of the Kingdom of Denmark. The scope and structure of self-government shall be determined by the law.

It was his wish to promote Greenland's development towards self-government within the framework of the community. His proposal can fairly accurately be characterised as "integration with the promotion of the development towards self-government within the framework of the community". He did say, however, that a provision on self-government was not currently appropriate but should be retained because – implicitly in the long term – it would form the best basis for structuring Greenland's situation in a way that would feel satisfactory.

Alf Ross' separate statement was longer than Poul Andersen's because Ross necessarily had to set out his arguments for his proposal since it went a step further than envisaged by those who had commissioned it. Ross' separate statement differs significantly from Poul Andersen's in its analytical form and its description of the considerations and motives underlying Ross' recommendations. However, Ross must surely have been aware that if his statement was to receive attention, it should be kept concise. Thus, it is not reasonable to expect completely detailed documentation and argumentation in Ross' separate statement. Its succinctness means that, on the basis of what Ross wrote about the debates at the UN, it is not possible to determine whether or not he knew that the aforementioned UN Ad Hoc Committee on Factors had drawn up a "list of factors" in autumn 1951 to be used by the UN as an instrument to assess whether or not a territory had attained a full measure of self-government. The first list of factors appeared in the form of an annex to Resolution 567 (VI) of 18 January 1952 and was adopted by the General Assembly several months before Alf Ross wrote his separate statement. The two later lists of factors were also adopted by the General Assembly.

The first list of factors, which was the result of intense committee work by a group of member states, comprised a set of criteria for measuring the political development of the territory in question. The criteria were to be applied within the framework of two main options, the first option being independence or another separate system of self-government, the second being free association of a territory on equal terms with other component parts of the metropolitan or other country.¹² What was new about the list was that it introduced to the international law debate

¹² The first list of factors (annex to Resolution 567 (VI) of 18 January 1952 set out two options, which in reality were three: (1) Factors indicative of the attainment of independence or other separate system of self-government; (2) Factors indicative of the free association (whether in a federal or unitary relationship) of a territory on equal status with other component parts of the metropolitan or other country. The ambiguity, which could be said to arise from the fact that independence is named together with other separate systems of self-government (here, there was a reference to territories that had freely let part of their sovereignty remain with the metropolitan country), was removed in the second list of factors of 10 December 1952 (annex to Resolution 648 (VII), which became operative in that, according to the wording of the Resolution, it should be referred to in all cases of secession). The second list of factors also sets out two options, which in reality are three: (1) Factors indicative of the attainment of independence; (2) Factors indicative of the attainment of other separate systems of self-government. This latter option also included a section on factors indicative of the free association of a territory with other component parts of the metropolitan or other country. In this case, the ambiguity can be said to lie in lumping together other separate systems of self-government with free association of a territory with other component parts of the metropolitan or other country. It was only with the third list of factors (annex to Resolution 742 (VIII) of 27 November 1953) that the different types of status were listed as three distinct options, namely: (1) independence, (2) other separate systems of self-government, and (3) free association of a territory with other component parts of the metropolitan or other country. See appendix 7, 8 & 9.

forms of self-government other than full independence as the ultimate goal, which required “a full measure of self-government”, and thus provided justification for an administering power to cease reporting to the UN. The first factor list was, in the words of the General Assembly, the “basis” for a “more definitive list of factors”. This more definitive list arrived in December 1952 (Resolution 648 (VII)). After publication of Resolution 567 (VI) in January 1952, a new development seemed to be under way in the UN with respect to the interpretation of Article 73 on the basis of the establishment of criteria for two (or rather three) main options for development.

The above shows that Ross did not specifically refer to this development in the UN in his separate opinion, but nonetheless operated within the scope of a possibility (free association of a territory on an equal status with other component parts of the metropolitan or other country) that was in fact one of the options in the first list of factors and which the Danish authorities were preoccupied with in particular. As described in chapter 8, Denmark was also under a strong obligation with respect to the factor list due to the fact that it had been highly instrumental in its creation. It is possible that Professor Ross was not aware in the summer of 1952 of this development regarding the factor list, which had not yet been mentioned in any annual report from the UN and certainly had not yet been featured in any specialist literature; however, he did of course have easy access to Resolution 567 (VI) and it is also possible that he was told about it.

Ross’ proposal to write a provision into the constitution on a self-governing Greenland society immediately created problems for the Constitutional Commission. Certainly, it was hardly originally intended that the expert opinion of the two professors be submitted directly to the Provincial Council; on the contrary, the expert opinion was to form part of the basis for the proposal which the Constitutional Commission and the government requested with a view to gaining the Provincial Council’s approval of the new solution at its meeting in September. Nonetheless, the Constitutional Commission deemed the expert opinion unsuitable owing to Ross’ separate statement, which introduced a new angle in the debate on the constitution, and the government took steps to prevent the separate statement from being made public. It is in the first instance somewhat difficult to understand the sharp reaction to Ross’ proposal, which, on the whole, was identical to the wording of the Faroe Home Rule Act of 1948. Seen in the context of 1952, at least three circumstances help to explain the reaction. First, Ross’ proposal threatened to reopen the debate about Greenland’s integration, on which political consensus had been reached in early 1952 – a consensus which in fact did not involve the same solution as the one for the Faroe Islands. Second, and possibly more importantly, it was feared that the simple knowledge of Ross’ expert opinion alone could complicate the debate in the UN with regard to the termination of the obligation to submit reports in connection with Greenland’s integration. Third, Ross’ proposal could have given rise to a new debate on self-government in the Faroe Islands only four years after the issue had been resolved with the Faroe Home Rule Act of 1948. The government did not want this new debate and this desire is clearly mirrored in Poul Andersen’s separate statement. It is no exaggeration to say that Alf Ross

dropped a bombshell on the debate. The Commission had to seek help and requested statements from the ministries concerned.

The Greenland Department outlined in a note to the prime minister of 17 July 1952 the reasons why it could not recommend Ross' separate opinion. The note summarised Ross' thoughts as follows: "Professor Ross sees the question in connection with Denmark's obligation in accordance with the UN Charter, insofar as Denmark has recognised that Greenland constitutes a non-self-governing territory, so that Denmark is obliged 'to develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples' (Article 73 of the Charter). This is the reason for Professor Ross' view that Denmark is obliged to ensure development towards full independence, at least within the framework of a community".¹³ In the final sentence, the Greenland Department tightened Ross' views on several points. Recall that Ross argued rather from the point of view of compatibility with UN policy and ideological standpoints than in terms of international law, and he explicitly mentioned the uncertain nature of the matter in terms of international law. He talked of a fundamental recognition of the right of self-government as being worth aspiring to but as a matter that was not currently relevant and certainly not primarily and concretely about "development towards full independence". There was no evidence in the note of any effort to convey the nuances of Ross' argument, but rather an attempt to depict him as something of a dogmatic disciple of international law. Yet, this attempt occurred without actually entering into a legal discussion with Ross. Instead, the Department argued politically.

The Greenland Department agreed with Ross that it was desirable for the constitution to contain a provision placing Greenland on an equal footing with Denmark, but it disagreed with the views expressed in his separate statement "which, among other aspects, clash with the policy pursued hitherto with regard to Greenland and with the policy pursued by Denmark in its work at the UN". The Department went further and said that the Danish delegation had constantly sought to emphasise at the UN that Greenland should be placed on an equal footing with other parts of the Kingdom of Denmark and that Greenlanders should be given full equality with the rest of the citizens of Denmark. It was also pointed out that the two Greenland members from the Provincial Council who participated in the meeting of the Danish Parliament's Committee on Greenland in February 1952 were in favour of writing into a possibly revised constitution a provision establishing Greenland's status as an equal part of the Kingdom of Denmark and the fact that Greenland as a consequence should be directly represented in the Danish Parliament. In order to avoid unnecessarily "encouraging the odd few" who might nurture any further-reaching desire in Greenland for self-government, the Greenland Department recommended that Professor Ross' separate statement not be made available or, for that matter, mentioned to the Provincial Council.¹⁴

¹³ The Greenland Department's *Note to the prime minister on Greenland's constitutional status*, signed by Finn Nielsen, 17 July 1952. The Danish National Archives, Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 3.

¹⁴ The Greenland Department's *Note to prime minister concerning Greenland's constitutional status*, signed by Finn Nielsen, 17 July 1952. The Danish National Archives, Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 3.

In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' response of 18 July 1952, which was signed by Ole Bjørn Kraft, it was advised against including in the constitution the provision proposed by Alf Ross in his separate statement. The response focused on the foreign policy and international law aspects of the issue by stressing the lack of consensus at the UN with regard to interpretation of Article 73 (e), seen in the context of the other provisions in Article 73 of the Charter. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, considering the issue raised by Professor Ross, "strongly advised" that the policy pursued by Denmark hitherto be continued. Subsequently, the Ministry referred to Denmark's main positions in the UN debate on the matter of competence, as they had been presented by the Danish representatives on the plenary session's Fourth Committee, namely that each and every administering state had a right to determine the constitutional position and status of its non-self-governing territories and that there were two ways for non-self-governing territories to advance from political immaturity to self-government: (1) through the development of self-government with a view to full independence, or (2) through integration with the metropolitan country. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as is evident here, was referring to the findings of the Ad Hoc Committee on Factors. The Ministry concluded by saying that a precondition had to be that integration be implemented in a loyal way, ensuring that there was full equality and that the local population was able to freely express its opinion by informed and democratic processes as to the constitutional status they desired. Going by the letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this precondition was presumably deemed to be fulfilled in this case through the act of submitting the relevant constitutional amendments to the Provincial Council of Greenland.¹⁵

Thus, there was no desire on the part of the government to submit expert opinions or alternative interpretations to the Provincial Council of Greenland.

In their response, the ministries were bound by the fact that their ministers represented the consensus which Danish and Greenland politicians had reached in the Committee on Greenland, namely that Greenland should be integrated into Denmark and by the fact that Denmark's Greenland policy at the UN had focused on the same goal for many years. Mentioning Ross' considerations could, in an extreme case, have put Greenland politicians within and outside of the Provincial Council in a situation where they were obliged to start a completely new debate about the terms of a self-government solution in Greenland, something that does not seem to have been desired in Greenland at that time when political efforts were focused on bringing about integration and equality as soon as possible – without any delay or diversion. At the UN, such a debate would immediately have been construed as a sign of uncertainty about the main positions that Lannung and the other representatives had maintained over the years; it would have caused astonishment among the administering powers and would have been seen as a sign that

¹⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the chairman of Committee 5 of the Danish Constitutional Commission, 18 July 1952. The Danish National Archives, Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 3; for the version on the web, cf. <http://www.nanoq.gl/imageblob/showimage.aspx?type=image&id=63598>.

Denmark had changed its policy in a territory for which the country had been strongly motivated to create a new set of rules.

Prime Minister Erik Eriksen agreed with the content of the opinions provided by the two ministries. On 25 July he sent all the members of Committee 5 of the Constitutional Commission a letter containing a summary of the two professors' legal opinion together with statements from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Greenland Department and called for the Committee, without holding a new meeting, to authorise the governor of Greenland to negotiate on behalf of the government with the Provincial Council of Greenland at its meeting, on the basis of the joint statement by the two professors – thus without including Ross' proposal. He requested that the committee members submit their comments on the aforementioned proposal as soon as possible, taking into consideration that, according to available information, the Provincial Council meeting would be held in the latter part of August. The members agreed with the prime minister.¹⁶ This agreement can be illustrated by, among other things, letters to the Constitutional Commission from its members. For example, the Conservative member O.H. Malchau wrote that he was speaking on behalf of his party in saying that he firmly distanced himself from Ross' separate statement, which ought not to be part of the basis for negotiations with the Provincial Council.¹⁷ Julius Bomholt wrote that: "The Social Democrats felt that only material about which there was full consensus in the Commission ought to be submitted to the Provincial Council. Thus it would presumably be appropriate to draft a separate letter, which, if sent to all the Commission members, as would be due and proper, could be expected to be answered as quickly as possible".¹⁸

Authorisation of the governor to negotiate the issue was given by the prime minister on behalf of the government in the form of an official request in a letter of 13 August 1952. In another personal and highly confidential letter of the same date, the prime minister informed the governor about Ross' considerations, pointing out that both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Greenland Department had advised against including the proposed constitutional provision from the professor's separate opinion, cf. the following.

¹⁶ Copy of Erik Eriksen's letter of 25 July 1952 to all the members of Committee 5. The Danish National Archives. Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 3. approval by the various committee members of the prime minister's proposal; a brief account of the case can be found in a confidential report dated 23 January 1953, written by Troels Munk and bearing Finn Friis' initials and the date 24 January 1953. The account is entitled: *Separate statement issued by Professor Alf Ross in connection with an expert opinion elaborated by Professors Poul Andersen and Alf Ross in June 1952 for the Constitutional Commission concerning the future status of Greenland within the Kingdom of Denmark*. Director Svenningsen signed that he looked at it on 24 January 1953. The document bears the stamp "Submitted to the Minister, Director". It also bears other stamps and signatures (F. Schøn, B. Paulson and "Seen 26/253. DM"). There is a note in pencil stating: "Seen. It is a good idea to have experts who have to have their opinions corrected by the Ministry! There is nothing in Ross' separate statement which has not already been stated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Greenland Department. 24.1 Br". The comment is written by C.A.C. Brun. The Danish National Archives. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Documents 1946-1972. 119, M.2.a. packet 6. Assuming Brun's sarcastic comment is as condescending as it sounds, it was out of place.

¹⁷ O.H. Malchau to Committee 5 of the Constitutional Commission, 6 August 1952. The Danish National Archives, Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 3.

¹⁸ Julius Bomholt to Committee 5 of the Constitutional Commission, 30 July 1952. The Danish National Archives, Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 3.

Final phase in the debate about Ross' separate statement

When the secretariat of the Constitutional Commission was putting the final touches on the report for January 1953, the secretariat initially chose not to publish Alf Ross' separate statement in the report's annex, but to publish that of Poul Andersen instead. This publication was the result of the decision made during the summer of 1952 not to use the professor's text. After Alf Ross had read the secretariat's draft, he protested and called for his separate statement to be included as an annex to the report. It is quite possible that it was only at this stage that he was informed that his text had been rejected and had caused a rumpus in during the summer of 1952.

At this point, the matter really did become a proper issue. Once again, the Constitutional Commission turned to the officials from the Greenland Department and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for help, and they were called into action again. In an extensive note dated 8 January 1953, which was formulated by senior officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Greenland Department to be used by the prime minister, all of the different stages of the case were reviewed and the two signatories "strongly" advised against including Ross' separate statement in the annex to the Commission's report. The main argument was that it would be extremely unfortunate and detrimental if publication of the statement raised doubts as to what extent the path chosen for changing Greenland's status was in keeping with the UN Charter. The authors also recommended that the prime minister seek to persuade Ross not to publicly mention in journals or any other media that he had submitted the expert opinion in question or, for that matter, that he held "a different view".

This last request, which had a whiff of censure, is difficult to understand unless one takes into account that Alf Ross was a professor of international law at Copenhagen University (from 1938 onwards) and an internationally renowned expert on international law as well as philosopher, who, among other works, had published a *Textbook of International Law* as well as one of the first systematic works on the UN, namely his book entitled *Constitution of the United Nations: Analysis of Structure and Function* (1950), which was published with a brief foreword by Secretary-General Trygve Lie. To a certain extent, Alf Ross' status reinforced the officials' aforementioned main argument, namely that it would be very unfortunate and detrimental if publication of the separate statement raised doubts as to how far the chosen path was in keeping with the UN Charter.

One interesting detail is that one of the cosignatories of the note, Deputy Under-Secretary of State C.A.C. Brun, by writing a comment in the margin, distanced himself the following day from the interpretation expressed in the note, namely that Ross' text had been rejected in order not to encourage any possible proponents of self-government in Greenland. The note stated – using the same wording as in the Greenland Department's aforementioned letter to the prime minister of 17 July 1952 – that: "In order to avoid unnecessarily encouraging the odd few who might nurture any further-reaching desire in Greenland for self-government, the governor was requested to not inform the Provincial Council about Professor Ross' sepa-

rate statement". Brun's comment on this was that: "No doubt the real reason was rather the desire not to [confuse] the Provincial Council by giving it unreliable information about Greenland's constitutional status". The claim that Ross' separate statement contained "unreliable information" was, to put it mildly, misrepresentation.

Clearly the case was tricky for the officials to handle, and this became apparent at a meeting of 9 January 1953, during which the two signatories (C.A.C. Brun and Finn Nielsen) discussed it, with the note as the underlying basis, with the prime minister's private secretary (Sven Reiermann). Here, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had reservations about simply excluding Ross' separate statement from the concluding report without taking into consideration what its author felt about the matter. Eventually, it was proposed – as another comment on the note by Brun shows – that it would be best to try and explain the case to Alf Ross and point out to him that it would also be in his best interest for his statement not to be made public. If he insisted, it would be necessary to provide counter-arguments.

On the basis of the meeting and the note, the prime minister's private secretary drew up a set of points that the prime minister could use in a talk with the professor. Point 8 stated that: "Publishing Professor Ross' separate statement could have very unfortunate consequences and serve to confuse the public at home, abroad and in Greenland". In the recommendation sent to the prime minister to request Ross to renounce his wish, it should be pointed out that it was given prior to 10 December 1952 (the date that Resolution 648 (VII)), which provisionally confirmed the list of factors, was adopted). It was also said that the professor's separate statement could cast a "derisory shadow" over him.¹⁹

The next step was to invite Professor Ross to a Committee 5 meeting of the Constitutional Commission on 14 January 1953. Prime Minister Erik Eriksen and Alf Ross had met here on several occasions in connection with the Constitutional Commission's work, but the fact that Foreign Minister Ole Bjørn Kraft was also invited is an indication of the meeting's special significance. At the meeting, Prime Minister Eriksen reported that the Committee had agreed not to inform the Provincial Council of Greenland of the separate statement, as it was believed to be partly misguided and might confuse the public. The prime minister also emphasised that barrister Lannung had said that publication of Alf Ross' separate statement would create an embarrassing impression. Foreign Minister Ole Bjørn Kraft said that he fully backed the chairman in his appeal to Ross to renounce his wish to have his statement included. According to the Minister, there was no doubt on

¹⁹ *Note concerning the use of the expert opinion on Greenland's status, submitted by Poul Andersen and Alf Ross.* Signed by C.A.C. Brun (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and Finn Nielsen (Greenland Department), dated 8 January 1953. With a comment pencilled in later: "Private – for the use of the private secretary of the Prime Minister's Office". Clearly, the status of the note changed from being intended for the prime minister to being for the use of the prime minister's private secretary. The concerns expressed by Brun's comments in the margin were decisive. Included in the note "Notits" (1 page) of 9 January 1953 with C.A.C. Brun; *Note for the personal information of the prime minister concerning the expert opinion on the constitutional status of Greenland and the Faroe Islands, submitted by Poul Andersen and Alf Ross*, dated 12 January. This seems to be about Sven Reiermann's draft. The Danish National Archives, Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 1.

the part of the UN that Denmark's conduct was fully in keeping with the meaning of the UN Charter since small societies – such as the people of Greenland, who numbered 20,000 – could never attain independence.

As will be shown, Professor Ross was put under considerable pressure to withdraw his separate statement. The professor explained that in the light of what had been said he wished to review the issue.

At a meeting on 16 January 1953 with the permanent under-secretary of state for foreign affairs, also attended by chief of section, Finn Friis, Ross was informed about the latest negotiations at the UN. During the meeting and during a later telephone conversation with Finn Friis, the professor was informed about the wording of the General Assembly Resolution of 10 December 1952. The following day, he reported to the Commission secretary that since he had elaborated his separate opinion, there had been developments at the UN that made it necessary to revise it. Professor Ross explained that he thus wished to withdraw the viewpoints he had expressed in June 1952. He reported this wish to the prime minister on 20 January and at the same time sent him a revised opinion, which was printed – without any changes – in the Commission report.²⁰ At the meeting of the Constitutional Commission on 22 January 1953, Ross said that he had sent a letter to the prime minister stating that he did not see any reason to uphold his separate statement in the expert opinion provided by himself and Poul Andersen on the constitutional status of Greenland and the Faroe Islands since, as he put it, “the UN's current resolution of 10 December 1952 made it clear that the solution preferred by the Commission, whereby Greenland would be made an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark, was fully in keeping with the UN Charter”.²¹ Thus, the case ended with Professor Ross, under the influence of the decisions made by the UN between June and December 1952 and the weighty political arguments put forward by Prime Minister Erik Eriksen, Foreign Minister Ole Bjørn Kraft, and a number of senior officials, no longer insisting on having his original separate statement fully included in the expert opinion, which was submitted on 29 January 1953. He instead agreed to have a revised version inserted. This case has been reconstructed on the basis of documents from the various authorities, since there are no descriptions by Ross himself of what happened. It remains unclear whether this is a totally accurate account of the events that occurred. Certain doubts do arise when it becomes apparent that the summarised version of the content of Ross' revised separate statement is misunderstood or misleading.²²

The new version of Ross' separate statement was identical to the original one as far as the two first paragraphs were concerned, but the third paragraph was rewritten. In the rewritten part, Ross expressed himself in a much more nuanced way than is reported in the minutes of the Constitutional Commission's meeting. In his

²⁰ The source for the meetings on 14 & 16 January 1953 is the previously mentioned confidential report by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 23 January 1953, cf. footnote 16.

²¹ Danish Constitutional Commission: *Minutes of the 21st meeting*, dated 22 January 1953. The Danish National Archives, Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 1.

²² Previously mentioned confidential report by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 23 January 1953, cf. footnote 16.

final published version of the separate statement, he alludes in considerable detail to General Assembly Resolution 648 (VII) of 10 December 1952 on *factors that shall be taken into consideration when determining whether a territory is or is not a territory whose peoples have attained a full measure of self-government* (italics are Ross'). He highlights the fact that the resolution presupposes that the obligations set out in Chapter XI can, under certain circumstances, be fulfilled by integration with the metropolitan country if done so "voluntarily". He writes however that the General Assembly Resolution 648 (VII) of 10 December 1952 does not come across as:

a definitive solution to the question being dealt with in that it refers to a decision to establish a new ad hoc committee for further examining the 'factors' issue. Apart from this basic uncertainty, it is legitimate not to expect any fundamental change to the aforementioned viewpoints, and thus it can be assumed that the solution being considered, whereby Greenland is made an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark, will not meet with any objections from the United Nations.

In the new version, he retains a certain, albeit moderate, reserve with respect to the developments at the UN both politically and in terms of international law. If the idea is to explain Ross' separate statement in terms of the political pressure he was put under, the conclusion must be, as far as the legal part of his arguments is concerned, that he surely very consciously toned down his wording considerably, but not to the point that he felt his professional integrity had been impinged upon. However, at no stage does he argue in ideological terms, as he had done previously. Similarly, he also withdrew his proposal to write a provision into the constitution on Greenland's separate status.²³

An examination of the extensive Alf Ross archive has not served to shed more light on the controversy between him and Danish officials and politicians. The case is not mentioned in the private notes, papers, and letters of Alf Ross that were kept posthumously. In order to try and shed light on why Ross shifted from his original position, it is important to clarify what developments occurred after Ross had written his original separate statement. As already explained, the UN General Assembly – after months of new committee work – had adopted, through Resolution 648 (VII) of 10 December 1952, the second list of factors, which also included integration with the metropolitan or other country as a main option, cf. footnote 12.

In paragraph 1 of the Resolution, the list of factors, which features as an annex, was approved and recommended as a guide both for the General Assembly and for the member states in charge of administering non-self-governing territories to be used when it came to determining whether or not a territory had attained a full measure of self-government. Paragraph 5 stated that, until further notice, the list should be taken into account in any case that the General Assembly examined con-

²³ *Betænkning afgivet af Forfatningskommissionen af 1946* [Report by the Constitutional Commission of 1946], 1953, pp. 87f.

cerning the cessation of the transmission of information under Article 73 (e) or in relation to other questions that might arise concerning the obligation to submit information. Five general criteria were drawn up as a prerequisite for accepting integration with the metropolitan country and included: Political maturity; the opinion of the population; and geographical, ethnic, and cultural considerations. The final, general criterion concerned an enumeration of constitutional considerations in which the question was asked about whether the association was by virtue of the constitution of the metropolitan country, by virtue of a treaty, or by virtue of a bilateral agreement. In addition to these general criteria there were a further seven criteria relating to status and constitutional matters (including suffrage, representation in legislative organs, citizenship etc.).

From then on, the factor list functioned as a checklist that had to be consulted when considering when a state could rightly cease to submit information about a territory. As will be shown in chapter 11, this checklist function played a key role when the General Assembly dealt with the Greenland Resolution in 1954. The important point in the context of this present analysis is that the list of factors in Resolution 648 (VII) of December 1952 was recommended as a guide for the countries that were administering territories, i.e. Denmark as well, and also that the integration option had been confirmed and further strengthened by yet another General Assembly resolution. A look at international law reveals that it was in the process of being established in this area, cf. chapter 5, and there were many lengthy and arduous discussions about lists of factors, cf. chapter 8. Thus, it was quite possible to honourably argue, on the basis of the UN Charter and the lists of factors, for both the interpretation that Alf Ross presented in his original statement and for his interpretation of January 1953. Chapters 5 and 8 show that in 1952 and 1953, member states were still in the process of clarifying and determining the substance of the provisions of the UN Charter. Here, as mentioned before, the Resolution of 10 December 1952 reinforced the possibility of opting for the solution of integration with the metropolitan country.

Of course, Ross understood that the integration option mentioned in the two lists of factors, and last but not least the UN resolution of 10 December 1952, gave added strength to the solution preferred by the Commission. He could also have been influenced by the fact that he was fully informed of the latest developments in the major work that had occurred concerning the lists of factors. Moreover, Resolution 648 (VII) referred to the establishment of a new ad hoc committee, which was to carry out and conclude an even more thorough study of the factors. Thus, it was a matter of extensive and targeted work at the UN with a view to realising the goal set down in Article 73 of the Charter.

It is, incidentally, worth noting that Alf Ross' thoughts about the non-self-governing territories' demand for independence changed over time. Early on, he had made his opinion on the subject known in his book of 1948 about the UN, which examines the UN Charter's declaration about non-self-governing territories and the mandate system.²⁴ Ross expressed his dissatisfaction with the definition of non-

²⁴ Alf Ross, *Constitution of the United Nations: Analysis of Structure and Function*, 1950, pp. 178ff.

self-governing territories used in the Charter, though in his view, this had no relevance to the case at hand. He focused particularly on the expression “administration of territories whose people have not yet attained a full measure of self-government” – a wording that he considered to be a definition of “non-self-governing territories” and that he called “illogical” and “misguided”. It was hard to envisage the logical opposite of this definition, namely territories whose people had attained a full measure of self-government, which, for Ross, meant independence. In his interpretation of Chapter XI of the Charter, he postulated that the Charter was presumably referring to colonial territories on a lower political and cultural level, which had a moral right – in line with the principle of self-determination of the people – to gradually attain a full measure of self-government as they attained the required maturity. He explicitly stated that he did not regard Chapter XI as being relevant to the Faroe Islands or to the Baltic States. He noted – but only indirectly – that the wording was relevant to Greenland in that he refers to the fact that Greenland was on the UN’s list of colonial territories and that, as far as he was aware, there had been no criticism concerning the completeness of the list. His book from 1948 does not describe the option that became a reality with the Constitution of 1953, namely that of a colony becoming integrated with the metropolitan country.

Though not relevant to this examination, it is also worth noting that in subsequent years, affected by the polarisation at the UN surrounding these issues and by the developments that had taken place in connection with the independence of former colonies, Ross became aware of the imminent dangers for the people of small independent states. His final book on the UN (1963), which was much more disillusioned, contains acerbic comments on the existence of the many new “Lilliputian states”.²⁵

Between Nuuk and Copenhagen

The first part of the following review of the correspondence between Copenhagen and Nuuk in late summer 1952 looks at the expert opinions made by Poul Andersen and Alf Ross, reviewed above, from a particular angle, namely how they were represented and argued in Erik Eriksen’s private letter to Governor Lundsteen in late summer 1952. While the focus so far has been on *DIIS’ representation* of the various expert opinions, the following considers the *prime minister’s representation and use* of the two professors’ legal opinions. There is not necessarily any significant difference between the two, but it is nonetheless worth bearing in mind that the same documents are being studied on two different levels of analysis. In order to understand some of the specific political subtleties of the Greenland issue during this phase, it is important to take note of this distinction.

²⁵ *De Forenede Nationer. Fred og Fremskridt* [*The United Nations: Peace and Progress*], 1963, p. 393: “The overwhelming number of Lilliputian states created in the name of tribalism, but which are completely unsuited to independent technical, economic and political existence.” A related comment *ibid.* p. 386.

The prime minister's letters to the governor, August 1952

On 13 August 1952, Prime Minister Erik Eriksen sent two letters to Governor P.H. Lundsteen. The first letter was official and addressed to the governor in his capacity as chairman of the Provincial Council. It explained that the Constitutional Commission had discussed the question of a possible change in Greenland's constitutional status through which the country would be made an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark with representation in the Danish Parliament. The government had approved a proposal by a committee of the Constitutional Commission stating that the constitution should be made applicable to every part of the Kingdom of Denmark and that Greenland should thus be represented in Parliament. On this basis, the committee had proposed that the future revised Constitution should contain a provision with the following wording:

The provisions in this constitution apply to all parts of the Danish Realm. As a consequence, Greenland shall in the future be represented in Parliament.²⁶

After mentioning a number of practical questions in connection with the method of electing Greenland Members of Parliament, the prime minister ended the official letter by authorising the governor, with reference to the law on Greenland's Provincial Council and local governments of 27 May 1950, cf. chapter 6, to act on behalf of the government and submit to the Provincial Council the proposal for a new constitutional provision on Greenland's constitutional status.

The second letter, also dated 13 August 1952, was addressed to the governor personally and, as a private letter from the prime minister, was highly confidential.²⁷ After referring to the aforementioned request to submit the proposal to the Provincial Council, the prime minister, for the purposes of providing what he termed "highly confidential details for the governor's personal information", outlined the joint statement by Poul Andersen and Alf Ross, which, after being consid-

²⁶ "Letter from Prime Minister Erik Eriksen to the chairman of the Provincial Council of Greenland, Governor P.H. Lundsteen", The Danish National Archives, Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 3. The prime minister's letter is reprinted as annex 3 to *Betænkning Afgivet af Forfatningskommissionen af 1946* [Report by the Constitutional Commission of 1946], 1953, pp. 89-90. Attached to the two letters to the governor is a note saying that copies had also been sent to the Foreign Minister Ole Bjørn Kraft. – The provision stating that the Constitution applied to all parts of the Kingdom of Denmark remained until the meeting in the Constitutional Commission on 12 January 1953, in Article 87 of the draft. At the meeting, chief of section N. Elkær-Hansen proposed on behalf of the secretariat that the provision be reworded so that it stated that: "The constitution should apply to all parts of the Kingdom of Denmark", and that it be moved to become a new Article 1. There was consensus on this matter. The Constitutional Commission, minutes of the second subcommittee meeting, Monday 12 January 1953. The Danish National Archives, Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 1.

²⁷ "Letter from Prime Minister Erik Eriksen to Governor P.H. Lundsteen". The Danish National Archives, Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 3. This second letter from the prime minister is published as an appendix in: "Jens Brøsted, Grønland, Grundloven og FN" ["Jens Brøsted, Greenland, the Constitution and the UN"], Daniel Thorleifsen (ed.), *De vestnordiske landes fælleshistorie. Udvalg af indledende betragtninger over dele af den vestnordiske fælleshistorie* [The Shared History of the West-Nordic Countries: Extracts of Introductory Observations on Parts of the West-Nordic Countries' Shared History], 2003, pp. 92-93.

ered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Greenland Department of the Prime Minister's Office, had been endorsed by both the Committee of the Constitutional Commission and the government and from then on formed the basis for the aforementioned official letter sent by the government. The prime minister continued by explaining that each professor had also provided a separate statement. Poul Andersen's view was quoted, namely that a constitutional provision on special self-government in Greenland should be considered unnecessary and inappropriate because the issue of that kind of self-government was hardly of relevance at that time and because a provision of that kind might have "unfortunate consequences". Subsequently, Alf Ross' view was quoted, namely that the matter had to be seen in relation to the UN Charter, in that Denmark had recognised that Greenland constituted a non-self-governing territory, and that Denmark was thus obliged to "further self-government and to take into proper account the political wishes of the people", cf. Article 73 and chapter 4. Consequently, Denmark – according to the prime minister's interpretation of Alf Ross' view – was obliged to promote development towards full independence and, it was added, "in any case within the framework of a community".

The prime minister then went on to report on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Greenland Department's position on the constitutional provision proposed by Professor Ross, which was that Ross' proposal conflicted with the policy pursued up to that point both with regard to Greenland and to the UN.²⁸ Until then, the Danish UN delegation had always stressed that Greenland should be placed on an equal footing with other parts of the Kingdom of Denmark and that the Greenlanders should be given the same rights as other Danish citizens. According to the Prime Minister, this circumstance meant that Denmark, for its part, had striven to achieve recognition for the fact that the metropolitan country's obligation to further the interests of non-self-governing territories could be fulfilled in two ways, both equally valid: Either by developing self-government with a view to independence or by bringing about equal rights with other parts of the metropolitan country and thus participation in government on an equal footing with other citizens. Finally, the prime minister emphasised that the Committee of the Constitutional Commission had endorsed these viewpoints and categorically opposed the considerations set forth in Professor Ross' separate statement. The prime minister concluded his letter by pointing out that, since it was wished that the Constitutional Commission's work should progress as a swiftly as possible, he preferred to be informed by telegraph or at the earliest convenience about the Provincial Council's position on the government's proposal.

Why did the prime minister choose to send Alf Ross' separate statement together with the other parts of the professors' expert opinions if the aim was to suppress its existence? One explanation could be that he was simply following administrative

²⁸ "Letter from Prime Minister Erik Eriksen to Governor P.H. Lundsteen". The Danish National Archives, Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 3; "Note to the prime minister on Greenland's status", signed by Finn Nielsen. The Danish National Archives, Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 3; "Letter to the chairman of Committee 5 of the Constitutional Commission" (prime minister), signed by Ole Bjørn Kraft. The Danish National Archives, Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 3.

procedure, informing a negotiator about all the relevant facts of a case; another reason could be that there was always the possibility that knowledge of Ross' separate statement had spread to other circles and could suddenly emerge in connection with the Provincial Council's negotiations, and it was thus felt that the governor ought to be made acquainted with the separate statement and the government's stance. By confidentially informing the governor, the prime minister was taking this possibility into account.

Meeting of the Provincial Council, 1952

At the meeting of the Provincial Council on 8 September 1952, the chairman, Governor P.H. Lundsteen, introduced the debate on the issue of Greenland's future constitutional status by referring to the Constitutional Commission's proposal that it should be laid down in the constitution that the provisions of the constitution were applicable to Greenland and that consequently, Greenland should be represented in the Danish Parliament.²⁹ After having mentioned a number of practical circumstances in Greenland that rendered it impossible to apply some of the clauses of the constitution to Greenland and that there would be particular problems in connection with holding elections, the governor drew attention to the fact that since the desired aim was for the Constitutional Commission's work to progress as fast as possible, the prime minister would appreciate it if he was informed at the earliest convenience of the Provincial Council's position with regard to the proposal put forward by the government.

Subsequently, Augo Lyngé presented the Constitutional Commission's proposal that the new constitution should include a clause stating that Greenland was a province of Denmark and had representatives in the Danish Parliament.³⁰ Augo Lyngé's speech – the content of which the governor had been briefed about shortly before³¹ – placed unusually striking emphasis on what was unique about Greenland's situation and about Greenland's wish to become an equal part of Denmark. Lyngé provided both a historical and topical perspective. He started by saying that one of the prime wishes of the new, democratically-elected Provincial Council was to tie Greenland to its administering power by making it part of the Kingdom of

²⁹ "Meeting on Monday 8 September 1952, 9:15 pm", *Report by the Constitutional Commission of 1946*, 1953, pp. 92-93; minutes of the meeting can also be found in the Danish National Archives, Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 2. By way of introduction, the chairman drew attention to the fact that Augo Lyngé had proposed that the issue already be discussed at the Provincial Council meeting prior to the request from the Prime Minister's Office.

³⁰ "Member of the Provincial Council of Greenland Augo Lyngé's speech on Greenland's future constitutional status", *Greenland National Museum and Archives*, Nuuk. Greenland National Archives, Provincial Council archive, folio: Journal no. 005.5.0552. See also: "Meeting on Monday 8 September 1952, 9:15 am", *Betænkning Afgrivet af Forfatningskommissionen af 1946* [*Report by the Constitutional Commission of 1946*], 1953, pp. 93-94. Many of the subjects in Augo Lyngé's speech also featured in his contribution at the Provincial Council's first meeting, 26 September 1951, cf. *Beretninger vedrørende Grønland* [*Reports on Greenland*], no. 3, 1951, pp. 8-9.

³¹ This matter is evident from the *Note concerning the use of the expert opinion on Greenland's status, submitted by Poul Andersen and Alf Ross* for the use of the private secretary of the Prime Minister's Office, signed by C.A.C. Brun, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Finn Nielsen, Greenland Department, 8 January 1953. The Danish National Archives, Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 1.



Photo of the Greenland Provincial Council. On 26 October 1952, Aftenbladet published this picture with the caption: "Although Greenland's laws are made by the wise gentlemen of Christiansborg, all the important issues pertaining to this large colony are in no way addressed there. A great many of the decisions that have a significant effect on the island's daily life are made on the spot". ... "These decisions will be made by the newly elected Provincial Council in Godthåb". ... "Our picture shows several of the men responsible for the colony's daily administration". ... including "issues about Greenland's Parliamentary representation, the new marital law and plans for fisheries and other industry". From the left are trade manager Peter Egede, shop assistant Knud Olsen, and trade manager Nikolaj Rosing. (The Royal Library, map and photo archive)

Denmark. In the 231 years that Greenland and Denmark had belonged together as colony and administering power, respectively, many connecting threads had developed that had gradually become so strong, Lynge said, that Greenland should now have a permanent association with Denmark. While many other parts of the world had seen struggles develop between colonies and colonial powers when the colonies had sought to break away from the administering power and become independent, the Greenlanders wanted to do the opposite, he emphasised, namely use their newly acquired right to opt of their own accord in favour of an initiative that would connect Greenland to the metropolitan country. Throughout the years, Greenlanders had striven to attain full and equal rights with other Danish citizens and were ready to take on the obligations, burdens, and responsibilities that the new relationship would bring. In Lynge's view, the Greenlanders were convinced that this association was to their own advantage and a prerequisite for continuing political, cultural, economic, and linguistic development, and for turning Greenland into a "normal, developed, civilised country".

Towards the end of his speech, Augo Lynge emphasised that it was very important to explicitly specify Greenland's constitutional status in the new constitution and not simply have a promissory clause that might take years of activity to bring about. Lynge added: "We should avail ourselves of the favourable opportunity to complete the work". He finished by saying that the initiative required full consent in the Provincial Council and he requested the full approval of the proposal to make Greenland a province in Denmark with representation in the Danish Parliament.

If, after reading the description of the events surrounding Alf Ross' separate statement, the reader remains with the impression that the Greenlanders were not aware either before or during the meeting of the Provincial Council that other alternatives to the integration option existed under constitutional and international law, this impression has now surely been corrected in the light of the account given here of Augo Lynge's speech. Lynge was very clearly talking about two distinct options when he talked of conflicts that had arisen in other regions in connection with colonies *breaking away from their administering powers to become independent*, and he said that Greenland wanted to do the *opposite*, namely use *its newly acquired right to opt of its own accord* in favour of an initiative whereby Greenland would be permanently connected with the *metropolitan country* (italics added). The phrase he employed about the newly acquired right to opt of its own accord echoed the words of the UN Charter in general and, more specifically, fit the two main options that had been described in the first list of factors of January 1952, cf. chapter 8. Lynge's remarks came across in a tone used when presenting generally known facts. Nothing in what he said suggested that his intention was to provide the Provincial Council with new information. The Members of the Provincial Council, when they endorsed the integration model, were aware that there was an alternative – namely "breaking away from the administering power", as Lynge put it.

In the discussion that ensued, the chairman, Governor Lundsteen, several times stressed the fact that the central question was the fundamental issue concerning Greenland's constitutional status and that it had to be dealt with swiftly, but that the technicalities of the method of election etc. could be considered in more detail. Generally, compared to Augo Lynge, the Council showed a little more reticence with regard to the proposal that Greenland should become a province of Denmark. There were especially reservations about the idea that Greenland should *quickly* agree to the fundamental matter of Greenland's constitutional status. Judging by the minutes, however, no one in the Provincial Council questioned Augo Lynge's fundamental attitude, i.e. that Greenland should be given equal status as part of Denmark. No one called for a third alternative to the two alternatives put forward by Augo Lynge: Independence or permanent association with the administering power.

Frederik Nielsen stated that the issue had been debated in the Provincial Council over the last few years and that it had been thought through and desired for more than two years. In Denmark, it was of great interest in leading political circles. Nielsen recommended the proposal as an offer to "enhance Greenland's status to make the country a permanent part of Denmark with representation in the Danish

Parliament”. Nielsen also proposed that the answer should be “yes” or “no” and that the outcome of the vote should be immediately telegraphed to Copenhagen.³² Others, such as Frederik Lynge and Peter Egede, were more reserved. Frederik Lynge wanted the proposal to be considered carefully by a committee. Although the idea that Greenland should be a province of Denmark was not new, the Provincial Council had to reach a decision that would not be opposed by the people of Greenland. Peter Egede explained that in such an important case the documentation should have been made available in advance but that it was only being provided to the members at the meeting. Egede further remarked that the answer could not be limited to yes or no, but had to be more detailed. In response to Peter Egede’s criticism that the documentation should have been issued in advance, the chairman replied that the documentation was in fact the proposal itself and that it had been issued to the members. What was being issued at the meeting itself was only the chairman’s contribution and that it had been issued simply to facilitate the Council members during the discussion. Some members proposed setting up a committee to formulate a considered, collective response. To this proposal, Augo Lynge remarked that he did not expect the Provincial Council to disagree on the matter but nonetheless preferred a couple of days to consider the matter. After the various suggestions by the chairman, Governor Lundsteen, and others, the Provincial Council established itself as a committee for discussing the response to the prime minister’s question.

At a meeting the next day, 9 September 1952, the chairman opened the proceedings by reporting that the Provincial Council in its capacity as committee had agreed on a statement to the government. The first part of the statement said:

At the meeting on 9 September 1952, the Provincial Council of Greenland unanimously agreed to approve the proposed draft for a new constitutional provision, in accordance with which the Constitution of the Kingdom of Denmark shall apply to Greenland, and Greenland shall be represented in the Danish Parliament.³³

The statement added that the Provincial Council presumed that the special circumstances of Greenland, which changing governments and the Danish Parliament had taken into account in their policies up until then, would continue to be taken into account in the future drafting of laws and provisions. According to the final minutes of the meeting, when the content of the statement was decided in a closed

³² “Meeting Monday 8 September 1952, 9:15 am”, *Betænkning Afgivet af Forfatningskommissionen af 1946* [Report by the Constitutional Commission of 1946], 1953, pp. 94-95; minutes of the meeting can also be found in the Danish National Archives, Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 2.

³³ Letter from the governor to the prime minister, 9 September 1952, *Greenland National Museum and Archives*, Nuuk. Greenland National Archives, Provincial Council archives, folio: Journal no. 005.5.0552. See also: “Continuation of meeting on 9 September 1952, 2:30 pm”, *Betænkning Afgivet af Forfatningskommissionen af 1946* [Report by the Constitutional Commission of 1946], 1953, p. 95. The Danish National Archives, Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 2.

meeting, all of the members rose to acknowledge approval of the proposal. The very same day, a telegram was sent to the Prime Minister's Office, informing him that the proposal had been approved.³⁴ The rest of the meeting of 9 September was spent discussing technicalities, such as method of election, time of the election etc., and, subsequently, a carefully worded recommendation to the Prime Minister's Office concerning these questions was approved at a meeting sixteen days later on 25 September 1953.³⁵ In reply to the prime minister's official letter of 13 August 1952, the governor reported to the Prime Minister's Office in a letter of 29 October 1952 that the issue of Greenland's future constitutional status had been discussed at the ordinary assembly of the Provincial Council of 1952, after which the aforementioned approvals were recorded.

Thus, the proposal to make Greenland an integral part of Denmark passed smoothly through the Provincial Council before its unanimous approval. The differences of opinion concerned how long it should take to examine and discuss the proposal. Why was it relatively easy for the Provincial Council to accept the proposal? Or, in other words, what would have happened if the Provincial Council had been presented with Alf Ross' separate statement? Of course, this question can only be answered hypothetically in the sense that it is necessary to examine key aspects of Greenland's relationship with Denmark and other North Atlantic countries and to assess the importance of this relationship for political decision makers in Greenland and Denmark. Before considering this matter, the debate on the draft constitutional provision on Greenland's constitutional status in the *Folketing* will be looked at briefly.

Debate in the *Folketing*

On 4 February 1953, Prime Minister Erik Eriksen presented his "Proposal for Constitution of the Kingdom of Denmark". In his presentation in the *Folketing*, he characterised the proposal as a "modernisation" of the June constitution and he emphasised that the proposal did not constitute "a break with the past". Greenland was one of the four main points, which together comprised the most important amendments to the present Constitution. The three other points concerned the succession laws, composition, and structure of Parliament and foreign relations.

The parliamentary debate on Greenland was not really a debate but rather a series of statements of a consensual nature by all of the political parties that, as a whole, only account for a fraction of the debate on the draft constitution. The con-

³⁴ "Telegram to the prime minister, personally delivered to the Prime Minister's Office", 9:10 pm and 10:30 pm, from Governor Lundsteen, The Danish National Archives, Erik Eriksen archive, group VI, packet 2.

³⁵ *Betænkning Afgivet af Forfatningskommissionen af 1946* [Report by the Constitutional Commission of 1946], 1953, pp. 98-100. The "carefully worded" description is based on the fact that the minutes of the meeting conclude with this passage: "It was agreed to submit a recommendation to the Prime Minister's Office with the above-mentioned approval by way of guidance, however such that it is understood that the Provincial Council will not feel disregarded if the Constitutional Commission is in favour of other principles".



Prime Minister Erik Eriksen in front of the Constitution in 1953. Greenland's status was one of the major issues in the negotiations prior to the new constitution. (Photo Center, the Royal Library, map and photo archive)

tributions were marked by overwhelming enthusiasm for Denmark's own efforts in Greenland. The major reform work initiated by the Commission on Greenland was characterised by a feeling of responsibility on the part of Denmark towards the Greenlanders, and it was felt that Denmark especially lived up to its responsibilities as the metropolitan country. The consequence of the speedy developments in Greenland led to the feeling that it was completely "natural" and "self-evident" that

Greenland should become an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark and, in the words of Erik Eriksen, become “a member of the Danish family”.³⁶ The role of the Greenlanders themselves in the issue was also acknowledged, albeit not so often, and more to emphasise that the Greenland members of the Danish Constitutional Commission had wished for constitutional equality with the rest of the Kingdom of Denmark. Furthermore, it was agreed that Denmark would earn recognition from abroad for taking Greenland into its Kingdom. Erik Eriksen even thought that Denmark “could again be seen as setting a good example with the new status being granted to Greenland”. One member, Jørgen Jørgensen (Social Liberal), emphasised that it was all the more pleasing that Greenland was being integrated into the Kingdom of Denmark, considering Denmark’s historical experience with overseas territories.³⁷

There were, nonetheless, a few warning tones. Hans Hedtoft was extremely enthusiastic and described the constitutional amendment as a “crowning achievement”, but did, however, point out that Greenland and Denmark faced “certain hurdles”, though not larger, he said, than they could, of course, be overcome.³⁸ Hedtoft did not explain further what exactly these hurdles were. Niels Elgaard (Liberal), on the other hand, was slightly more specific when he said that the achievement “which had been brought about wearing seven-league boots, could have unfortunate consequences”. The consequences he referred to were, however, at worst no more than “transitional difficulties” in holding an election in a territory without political parties.³⁹ Not surprisingly, Aksel Larsen (Communist Party) used the opportunity to bring up the matter of the American troops. He greeted the termination of Greenland’s colonial status with “enormous enthusiasm”, even though Greenland, according to Larsen, was unfortunately under a “much more rigorous American occupation than actual Denmark occupation”.⁴⁰ At the second reading in the *Folketing*, the difficulties posed by the unstable weather conditions in Greenland with regard to holding elections were briefly discussed and it was considered extremely important that the wording be unambiguous on precisely the point that “the UN examine our Constitution to see whether Greenland is really changing from being a colony to an organic part of the Kingdom of Denmark with

³⁶ See for example “Presentation of proposal”, *Rigsdagstidende. Forhandlinger i Folketinget 1952/53* [*Rigsdagstidende: Debates in the Folketing 1952/53*], 4 February 1953, column 2010f (Erik Eriksen), and “First reading of the bill on the Constitution of the Kingdom of Denmark etc.”, *ibid.* 10 February 1953, column 2254 (Jørgen Jørgensen).

³⁷ “First reading of the bill on the Constitution of the Kingdom of Denmark etc.”, *Rigsdagstidende. Forhandlinger i Folketinget 1952/53* [*Rigsdagstidende. Debates in the Folketing, 1952/53*], 10 February 1953, column 2254 (Jørgen Jørgensen), and “Third reading of the bill on the Constitution of the Kingdom of Denmark”, *ibid.* 3 March 1953, column 2733 (Jørgen Jørgensen).

³⁸ “First reading of the bill on the Constitution of the Kingdom of Denmark etc.”, *ibid.* 10 February 1953, column 2213f. (Hans Hedtoft).

³⁹ “First reading of the bill on the Constitution of the Kingdom of Denmark etc.”, *ibid.* 10 February 1953, column 2228 (Elgaard).

⁴⁰ “First reading of the bill on the Constitution of the Kingdom of Denmark etc.”, *ibid.* 10 February 1953, column 2273 (Aksel Larsen).

equal rights”.⁴¹ At the third reading the Faroese representative P.M. Dam followed suit and welcomed the Greenland representatives and proposed close cooperation – cooperation, which moreover was to serve to “remove all misunderstandings and establish a good basis for the desired fruitful cooperation”.⁴²

Why the integration solution?

Why did Danish and Greenland politicians for many years steer just the one course towards Greenland’s integration into Denmark? What made up the ties between Greenland and Denmark? Why, for example, was it not possible to accept the solution for Greenland that Alf Ross proposed in his original statement of 17 June 1952, and how can we explain the fact that leading Danish politicians chose to keep quiet about Ross’ original expert opinion and avoid disclosing it to the public?

Greenland’s vulnerability

In order to shed light on these questions, we can take as our starting point the unchallenged perception that the people of Greenland were *vulnerable*. Greenland could not stand on its own two feet because of its small population (approx. 22,000 around 1950), because of the vast distances, the climatic and geographical conditions, and its limited local resources, cf. assessment of the country’s economic dependence in chapter 3. In the mid-twentieth century, this perception was the main premise on which the Danes, and it would appear also the Greenlanders, based their notions about the future of their country. This perception was passed on abroad on many occasions as Denmark’s main position and it seems also to have been widely accepted. This acceptance can be seen, for example, in the description in chapter 11 of meetings at the UN in 1954 in connection with the discontinuation of Denmark’s obligation to transmit information on Greenland. On that occasion, Hermod Lannung said, among other things, that if the Greenlanders did not receive support, they would live under conditions that were completely different from those of the populations in the other Nordic countries. As mentioned in chapter 11, Augo Lynge, in one of his speeches to the UN General Assembly in 1954, explained in detail that this perception was also widespread in Greenland.

The interpretation was that if the Greenlanders were to live humanely under the circumstances of a new era, they needed the support of a state with abundant resources that would take on this task. Behind this interpretation was presumably both an acknowledgement of an *obligation* that rested on Denmark’s shoulders as well as a *political desire* on the part of Denmark. When the Danes expressed these thoughts, they were based on the deliberation that they were obliged, for historical

⁴¹ “Second reading of the bill on the Constitution of the Kingdom of Denmark etc.”, *ibid.* 27 February 1953. Regarding the unstable weather conditions, see column 2626 (Lorentzen) and column 2663 (Bomholt) on the UN.

⁴² “Third reading of the bill on the Constitution of the Kingdom of Denmark etc.”, *ibid.* 3 March 1953, column 2733 (P.M. Dam).

and humanitarian reasons, to continue to support the Greenlanders to ensure that they could have a reasonable standard of living.⁴³ Behind this belief was definitely an inkling that it would have been a national declaration of failure – and impossible from the point of view of domestic policy – to refer the Greenlanders to seek support from the US and Canada, which, as is known, had both expressed interest in Greenland. Presumably, no member of the *Folketing* would have been able to provide a satisfactory answer to the question of why Greenland should be left to foreign powers, which although geographically closer to Greenland than Denmark, had not had a hundred year association with the Greenland people. Furthermore, the way the US treated local populations outside its national borders was not seen in a positive light. The memory of the sale of the Danish West Indies to the US in 1917 – i.e. the sale of a group of people who were presumably sold simply because their skin colour was different from the Danes – was a bugbear and was part of the reason why any other solution except continued support for Greenland was impossible.

In other words: For historical reasons, the predominant perception was that Denmark had an obligation to support Greenland. Other political options were not politically feasible in Denmark in the 1950s. However, this sense of obligation was accompanied by a widespread *desire* among the people and the politicians to continue to have a significant Danish presence on Greenland. To all appearances, this was a common and deep-rooted desire among the people and thus constituted a factor that could be used to mobilise political support and gain political clout.

Denmark's wish to continue its presence in Greenland was also rooted in identity-related and national considerations and circumstances, which are relevant to draw attention to and elucidate.

The aspect of sentiment and identity

One key reason is certainly related to *sentiment and identity*. The two countries were linked by various work, family, and educational ties and in a number of ways they shared a common history. In addition, there were the stories about Hans Egede and his family, the work and research of the polar explorers and, in general, accounts of endeavours over many years, often under dramatic circumstances. Finally, the dispute with Norway over Greenland in the 1930s and the separation of Greenland from Denmark during the years of German occupation were also experiences that evoked emotions. Greenland was an issue about which the Danish people had stood united in their feelings, cf. also chapter 2. In the years after World War II, there was widespread sympathy among the Danes for the people of Greenland. Hedtoft's committed appeals about Greenland (see chapter 6) definitely found resonance among broad sections of the population. A large section of the Danish public was interested in what life was like in Greenland and felt that it concerned them. Greenland was a popular subject in the Danish press, which published numerous articles and reports year after year. The extensive scholarly endeavours made in Greenland in the fields of archaeology, ethnology, and scientific research became

⁴³ Cf. for example quotation from Knud Rasmussen in footnote 45.

popularised and were a standard feature in the daily press. Greenland explorers such as Knud Rasmussen, Ejner Mikkelsen, Peter Freuchen, and others had not only written extensively and had a wide readership, but they were also role models for many people.

Also, it might with some justice be maintained that the Danes felt that if Denmark did not fulfil its obligations arising from Greenland's vulnerability, their identity and self-perception would be under threat. The Danes would definitely experience it as damaging to their image of themselves.

Finally, it should be noted that the visit by the royal couple to Greenland during the summer of 1952 was also a factor in the Danes' identification with Greenland. This was the second royal visit in the country's history. In the context of the time, the visit could be interpreted both as a concrete political act by the government and as a symbolic expression of the strong Danish desire to preserve and develop the ties between Greenland and Denmark.

Nationalism

Behind the wish to maintain the links with Greenland was also a form of Danish nationalism, which was expressed in a variety of different ways. One was the efforts of decision makers to *keep the Kingdom of Denmark together* as it was, without further diminishing it. Negative reminders of this included the conflict with Norway over East Greenland in 1931-1933, Iceland's breakaway from Denmark during World War II, and the plebiscite on the Faroe Islands in 1946. The historically-minded could also list the Treaty of Kiel of 1814, where Norway was ceded to the King of Sweden, and the Treaty of Vienna of 1864, where the country had to relinquish Schleswig, Holstein, and Lauenburg.

It has been said that when a state hates losing territory, it is not so much because of the loss of geographical territory, but because of the damage to the image of the greatness of the fatherland.⁴⁴ This scenario could also be true with regard to Greenland, which, after all, in a broad sense also formed part of the Kingdom of Denmark, especially the concept of an extensive sea empire encompassing southern Danish and North Atlantic territories. Moreover, loss of territory is normally considered as more damaging to a country's status than anything else and is thus hugely resisted by the elite charged with the administration of the country's interests. It was uncontested that Danish sovereignty over Greenland enhanced Denmark's status and attractiveness in an international context, and this fact became a reality as Greenland's strategic importance grew during the first years of the Cold War. In this light, the loss of Greenland would seem even worse.

A kind of nationalism can also be detected in Danish rhetoric on Greenland. In particular it can be discerned in the speeches by Hermod Lannung and Eske Brun at the UN, especially in connection with the debate on the Greenland Resolution in the Fourth Committee in 1954. The same can be said of the wording in the various Greenland reports submitted to the UN since 1946-1947. These reports

⁴⁴ Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 1995, pp. 75ff.

contained evidence of a form of nationalism that was reflected in, for example, national self-praise for Danish support of the Greenlanders for generations and the protection of Greenlanders' unique characteristics. This form of Danish nationalism, which also encompassed Greenland, can be deduced from certain wording in speeches and publications, such as when it was emphasised that the Danish-Greenland relationship should be regarded as a "natural" development. Hedtoft's flowery speeches about Denmark's huge input in Greenland expressed the same attitude, and many years earlier Knud Rasmussen had expressed himself using similar phrases.⁴⁵ Both in speeches and reports there was evidence of an unreflecting national self-image when referring to Denmark's efforts. Occasionally, there was also evidence of a patriarchal ideology, which undoubtedly was rooted in centuries of official practice and administrative procedures in Greenland. It is worth remembering here that the political language around 1950 was completely different from that of today. A national or nationalistic tone was a regular feature of many nations' speeches at the UN.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that in the decades around World War II, the first signs are visible of a form of Greenland nationalism, which, like Danish nationalism, had its sights set on development within a common Danish-Greenland realm. These sentiments are expressed in writings such as those of Augo Lynge, also in his futuristic novel *Ukiut 300-nngornerat (Three hundred years after Hans Egede's arrival in Greenland)* from 1931.⁴⁶ On a symbolic level the Danish flag, *Dannebrog*, played an important role for Greenlanders as an expression of their association with Denmark, cf. speeches by the two Greenland members of the *Folketing* at the UN in 1954, as discussed in chapter 11.

Opinion makers and decision makers

Thus, even if it was apparent that broad circles in Denmark expressed an interest in and a feeling of sympathy towards the people of Greenland, as well as a widespread popular expectation that Denmark's association with Greenland would be continued, it was already clear to a small number of opinion makers and politicians from 1948 onwards that this association should be based on a different relationship, since Greenland could not continue to be a colony in an era where colonial relationships were ending.

⁴⁵ Following this tradition, for example, are the words of Knud Rasmussen, who does not regard Denmark as a colonial power in the traditional sense (of oppression), but rather as a kind of helper, a "Nation that has taken upon itself the parental responsibility for educating a primitive hunting people in new ways". This is what Rasmussen wrote in his introduction to Storch's novel entitled "En Grønlanders Drøm" ["A Greenlander's Dream"] from 1915, cited here from Kirsten Thisted, "'Hvem går qivittoq?'" Kampen om et litterært symbol eller relationen Danmark-Grønland i postkolonial belysning", ["Who is going qivittoq? The struggle for a literary symbol or the relationship between Denmark and Greenland in a post-colonial light"] *Tijdschrift voor Skandinavistiek*, 25, 2004, pp. 133-159.

⁴⁶ The Greenland prefect (!) who happens to deliver the speech at the celebrations in 2021 on the 300th anniversary of the arrival of Hans Egede in Greenland can conclude with the words: "Long live our nation, Greenland the land of our forefathers! And long live Denmark, also the land of our forefathers!" (Christian Berthelsen, *Grønlandsk litteratur. En kommenteret antologi [Greenland Literature: An Annotated Anthology]*, 1983, pp. 96ff).

The reason why the focus was placed so unequivocally on the solution of integration was because it was felt that no other solution could guarantee the desired association between Denmark and Greenland. The integration solution was without a doubt reinforced by the American presence in Greenland, which, on the one hand, solved the problem of Greenland's defence during the Cold War, but, on the other hand, also resulted in Greenland being woven into American defence planning and strategy and thus elicited a feeling of considerable insecurity in Denmark as to America's long term plans for Greenland. The decision makers remembered that the US wanted to buy Greenland in 1947 and after 1949-1950, there was no doubt about America's major interests in Greenland as a consequence of its key position in relation to the Soviet Union. The Greenland Defence Agreement of 1951 between Denmark and the US came into being after huge pressure was placed on the Danish negotiators. The enormous scope of American military activities in Greenland in the early 1950s was also an unexpected and mixed experience, since at times it created friction due to American obstinacy, and because it was also not clear what America's plans were with respect to Greenland. Furthermore, it was presumed that the large-scale American commitment heightened the risk to Denmark emanating from the Eastern Bloc.

Against this backdrop, Denmark and the US found themselves in a strange relationship concerning Greenland, characterised by both cooperation and conflict. Certainly, there was no wish on the part of Denmark to leave Greenland to the US, and there does not seem to have been any wish on the part of Greenland, either, to have an official association with the US. In Denmark, there was appreciation for American protection of Greenland and, as mentioned in chapter 3, Danish politicians were beginning to understand that the American bases in Greenland played a key role in the strategy of the Western powers, in which Denmark also had a vital interest. However, despite this role, many Danish politicians who were in favour of NATO membership still found it difficult to accept, on an emotional level, the extensive American presence in Greenland. The alternative, namely that the US should support Greenland, of course had a negative touch and Denmark avoided using American assistance in Greenland.

Owing to the political polarisation of the time, the relationship was generally not referred to directly, except by a few individuals. One of them was the main Danish negotiator at the UN, Hermod Lannung, who in 1950 spoke of the "American occupation" of Greenland, a description that was only otherwise used by Aksel Larsen and the Danish Communist Party. A mixture of a kind of nationalism and noticeable scepticism *vis-à-vis* America's intentions was expressed, for example, in Lannung's speech to the *Landsting* on 12 May 1953 at the first reading of the bill on *Folketing* elections in Greenland. On this occasion, he said that:

"It was not merely in itself a necessary act of justice to change Greenland's status from being a colony lacking legal capacity to being part of the Kingdom of Denmark, on an equal footing with the rest of Denmark, but that in terms of national politics, it was in the interests of the Kingdom of Denmark, particularly

in the light of the circumstances developing in Greenland, especially in respect to the major foreign power which had been granted certain special rights in Greenland”.⁴⁷

The major foreign power was the United States.

Lannung’s lasting and energetic commitment to the Greenland issue, which is described in the chapters dealing with the Greenland issue at the UN, was probably characterised by the perception that Greenland’s integration into Denmark alone could impose restrictions on American plans for the country, cf. the section on Soviet support regarding the Greenland issue in chapter 11. Hans Hedtoft’s words at the meeting of the Danish Constitutional Commission on 11 June 1952, at which he stated that it would be beneficial, particularly with regard to the US, for Denmark to make its position on Greenland clear, can also be construed as expressing the desire to be in the strongest possible position to deal with the US, and that this could best be achieved by integrating Greenland into Denmark. However, Hedtoft scarcely shared Lannung’s deep distrust of America’s intentions. Presumably, the repeated mention by Lannung, Eske Brun, and other Danish politicians and officials of the imperfect situation with respect to Greenland can be interpreted as a subtle way of introducing a latent fear – namely, an American takeover of Greenland – into the debate without actually naming it. It was impossible to imagine what a small, independent Greenland population could possibly do by itself in the face of the American superpower’s interests.

There is also evidence that another factor was equally decisive for Danish decision makers: The desire to avoid any continued obligations to the UN with regard to Greenland. Despite the strong support for furthering the UN’s role in world politics, Denmark felt very uncomfortable about how its obligations to the UN might develop if it did not succeed in quickly integrating Greenland into the Kingdom of Denmark. However, the nature of these concerns was such that it was difficult for Danish politicians to air them publicly. UN concerns were also an essential reason why leading Danish politicians agreed to reject the solution proposed by Alf Ross in his original expert opinion. There were concerns about what the completely unforeseeable process of publication of the expert opinion could trigger, primarily at the UN. There are indications that there might also have been a certain fear of reactions in Greenland, but it is hard to pinpoint the extent and depth of this fear.

As discussed in chapter 6, while economic and, in particular, fishing interests, played a role in the commitment of organisations representing Danish interests concerning the Greenland issue, there is no evidence that economic interests played any role in the Danish decision makers’ constant efforts to maintain the association with Greenland.

⁴⁷ *Rigsdagstidende. Extraordinary Assembly 1953: Debates in the Landsting*, 1953, column 31.

Conclusion

The meetings of the Committee on Greenland in spring 1952 and the meeting of the Provincial Council in the autumn of that same year played a central part in the Danish-Greenland political process leading up to the implementation of constitutional equality. The Committee meetings were a determining factor, since the Greenland representatives, it would seem, represented the desire for Greenland's equal status within Denmark, which the entire Provincial Council then basically endorsed. Seen against this background, there cannot have been much uncertainty about the Provincial Council's attitude in autumn 1952. There were subtle but clear differences between the members of the Provincial Council, but there does not seem to have been any doubt about the overall position.

One of the most striking features of this Danish-Greenland process and the communication between Nuuk and Copenhagen is the difference between what was said and written at the confidential level versus the public level. Alf Ross' separate statement of 17 June 1952 was rejected and, after a decision by the government and Committee 5 (editorial committee) of the Constitutional Commission, its existence was kept from the public. The members believed that Alf Ross' proposal conflicted with both the Danish-Greenland decision on Greenland's future, and with the policies pursued for years at the UN. According to C.A.C. Brun, cf. above, the opinion was rejected because it was felt that the Greenlanders should not be confused by being given unreliable information.

To claim that Ross' original separate statement contained unreliable information was somewhat disingenuous and certainly failed to address the central point, which was that it contained political and ideological ideas that challenged the political consensus achieved at the start of 1952. If Ross' separate statement had become publicly known, it would hardly have changed Greenland's position, as argued elsewhere. However, it could have led to renewed discussions. And a new round of discussions could easily have delayed the adoption of the revised constitution.

The decision not to share Alf Ross' considerations and proposal with the public can also be seen as a manifestation of the patriarchal aspect of Danish colonial policy. There was uncertainty with regard to how the Greenlanders would react if they were faced with Ross' proposal, even if it was based on a line of argument whose validity the Danish politicians and officials strongly contested. Some Danish officials felt that there was a very scant risk of individual Greenlanders not sticking with the opinion that their members of the Danish Parliament's Committee on Greenland had agreed on with the Danes. The desire, in a typical political-administrative fashion, was to minimise even this moderate risk as much as possible. It was feared that the constitutional process could be derailed. In simple terms, despite all of the solemn declarations from Denmark about "informed" Danish colonial policies, there were indeed limits on *how* "informed" the decision makers in Copenhagen dared to be! Looked at in terms of patterns of conduct determined by *realpolitik* at that time, such conduct on the part of a colonial power was possibly unremarkable and could be interpreted as a resolute safeguarding of the real and

long-term interests of the inhabitants of a colony. However, even by the standards of the day, this conduct was not really in keeping with the general norms, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' own precondition that the Provincial Council should have the possibility to express its opinions after being fully informed testifies to the fact that Denmark was, of course, aware of the norms. The fact that the political establishment, with this knowledge, thought in practice that it could fulfil this precondition simply by presenting the relevant constitutional amendments to the Provincial Council of Greenland merely strengthens any reservations that could have arisen at the time with regard to the procedure. From the perspective of the norms that apply today, a good fifty years on, the fact that the Provincial Council was not informed about half of Alf Ross' arguments would invariably be regarded even more critically.

However, even from the point of view of the thinking of the day, it is still rather odd that Denmark was so concerned about the reaction in Greenland should the Provincial Council be presented with Professor Ross' proposal. As far as it is possible to ascertain, at no point during these years was there any group in the Provincial Council, or any individual member, for that matter, who was seeking an alternative to integration and who would have led a movement in favour of a solution along the lines of Alf Ross' proposal. In Greenland, the people clearly wished to have a greater influence on their own affairs and at the meeting of the Provincial Council in autumn 1952, there was clearly dissatisfaction with the fact that a decision was to be reached so quickly. However, such attitudes could hardly at the time have provided sufficient motivation for any Greenland opponents of integration with Denmark to lead the formulation of a clear alternative to the widespread desire for constitutional equality in the Kingdom of Denmark. The proponents of integration in the Provincial Council were – as far as available sources show – so prominent and so strong that they would soon have been able to push any proponents of Professor Ross' proposal into a defensive position.

In the early 1950s, the Greenlanders, as mentioned, were very much aware that the international anti-colonialism movement together with the UN Charter had opened the door to new possibilities for self-government and independence. Nonetheless, at no time had the Greenlanders wished for independence or a solution such as the one adopted for the Faroe Islands, both of which, of course, were well-known in Greenland. The Greenland debate did not revolve around these options but around the solution to the Greenland issue of placing the country on an equal footing with Denmark and making it an integral part of Denmark. In other words, this fundamental situation was not something that the Danish government could "keep secret" from the people of Greenland or their politicians. The Greenlanders made their choice about integration with their eyes open, well aware that there were other alternatives – and they were united in their decision. As mentioned, it is hard to imagine that Alf Ross' separate statement could have shaken this prevailing, basic underlying attitude.

A possibly even more important motivation than the fear of derailing the constitutional process was the Danes' clearly expressed fear that Alf Ross' separate statement could either directly or indirectly affect politically, and in terms of interna-

tional law, the unresolved situation at the UN in such a way that the Greenland issue would become a hot potato in the international arena, and that this could work as an obstacle against the integration policy on which there was consensus. The main argument of the officials was that it would be extremely unfortunate and damaging if publication of the separate statement created doubts about how far the chosen approach to the issue of Greenland's status was in line with the UN Charter. In the eyes of the Danish government, this direct link could have arisen if Ross' separate statement had become known in UN circles and there could have been an indirect link if the separate statement became known in Greenland. This knowledge could have led to the slightest doubt in even just a small, limited circle. Hypothetical doubt of this kind meant a risk that certain UN member states could make use of in their arguments and it was clear that the Danish government wished to rule out this risk.

In other words, the prime reason why the government did not wish for Ross' separate statement to be presented in autumn 1952, or January 1953, was hardly because they were concerned that it could seriously jeopardise the solid Greenland support for the policy of integration, but rather because they feared that it could either directly or indirectly impact and hamper negotiations at the UN.

Aside from the specific explanation given in the previous pages of how the issue was treated, the whole process begs the more fundamental question of why Denmark was so strongly in favour of the solution of pure and simple integration. A brief outline of the motivations pinpointed has been presented in parts of this chapter, although admittedly, proper justice cannot be done to the subject in an explanation such as this. Chapter 12 fully sums up the conclusions of the analysis of the motives. Thus, at this point only the four topics the analysis examines are listed.

The first motive is *Greenland's vulnerability*. The perception at the time was that Denmark had an irrefutable obligation to support Greenland due to its particular circumstances. According to this perception, it would have been tantamount to a national declaration of failure if Denmark did not live up to this responsibility. The second motive is related to *sentiment and identity*. Denmark and Greenland were connected by a large number of ties, which elicited feelings of pride, strength and warmth. The idea of severing these ties was like a threat looming over Danish identity and self-perception. The third motive is *nationalism*. The efforts of the decision makers to hold together the rest of the diminished Kingdom of Denmark can be interpreted as reflecting a form of Danish nationalism. The loss of territory was regarded as a blow to the greatness of the fatherland and its international status. The fourth motive is *the state's interests* as seen from the perspective of the *opinion and decision makers*. Among the issues of concern are the relationship with the United States and its interests in Greenland, unease about the direction developments in the liberation of colonies could take under UN auspices, and, finally, economic interests.

10 · The Greenland issue at the UN, 1953

Frede P. Jensen

The revised Danish Constitution was due to be adopted in spring 1953. It meant that Greenland was an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark and that the country's status as a colony had ceased. In Denmark's view, the change to Greenland's status was a purely Danish matter about which the UN should merely be notified. The Danish government hoped that the process of notifying the UN about this change in status would be as smooth as possible. The report to the Secretary-General about the intention to terminate the transmission of information on Greenland was thus accompanied by three other texts presenting the Danish case: A memorandum, the text of the revised Constitution, and the minutes of the meetings of the Provincial Council of Greenland in 1952. An important part of this documentation submitted to the UN was information about the political development of Greenland, particularly during the preceding few years. Although Denmark maintained its position that the change in Greenland's status was a sovereign decision, it nonetheless clearly adjusted its policy to take into account the stipulations in the first factor list, albeit discreetly. The Danish officials involved were all in complete agreement about Denmark's political objectives, but not about the means, and the chief Danish negotiator, Hermod Lannung, in particular, showed clear signs of nervousness about how the final negotiations at the UN would proceed. Lannung initiated a series of independent measures without consulting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including an initiative to allow delegates from Greenland to participate in the UN meetings.

The act of notifying the Secretary-General was deferred several times. Since the British, for political reasons, did not want the matter to be discussed in the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories (the 73 (e) Committee) that year, it was not possible to bring the Greenland issue to a conclusion in 1953, which means it was not concluded until the latter half of 1954. At the meetings, Denmark was able to gather experience from the negotiations on the similar matter of the US termination of reports on Puerto Rico. These negotiations generated a feeling of unease in Copenhagen, since it was clear that the US had shifted its position on the matter of competence and now tolerated the fact that the Puerto Rico issue was to be concluded by a resolution that served to grant the General Assembly a certain competence. This circumstance meant that the Greenland issue would presumably also be concluded with a UN resolution.

The report on Greenland

Originally, it was the idea of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the Danish UN delegation should send, together with its yearly report to the UN on conditions in Greenland, a note (with accompanying documents) to the UN Secretary-General on the Danish decision to terminate the transmission of information as stipulated by Article 73 (e) of the UN Charter. Since the accompanying documents were not yet ready by the end of June 1953, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was obliged to submit the two parts separately. According to internal sources, the Ministry had wished to send the notification together with the yearly report. Ultimately, as a result of the delay, the Greenland issue was not brought to a conclusion at the UN until one year later.

In compliance with the agreement reached in the Fourth Committee, the information submitted to the UN in 1953 was to focus on education. Consequently, that year's report on Greenland included a comprehensive review of the different aspects of education conditions in the country.¹ In the report from that year, there is evidence of chief of section Sveistrup's recommendation to his colleagues from 1951 to emphasise and reiterate details that were particularly positive for Denmark. Hidden behind the otherwise very neutral description of education conditions (written by the historian Finn Gad) is an effort to subtly market the Danish government's efforts towards combating illiteracy and preserving the Greenlandic language.

There is also a hint of Sveistrup's recommendation in the section on healthcare, which mentions, among other things, the large-scale measles epidemic in the districts of Julianehåb and Nanortalik in 1951. It was described as "an epidemic so acute that it is more or less unparalleled in this century, certainly in the Arctic region". Due to a rapid medical response, the outcome of the epidemic was "relatively mild" (77 fatalities out of 4,400 instances of the disease were recorded). The report also mentions the establishment of a tuberculosis clinic in Nuuk, which was due to be completed in autumn 1954. The building was to increase bed capacity by 50% (to approx. 600 beds). Thus, Denmark was active in combating tuberculosis, which was a scourge throughout the polar region (including in America). However, as could be expected with a document intended for the UN, the report neglected to mention the failure of the Danish state to tackle the problem of tuberculosis in the period between the two World Wars and the fact that the major building project in Nuuk, which had been decided on in spring 1952, had not got under way during the Erik Eriksen government, but was first launched after a press campaign in Copenhagen in 1953.²

The report was sent by the UN delegation to the UN Secretariat on 7 July 1953.

¹ Danish and English version of the report in the Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U. 83.a., packet 4. – The report was enclosed with *Generaltakst for udhandling og indhandling af varer og produkter ved handelssteder i Grønland 1953* [*General Rates for Purchasing and Distribution of Goods and Products at Trading Stations in Greenland*].

² Kai S. Stein, *Tuberkulosen i Grønland og dens bekæmpelse* [*Tuberculosis in Greenland and the Fight against the Disease*] 1994, pp. 12ff.

Negotiations at the UN, 1953

The Ad Hoc Committee on Factors

As described earlier, Denmark withdrew from the Ad Hoc Committee on Factors, which was deemed not to be of any further use to the country. In a letter of 2 May, in reply to the Secretary-General, it was stated that Denmark had no new comments on the factor list of December 1952 and that it had thus ceased to play a role in the negotiations. Nonetheless, Denmark kept a keen eye on the 1953 meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Factors from a distance.³

The Ad Hoc Committee on Factors convened over the period of 21-30 July 1953 in New York and, as previously, was led by Iraq's Awni Khalidy (chairman) and America's Benjamin Gerig (vice-chairman). The meetings produced a report (A/2428) of 4 August 1953 containing, among other things, a new draft factor list, which was forwarded to the Fourth Committee.

The new draft of the factor list set out the factors more systematically than had been the case in the previous lists. In accordance with a British proposal, the factors were presented in three sections carrying equal weight, with the factors related to association being listed in a separate section. The three overriding sections were now: (1) Factors indicative of the attainment of independence; (2) Factors indicative of the attainment of other separate systems of self-government *with the continued association with the metropolitan country or another form of association* (the words in italics disappeared from the version adopted in November 1953); (3) Factors indicative of the free association of a territory with the metropolitan or other country as an integral part of that country. As can be seen, the third section, the one in which the Danish authorities were particularly interested, now included the specific description "integral part" in the title and now read: "Factors indicative of the free association of a territory on equal basis with the metropolitan or other country as an integral part of that country". It was this title – with a few additions – that was relevant to the 1954 debate at the UN on Greenland's association with Denmark, cf. below regarding the adoption of the new list of factors in November 1953, which Denmark voted against.

The only substantial change that was made to the list of factors of December 1952 was the addition of two new factors, both in section II. The point "Voluntary limitation of sovereignty" (A.3), about which the Third-World countries were highly sceptical, was enlarged to include a new factor, which stipulated that information should be provided on the degree of evidence that an attribute (or attributes) of sovereignty that had not been individually exercised had been collectively exercised instead. Furthermore, B.1 included a factor concerning the scope of the right of the metropolitan country to negotiate and enter international conventions which might influence conditions in the territory. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Copenhagen did not consider the additions to the list particularly important and

³ Report (no. 542) by B. Dons Møller of 5 August 1953. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M. 2., packet 7; UN report A/2428, idem.

the delegation was instructed to vote in favour of the list in the 73 (e) Committee.⁴ At the same time, the delegation was told to stress, if necessary, the basic view which Denmark had asserted on previous occasions, namely that the UN did not have the competence to either reject or approve the judgement exercised by the administering powers.

The General Assembly had also requested that the Ad Hoc Committee on Factors define the expression “a full measure of self-government”. However, this request was relinquished when it was ascertained that the wording did not pose a serious problem, since the expression could be applied without the need for an exact definition. The most interesting item on the agenda as far as Denmark was concerned was without doubt the termination of the Netherlands’ obligation to transmit information on Surinam and the Dutch Antilles, an item which the General Assembly had placed on the agenda of the Ad Hoc Committee on Factors. At the meeting, the Netherlands argued that, among other things, it was not able to submit information on Surinam and the Dutch Antilles since the local authorities had opposed it. The Netherlands also drew attention to the fact that the list of factors would not be of any great use to the members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Factors inasmuch as the territories mentioned were going through a transitional phase. A number of Third-World countries, however, were not satisfied with these reasons. The issue could not be resolved due to disagreement among the participants and so it was passed on to the General Assembly without a recommendation.

Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories (73 (e) Committee)

As mentioned earlier, Denmark was an original member of this committee by virtue of its obligation to submit reports on Greenland, but it had neither political nor legal reasons to maintain its membership after the final report on Greenland had been conclusively dealt with at the UN.⁵ It was also Denmark’s intention to leave the Committee as quickly as possible as a clear indication that it was no longer one of the colonial powers. However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs soon had to revise its notion that the official notification of the UN of its withdrawal from the Committee would be a quick procedure. When the remaining colonial powers learned at their annual internal meeting (on 24 July 1953 in New York) that Denmark had not yet submitted notification of its intention to cease reporting on Greenland, they appealed to Denmark not to send notification until the meetings in the 73 (e) Committee had been concluded. The other colonial powers plainly wanted to avoid the annual agenda being upset by Denmark’s notification. They anticipated that

⁴ Briefing for the 8th plenary session, 11 September 1953, bearing Troels Munk’s stamp. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 7.

⁵ Cf. Finn Friis’ extensive arguments in favour of this standpoint in the minutes of 30 July 1953. Copy in the Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U. 83.a., packet 4. – He wrote in the minutes that he had briefly touched on the problem with Hermod Lannung, who was completely in agreement that Denmark should automatically withdraw from the Committee.

the Danish decision would give rise to a new debate on the composition and work of the Committee and were especially concerned about the Committee's balance after Denmark's withdrawal. As mentioned, the committee up to that point had been composed of an equal number of administering and non-administering countries.⁶

At the meeting in New York, Belgium together with France and Britain adopted a very aggressive tone, listing a number of so-called "sticking points", i.e. issues that were considered so vital that one or more delegations would refuse to participate in the debate or would withdraw. According to the minutes, France declared that it would leave the meeting if political issues were discussed. All three countries declared that they would leave the meeting if there was a debate on whether or not the US notification that it would cease reporting on Puerto Rico was justified. The three powers likewise wanted to end their representation in the Committee if there was going to be participation by representatives from non-self-governing territories.

Denmark could not simply ignore an appeal from friendly states to defer the notification of its intention to cease reporting on Greenland. Thus the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to postpone the submission of the note to the UN Secretary-General until a few days before the opening of the eighth session of the General Assembly.

At an internal meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 13 August 1953, prior to chief of section Sveistrup's trip to New York, it was agreed that Denmark should keep a low profile at the meetings and should not join in any protests that had been proposed by some of the other colonial powers at the meeting on 24 July 1953. With regard to the debate on America's termination of reporting on Puerto Rico, the US position was to be supported, namely that the role of the Committee and the General Assembly should simply be to "take note".⁷ It was also reported at the meeting that the note on the termination of the submission of reports on Greenland would be ready between 20 and 25 August. They were prepared to withhold the note until, for example, mid-September (the opening of the plenary session).

The tone of the meetings of the 73 (e) Committee in New York (from 18 August to 8 September 1953) was affected by the Belgian government's decision announced at the start of the meetings that it would not be represented on the Committee. This occasion was the first time that a colonial power had withdrawn from a UN Committee in protest. The other colonial powers, including Denmark, had been informed of Belgium's decision at the traditional annual preliminary

⁶ Danish minutes of the meeting on 24 July 1953 submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a letter dated 27 July 1953. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 7. – It is clear from underlined passages and parentheses in the minutes that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also noted that Wilfrid Benson from the UN Secretariat had remarked to the Danish UN delegation on a social occasion "that it might be more prudent for the Danish Government to withhold notification until the revised constitution has been fully implemented, i.e. until Greenland had elected its representatives to the Danish parliament". – *Folketing* elections in Greenland were held on 25 August 1953.

⁷ Minutes by Finn Friis of the meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 13 August 1953, 14 August 1953. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 7.

meeting (on 17 August 1953) prior to the start of the meetings of the 73 (e) Committee. The minutes of the preliminary meetings show that the US had endeavoured in vain to get Belgium to remain on the Committee. A spokesman for the Belgian delegation justified Belgium's decision by referring to the Committee's "lack of legitimacy, incompetence, discrimination and lack of usefulness with regard to the non-self-governing territories". All of these accusations were commented on in detail in an international press release. With respect to the accusation of discrimination, it was pointed out by Belgium, as on previous occasions, that a number of non-administering countries also had indigenous peoples who were not self-governing and on whom reports had not been submitted to the UN.⁸ Incidentally, the Danish and Belgian Foreign Ministries very much agreed on this point. Lannung, as mentioned, had pointed out on many occasions that a number of countries were not fulfilling their obligation according to the Charter to report on peoples under their rule. Without actually being named, the countries being referred to were, among others, Russia, India, and Brazil.

After the Belgian decision, the meeting was characterised by a mood of uncertainty about the Committee's future. The Committee members were well aware that France and possibly Britain were also close to giving up their representation. This possibility definitely helped to limit the confrontations during the meeting. According to the concluding assessment by the Danish representative, P.P. Sveistrup, the Committee's work that year had been "of an extremely objective nature".⁹

On a more political level, the year's meetings of the 73 (e) Committee revolved around the debate on the US termination of reporting on Puerto Rico. The matter was followed with keen interest by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, since Denmark would soon be in the same situation as the US, as would the Netherlands (although the Netherlands' case was not discussed in this Committee). The Danish brief was to stick to the policy line established several years before, namely that the General Assembly's competence lay simply in taking note of the documentation submitted by the US and the Netherlands as information.

Very soon, however, the government in Copenhagen learned that things were starting to shift in the key matter of the General Assembly's competence. The issue of Puerto Rico was discussed on the basis of a Brazilian proposal for a resolution, on which the US had had an influence, and the UN delegation asked to be briefed with regard to the proposal for a resolution. Copenhagen was astonished by the fact that the US and other Western countries had been able to accept the detailed text of the draft resolution concerning Puerto Rico, which granted the General Assembly a certain role in the matter and, in the opinion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, contradicted the perception of the General Assembly's competence that those very same countries had represented up till then. Finn Friis in particular was concerned about the draft resolution and he suggested in a draft briefing that a dangerous precedence was being set. He further wrote:

⁸ Press cutting from *La Libre Belgique*, 19 August 1953. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 7.

⁹ Report of 10 September 1953. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 7.

If the Assembly is given the authority to express its approval (and not simply take note of the received information), it may, on another occasion (without the administering powers being able in principle to object, since they had in fact voted in favour of the resolution,) legitimately express its disapproval of a position that the US, Denmark or any other administering power believed to be well within its own competence.

Thus, on 28 August 1953 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requested clarification of what lay behind America's apparent change in attitude. The matter was of fundamental importance for Denmark since, as mentioned previously, its uncompromising stance on the issue of the General Assembly's competence had been contingent on the US position. Naturally, Copenhagen also wondered whether Denmark should now negotiate its way towards the UN's acceptance of Greenland's integration into Denmark in the same fashion as the superpower America seemed to be doing it.

The very same day, the Danish delegation informed the ministry that the US considered the concession to the General Assembly to be insignificant. The ministry was also told that the US wished for the matter to be sorted out quickly and in a way that would be satisfactory when the Alaska issue came up for debate at the UN (Alaska, however, did not become part of the Union until 1959). Furthermore, the US had promised to produce a declaration that reduced the importance of the approval. The delegation recommended that, if the US and Britain felt they could accept the resolution, Denmark should follow suit and vote in favour. Otherwise, it should abstain. The issue was apparently of such importance that it had to be decided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' permanent under-secretary, who duly approved the delegation's recommendation.¹⁰

The outcome of the negotiations in the 73 (e) Committee was that Denmark reluctantly accepted that the committee's decision on the issue of Puerto Rico should take the form of a *proposal for a resolution*, which clearly clashed with Denmark's position up till then on the issue of competence. In the coming debate on Greenland at the UN, it would almost inevitably lead to a similar proposal for a resolution. Out of consideration for the US, Denmark voted in favour of the draft resolution in its entirety, but was the only country to vote against the text of the resolution's preamble (in paragraph 5), which stated that the documents submitted by the US had been reviewed in the light of Chapter XI of the UN Charter. As previously, the reason given by Denmark was that the UN should not be seen as having

¹⁰ Confidential telegram from Borberg to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dated 28 August 1953; draft briefing by Finn Friis of 28 August 1953; Text of reply telegram. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2., packet 7. – The matter was considered so important that a separate report was written and dated 5 September (by Troels Munk) for the permanent undersecretary of state, listing in parallel point by point the Brazilian proposal and the final draft of the resolution. Comment by Svenningsen, 8 September 1953. Finn Friis added the comment: "The approved text for the resolution is perhaps a little more flexible than the original proposal", *ibid.*

competence in the matter of examining a member state's constitutional records. Britain adopted the same position as Denmark, but sufficed with abstaining to vote.

In the resolution, the Committee – without prejudice to the General Assembly's debate on the matter – took note of the fact that the available information indicated that Puerto Rico could be considered as falling outside the framework of Article 73 (e) of the UN Charter and took note of the American government's view that it was no longer necessary or fitting to transmit information about Puerto Rico in accordance with Article 73 (e).¹¹

Denmark's notes to the UN Secretary-General

As mentioned, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' plan had been to send notification of Denmark's intention to cease the submission of reports on Greenland to the UN together with the report on Greenland for 1952, which it was assumed would be the last report. The UN was to receive the report before 1 July 1953. However, by late June 1953, it was clear that this plan would have to be abandoned. On 30 June 1953, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced in connection with the transmission of the report to the UN delegation in New York that the translation of the annexes to the report were not yet complete and that it would take, at best, another couple of weeks. The note to the Secretary-General would be sent in during July. However, it was not until 24 July that Finn Friis was "eventually" able to send his draft of the note intended for the UN Secretary-General together with the accompanying memorandum to chief of section Sveistrup in the Greenland Department for his comments.¹²

The timetable was then adjusted and the plan was that the notification of the termination of reporting on Greenland would be submitted at the opening of the 73 (e) Committee meetings on 18 August. The note they planned to send on the matter, addressed to the Secretary-General, was to be submitted together with the accompanying documents, which comprised a memorandum, a translation of the revised Constitution of 1953, and the minutes of the negotiations in the Greenland Provincial Council in September 1952. At some time during the Committee meetings, Denmark was to inform the members – without special notification – that it was ending its membership of the 73 (e) Committee.

This timetable had to be changed yet again, since it would be difficult to avoid accommodating the aforementioned request by the other colonial powers (put forward at the meeting on 24 July 1953) to postpone the notification of termination of reporting until after the meetings of the 73 (e) Committee had been concluded. Denmark felt it was of no consequence when the notification was submitted and thus the timetable was shifted once again.

¹¹ Minutes of the meetings of the 73 (e) Committee concerning Puerto Rico by Dons Møller, submitted by Borberg, New York, 9 September 1953. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 7.

¹² Finn Friis to P.P. Sveistrup of 24 July 1953. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 4.

The subject was also discussed at the aforementioned preliminary meeting held by the colonial powers at the British UN delegation on 17 August 1953, prior to the start of the 73 (e) Committee meetings. Denmark announced that it was inclined to submit two notifications, of which the one concerning withdrawal from the 73 (e) Committee would be sent after the committee meetings were over. However, this tactic did not suit the British whatsoever. They made it absolutely clear that they were against Denmark submitting notification to the 73 (e) Committee of its intention to cease reporting, since this could lead to a protracted debate that ought not take place in that committee. Britain's statement was a determining factor in setting the submission deadline.

The final decisions concerning notification were reached at a meeting in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the start of September, attended by Foreign Minister Ole Bjørn Kraft, Permanent Undersecretary of State Svenningsen, and Finn Friis. At the meeting, it was discussed how Denmark might come under attack at the UN in connection with the issue of notification and attention was drawn to the fact that it could also be accused of not having full sovereignty over Greenland since it had entered into the military base agreement with the US in 1951. The military base agreement and the expansion of the American commitment in Greenland had become a particularly sore point for Danish politicians as the Cold War intensified. It was decided that a document should be drawn up that could be used to ward off any attack sparked by what was officially known as Denmark's cooperation with the US on the defence of Greenland.¹³ At the request of the Foreign Minister, a note was drawn up on the rules governing the *Folketing* elections in Greenland and the procedure for the election on 25 August 1953, when Greenland elected its first two *Folketing* representatives (Augo and Frederik Lynge).¹⁴ It can be assumed that this note was also intended to be used in response to any questions raised at the UN pertaining to election conditions in Greenland.

A final adjustment was made following Eske Brun's contact with the UN Secretariat around 10 September. Brun learned that the matter was to go through the 73 (e) Committee, which meant a one-year postponement. As a result, Denmark had to give up the idea of withdrawing from the 73 (e) Committee at the end of the current session, and consent was sought from Copenhagen to change the text sub-

¹³ Note of 18 September 1953 drawn up by P.J.V. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 4. – Attacks should be warded off “with very general references to NATO's defensive and peace-keeping objectives”. How delicate the NATO membership also was can be seen from the fact that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs felt that “practically speaking, it would not be desirable under any circumstances if, at the UN, Denmark ended up actively participating in a more detailed debate on NATO issues”. For the purpose of information, the official Danish viewpoints were enclosed, emphasising that the agreement with the US was part of joint NATO defence and that it placed defence facilities in Greenland for use by other member countries; that the Greenland agreement of 1951 with the US was of a defensive nature; that Denmark's sovereignty and full co-determination right was maintained; and that “due” consideration had been taken of the local population.

¹⁴ Note. “Concerning parliamentary elections in Greenland on 25 August 1953”, *ibid.*



Foreign Minister H.C. Hansen (right) in a conversation with UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld before a meeting in the General Assembly, October 1953. (UN Photo and Film Collection, Roskilde University Library)

mitted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on this point.¹⁵ The postponement also meant that the Danish officials had to prepare to submit yet another report on Greenland.

On 14 September, William Borberg handed over to UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld the Danish Foreign Minister's note of 3 September 1953 with accompanying documents and a letter signed by Borberg explaining that Denmark intended to leave the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories (73 (e) Committee). It had chosen to leave since the prerequisites for representation on that Committee had ceased to exist with the revised Constitution of 1953. In a letter of 18 September, the Secretary-General acknowledged receipt of the letter of 14 September and the note dated 3 September. He wrote that he would place the notification about Greenland on the agenda for the fifth session of the 73 (e) Committee so that the committee could report on it to the ninth ordinary

¹⁵ Confidential telegram from the UN delegation of 10 September 1953. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 4. – The telegram stated that, according to a statement by head of department, Eske Brun, the UN Secretariat set great store by Denmark remaining in the 73 (e) Committee, at least while it convened the next time, at which point, according to the information, the final report on Greenland would be discussed.

session of the General Assembly.¹⁶ Thus, the concluding debate on Danish notification would take place in late summer or autumn of the following year.

On 14 September, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also submitted a press release via Ritzau on the notification.¹⁷ Hermod Lannung did not inform the UN of the Foreign Minister's note concerning the fact that Greenland was no longer a non-self-governing territory until the meeting of the Fourth Committee on 2 October 1953. Lannung's information did not give rise to any comments in the Committee, cf. analysis of the meetings in the following.

The note of 3 September 1953 sent by the Danish government to the Secretary-General was worded along the lines of the corresponding American note of 19 January 1953 to the Secretary-General concerning the termination of the obligation to report on Puerto Rico, although the content of that note was of a different nature. The American note was accompanied by a memorandum.

The Foreign Minister's note quoted the content of Resolution 222 (III) of 3 November 1948 and subsequently reported that, through the Constitution of 5 June 1953, Greenland had become an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark with rights on an equal footing with other parts of Denmark. The people of Greenland now had representatives in the Danish Parliament on equal terms with the rest of the Danish people. Finally, the government reported that, owing to the change in the constitutional status and general status of Greenland and its people, the government considered that its responsibility with regard to Chapter XI of the UN Charter had ceased and thus it had decided to terminate the transmission of information in accordance with Article 73 (e). At the end, there was a reference to the three attached documents, namely the memorandum, the Constitution, and the minutes of the meetings of the Provincial Council of Greenland, at which, it was emphasised, "the constitutional changes had been discussed and unanimously adopted".¹⁸

The most interesting of the documents was, perhaps, the memorandum, which should be considered a key document, in that its purpose was to inform the inter-

¹⁶ Report (no. 653) of 22 September 1953 with copy of Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld's letter of 18 September 1953. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 7.

¹⁷ The Ritzau notification is available in a long and a short version. The long version contains the wording of the note to the Secretary-General. Furthermore, the press releases, the note of 3 September 1953 (in Danish and English) together with the accompanying memorandum (in Danish and English) were made available to the public by the press office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Cf. notice to the head of the press office of 14 September 1953; press releases, translation of note of 3 September 1953 and of the memorandum at the Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 4. – Also, press cuttings from various daily newspapers of 15 September 1953.

¹⁸ Draft of the note from the Foreign Minister to the UN Secretary-General by Troels Munk with comment by Finn Friis, 31 July 1953; approved by Foreign Minister Ole Bjørn Kraft with a comment dated 27 August 1953; draft of memorandum commented on by Finn Friis, 31 July 1953, and with his various corrections regarding the recommendations from the Greenland Department and Hermod Lannung; transcript copy of the final text of the memorandum; considerably revised translation of the memorandum. It includes a comment from a superior: "Is the translation of the last sentence as good as it can possibly be?"; transcript copy of the translation; note by Finn Friis, 31 July 1953, with a review of the documents relating to the case and with an explanation of the main intentions guiding the work on the documents. Approved 3 August by Alex Mørch; minutes of 30 July 1953 concerning withdrawal from the 73 (e) Committee. All available in the Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 4.

national public of the background to Denmark's submission of the note. The document must be seen as having provided other powers with an up-to-date understanding of the Greenland issue and thus as forming part of the basis for their reaction. The memorandum was drawn up by Finn Friis after receiving comments from the Greenland Department and from Hermod Lannung.¹⁹ The author of the document was extremely aware of its significance and felt it was necessary to explain its content in an internal report to the ministry. He wrote:

When choosing the wording of the explanatory memorandum, I emphasised the fact that the Provincial Council had free access to the debate on the draft provisions. As can be seen from earlier discussions at the UN, it is certainly extremely important, as far as the United Nations, and possibly critically-minded member states, are concerned, to stress that Greenland's new status was in no way imposed upon the people, but that their freely elected representatives had beforehand prompted a change like the one now implemented, and once there was a proposal, gave their unanimous consent to the draft provisions.

Apart from this, a much more detailed explanation does not seem to be necessary. What we would like to document is that Greenland secured equal status as part of the Kingdom of Denmark and that the Greenlanders have been granted the same rights as other Danish citizens.

Providing a more detailed explanation of the "legitimacy" of Denmark's actions is hardly necessary, since the Danish government, in agreement with the position consistently maintained here, did not recognise that the United Nations had the right to confirm or reject a sovereign decision reached by Denmark.

¹⁹ Lannung had the wording changed so that it sounded less open to challenge with regard to two of his main, regular complaints about the Danish authorities, namely that (1) the district of Thule and East Greenland were not included in the new municipal systems and electoral rules. He interpreted these exceptions as a colonial legacy that could be attacked by the UN, and (2) that "full equality" between Greenland and the rest of Denmark had not been implemented with the new system after 1950. Full equality should preferably be expressed in the wording of the Constitution. Thus, when "equality" between Greenland and Denmark was mentioned in the text of the memorandum (section 11), this did not mean "full equality", since Lannung had the epithet "full" removed as it did not correspond to the reality. – In a private appeal to fellow party member Jørgen Jørgensen, formerly Minister of Internal Affairs, of 19 February 1953, he sought to have the electoral law changed so that it would include the whole of Greenland. The Danish National Archives, Hermod Lannung private archive, packet 14.

There was also a reference to Lannung's speech of 15 November 1952 in the Fourth Committee as further documentation, should it be required by the UN's authorising bodies.²⁰

An analysis of the memorandum shows that the change to Greenland's constitutional status, in keeping with the traditional notions prevalent in the Danish ministries, was treated as a matter purely between Denmark and Greenland, in which the UN did not play an active role. The factor list and its section on association with the metropolitan country are not mentioned in the memorandum, even though it is clear that the memorandum's central argument is built on a number of the list's key factors concerning democratic rights. The main points are the newly established equal status between Greenland and Denmark and the emphasis on the fact that the Greenlanders' desire for a decisive change to their country's constitutional status was taken into account.

The text briefly outlines the political/administrative development in Greenland, where, according to the author, a certain degree of self-government was introduced as far back as the eighteenth century; the author was no doubt alluding to the parish councils proposed by H. Rink and introduced in 1862-1863. Subsequently, there is a description of the legislative stages up to 1925, during which municipal councils, district councils, and national councils were introduced. A key change was implemented in 1950 when a single national council with extended powers was introduced for West Greenland. At the same time, sixteen municipal councils with greatly extended powers were introduced. As in Denmark, elections were by universal suffrage. The aim of this outline of ninety years of development was presumably to document that Denmark had been a humane colonial power that had allowed the Greenlanders a say in their own matters at an early stage and had educated them politically and administratively, thus enabling them to independently adopt a position on the present-day issues, including the matter of the country's future. Again, there is evidence of the wish to meet an identical requirement stated in the existing lists of factors concerning "political advancement" of the people (political advancement of the population sufficient to enable them to decide upon the future destiny of the territory with due knowledge).

However, from the perspective of international law the most important part of the memorandum is certainly the section concerning the Greenlanders' expression of their political will in the preceding years. As the analysis of the factor lists indicates, the most important principle in the lists concerns the wishes of the people of the colony. Section 5 of the memorandum refers to the fact that the Greenlanders' desire to have a greater say in their own affairs (from 1948) led in 1950 to the nomination of two Greenland representatives to the permanent Greenland Committee. According to section 6, the Greenlanders' wishes expressed in the Greenland Committee had a major influence on the ensuing developments up to the constitutional provision. The memorandum states:

²⁰ Internal accompanying letter to notification documents by Finn Friis, dated 31 July 1953. In the extension of the letter, comment and confirmation by Alex Mørch of 3 August. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 4.

In February/March 1952 the constitutional issue was discussed a number of times in the Danish Parliament's Greenland Committee by the Committee's members from the Danish Parliament, the delegates from the Provincial Council of Greenland, and leading officials.

On this occasion, the delegates from Greenland stated that, in the light of the developments that had taken place, there was a general desire in the Provincial Council for Greenland to be more closely associated with Denmark constitutionally through a provision in the constitution that established the fact that Greenland was no longer a Danish colony but an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark and that the people of Greenland, in accordance with the more specific provisions laid down in the Elections Act, were represented in the Danish Parliament on an equal footing with the people in the other parts of the Kingdom of Denmark.

The Committee on Greenland subsequently requested the government to ensure that the Danish Constitutional Commission discussed this question and formulated the necessary draft provisions for the Constitution and the Elections Act.

Clearly, it was these wishes expressed by the Greenlanders that Finn Friis was alluding to when he stated in his internal report that Greenland's new status had not been "imposed" on the people, but that their representatives had "prompted" the change.²¹ This interpretation of the memorandum tallies with the fact that the decisive turning point was in February-March 1952 and that the subsequent development in the form of elaboration of a constitutional provision on Greenland can be regarded largely as an effort to accommodate and enshrine in the law the Greenlanders' wishes as put forward in the Committee on Greenland.

In this context, it should be mentioned that the Greenland Department, on Eske Brun's initiative, had also begun considering the matter of "how to notify the UN about termination of the obligation to transmit information". This consideration led to the drawing up of a draft memorandum, the purpose of which was to provide the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with what was referred to as indirect guidance (!) on the wording of the text of the memorandum to the UN Secretary-General. The author of this draft memorandum – chief of section Sveistrup – proposed at the outset that the Danish government should follow the example of the American notification in the matter of Puerto Rico and send a short notification document together with a longer memorandum. The draft memorandum provided an ac-

²¹ The text of the memorandum is very close to the letter from the Danish Parliament's Committee sent to Prime Minister Erik Eriksen on 17 March 1952, cf. chapter 9, note 4.

count of Greenland's development from a Stone Age civilisation (in 1721) to its present-day status on par with other societies. Denmark had considered it as one of its primary duties to help the people in Greenland to achieve cultural equality with other peoples. It was also emphasised that Greenland had not in this regard been exploited. The bulk of the document consisted of minutes of the meetings of the Provincial Council of Greenland in September 1952; however, it differed greatly from the memorandum written by Finn Friis in its description of how the draft constitutional provision came into being. In the Greenland Department's document there was only a reference to the Department's apparent considerations about granting Greenland self-government and about Greenland's options for existing as an independent society. There was no mention of the meetings of the Committee on Greenland. The document created the impression that the process had been steered entirely by Denmark and that the voice of the Greenlanders was first heard at the Provincial Council meeting on September 1952.²²

Today, it is difficult to determine whether the document landed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was immediately rejected. This possibility cannot be ruled out. Finn Friis' internal report of 31 July 1953, described above, can be read as a rejection of the structure and main points in the Department's draft. If the Greenland Department's draft was rejected, it was definitely for good reasons. It lacked precision, and, moreover, it was hardly fitting to present a ministry's internal considerations in a memorandum to the UN.

Hermod Lannung's initiatives

On 7 December 1953, the UN Secretary-General published a document (A/AC.35/L.155) containing the Danish Foreign Minister's note to him, dated 3 September 1953, together with all the accompanying documents (translated into English).

The Secretary-General's publication of the Danish documents turned into quite a major affair for the Danish government and it reveals the tensions and differences

²² Handwritten draft and two copies of the document, all addressed to the head of department, can be found in the Danish National Archives, Greenland Administration, delayed submission 1987, packet 16. – It says, among other things: "Once this development [the "general education" that led to the Greenlanders being granted equal status in economic, social, and cultural areas] could be seen as concluded, the issue remained about Greenland's constitutional position. One could consider giving the Greenlanders a degree of self-government such that the population, if necessary, may express their wishes through the Provincial Council, which is elected by all men and women who are of age in a conventional, democratic way. It has now been recognised that it would not be possible for a people who do not number much more than 20,000 and who live along a coastline extending several thousand kilometres, to be a self-governing society without support from outside. Such support has hitherto been provided by Denmark, which has regarded it as its duty to continue this cooperation now on the basis of full equality. Thus, during the preliminary work on the revised Danish Constitution, it was proposed that Greenland should be made a part of Denmark with equal status with the rest of Denmark; however, before the Constitutional Commission finally gave its opinion, the issue was presented to the Provincial Council of Greenland". – In one of the copies, there is a suggestion in the margin that the first part of the quotation could possibly be left out. The draft indicates that copies were intended for Eske Brun, Finn Nielsen, and Hermod Lannung. Lannung worked closely with Sveistrup and might have had an influence on the text.

of opinion among Danish officials concerned with the issue of Greenland. Upon reading the documents published by the Secretary-General, the UN delegation in New York discovered that there were omissions in the translation of the accompanying documents. In a report of 23 December 1953, the delegation drew the attention of Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the fact that there were omissions in both the English text of the Constitution and in the English translation of the minutes of the meetings of the Provincial Council of Greenland in September 1952. In the latter, the omissions were not marked. A number of misleading mistakes had also been found. The delegation also pointed out that its note of 14 September 1953 had not been published.²³

It is not clear whether the Ministry of Foreign Affairs already had an inkling of who might be behind the omissions. In any case, the matter was considered worrisome and the new head of the political-legal department in the Ministry, the diplomatic representative Alex Mørch, requested Borberg to investigate who was responsible for the abridgement. The Ministry was less concerned about the omissions in the text of the Constitution, since an English translation was generally available; by contrast, the omission in the section concerning the Provincial Council's negotiations was seen as more grave, since – as Borberg was informed – the intention had been to faithfully present all existing documents, and there was nothing to hide. Moreover: “The published text omits the mention of, among other things, Peter Egede’s criticism of the fact that the proposal had not been presented to the

²³ Report no. 789, New York, 23 December 1953, signed by Borberg. The report contains an exact list of the omissions and mistakes in the translation that was sent. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 5. Together with the letter of 27 January 1954, the delegation sent the French translation, pointing out the various inaccuracies in the translation and noting that it contained the same omissions as the English translation. It was deemed by the delegation to have less significance than the English translation, since only a few countries used the French text as the basis of their work. Together with a letter of 28 January 1954, the Spanish translation was sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is clear from a comment that the delegation did not check the translation apart from two points. *Idem.* – There are three omissions, one major one and two minor ones. The biggest and most significant omission is in the minutes of the Provincial Council meeting immediately after Frederik Lynges’s proposal to nominate a committee to produce a joint statement on the matter. The English version is as follows:

“Mr. Peter Egede declared that the material of a matter as important as this should have been available beforehand, but the members had not received it until now. He also found it expedient to appoint a committee.

The Chairman answered: The material is the actual proposal and that has been circulated to the members. What has been distributed to-day is what I have stated, and that has only been distributed in order to facilitate the work of members of the Council during the introduction.

Mr. Peter Egede observed that the reply in this matter could not be reduced to a yes or no. A more comprehensive reply was required.

Mr. Fr. Nielsen asked what Mr. Fr. Lynges had thought the proposed committee should devote its time to.

Mr. Fr. Lynges repeated that he found the question so important that it had to be considered carefully and a clear decision had to be made. Alone the method of election required consideration.

Mr. Jens Olsen found the matter so momentous that not a committee, but the Council in plenary session should discuss it.

Provincial Council earlier, without it being clear from the text that corrections were made”.²⁴

A talk on the matter (14 January) between a member of the delegation and Wilfrid Benson in the UN Secretariat resulted in Benson taking responsibility for the omissions, which, according to him, had been made as a consequence of “a misunderstanding about the wishes expressed by the Danish delegation” (report’s quotation marks). Benson named the person in strict confidence for the delegation member’s personal information. However, as Borberg stressed in a new report to Copenhagen, since – “obviously” – none of the permanent delegation members had made any statements to the UN Secretariat that could be interpreted as a wish to modify the text communicated by the Ministry, it would hardly be difficult for the recipient to work out which member of the delegation to the General Assembly was being alluded to (!). Thus, without actually naming names to the Ministry, Borberg, in true diplomatic fashion, indicated that Lannung was the person responsible.

Borberg further wrote that “the delegation member in question” had told the members of the permanent delegation that certain parts of the presented material should have been left out while other information should have been included. According to Borberg, the permanent delegation’s unequivocal response to this statement was that it could not, of course, alter the instructions that had been received. Finally, the report stated that Benson had felt he had been given the authority to omit the extract in question, which he had understood as being of a procedural nature. He then realised that he should have consulted the permanent delegation before changing a text that had been officially communicated by the Danish government. He regretted his actions and had given a spoken assurance that he was willing to submit a revised version. Borberg’s own assessment, however, was that Denmark should not call for the omissions to be publicly corrected, but that it should be left to the UN Secretariat to decide whether it wished to submit a list of

Mr. Fr. Nielsen endorsed this point of view.

The Chairman was of the opinion that the method of election had to be discussed in detail. He understood Mr. Fr. Lyngé’s statement in the sense that a committee was to prepare a concerted well-balanced pronouncement, which then could be polished a little and be given a momentous character. This the Chairman could accept.

Mr. Augo Lyngé moved that the question be postponed to a later date of this session.

The Chairman observed that the fundamental question was urgent, whereas the technical one should be considered a little further. The Chairman thought the discussion should not be postponed to a later date of this session, but rather to a meeting immediately after the present one.

Mr. Fr. Nielsen endorsed the Chairman’s statement; the question was not a new one, but had been desired and thoroughly considered for more than two years. He proposed that the reply should be yes or no, and that the reply should at once be given by telegram. Thereupon the members could deal with the technical question.

Mr. Augo Lyngé did not reckon that the Greenland Council would disagree on this question, but he preferred nevertheless a couple of days’ postponement for consideration”.

Extracts from the minutes of the Greenland Council. Meetings held in Nuuk, Greenland, September 1952. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8. U.83.a., packet 5. – The omission is marked here by an official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with brackets in colour pencil. By contrast, the two minor omissions are not marked; it is possible that they were not seen as important. In another copy in the Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 4, all the omissions are marked in pencil.

²⁴ Copy of letter from Alex Mørch to William Borberg, dated Copenhagen, 9 January 1954. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 5.

printing errors. If, however, the government decided to submit a revised text, it should consider adding information about the fact that not only the old colonial territories in West Greenland, but also the Northern Greenlanders and East Greenlanders had been granted voting rights for elections to the *Folketing*.²⁵

Thus, Lannung presumably made use of his close relationship with Wilfrid Benson in the UN Secretariat to tamper with the texts from Copenhagen after failing to get the delegation to edit the accompanying documents, the content of which was apparently not quite to his liking. At the same time, it must be recalled that Lannung, as described above, had brought about changes in the memorandum's text. Lannung's conduct was, of course, plainly wilful and quite outrageous, and moreover does not even appear to have been well thought out. His approach says more about his commitment to the Greenland issue than about his capacity for judgement. The omission of Peter Egede's criticism, in particular, could easily have been exposed as a manoeuvre that would undermine the credibility of the Danish government.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was presumably furious with Lannung, as it had every reason to be; however, it decided not to blow the affair up, but simply to focus on the assurance that a cancel page would be provided. According to Finn Friis, the argument was that submitting a completely new version of the documents would simply attract attention.

A few days later, another of Lannung's initiatives caused a stir. It came to light that Lannung, in a short preface to a booklet about the UN written by chief of section Sveistrup, which was published in Danish and Greenlandic by *Grønlands Folkeoplysningsforening* [*Greenland's Youth and Adult Education Association*], had written that the Danish UN delegation, *backed by a representative from the Provincial Council of Greenland* (italics added), should consolidate the process of notification of the UN about this important event in the history of Greenland's development. The booklet's publication was a consequence of the awakening interest for UN issues in Greenland. The Greenlanders involved were Knud Hertling and Jørgen Fleischer.

The presence of Greenlanders at the UN's concluding negotiations on Greenland's integration into Denmark was something Lannung had worked on for several years but which had never been referred to publicly or decided on in any way. At this point, Lannung had essentially made a decision on behalf of the Danish authorities, since it would be difficult to ignore the message that had been spread throughout Greenland by the booklet on the UN. His actions were presumably motivated by the resistance to the idea which he felt emanated from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Greenland Department, on the other hand, had shown much

²⁵ Borberg to Alex Mørch, New York, 26 January 1954. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 5.

greater understanding.²⁶ The issue is somewhat reminiscent of the circumstances surrounding the visit to Greenland in 1950 by Deputy Secretary-General Hoo and director Benson, when barrister Lannung also confronted the Danish authorities with a *fait accompli* by announcing a visit the Danish authorities could then hardly avoid.

The matter went to the top echelons of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where Foreign Minister H.C. Hansen apparently believed it was so important that he felt compelled to inform Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft about it, sending him a thorough presentation of Lannung's two wilful initiatives.²⁷ It is very telling about relations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Greenland Department that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not first seek to clarify the matter over the telephone with Eske Brun, Sveistrup, or Lannung, but instead chose to make it into an issue.

Prime Minister Hedtoft apparently asked Eske Brun for advice, who seems to have been milder in his reaction than the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been in its internal correspondence. Eske Brun supported Lannung's idea of having one or two Greenlanders sent by the Provincial Council to the delegation when the time came for the issue to be debated in the UN. He also did not believe that it was necessary to take any measures in the matter of the omissions in the documents accompanying the Foreign Ministers note of 3 September. In a private letter to Alex Mørch, intending to hush up the whole matter, Brun simply wrote, "We do, as a matter of fact, regret these omissions".²⁸ In the end, the Prime Minister's Office simply returned the letter of complaint.

Brun's letter provided support to Lannung in his struggle against what he saw as an inflexible Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and since the Ministry was powerless to penalise him, there was nothing more to do. In late March 1954, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requested the UN delegation to ensure that the UN Secretariat published a list of printing errors with the English and French versions. The delegation was also to announce that it accepted the offer made by Mr Benson, should the occasion arise in the 73 (e) Committee and in the Fourth Committee, to make it

²⁶ The matter had already been discussed at high levels back in summer 1952, where Finn Friis had discussed the participation of Greenland in a talk with Eske Brun and head of department Finn Nielsen. The Greenlanders should be "on hand" when the Greenland issue came to be discussed in the 73 (e) Committee in 1953. At that time, it was thought that the debate at the UN would be concluded in 1953. In a note of 1 June 1953 Finn Friis wrote: "It is obvious that the notion that Greenlanders should be at all present comes from barrister Lannung, who on many occasions has mentioned the idea, which probably cannot be avoided". (!). Finn Friis was evidently not keen on the idea and contended in the note that the Netherlands and America's involvement of participants from Surinam and Puerto Rico respectively was more natural. What was important was to underline the independence of the new territories and not their integration. He pointed out that, due to the *Folketing* elections, Greenland representatives could not present before September 1953. Copy in the Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 4.

²⁷ H.C. Hansen to Hans Hedtoft of 26 February 1954. With a comment by Finn Friis on the same date. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 5.

²⁸ Eske Brun to personal secretary Tyge Kappel, Prime Minister's Office, 5 March 1954 and to Minister Alex Mørch, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 19 March 1954. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 5.



West Greenland landscape at Christianshåb, Qasigiannnguit, photographed by Jette Bang (1914-1964). A pioneer in photographic documentation of the country's culture and natural environment, Bang made six trips to Greenland starting in 1936. (The Arctic Institute)

clear that the omissions were due to a misunderstanding, for which the Secretariat took responsibility.²⁹

The issue of Lannung's preface was taken to a higher level in summer 1954 when Foreign Minister H.C. Hansen apparently rebuked Lannung at a meeting in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, Lannung, whose initial reaction was surprise about what had happened, retaliated once he had recovered and wrote to H.C. Hansen, saying that his preface to the publication had been thoroughly reviewed by the Greenland Department, which had not had any comments on the point in question. Thus, in his eyes, he had not done anything wrong.³⁰ In 1954, Lannung succeeded in ensuring the participation of two Greenland representatives in the

²⁹ Alex Mørch to Borberg, 25 March 1954; Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the UN delegation of the same date. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 5.

³⁰ Hermod Lannung to Foreign Minister H.C. Hansen, 24 June 1954. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 5. Copy in the Danish National Archives, Hermod Lannung private archive, packet 12. – The letter pointed out that P.P. Sveistrup had asked him orally and in writing (7 May 1953) to write the preface, the text of which had been gone through in detail together with chief of section Sveistrup. It was also noted that the Foreign Minister had not touched on the subject previously. Lannung wrote in conclusion: "Since, on the basis of my work and experience at the UN, I believed at that time that it was a self-evident and universally agreed view that a Greenland representative should participate, and since the preface was written in close coordination with the Greenland Department officials, it seems to me that, all things considered, there is no justification for the reproaches directed against me". In a letter to Sveistrup of 20 February 1954, Lannung complained about linguistic errors in the booklet's preface – something the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had also noticed. He complained in strong terms that the changes in the preface had not been brought to his attention. The Danish National Archive, Hermod Lannung private archive, packet 14.

concluding negotiations at the UN on the termination of Denmark's obligation to transmit information; hence, Lannung had the last word in this matter.

Meetings of the Fourth Committee

The new list of factors

The report by the Ad Hoc Committee on Factors (A/2428 of 4 August 1953), which contained the proposal for a new factor list, was the subject in nine meetings of the Fourth Committee during the period 1-12 October 1953 of a long and increasingly confrontational debate, which exposed the fundamental differences of opinion on the issues of factors and competence.³¹ India – according to the minutes of the Danish delegation – began cautiously and declared that it accepted the factor list in its present form. It believed there was no reason for further “academic” study of the factors if all of the members agreed that the factor list should be used only as a guideline. However, Yugoslavia and several other Eastern Bloc countries subsequently took over, a move that was clearly a planned, coordinated attack on the main aspects of the Western countries' positions on the factors.

According to Yugoslavia, a hitherto non-self-governing territory could only be said to have attained a full measure of self-government once it had attained full independence. The people of the territory in question must also have been presented with a free choice of several options, including the option of full independence. The incorporation of a country into the metropolitan country was not a solution that could be seen as acceptable. It contradicted the UN Charter's demand for full independence, since that alone provided for decentralised or regional self-government. The same sentiment was echoed by Russia. A territory had only reached full self-government when it had become a sovereign state governed by its own people. It was up to the UN General Assembly to determine when this was the given circumstance. Until self-governance had been attained, there was an obligation to transmit information on the territory. Parts II and III of the factor list were rejected by Russia as unacceptable, since they did not lead to full independence and sovereignty.

According to the minutes of the Danish delegation, a large number of Asian and Latin American countries, partly in agreement with this view, maintained that the competence to decide whether or not a territory was self-governing rested with the UN alone.

It was particularly interesting from Denmark's point of view that the Eastern Bloc countries were launching sustained attacks on the new structure of the factor list. Many of the countries simply did not accept association with the metropolitan country as a legitimate *modus operandi*, since it was seen as a continuation of colonial rule.

³¹ The account is based on the UN delegation's reports on the meetings dated New York, 30 November 1953, and on *Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories: Report of the Fourth Committee*, A/2556, dated 17 November 1953. Both in the Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 7.

This was obviously not the position that Hermod Lannung adopted when he spoke for Denmark on 2 October. Denmark was prepared to approve the report by the Ad Hoc Committee on Factors and to accept the factor list as it now stood. Now that the paragraph on association (part III) formed a separate section of the list, the structure of the list was presumably better, from Denmark's perspective, than in the former version. Thus, the separation of the factors into three sections was declared "fully acceptable". Lannung did not think it necessary for the Ad Hoc Committee on Factors to continue its work. In his statements, he again focused decisively, as on previous occasions, on the wishes of the people in question, "freely expressed by informed and democratic processes", which led him to refer to the change in Greenland's status through revision of the Constitution of 1953, which, in line with the overall Danish position, was being treated as a matter between Denmark and Greenland that the UN should merely take note of.

In his speech, Lannung meticulously explained that Denmark had always been willing to provide the Committee with information on Greenland's political development and that on several occasions Denmark had explained the important constitutional developments that had taken place in Greenland. He referred to his statement in 1951 concerning the fact that the Greenlanders had stressed their desire for direct representation in the Danish Parliament, which they had expressed in the Provincial Council of Greenland; he subsequently referred to the unanimous statement by the Provincial Council at the meeting in 1952, at which the Council had declared its wish to be associated with Denmark as an integral part of the metropolitan country on an equal footing with the other parts of the Kingdom and with representation in the Danish Parliament. According to Lannung, the Greenlanders' desire for constitutional change had met with the full approval of both the Danish government and the *Folketing* and had been taken into account by the revised constitution, which had entered into force on 5 June 1953. As a result, Greenland had become an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark with rights on an equal footing with the other parts of Denmark and with representation in the Danish Parliament. The UN Secretary-General had been duly informed in a note of 3 September 1953.³²

Lannung's speech on 2 October 1953 did not evoke any comments from the committee.

During this period, Brazil put forward a proposal for a resolution that was presumably intended to be a compromise. It was proposed that the members take note of the report by the Ad Hoc Committee on Factors and approve the factor list, which was meant to serve as a guide and be applied while taking into consideration all the relevant circumstances. The resolution underlined the control function in such cases, pointing out that paramount consideration should be given to documentation indicating that the people in question had exerted their right to self-

³² Copy of Lannung's speech on 2 October to the Fourth Committee. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2.a., packet 7.

determination; one of the tasks of the 73 (e) Committee should be, among other things, to undertake these analyses henceforth on the basis of the factor list.

Although Brazil did not explicitly state anything to this effect in the text, the proposed resolution was clearly interpreted by the Western countries as another step towards granting the General Assembly the right of veto in decisions on such cases. This interpretation played a decisive role in their presentation in which they responded largely by restating their fundamental positions on the issue of competence. The US, which up till then had been very silent, declared that it would vote against the resolution. According to the Danish minutes, the US argued that the UN could adopt general guidelines and put forward recommendations, but no state could relinquish its right to determine, of its own accord, the constitutional status of a territory under its sovereignty. France openly declared that, even if the Brazilian proposal was adopted, it would not consider it binding.

In continuation of this critique, on 6 October, eleven countries (Bolivia, Guatemala, Mexico, Venezuela, Indonesia, Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen, and Yugoslavia) put forward proposals to modify the Brazilian draft resolution, which not only tightened up the draft's preamble, making it more rigorous concerning the issue of the General Assembly's competence, but also notably included extensive changes to the draft factor list of August.

This turn of events came as a surprise to the administering powers, who tried to get the countries to withdraw their proposal for amendment. They objected that the Ad Hoc Committee on Factors had worked for months on the draft and that three of the above-mentioned countries had even participated in its work. Since their objection did not yield any result, a number of the Western countries expressed very strong criticism of the proposal. At one point, the US vainly attempted to win approval for its proposal that the 73 (e) Committee should revise the factor list once again.

The complex playing-out of the resulting tough negotiations and extensive voting that ensued will not be looked at in great detail here. First, the revised factor list was voted on point for point and was squeezed through under opposition, and subsequently the preamble of the resolution, to which the factor list was an annex, was voted on. At some point, the revised factor list was inadvertently rejected when a version of the Brazilian proposal for a resolution that accepted the original factor list was adopted! India, which shifted its position during the negotiations, then put forward, amidst protest from the administering powers, a proposal for an amendment to the effect that the factor list should be the one which the Fourth Committee had just adopted. The proposed amendment was adopted with 30 votes in favour, 18 against, and 4 abstentions.

A look at the substance of the new draft resolution with the new factor list shows that the Danish delegation – like the other Western European countries and the administering powers – had difficulty accepting the new paragraph 3 of the preamble concerning the issue of competence. It now stated that the factor list should serve as a guide for the General Assembly and the administering powers when determining whether a territory fell under Chapter XI of the UN Charter. The key stumbling block was the conclusion of the paragraph (“... in order that ... a deci-

sion may be taken by the General Assembly on the continuation or cessation of the transmission of information required by Chapter XI of the Charter”), which granted the General Assembly a competence which the administering powers – not least Denmark – had consistently denied that it possessed.

In this context, the proposals for revision of parts II and III on other separate systems of self-government and free association with the metropolitan or other country respectively will be looked at. It was not problematic for Denmark (unlike for a number of other countries) that part II was now entitled “Factors indicative of the attainment of other separate systems of self-government”, or that the new list now positioned what had previously been factor A.2 (Opinion of the Population) first, both in part II and in part III. Denmark subsequently voted in favour of these amendments.

In part II the most important new element was presumably the fact that a new provision was inserted in the form of a new factor A.2: “Freedom of choosing on the basis of the right of self-determination of peoples between several possibilities, including independence”. Equally important was factor A.3, which added a kind of annulment provision to the factor list. It was expanded and changed to: “Degree of evidence that the attribute or attributes of sovereignty which are not individually exercised will be collectively exercised by the larger entity thus associated and the freedom of the population of a Territory which has associated itself with the metropolitan country to modify at any time this status through the expression of their will by democratic means”. In this case, Denmark abstained from voting on the last part of the paragraph.

A.4 consisted of factors concerning geographical considerations, taken from part III. A remark was added on the extent to which the interests of the neighbouring country were affected. Inserted as A.5 was the factor concerning ethnic and cultural considerations, taken from part III. Finally, B.2 had been inserted as: “The right of the metropolitan country or the Territory to change the political status of that Territory in the light of the consideration whether that Territory is or is not subject to any claim or litigation on the part of another State”. Denmark voted against the three latter proposed amendments. A vote was also held on the whole of the modified part II. Denmark, together with seventeen other countries, voted against it. Part II was adopted with 24 votes in favour and 11 abstentions.

With regard to the proposed changes to part III on association with the metropolitan country or other country, the words “on an equal basis” and “or in any other form” were to be added to the heading to make it read: “Factors indicative of the free association of a territory on an equal basis with the metropolitan or other country as an integral part of that country or in any other form”. There were no objections to this revision from Denmark. The following provision was to be added as a new point A.2 in part III: “The freedom of the population of a Non-Self-Governing Territory which has associated itself with the metropolitan country as an integral part of that country or in any other form to modify this status through the expression of their will by democratic means”. Denmark voted against this revision and explained its reasons for doing so, cf. below.

There was to be an addition to factor A.3 on geographical considerations proposed by the Ad Hoc Committee on Factors, corresponding to what was stated under II (8): "The right of the metropolitan country or the Territory to change the political status of that Territory in the light of the consideration of whether that Territory is or is not subject to any claim or litigation on the part of another state". Denmark voted against this addition. With regard to factor A.5 (now A.6) proposed by the Committee, the words "by virtue of the constitution of the metropolitan country" were to be omitted, such that association could only be based on a treaty or a bilateral agreement. Denmark could not vote in favour of this proposal either since it had implemented its association with Greenland precisely by virtue of the constitution and not a treaty or agreement. As B.2, the same factor that was in the Committee's part II, C.2 was to be inserted concerning the population's effective participation in the government of the territory (by means of an election system). Likewise, Denmark voted against this change. As C.5, the same factor that was in the Committee's part II, C3 was to be inserted concerning the degree of economic, social, and educational autonomy and the degree of freedom against discrimination in the social area. Again, Denmark voted against this change.

During the negotiations, Lannung spoke up and raised objections, in particular to the new paragraph 6 in the preamble, which he found to be illogical. The new wording ("Considers that the manner in which territories referred to in Chapter XI of the Charter can become fully self-governing is through the attainment of independence, although it is recognized that self-government can also be achieved by association with another state or group of states if this is done freely and on the basis of absolute equality") undermined the equal status of integration and independence, something which he had fought for so vehemently from the very beginning of negotiations on the factors. Lannung thus proposed replacing the words "although it is recognized that self-government can also be achieved" with the word "or". This desired parity was rejected by the eleven states responsible for the amendment. However, they were accommodating enough to insert the word "primarily" ("... is primarily through the attainment of independence ..."), which was also included in the final resolution.

For Denmark, Dons Møller also expressed his astonishment at the fact that the majority had wished to push through the proposals for amendment so fast that there was no opportunity to carefully weigh them. He particularly criticised the new point A.2 in part III, which gave a population the right to modify its legal status, pointing out that, in determining whether or not a people had attained a full measure of self-government through integration with the metropolitan country, it was not appropriate to have a factor concerning the extent to which other wishes of the population in question had to be taken into account in the future.³³ Dons

³³ According to the delegation's report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (p. 12) a contradiction had been spotted between the new point A.2 in part III and the new paragraph 5 in the resolution, in which emphasis had been placed on the freely expressed will of the people "at the time of taking the decision". According to the minutes, this contradiction was not pointed out at the meetings so as to avoid the risk of the wording in question being modified in an "unfavourable direction".

Møller was right on a formal level; however, long before that time, other functions had been conferred on the factor list that were aimed at safeguarding the rights of the people of non-self-governing territories.

The final voting on the draft resolution in its entirety (including the modified factor list) reveals how divided the opinions of the countries were; the draft resolution was adopted by 27 votes to 23, with 2 abstentions. All the administering powers voted against it, as did the Eastern Bloc countries – albeit for completely different reasons. They could not accept part II and part III of the new factor list, which they felt amounted to continuation of the colonial regime.

As is evident from the above, the debate on the issue of factors developed into a drama with unprecedented polarisation over the content of the factor list. The Eastern Bloc countries put their cards on the table by voting against it and only recognising the future prospect of full independence for colonies. However, the Third-World countries, which were in the majority, could recognise different forms of continued association between a metropolitan country and non-self-governing territory, and sought, instead, to safeguard the autonomy of independent territories by meticulously listing their rights in different areas, including the right to undo a political decision to maintain an association with the metropolitan or other country. The price paid for this possibility was that the modified factor list – unlike its predecessors – did not have the backing of the administering powers and was adopted by only a tiny majority. One could rightly ask what importance it had in practice when all the administering powers and a number of non-administering powers (as Denmark regarded itself!) had voted against it.

The cessation of the transmission of information by the Netherlands and the US

America and the Netherlands' termination of reporting on Puerto Rico and Surinam (and the Dutch Antilles) respectively was the subject of debate at meetings from 26-29 October and 30 October to 6 November 1953.

At the meetings, the Netherlands adhered to its decision of 1951 to stop sending reports. A definitive solution to the territories' constitutional situation had most certainly not been implemented; however, in 1951, the territories had been granted full self-government in internal matters through an interim solution. The Dutch position was supported by representatives from the territories, who declared that their parliament had decided to oppose the transmission of information to the UN. The non-administering powers were not satisfied with this declaration and maintained that it was the General Assembly which had the competence to determine whether or not a decision reached by an administering power concerning the transmission of information was legitimate or not.

Denmark felt it was necessary to explain its position since Sweden had put forward a proposal for a compromise, which could not be supported on grounds of principle. Denmark said that the named territories no longer fell under Chapter XI of the UN Charter and that the Dutch government was no longer bound to transmit

information. It was pointed out that the Danish delegates had already announced in 1951 and 1952 that the General Assembly should have taken note of the Dutch declaration without further delay.

The result of the discussions, during which a series of proposals for a resolution were put forward, was the adoption of an Indonesian proposal that was supplemented by a Soviet proposal that there should be negotiations to establish a new status for the territories. This new status should represent a full measure of self-government in fulfilling the objectives in Chapter XI of the UN Charter. The General Assembly should request that the Dutch government transmit information to the Secretary-General until the General Assembly had decided that the transmission of information could be discontinued.³⁴

Mexico and the Eastern Bloc states were among the countries which protested with respect to the issue of the US termination of reporting on Puerto Rico. Mexico was disappointed that Puerto Rico had not attained full independence, and according to Russia, Puerto Rico was still a colony under US economic and political control. The delegate from the Ukraine denounced the adoption of Puerto Rico's new constitution as a political farce that was intended to give American monopolistic capitalists free reign to continue their hegemony over the territory's economy. The debate, which took place between 30 October and 6 November 1953, was influenced by a proposal for a resolution put forward by seven Latin American states led by Brazil. The proposal recognised the 73 (e) Committee's position that Puerto Rico's new constitutional status had been attained by democratic means and by virtue of a reciprocal agreement. Thus, the proposal considered it "appropriate" that the US should terminate its reports. India objected and proposed that the matter be re-examined, for which purpose an ad hoc committee comprising six members should be set up. However, the proposal was rejected. On the other hand, on the initiative of Burma, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, and Mexico, a paragraph was inserted, stating that the General Assembly had the competence to determine whether a non-self-governing territory had attained a full measure of self-government. The same five states' proposal that the US should continue to transmit information was, on the other hand, defeated.

The outcome of a protracted debate was the adoption of the seven countries' proposal for a resolution which supported the US, but also contained the two aspects that were basically unacceptable for the administering powers: The resolution drew attention to the General Assembly's competence in the matter and it was considered "appropriate" that the US should cease its reporting on Puerto Rico. The proposal was adopted by 22 votes to 18 votes, with 19 abstentions (including Denmark, the US, and Great Britain).

The development during the debate clearly put the administering powers in a dilemma: They saw themselves placed in a situation where they risked not being able to obtain assent to cases concerning the termination of the submission of re-

³⁴ Report no. 129, New York, 6 November 1953. Signed by Borberg. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 7.

ports in the form of a General Assembly resolution unless they themselves recognised the General Assembly's competence in the matter.

The Danish delegation, which was also in contact with the American delegation regarding the matter, was extremely aware of this dilemma. The two countries hoped that they would succeed in getting rid of the wording on the General Assembly's competence, which was so unacceptable in their view, by demanding a vote requiring a two-thirds majority, but they realised at the same time that there was perhaps a risk that a resolution could not be achieved. After the debates in the Fourth Committee, the Danish delegation explicitly linked the imminent vote in the General Assembly with the following year's debate in the UN on the issue of Greenland. The position of the delegation was that at the voting the following year they might be forced to accept a preamble on the General Assembly's competence that was not to their liking. In a communication with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, permission was obtained to possibly make a statement if necessary in connection with the voting to the effect that a vote in favour of the resolution did not amount to confirmation of the provision concerning competence.³⁵

The fate of the draft resolution in the plenary session on 27 November 1953³⁶

The meeting began with a debate on procedural matters, namely whether the draft resolutions from the Fourth Committee should be adopted by a simple majority or two-thirds majority. The administering powers were defeated and it was voted that the new factor resolution could be adopted by a simple majority and later that the draft resolution on Surinam and Puerto Rico could also be adopted by a simple majority. This vote was a setback for the administering powers, which thus lost a tool for weeding out undesired paragraphs from draft resolutions. Beforehand, Hermod Lannung had emphasised, to no avail, that adoption by a simple majority went against the UN Charter, the rules of procedure, and usual practice. Against this backdrop, the factor resolution and thus also the third list of factors was ad-

³⁵ The delegation backed up its viewpoint *vis-à-vis* the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by submitting a report entitled *The Trap (Fælden)*, which the author of the report, Puerto Rico's "Resident Commissioner", who was part of the US delegation, handed over to Lannung on 18 November. The report argued that the administering powers should stop voting against the termination of reporting because they disagreed with the wording on the General Assembly's competence in the matter. If they did that, they would fall into a trap, the author claimed, since this would mean that it would only be possible in the future to pass resolutions in the General Assembly on termination of reporting on the basis of independence. According to the author, this consequence was too high a price to pay. The document therefore concluded by calling upon the administering powers to give way with regard to the wording on the General Assembly's competence. The author claimed that the wording did not serve to grant the General Assembly competence. The General Assembly only had the competence to make recommendations. – The paper was submitted by Borberg together with report no. 164 of 20 November 1953. The Danish National Archives, UM 119. M.2., packet 7.

³⁶ UN delegation report no. 242 of 7 January 1954 together with *Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories: Report of the Fourth Committee A/2556*, 17 November 1953. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 8.

opted on 27 November 1953 with a majority of 32 votes in favour, 19 against, and 6 abstentions. Denmark voted against the third factor list, owing to the changes that had been made to the list in the Fourth Committee, which the Danish delegation felt to be unacceptable.

The resolution on Surinam and the Dutch Antilles, which, as mentioned, did not accept the Netherlands' reasons for terminating the transmission of information to the UN, was adopted with 33 votes in favour, 13 votes against (including Denmark), and 8 abstentions. After the vote, the Dutch delegate announced that his government did not intend to resume its submission of reports to the UN, despite the fact that the resolution called upon the Dutch government to do so.

With respect to the vote on the draft resolution on Puerto Rico, which involved voting on each individual paragraph, the paragraph on the competence of the General Assembly was adopted with 34 votes in favour, 19 votes against, and 7 abstentions. Among those who voted against it were the administering powers and the Nordic states. In the final vote, the votes were distributed in a completely different way. The resolution was adopted with 26 votes in favour (including the US), 16 votes against, and as many as 18 abstentions. Denmark abstained, together with Sweden, Norway, Great Britain, France, and many others. When explaining its decision to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Danish delegation referred to the latest brief it had received and explained that if the abstaining countries had voted against the resolution, it would not have been adopted – an outcome which the US “had been at pains to avoid”.

Conclusion

According to the plan, 1953 should have been the last year of Denmark's status as a colonial power. With the adoption of the Constitution of 1953, Greenland had become an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark with equal status, and Denmark sought to limit its diplomatic activities associated with colonial power status. Denmark did not participate in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Factors in 1953 and kept a very low profile in the 73 (e) Committee in order not to ruffle any feathers before official notification to the UN of its termination of reporting and withdrawal from the 73 (e) Committee. Presumably, Denmark had to change its plans when the other colonial powers, for several reasons, made it clear that they did not wish to receive Denmark's notification of withdrawal during the meetings of the 73 (e) Committee in late summer 1953, which were already strained, and thus persuaded Denmark to defer this step. As a consequence, the debate on Greenland at the UN was postponed by one year.

The notification sent to the Secretary-General in September 1953 about termination of reporting was based on Denmark's consistent policy line that this was a matter about which the UN should merely be informed of. Denmark became very nervous when the US, in connection with its termination of reporting on Puerto Rico, abandoned its previous position and accepted that the matter be negotiated on the basis of a proposal for a resolution put forward by Brazil, thereby granting

the General Assembly a certain competence. This circumstance meant that the issue of Greenland would almost inevitably also result in a proposal for a resolution. In fact, the government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepared themselves most thoroughly for a battle at the UN, and the additional documentation, in the form of a memorandum and other texts, that was submitted to the UN was worded in such a way that Denmark could claim to have met the requirements about attainment of political maturity, local self-government, and, finally, free expression of a population's wishes, as set down in the two existing factor lists. The country also prepared itself to answer questions arising in connection with the considerably expanded American military involvement in Greenland.

However, Denmark stuck to its guns on the matter of the General Assembly's competence in the matter of termination of reporting, but realised during the negotiations on the Netherlands and America's termination of reporting on Surinam and Puerto Rico respectively that it could become necessary to back down on its principles in order to be able to push a resolution through the General Assembly at all. While Denmark was able to vote in favour of the first two factor lists and was one of the main countries responsible for the structure of the lists, it voted against the third factor list of November 1953, as did the administering powers. The list was adopted by a narrow majority amidst vociferous protests by the administering powers about the fact that the policy of cooperation that had been pursued with regard to the factor lists had now been replaced by the dictates of the majority. The new factor list abolished the option of integrating a territory into the metropolitan country through a new constitution – as Denmark had done. It now laid down the requirement of a treaty or bilateral agreement. One could very legitimately ask what relevance a factor list that was rejected by all the administering powers ultimately had.

The leading players and protagonists in the Greenland issue agreed on Denmark's general position on the matter of competence and also on how the issue should be negotiated at the UN. The personal differences of opinion between Lannung and those involved in the matter at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in particular the highly competent Finn Friis, author of the notes from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the UN, did, however, result in tension and the occasional clash. Lannung and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had their sights set on the same goal, namely to gain the UN's acceptance of the integration of Greenland into Denmark; however, they partly disagreed on the means. Lannung's somewhat high-handed behaviour angered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and led to a complaint about him being sent to Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft, who did not pursue the issue. Lannung had the backing of the Greenland Department and his role in the imminent negotiations at the UN was presumably considered to be absolutely vital.

11 · The Greenland issue at the UN, 1954

Frede P. Jensen

This chapter describes the debate on the Greenland issue at the UN in 1954, which started with the meetings of the 73 (e) Committee, at which Brazil drew up and, together with India and Guatemala, presented a draft resolution. The resolution was very accommodating towards Denmark and was based on Denmark's view of the development of its relationship with Greenland. During the subsequent meetings of the Fourth Committee and the General Assembly, there was a general consensus on retaining the text of this resolution. However, in the final phase, Uruguay put forward an amendment proposing that a new paragraph on the competence of the General Assembly be inserted in the preamble, thus raising the general issue of competence. This amendment prevented the resolution from being almost unanimously adopted, since, among others, a number of colonial powers subsequently decided to abstain from voting.

During the negotiations, Denmark was criticised on several fundamental points, one of them being the criticism from several countries that a referendum on the decision had not been held in Greenland. However, the majority of member states did feel, nonetheless, that the requirement of the factor list, namely that the opinion of the people should be heard, had indeed been fulfilled. Thus, in these circumstances, the requirement of self-determination was deemed to have been met. Here, it was important that the two newly elected Greenland members of the Danish Parliament were present and supported this point. The numerous speeches showed that Denmark had earned substantial goodwill in the international community for its many years of effort in Greenland and for its work at the UN on colonial issues.

Report on Greenland

Originally, the Greenland Department had intended to make what it presumed would be the final report on Greenland extremely brief. The report, which was submitted in 1953, covered the situation up to the end of March 1953 and thus there was only an approximately two-month period up to 5 June 1953, the day when the revised constitution was signed by the King, which still had to be covered. However, at some stage the plans were changed. At a meeting in the Greenland Department on 1 March 1954, the preparation of the report and a number of other initiatives in connection with the meeting at the UN were discussed. The first item on the agenda proposed that the final report to the UN

should provide a comprehensive overview of development over the last five years.¹ In the final version of the report, it was simply noted that since this was the final report, it was considered most appropriate to provide a comprehensive description of the last few years.²

Hence the report included content that had been described in detail in previous reports and it took on the shape of a summary of the thorough political, administrative, and cultural reforms that had taken place in Greenland over the previous years. At the same time, as before, it provided a comprehensive body of statistics on the economy, labour conditions, social conditions, health conditions etc.

It was very clear from the wording that the report of 1954 was meant to harmonise with the documentation submitted by Denmark to the UN in September 1953 and was intended as information/propaganda material. This intention is also evident from the fact that it was distributed, together with the illustrated booklet “Greenland” (which is mentioned later) to the members of the 73 (e) Committee and the members of the General Assembly in autumn 1954. Thus, an extensive propaganda campaign by Denmark existed up till the concluding Greenland debate at the UN. There is ample evidence that this initiative stemmed from the Greenland Department and Hermod Lannung. Lannung in particular seems to have been nervous (cf. following) that Denmark had not done enough groundwork at the UN on the issue of Greenland’s integration and that there would thus be difficulties when it came to international acceptance of Denmark’s decision. Lannung was certainly critical of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ efforts.

As far as the main points of the report are concerned, the most important was probably the theory that the people of Greenland continually relied on external support to survive. This theory was expressed in the conclusion in the section on geographical aspects (I.A), which stated: “The factors mentioned, namely the country’s location, climate, small population and scattered settlements allow for only extremely modest living conditions unless there is support from an external source”. This view also played a central role in the section on economic conditions (II), which stated:

The small population, which lives spread out along approximately 1800 km of coastline in West Greenland, the one-sidedness of working life and the enormous transport costs are all factors which serve to make it much more difficult to create

¹ Minutes of the meeting of the Greenland Department on 1 March 1954. It was attended by: Eske Brun, Hermod Lannung, and the chiefs of section P.P. Svestrup and Otto Jensen together with the secretary Pie Barfoed. – The agenda comprised: A concluding report to the UN; resolution of the Provincial Council on the termination of the obligation to transmit information; selection of two Greenland representatives to participate in the UN meetings; the Danish delegation’s speech; and the Greenland representatives’ speech of presentation at the UN. The Danish National Archives. Ministry of Greenland (1950-1954), Fourth office, journal no. 1304 A, 1954.

² The Danish version with final changes in the Danish National Archives, GS, delayed submission 1987, packet 15. – A copy of the multigraphed version can be found in the Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a/49-54 including appendix, packet 1.



In their final report to the UN in 1954, the Greenland Department used Greenland's isolated location, the harsh climate, and the small population to conclude that the country needed economic subvention from abroad – meaning from Denmark. Dog sleds at Jakobshavn, Ilulissat, West Greenland. (Photograph by Jette Bang, the Arctic Institute)

satisfactory living conditions in Greenland than, for example, in European countries. If the people of Greenland are ever to enjoy the same benefits as the rest of Denmark's population, the region must receive substantial economic support.

Using the significant boost in support over the previous years for the modernisation of Greenland society as its starting point, the report went on to paint a picture of the future prospects for Greenland society, which was described as being heavily dependent on fishing and the fishing industry, without any sign of industrial development or mining. In the section on social conditions (III), the focus was on the increased social work in the years after the war, including a massive boost in social expenditures, which had multiplied from 89,809 kr. in 1939-1940 to 809,865

kr. in 1952-1953. The largest amount was allocated to support for the elderly (55 years and above), which rose from 60,714 kr. in 1939-1940 to 492,175 in 1952-1953. These sums were obviously deliberately quoted. Many of the non-administering powers at the UN had no kind of provision of support for the elderly.

In the detailed description of health conditions, the focus was likewise on the higher prioritisation of medical efforts to combat tuberculosis by building hospitals etc., which had indeed taken place. We can deduce from the omissions that, either for the sake of the Greenlanders or the international public, it was not considered appropriate to relay the doctors' cool-minded assessments of hygiene standards among the Greenland population and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.³

The detailed description of education in Greenland (IV) included once again the early eradication of illiteracy in Greenland, a situation which made quite an impression on the Third-World countries, which were in the majority at the UN, and definitely had an impact on the negotiations at the UN later in the year, cf. the following. It was also noted that the Greenlanders called for a much further-reaching education in the Danish language.

Negotiations at the UN in 1954

Preparations for the meetings of the 73 (e) Committee

During the preparations for the autumn meetings on the matter of Greenland, the Danes referred to a Dutch memorandum drawn up by the Dutch and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' expert on international law, Dr Spits. In the memorandum, Spits, who was working on the issue of Surinam, considered the difficulties that could occur for Denmark in connection with the debate on the Greenland issue. He took as his basis the criteria which the General Assembly had established by adopting the latest list of factors. Spits believed that the Danish decision could be said to comply with a number of factors, but that there could be a problem with respect to factor A.1, namely the opinion of the population, in that the UN was inclined to interpret this as a requirement to hold a referendum. The majority of members also tended to hold the view that the principle of self-government was implemented through a people's free choice between different options, one of them being independence. He also foresaw a problem with A.2, namely freedom

³ Under III.J. Public Health, paragraph 7 in the section on tuberculosis – where it was stated that 6-7% of the population suffered from tuberculosis – the following passage was dropped: “The large spread of this disease can be assumed to be caused partly by small and crowded domiciles and the resulting poor hygienic conditions, and partly by nutritional conditions, which during periods of small catches and fishing yields, when the population is compelled to live off imported goods, can be considered to be deficient, certainly as far as anti-substances are concerned”. Towards the end of the passage, the following sentences stand out: “Among other diseases, gonorrhoea should be mentioned as being very widespread in Greenland despite intensive efforts by doctors and penicillin treatment. Finally, there are still frequent incidences of lice and scabies as it is difficult to tackle these diseases without significantly improving standards of hygiene among the population”.

of choice, in that this required that a territory's population should have the right at any time to change its status, possibly in some cases by withdrawing from an association.

Spits considered the solution implemented by Denmark to be the right one, since a territory populated by 24,000 people "surely could not" become an independent state. Moreover, the territory would not be able to stand on its own two feet, either economically or financially. In his view it was likely that the General Assembly would consent to Denmark terminating the transmission of information, since political factors – which were more significant than legal factors – did not seem to play any important role in the matter.⁴

At a meeting of the Danish UN delegation in New York on 27 May 1954, also attended by Eske Brun, the delegates considered for the first time what approach the Danish representatives should take at the forthcoming meetings on the Greenland issue in the 73 (e) Committee in August. At the meeting, it was agreed that the issue should not be played up too much since this could arouse suspicion about the degree of Denmark's certainty among a number of anti-colonial powers. Denmark should proceed on the basis that the issue of Greenland's integration was a straightforward matter in the context of the UN. At the meeting, the idea of *Greenland* representatives participating in the meetings of the 73 (e) Committee was also discussed. Their participation was taken as a given, but it was anticipated that certain practical problems could arise.⁵

In early June, Lannung took a new initiative with respect to the committee meetings. He drew up and passed on to the Greenland Department a text for a resolution which he envisaged should be submitted by the Provincial Council of Greenland in connection with the negotiations at the UN. As mentioned above, this matter had been discussed at the meeting of 1 March 1954 at the Greenland Department. According to Lannung, it was important to state that the Provincial Council felt that continuation of the obligation to transmit information to the UN would not be in keeping with the fact that Greenland had attained full self-government as a part of Denmark on equal terms with the rest of the Kingdom of Denmark.⁶ This initiative, which was not the only one Lannung took (cf. the following), indicates that Lannung was apparently quite nervous about the imminent negotiations at the UN on the Greenland issue. His draft resolution was intended

⁴ The memorandum, written in Dutch, was submitted with an accompanying letter, signed by Borberg and dated New York, 28 April 1954. The accompanying letter is classified as "Strictly Confidential" and, according to the stamp, was submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U. 83.a., packet 5. – *Idem* Danish translation.

⁵ Copy of report (no. 321) of 27 May 1954, signed by Borberg. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 5. – At the meeting there was consensus that it would presumably be sufficient to have Greenland representatives present at the 73 (e) Committee and thus not at the discussions in the Fourth Committee. The delegation should not try to fix a specific date for the start of the debate on the Greenland issue either. Should, "contrary to expectations", the presence of representatives from Greenland at the Fourth Committee meetings be necessary, they could travel back to New York. Eske Brun felt that there would no problem in getting the Americans to organise the transportation.

⁶ Otto Jensen to Finn Friis, 12 June 1954, with enclosed draft resolution. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 5. – With Svenningsen's note of 14 June requesting a draft reply.

to bolster the Danish government's position and it was presumably modelled on a similar declaration that had been submitted by Surinam's parliament – with limited success, as shown – in support of the Dutch government on the cessation negotiations on Surinam and the Dutch Antilles. The Greenland Department forwarded the draft to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and declared – when asked – that, provided that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not have any reservations, it would approve the draft. However, the Ministry did indeed have reservations.

Finn Friis pointed out that the initiative had come from Lannung and he loyally expressed his understanding of the fact that Lannung, who was so familiar with the UN environment, should wish to be prepared for all eventualities at the forthcoming negotiations in autumn 1954. “This explains his initiatives with regard to the participation of Greenland experts, his remarks concerning the wording of Denmark's concluding report and, finally, the proposal mentioned in the present note”. However, Friis then went on to emphasise that Eske Brun and the delegation in New York had agreed that the issue should not be played up too much. A resolution like the one being proposed could be seen as a “commissioned work”. His main point was, however, that the government had declared in its letter of September 1953 to the Secretary-General that it had decided to cease the transmission of information. “Our principal viewpoint is that this declaration cannot be challenged by any discussions or decisions that might arise at the UN”, he continued. He concluded by proposing that a meeting be held, attended by Lannung, to discuss tactics for the imminent debate in the 73 (e) Committee. He was not happy with the discussions, which had so far been piecemeal.⁷

Lannung, however, did not just give up. Upon learning of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' rejection of his initiative, he pointed out in a letter to the Greenland Department dated 6 July – which was sent from a ward of the district hospital in Copenhagen – that during the previous autumn in New York he had already suggested to Eske Brun and the head of the department, Finn Nielsen, that a statement should be drawn up for use in the Fourth Committee indicating or explicitly stating:

... that the Greenlanders exercised their right to self-determination when they supported integration, and that the Greenlanders unconditionally wish to discontinue the transmission of information pursuant to Article 73e, since this cannot be reconciled with the fact that they have now attained a full measure of self-government (words underlined by Lannung).

⁷ *Concerning Greenland Department's letter of 12 June 1954.* Minutes by Finn Friis of 16 June 1954. – With approval by A. Mørch, 17 June 1954 and rejection letter from Nils Svenningsen to the Greenland Department of 17 June 1954, in which “strong doubts” are expressed as to how far it was now opportune to let the Provincial Council put forward a statement. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 5.

Thus, Lannung had widened his proposal to include a new point stating that the Greenlanders had exercised their right to self-determination, a point he apparently felt was missing in the declarations submitted hitherto.

Eske Brun forwarded the letter for approval by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where it was immediately noticed that Lannung had introduced a completely new point concerning the right of self-determination and also requested that the Greenland representatives be present at the meetings of the Fourth Committee. The proposal met with just as negative a response as Lannung's earlier initiative in June.⁸ It was only passed on to the Greenland Department in late August in the form of an extremely urbane report, setting out point by point the tactics to be pursued in the Greenland issue agreed on by the Greenland Department and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁹

A final, important point was who should represent Denmark in the 73 (e) Committee. Eske Brun stated that he would like himself and Sveistrup to be registered as deputies. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs named two candidates as representatives, namely Borberg and Lannung. However, the Ministry was aware that if Lannung was to be involved, it was necessary to register him as a representative. However, the issue of whether or not Lannung could be offered the post "presumably had to be decided first and foremost from a political point of view". In other words, the matter had to be settled by Foreign Minister H.C. Hansen. The Minister of Foreign Affairs had, with limited success, tried to censure Lannung in the matter of the foreword in the Danish-Greenland booklet put together by Sveistrup. It is not possible to say whether it was this foreword or Lannung's other political activities – especially his work on the Council of Europe in Strasbourg took up very much of his time – that guided the decision, but the leading post was filled at the beginning of August by someone who had not been proposed, namely the envoy Birger Dons Møller from the UN delegation. It appears that Borberg was on leave when the post was due to be filled. Thus, Lannung seems to have dropped out of the picture. Source materials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs do not clearly indicate what the precise circumstances were.

Denmark's position was clarified at top political levels a final time when the Nordic ministers of foreign affairs convened in Reykjavik on 30 and 31 August 1954. On this occasion Denmark's termination of transmission of information on

⁸ Copy of Lannung's letter to Finn Nielsen 6 July 1954. The copy was forwarded to Deputy Under-Secretary of State Axel Mørch; minutes by Finn Friis of 30 July 1954. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 5. – In his report of 30 July, Friis wrote that it was "superfluous and undesirable" to call for a new debate on the matter in the Provincial Council. He further wrote: "It is certainly correct that the Article 73 (e) Committee and the Fourth Committee want to focus on the issue of how far the procedure chosen by Denmark with regard to the debate in the Provincial Council on revision of the Constitution gave the Greenlanders sufficient means to effectively exercise such a right of self-determination. To judge this we will have to be able to refer to the negotiations that took place in the Provincial Council, which were submitted to the UN member states in full. It is in any case doubtful to what extent a declaration by the Provincial Council called for and adopted by the Danish government would make any real difference to the already existing material".

⁹ Minutes by Alex Mørch of 29 August 1954. Forwarded to Finn Nielsen. According to the stamp, it was presented to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 5.

Greenland was one of the items on the agenda (item 18). At the meeting, H.C. Hansen briefly outlined the developments since the submission of notification to the Secretary-General. He referred to the factor debate and remarked that agreement had not been reached on whose role it was to decide in cases of cessation: Was it the role of the administering power, the General Assembly, or both jointly? In Denmark's view, the General Assembly should merely receive Denmark's notification. H.C. Hansen concluded by saying that the case of Greenland should be so clear-cut that it ought not to be difficult for a fair resolution to be adopted on the termination of the obligation to transmit information. Should problems arise, the Ministry was counting on "understanding and support" from the other Scandinavian delegations.¹⁰ At the meeting in Reykjavik, Denmark received assurances of support from Norway and Sweden, while Iceland refrained from stating its position. The reason for this restraint was the uncertain situation in Iceland's parliament with regard to Iceland's claim that it had a legal right to parts of Greenland,¹¹ a matter that had been raised on several occasions in the parliament by nationalistic forces in Iceland's political landscape and which had been examined by a commission. See appendix 13 on Iceland's claims to Greenland.

Denmark also expressed its wish for support to the American authorities. At a meeting in Copenhagen on 6 September 1954, at which Denmark – as in previous years – was informed by a representative from the American embassy about America's positions regarding the issues on the agenda of the forthcoming meetings at the UN, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs used the opportunity to express the hope that Denmark could count on the American government's understanding and cooperation on the issue of termination of transmission of information on Greenland.¹²

All in all, it can be said that these appeals for support had a certain routine character about them, which presumably reflects the Foreign Service's expectation that Denmark had a solid case at the UN.

Meeting of the 73 (e) Committee

As in previous years, the administering powers convened a preliminary meeting in New York (18 August 1954) in preparation for that year's debate on the issue of colonies in the 73 (e) Committee and the Fourth Committee. At the meeting, both

¹⁰ Speaking point written by Finn Friis, 20 August 1954. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 5. – The wording of the speaking point on the matter of competence is as follows: "Denmark has always claimed that it is the administering power itself which, taking into consideration the existing constitutional situation, has the competence to determine whether there is an obligation to transmit information on a territory. In our view, the General Assembly ought to be satisfied with being informed by Denmark about the situation".

¹¹ Translation (from *Tíminn*, 20 November 1954) of the speech by Iceland's minister of foreign affairs at the parliamentary debates on the voting at the UN on the issue of Greenland. Copy in the Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 6.

¹² Minutes of 8 September 1954 by F. Schøn. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 6.

Great Britain and France said that they would have reservations about any moves during the meetings to go beyond the framework of the UN Charter and the Committee's mandate. At the meeting, the general view was that the Greenland issue would arouse considerable interest in the Committee. The main topic was now economic conditions in the non-self-governing territories and the main position at the meeting was that the issue of Greenland should be postponed until after the meeting. The other countries fully understood Denmark's request to deal with the issue of Greenland only after the representatives from Greenland had arrived. At the meeting, several countries promised to help gauge the mood among the non-administering countries with regard to the presentation of a proposal for a resolution, with one or more of them participating as proposing countries.¹³

Before the meeting was convened, Belgium had announced to the administering powers that it did not intend to be represented at the 73 (e) Committee meeting that year either. The Belgian envoy in Copenhagen had a meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 16 August 1954 and informed the Ministry that Belgium would not be represented at the forthcoming meeting of the 73 (e) Committee. He also distributed copies of a new Belgian publication on the so-called "Belgian theory" and expressed interest in hearing the Danes' opinion.¹⁴ Finn Friis said at the meeting that Denmark largely agreed with the Belgian theory, but that due to the Greenland issue, Denmark would be generally reserved at the forthcoming General Assembly with respect to more controversial matters. Denmark's overall interpretation, which it had expressed in May 1954 – when the envoy had officially issued two pamphlets on the Belgian theory and had asked the Danes to state their opinion – was that this was a large-scale Belgian drive on the issue of colonies.¹⁵

At the opening of the meeting of the 73 (e) Committee on 20 August it was agreed at the request of the Danes – without a vote being held – that item 9 on the agenda concerning the termination of the transmission of information on Greenland should be treated as soon as possible after the arrival of the Greenland

¹³ Minutes of the meeting by Dons Møller of 19 August 1954. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M. 2., packet 8.

¹⁴ According to "the Belgian thesis", the basic provisions in Article 73 (e) of the UN Charter should be much more widely applicable than they were. Information should be transmitted to the UN not only by the governments that administered non-self-governing overseas territories, but by all states within whose territory groups of people were living culturally on such a low level of development that they did not have the prerequisites to govern themselves. According to Belgium, there were groups of under-developed peoples living in about half of the member states. – The "salt water theory", which was much more convenient for a number of large states, and which had in fact been developed by the Soviet Union, was however supported by a large majority at the UN. In a nutshell, the theory was that the main prerequisite for the obligation to report to the UN was that the metropolitan country and the occupied territory were separated by sea.

¹⁵ Minutes by Finn Friis of 17 August 1954, continuation on 20 August 1954. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M. 2., packet 8. – The publication submitted was F. van Langenhove's, *La question de aborigènes aux Nations Unies. La Thèse belge [The issue of indigenous peoples at the UN: The Belgian theory]*. In the continuation of the minutes, Friis referred to the content of the publication and wrote that copies of it would be sent to the Danish delegation in New York and to Lannung.

delegates in New York. During talks with the Committee's chairman, Awni Khalidy of Iraq, and Deputy Secretary-General Hoo, it was decided that a good time for beginning the debate on Greenland would be 1 September or as soon as possible thereafter.

The meeting commenced with Great Britain and France, as they had announced at the preliminary meeting, cautioning against widening the Committee's competence. Great Britain made a reference to its reservations in this regard, expressed in 1950 and 1953, and France declared that it was only prepared to participate as long as the Committee adhered strictly to the rules. Brazil said that it distanced itself from France's statement. Following a number of preliminary remarks, the Committee members then passed on to the main topic of that year's committee meetings: Economic conditions in non-self-governing territories.¹⁶

At the meeting on 3 September, the English version of that year's report on Greenland, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' booklet entitled "Greenland"¹⁷ and Sveistrup's aforementioned booklet on the UN in Danish and Greenlandic were handed out to the meeting's participants. Eske Brun accompanied the distribution of the publications with comments and took the opportunity to introduce the representatives from Greenland, who had just arrived: Augo Lyngé and Frederik Lyngé, together with the governor of Greenland, Poul Lundsteen.

The actual discussion of agenda item 9a concerning termination of transmission of information on Greenland did not get under way until 7 September and was set in motion by a lengthy speech on the development of the relationship between Denmark and Greenland. The item was then discussed on 7 and 8 September, and as a result, a draft resolution was put forward by Brazil, with India and Guatemala as co-proposers. At the meeting on 9 September, the draft resolution was debated and subsequently unanimously adopted. A number of states, however, had reservations about certain details in the proposal. The atmosphere was friendly and calm.

The following description of the debate is based on very detailed UN minutes, namely, the *Summary Record*, which, at Iraq's request, was particularly detailed in the case of the Greenland issue.

¹⁶ Report by Dons Møller of 25 August 1954. Accompanying letter of the same date signed by Borberg. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 5.

¹⁷ The booklet (167 pages) was an official Danish information document. Beautifully illustrated, the booklet was well done. It can be characterised as a well-edited piece of propaganda, which presented the main Danish viewpoints on the Greenland issue to the English-speaking world. It included a chapter on the country itself (by Kjeld Rask Therkildsen), on administration (by Eske Brun), on the Greenlanders at present and in earlier times (by Kale Rosing), on Greenland culture (by Frederik Nielsen), on daily life in Greenland (by V. Borum), on economic conditions and employment (by Kjeld Rask Therkildsen), on East Greenland (by Ejnar Mikkelsen), and on scientific research about Greenland (by Gunnar Seidenfaden).

When the full text of a speech is available – which is the case with the speeches by Eske Brun, Frederik Lynge, and Augo Lynge – they are used as a basis for the minutes in the record.¹⁸

If we look more closely at the content of the discussions, we can see that they got off to a good start on 7 September with a long speech by Eske Brun on the development of the relationship between Denmark and Greenland and on the reasons why Denmark believed that its responsibility arising from Chapter XI of the UN Charter had ceased and that it was now leaving the 73 (e) Committee.¹⁹ This speech was Eske Brun's first major speech at the UN.

He did not include any new components – which, of course, could not be expected of a speech that had come into being at a late stage in the proceedings. It set forth positions and interpretations that were well known from previous Danish speeches on the Greenland issue, which either echoed the words of Lannung or were extracts from the various texts from the Greenland Department or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In keeping with the Danish positions on the Greenland issue, there was virtually no mention of the UN and none at all of the factor lists, even though the speech was largely designed around the criteria set by the factor lists – as was the Danish memorandum of September 1953.

Thus, the content might not have been new, but the wording was nevertheless interesting. In his speech, Brun asserted:

Greenland had never been a colony in the classic sense of the word. Greenland, ever since being discovered a thousand years ago, had always been linked with one of the Nordic kingdoms and had been part of Denmark at the time when the United Nations Charter was signed. It was felt at that time that Greenland fell within the scope of the Charter's term "non-self-governing territories".

¹⁸ Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories. Fifth Session. *Summary Record* of meetings 102, 103, 104 & 105 held on 7, 8, 9 & 13 September 1954, respectively (A/AC.35/SR.102, 103, 104 & 105 of 22 September, 23 September, 22 September and 29 September 1954, respectively). The *Summary Record* was sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with an accompanying letter by Borberg, New York 8 October 1954. All material can be found in the Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M. 2.b., packet 2. – *Summary Record* of meetings 102, 103 & 105 can also be found in the Danish National Archives, Hermod Lannung private archive, box 15, folio 4. – A briefer report of the meetings can be found in the *Report of the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories*. General Assembly. Official Records: Ninth Session. Supplement no. 18 (A/2729), pp. 6-8.

¹⁹ *Statement presented on 7 September 1954 by Head of Department Eske Brun to the UN Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories* (ten typewritten pages). Sent by Dons Møller on 29 September 1954 to Alex Mørch. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a., packet 6; UN record of the speech can be found under A.AC.35/SR. 102 of 22 September 1954 (approx. 2 1/2 pages). – It is clear from the exclamation marks in the Danish version of the text that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs noticed Brun's criticism of the fact that Greenland had been registered as a colony. – It is clear from the subsequent letter to Mørch that the translation of Brun's statement back into Danish was for the benefit of the two Greenland members of the Danish Parliament. – The full English text: *Statement by Eske Brun, Head of the Greenland Department, Member of the Delegation of Denmark to the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories*. United Nations Press Release PM/2828. 7 September 1954. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2.b., packet 2. It can also be found in the Danish National Archives, Hermod Lannung private archive, box 15, Greenland I, folio 4.

Not many of the audience members actually noticed the sting hidden in that last line. It was a camouflaged criticism from the Greenland Department of the fact that Greenland had been regarded as a Danish “colony” and Denmark had been urged to transmit information on Greenland as a colonial power. Brun, however, expressed himself in such general terms that it is impossible to say whether his small outburst was directed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (thus, in particular at Kauffmann, who had headed the delegation in 1946 and who had found it opportune to register Greenland as a colony), or at the colonial powers, primarily the US, which had put Denmark under pressure about the issue in 1946.

The next part of the speech was also interesting, as it concerned claims to Greenland since the tenth century. Brun explained:

Shortly after its discovery in the tenth century, Greenland had been built up by Scandinavian immigrants (as they were called in the UN report). When these immigrants arrived in Greenland, the country had been uninhabited, although there had been traces of earlier settlement by Eskimos. The Norsemen (as they were called in the UN report) had lived on Greenland for about 500 years, after which time they had either died out or had been superseded by a new wave of immigrants, Eskimos, who had come from Canada.²⁰ Politically, these Norsemen belonged to Iceland, and together with Iceland, Greenland came under the Danish-Norwegian Kingdom until 1814 when Denmark and Norway split up and Greenland remained under Denmark’s rule. Even during the centuries when there was no regular contact between Europe and Greenland, the Danish Kings had always regarded themselves as the rulers of Greenland and many of them, either successfully or unsuccessfully, sent expeditions to the country.

Some of the wording used might be open to debate or to criticism; however, it must be remembered that Eske Brun was not providing a historical analysis. The mes-

²⁰ A somewhat different description can be found in the report on Greenland submitted to the UN in 1954, in which, under “B History” it states: “A couple of centuries before the arrival of the Norse settlers in Greenland, the Eskimos, who presumably originated from Asia, had migrated to the country from North America. However, the Eskimos did not pose a problem for the first Norse settlers. The latter must certainly have found traces of a foreign race, however all evidence indicates that there were no permanent Eskimo settlements in South Greenland around 1000”. Text in the Danish National Archives, GS, delayed submission 1987, packet 15. – The present-day view of these circumstances is based on archaeological studies, particularly in the 1990s. These studies have found that people from the Dorset culture migrated to Greenland in the eighth century. Later, people from the so-called Thule culture migrated to Greenland. There are indications that the Dorset and the Thule cultures could have existed at the same time in the Smith Sound region in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Apparently the Dorset culture disappeared in the thirteenth century. The Norse term *skrellinger* could refer to people from either of these two cultures. Cf. Hans Christian Gulløv, *Grønlands Forhistorie [Prehistory of Greenland]*, second edition 2005, pp. 177 & 217.

sage he wished to convey to the Committee was that Greenland was a *country of immigration*. Greenland had not seen unbroken, continuous population growth and settlement. In his view, Greenland's history was one of initial settlement by Scandinavian migrants and later, partly overlapping with the Scandinavian migrants, a new settlement by Eskimos from Canada. However, constitutionally, the Danish kings had consistently considered and declared themselves to be the rulers of Greenland since the late Middle Ages. This last aspect was an argument worth mentioning, although it was not cited, since the officials had their dispute about Greenland's constitutional status in 1946 (and later) due to the requirement of transmitting information on Greenland to the UN.

Eske Brun went on to talk about the work of Hans Egede, who had originally set out to help the old Norse settlers. Hans Egede's cultural and economic work among the people he found in Greenland – the Eskimos – had set the standard for Denmark's contribution to Greenland. For centuries, life in Greenland had been based on seal hunting, "the techniques of which had been developed to a level unparalleled in any other hunting community in the world". He imagined this period to have been a happy one and stressed that Denmark's policy for two hundred years had been "to try to maintain this positive state of affairs". In order to protect the people and their way of life, the Constitution had not been amended in 1849 to include Greenland. This protection had been in the form of screening off the country from outside influences which had brought about the decline of primitive civilisations in so many other places in the world, and supporting the efforts "to preserve the people's inherited way of life as far as possible". At the same time, local government was gradually introduced from the 1850s onwards, at which time illiteracy was more or less eradicated and had been since.

The climate change around 1920 completely altered the situation, since the seal population diminished and the Greenlanders had to resort to fishing, which was not very highly thought of by this hunting society. This shift had required a change in mentality. Brun subsequently described the introduction of a new policy after the war, which, he said, was introduced in close harmony with the Greenlanders' wishes, as expressed through their elected representatives. The economic and cultural revolution in which Greenland found itself at present had not been imposed on the Greenlanders by Denmark, but by nature. It was necessary to "find a new civilisation for Greenland" and it was natural for Denmark to try to create conditions in Greenland that matched conditions in the rest of the Kingdom. This was an enormous task, since Greenland's population was spread out over an area as big as half of Western Europe. At the same time, Denmark's main policy was no longer to protect the Greenlanders, but to bring them into Danish society on equal terms with the rest of the Kingdom of Denmark and to offer them a corresponding way of life.

Eske Brun concluded by thanking the members for the years in which Denmark had participated in the 73 (e) Committee, for the fruitful cooperation with the UN Secretariat, and for the personal contacts that had been established during its work in the Committee. It was with regret that Denmark was leaving the Committee.

After Brun's speech, the chairman of the Committee (*Mr Khalidy from Iraq*) welcomed the Greenland members of the Danish delegation on behalf of the Committee. He said that it was the obligation of the General Assembly to ensure that when a territory had attained a full measure of self-government, this self-government was real and effective. In this regard, the presence of the members from Greenland carried deep symbolic significance. Lannung was not present at the meeting; however, his spirit presided over the opening of the meeting, since, according to the official UN record, Khalidy stated that the notification by the Danish government of its intention to terminate the transmission of information was the first example of Resolution 742 (VIII) being applied in practice and would be considered in the spirit of international cooperation, of which Mr Lannung, the former Danish representative, would approve. He hoped that the Danish representative would convey to the Danish government the Committee's appreciation of Lannung's work in previous meetings. Behind Khalidy's carefully-chosen words in praise of Lannung lay tacit astonishment about the fact that Denmark had not appointed his old acquaintance to lead the delegation in what was such an important matter for the country.²¹

The *Indian* representative (Singh) – like almost all of the representatives for the non-administering powers – took the latest factor list as his frame of reference. He said the Committee was obliged to examine, on the basis of the factor list of Resolution 742 (VIII), information from all governments backing up declarations that a territory no longer needed to be protected by Chapter XI of the UN Charter. He said that the information provided by Denmark showed that the people in Greenland were fully literate, and that, particularly since the introduction of reforms in 1950, they had had ample opportunity to express their political opinion.

Consequently, he felt that the most important factor in part III of the list, which concerned integration with the metropolitan country or other country, A.1, had been sufficiently taken into account. He also felt that B.1 had been very much taken into account by the over-representation of Greenland in the Danish Parliament. The information that was available seemed to indicate full compliance with the factors concerning the domestic constitutional situation, which were listed in section C of part III. However, the Committee should consider whether, in this case, there was compliance with A.2 and C.2 (concerning free elections, local rights, and status). In his opinion, new and more comprehensive procedures were required to deal with such cases, and he aired the possibility of setting up an ad hoc committee and dispatching a UN mission to the territory in question. The aim of the mission would not be to monitor or criticise, but to remove any doubt about the correctness of the procedure followed and, furthermore, it would be meant as a congratulatory gesture.

The representative of India asked whether the UN had received any information that called into question the validity of the change to Greenland's status. He re-

²¹ Regarding the close cooperation between Lannung and Khalidy, see Finn Petersen, *Grønlandssagens behandling i FN 1946-54* [Debate on the Greenland Issue at the UN 1946-54], 1975, p. 42.

quested that the UN Secretariat's answer to his question be included in the Committee's report. Finally, he said that he wished to reiterate the chairman's welcome to the Greenland members of the Danish delegation. He welcomed them both as individuals and as a symbol of the fact that Denmark shared the principle that the people of independent territories should take part in all decisions concerning their territory.

Deputy Secretary-General Hoo replied that no other information had been received by the UN on Greenland's status apart from what had been provided by the Danish government.

Iraq's representative (Al-Jamali) requested further details on what the Danish government had undertaken with regard to extending the right to vote in Danish parliamentary elections to North and East Greenland and details on how far the government had taken the factor list in Resolution 742 (VIII) into account in its decision to cease the transmission of information.

Indonesia's representative (Miss Roesad) wished to be informed about whether the Provincial Council's powers were limited to deliberation and recommendation; whether the *Folketing* had adopted any bills that had not first been put before the Provincial Council or the wording of which had been rejected by the Provincial Council; and whether the Provincial Council was able to debate matters other than those entrusted to it by the *Folketing* and the government.

The *Netherlands* and *Great Britain* – not unexpectedly – declared their wholehearted support for the Danish decision. The Dutch representative (Spits) said that it was clear from the submitted material that Greenland's new status had been attained after full consultation with the people of the territory and in fulfilment of their wishes. The General Assembly should accordingly recognise this status and praise the Danish government's wise policy. The Dutch representative talked about the expression "a full measure of self-government", which the UN had never succeeded in defining. He added that, in practice, self-government was more a fact than a principle. Greenland's free association on equal terms with the metropolitan country, appropriate representation in the Danish Parliament, and the creation of Greenland's own administrative bodies were sufficient evidence that self-government had been attained and that it was legitimate to terminate the transmission of information. Denmark's exemplary respect for democratic institutions was a guarantee that the equality that had been created would be upheld. The *British* representative (Gidden) also welcomed the Greenland members of the Danish delegation. He said that the Greenlanders and the Danish government should be congratulated on Greenland's attainment of full self-government. It should be seen as a tribute to the wisdom of Danish policy and to the maturity of the people of Greenland. The British delegation was delighted that the goals set out in Chapter XI of the UN Charter had been attained in yet another instance.

Burma's representative (Hla Aung) began by thanking Denmark for its active cooperation in the Committee and expressed his delight at the participation of the members from Greenland. The issue of Greenland raised fundamental questions and set an important precedent. He recalled that when the Dutch government

terminated the transmission of information on Surinam and the Dutch Antilles in 1953, the delegation had felt that certain factors had not been taken into account. Pursuant to Resolution 742 (VIII) it was the Committee's duty to ensure that certain factors in the list had been taken into account in the case of Greenland. If this was the case, the Danish government's decision was legitimate. In the case of Greenland, the matter had to be judged on the basis of part III of the factor list. Denmark had assured the Committee that the people of Greenland had been able to express their opinions freely. He enquired whether a referendum had been held in Greenland to assess the general sentiments of the people; he felt that this was the most democratic method. He also asked if it would be possible for the people of Greenland to change their status at a later point in time, as recommended by the General Assembly. With regard to the geographical considerations in A.3 of the factor list, he emphasised the importance of good transport links between the two countries. He enquired what the Danish government had done, or planned to do, with regard to establishing fast and cheap transport links between Greenland and Copenhagen.

Indonesia's representative (Roesad) thanked Denmark for the full documentation it had provided and praised Denmark for having invited the Greenland representatives to participate in the proceedings, who, as she understood it, were there to explain their position to the Committee. An important precedent was being set. She generally expressed her appreciation of Denmark's work in the Committee and recalled that Denmark was the only administering power that had invited the Secretary-General to send a mission to a territory to observe how Denmark was fulfilling its obligations arising from Chapter XI of the UN Charter. (This was not an altogether accurate picture of the visit to Greenland by Deputy Secretary-General Hoo and director Benson, cf. description of the visit in chapter 8.)

She agreed with the Indian representative that the matter should be examined in the light of the latest factor list and in particular the general factors listed in part III, section A. She wished to draw attention to the factor "political advancement" (part III, A.5). The fact that political maturity depended on the education level of a population and that, owing to Denmark's "remarkable educational policy", as she put it, there was no illiteracy in Greenland, led her to infer that the people of Greenland had attained sufficient political maturity to be able to determine their future status intelligently. She remarked, however, that the Greenlanders had not reached their decision through a referendum, unlike the Danes in 1953. She would welcome information on how the Greenlanders had been able to express their view on integration with the metropolitan country. She also wished for clarification on the powers of the Provincial Council of Greenland. Unlike the Burmese representative, she recommended that the same procedure be applied as in the case of Puerto Rico and she looked to the General Assembly to make the final decision.

The *United States'* representative (Gerig) praised Eske Brun's speech. His descriptions of the history and life of a small and courageous people, who until recently had lived far-removed from the world's highways, had been not only remark-

able but also fascinating, since they showed that human relations based on mutual understanding and respect inevitably bore fruit. The new legal status, created through the amendment of the Constitution, was not the consequence of new policy, but the result of steady development and the expression of the sincere wishes of two peoples who had long become accustomed to living together.

There could be no doubt about Denmark's good intentions or about the Greenlanders' desire to become an integral part of Denmark. The people of Greenland had enjoyed complete freedom of choice, as stressed by the Danish representative and the Greenland members of the Danish delegation, whose participation he welcomed. He hoped that Brazil's draft resolution, which had not yet been distributed, would reflect these basic facts. He believed it was not possible to establish a general procedure to be used in each individual cessation case. The Ad Hoc Committee on Factors' report had recognised that the criteria proposed by the General Assembly should only be considered as indicators that were not to be applied in each instance. He recommended that the Committee be satisfied with the adoption of a resolution whereby the General Assembly simply took note of the fact that the revised constitution justified the termination of transmission of information on Greenland or merely expressed its opinion on the matter. If the committee went further than this, it would be taking a step beyond its authority and its mandate. Finally, he thanked the Danish delegation for its valuable contribution to the Committee's work, which the Committee would unfortunately be deprived of in the future.

Guatemala's representative (Arenales) emphasised the importance of the case as a precedent, in that the decision not only concerned Greenland, but also affected approximately 178 million people in 58 territories. However, the legitimacy of Denmark's case had to be examined very meticulously and with the utmost care. He recalled the Committee's duty according to Resolution 742 (VIII) to study any documentation concerning the termination of transmission of information on Greenland and referred to the wording ("... in the light of the list of factors ... and other relevant considerations ...") in Resolution 742 (VIII, paragraph 9). He expressed his fear that the opinions of the Greenlanders had not been fully respected (with regard to part III of the factor list, section A.1), since the new Danish Constitution contained provisions about which the Provincial Council had expressed reservations. He did not elaborate any further.

He also said that the Provincial Council did not seem to have been given a mandate by the voters to vote for integration with Denmark. He asked whether the Greenlanders had been given the opportunity to express their opinion on the change in political status through a referendum, as was normal in the case of constitutional changes, and as had indeed been the case in Denmark. He also enquired whether the new Constitution guaranteed the right of the people of Greenland to change their present legal status. He also requested information on how the population in Thule and East Greenland could have been in a position to express their wishes with regard to association if they were not represented on the Provincial Council. What did the Danish government understand by "equality" between Greenland and Denmark? Equality should be tilted in favour of

Greenland. Finally, he expressed his support for the idea of dispatching visiting missions to territories that had attained a full measure of autonomy and hoped that the Danish government could support this.

Iraq's representative (Al-Jamali) recalled that the factors pursuant to Resolution 742 (VIII) should not be interpreted as preventing the attainment of a full measure of independence. The factor list was to be applied to Greenland. It should be used as a guide and not as a tough stipulation, and even though some of the conditions that should have been taken into account had not been properly fulfilled, the General Assembly could nonetheless decide that the transmission of information within the meaning of Chapter XI should cease. He pointed out that one of the factors concerned the freedom of a population to change its new status by expressing its will through democratic means. This freedom, however, did not necessarily have to be fulfilled by virtue of a legal provision, which might be irreconcilable with the position of a modern state; his delegation assumed, however, that Denmark would find a suitable procedure if the people of Greenland wished to change their status. This was a friendly response by a non-administering power to Dons Møller's protest during the last General Assembly about the annulment provision in the new factor list.

Iraq's representative said that, considering its location, climate, and small population – which made it dependent on the outside world – Greenland was one of the few examples of a country that could and, moreover, ought to attain autonomy through association with another country within the meaning of Resolution 742 (VIII). He enquired whether Denmark had considered a solution equivalent to the one agreed upon between the US and Puerto Rico which would allow Greenland to have a close association with Denmark while at the same time preserve its special identity. He also asked what measures had been taken under the new Constitution to ensure that Greenland continued to receive the subsidies it needed due to its limited resources and which Denmark had granted so generously. He congratulated Denmark on having preserved Greenland's cultural and linguistic heritage.

With respect to procedure, he would follow whichever procedure the Committee deemed suitable; he felt that it could be in the form of a resolution. He requested that the Committee's report contain a complete account of all the representatives' speeches, questions, and answers.

New Zealand's representative (Scott) also welcomed the Greenland representatives and thanked the members of the Danish delegation – who would now be leaving the Committee – for the moderating influence they had exercised on the Committee's work. He especially expressed his gratitude to Mr Lannung, whose work in the Committee and in the Fourth Committee had been so fruitful. He reiterated in detail New Zealand's position, which had been stated in the Fourth Committee in 1953, namely that since the administering powers were responsible for the non-administering territories, it was up to them to decide when they wished to cease the transmission of information to the UN. More than any other party, they were in the best position to determine whether or not the territories were self-governing.

Upon closer scrutiny, the documents which Denmark had submitted on Greenland showed that the two countries had freely entered an association on equal terms, pursuant to the Constitution of 5 June 1953. He could therefore lend his wholehearted support to the decision of the Danish government. The Danish government, like the New Zealand government, had always demonstrated its deep commitment to democratic principles and to social progress. With full confidence in the future of the people of Greenland, New Zealand expressed its best wishes for success.

Australia's representative (Loomes) congratulated the Danish government on its wise decision and the Greenlanders on the progress they had achieved. He particularly welcomed the attendance of the representatives from Greenland. He said that the Danish government had followed a strictly correct procedure. The Australian delegation had never been enthusiastic about the factor list to which some of the delegations had referred. According to Resolution 742 (VIII), the factor list should merely be regarded as a guide, and not as evidence, for the final appraisal of a territory's status. The resolution also stated that each specific case should be considered and decided on in the light of the particular circumstances. He rejected the idea of setting up an ad hoc committee and dispatching a visiting mission. The Committee was itself a type of ad hoc committee established by the General Assembly to provide opinions and it had the competence to make recommendations to the General Assembly on the basis of the extremely detailed documentation Denmark had provided. Should further information be requested, it would be possible to simply consult the Greenlanders' elected representatives, who had made the long journey to New York to be available to the Committee. It was not within the Committee's competence to dispatch visiting missions, for which there were no grounds in the UN Charter. He urged the Indian representative not to push the issue.

Following these comments, which paved the way for the draft resolution, the Danish representatives had the opportunity to comment on and respond to some of the questions that had been raised.²² The first to take the floor was *Frederik Lyngé*, who spoke in Danish and was simultaneously translated by an interpreter. He began by highlighting the strong ties that had always bound Greenland and Denmark together and said that the Greenlanders were well aware of Denmark's historical claim to Greenland, which went back to before the arrival of Hans Egede. From the earliest colonial times, the Danes had always treated the Greenlanders most humanely and the Greenlanders had never been exploited. Furthermore, the Danes had protected the Greenlanders' language, culture, and way of life. He briefly explained how the work on improving conditions in

²² *Statement by Frederik Lyngé, Member of the Danish Parliament representing North Greenland, to the UN Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories*, 8 September 1954. United Nations Press Release PM/2829, 8 September 1954; *Statement by Augo Lyngé, Member of the Danish Parliament representing South Greenland, to the UN Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories*, 8 September 1954. United Nations Press Release PM/2830, 8 September 1954. Both folios are in the Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2.b., packet 2. – Also to be found in the Danish National Archives, Hermod Lannung private archive, packet 15 Greenland III, folio 2. – Both with Lannung's underlining.



On 8 September 1954, the Greenland members of the Folketing, Augo and Frederik Lynge, addressed the UN Committee on information about non-self-governing territories (the so-called 73 (e) Committee). The two Greenland representatives were asked to explain to the assembly why Greenlanders wanted to be a part of Denmark. From the left: Augo Lynge, Eske Brun, Frederik Lynge, and (in the back) P.P. Sveistrup. (UN/DPI PHOTO. United Nations Photo Archive, New York)

Greenland had progressed, and mentioned the visit by Danish ministers and members of the Danish Parliament to Greenland, the sympathy shown in Copenhagen towards Greenland delegations, and the two royal visits in 1921 and 1952.

Lynge also mentioned that Greenland had shared the same national flag as Denmark since 1721, a flag which all Greenlanders wished to keep as their own. He also stated that there had never been any racial problems in Greenland,²³ explaining that “the historical background, close personal relations, and the resulting feeling of solidarity were what have made and always would make the idea of separation from Denmark inconceivable”. That was the reason why Greenlanders now, particularly since 1953, were very happy for Greenland to be an integral part of Denmark.

²³ This statement about race problems, which was quoted in the American press, subsequently gave rise to a protest by author Peter Freuchen (1886-1957), who had settled in the US: “Thoughts on a Greenland declaration at the UN”, *Den Danske Pioner*, 7 October 1954.

Augo Lynge, the Member of Parliament for South Greenland, said that it was an honour and a pleasure to testify before the honourable gathering of UN members, and thus the whole world and that the adoption by the Provincial Council of Greenland a few years beforehand of the resolution on Greenland's integration into Denmark on an equal footing with the rest of the Kingdom of Denmark had been on Greenland's own initiative and entirely in keeping with the wishes of the people of Greenland. Greenland and Denmark had been together since the Middle Ages. In the period since Hans Egede had begun his work in Greenland, so many ties had been forged between the people of Greenland and the people of Denmark that the two had gradually come to feel that one could not be without the other, and both sides wished to make these ties permanent. This wish became reality when Greenland became an integral part of Denmark, a Danish province, by virtue of the Constitution of 5 June 1953. The Danes had treated the Greenlanders with consideration and had helped them to advance from the level of a primitive society to the present-day level. Denmark had also protected the Greenlanders' language and their way of life. Politicians in Greenland might disagree on politics in Greenland but they all agreed on one point: Greenland should be incorporated into Denmark as a Danish province and the people of Greenland should be represented in the Danish Parliament, as came about on 5 June 1953.

Augo Lynge then went on to explain why North and East Greenland did not participate in the *Folketing* elections. He said that it was currently not possible to hold elections owing to the sparse population and vast distances. And even if elections were held, it would be impossible for the candidates to come into contact with the voters in those regions. The prerequisites for a truly democratic election were not in place. He hoped that these practical problems could soon be overcome with the help of technology. Augo Lynge concluded by saying that they wished personally and on behalf of the Greenlanders that the UN member states would understand and respect Greenland's incorporation into Denmark as a Danish province, which had taken place in compliance with the Greenlanders' wishes and had been implemented through the revision of the Danish Constitution of 5 June 1953.

After these fairly strong statements delivered by the two members of parliament from Greenland, which highlighted the mutual connections between the two peoples and the Greenlanders' desire for integration and their gratitude for Denmark's input, *Eske Brun* replied to some of the other questions and criticisms raised. He promised in his speech to pass on to Hermod Lannung the complimentary remarks made about him.

In reply to the question raised by the *Indian* representative, namely whether Greenland could be granted full independence if it so wished, Brun said that the Danish Constitution did not contain any provision allowing the possibility for any part of the country to leave the Kingdom. In response to the questions posed by a number of representatives on the geographical distance separating Greenland and Denmark, he explained that it took six hours to fly to Greenland and fourteen days by sea.

He pointed out that the factor list had been adopted six months after adoption of the revised Danish Constitution, yet the conditions set by the factor list had

been fulfilled. His reply to the questions concerning the fact that there had not been a referendum on Greenland was that the issue of integration had been the subject of lengthy debates in the Provincial Council and among Greenland's electorate. The members, who had been regularly elected by the people, had unanimously agreed on integration. The Danish government had felt that if a referendum was held in Greenland, it would cast doubt on the sincerity of the wish that had been freely expressed by the Provincial Council's representatives. With respect to cultural aspects, Eske Brun reiterated the fact that Greenland and Denmark shared a long history and common traditions.

His reply to the question by the Indonesian representative on the competence of the Provincial Council was that the *Folketing* could in theory adopt a bill that had been rejected by the Provincial Council, but that it was highly improbable that this would ever occur. Moreover, the Greenland representatives in the *Folketing* could always bring their influence to bear. Brun drew the Indonesian representative's attention to the Provincial Council's competence in fiscal issues. Here, the Danish government had prepared draft fiscal legislation, which the Provincial Council had immediately implemented before the Danish Parliament had adopted it. However, the Provincial Council only controlled the yield from taxes levied in Greenland. He added that the Provincial Council had the competence to initiate legislation. When the Danish Constitution was last revised, it had not applied to Greenland and thus the Greenlanders could not be consulted. Greenland, like all the other provinces of Denmark, would participate in any future referenda on amendments to the Danish Constitution.

His response to the Guatemalan representative was that Greenland enjoyed the same rights as other parts of Denmark. The Provincial Council of Greenland had greater powers in local matters than the regional authorities in other provinces. In reply to a comment by the Iraqi representative, he said that the Danish government's expenditure on Greenland had risen considerably since the previous year. Thus the expenditure on the health system amounted to approximately forty dollars per person and expenditure on education was fifteen to twenty dollars. The Danish people fully supported the government's policy in this area. With respect to the visiting missions – which were an important matter of principle for all the administering powers – the message from Eske Brun was that it was possible to gain a picture of the conditions in Greenland from the documentation submitted by the Danish government and from the explanations that had been provided. The people of Greenland had chosen their new status of their own free will, and it would be an affront to ask them whether they had truly wished for integration. He requested that India and Guatemala refrain from insisting on that point.

Brazil's draft resolution

The Danish delegation seems to have realised early on that it would be impossible to get a consensus on a resolution that merely took note of the Danish notification of termination of transmission of information on Greenland. This circumstance

can be seen from Dons Møller's report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²⁴ Furthermore, it was clear after the debates at the UN on Puerto Rico, Surinam, and the Dutch Antilles in 1953. The general opinion, which according to Dons Møller was also shared by the UN Secretariat, was that the Danes should be satisfied with a resolution equivalent to the resolution on Puerto Rico from the previous year. As far as Denmark was concerned, the objective from then on was to draw up a resolution that would win the votes of all the members of the 73 (e) Committee. Presumably, such a resolution would be easier to push through the Fourth Committee/General Assembly. It would definitely involve making compromises on certain points.

The available source material does not shed much light on what efforts were made behind the scenes, either by Denmark or the others. Generally, it is known that Denmark in this phase appealed to the administering powers not to be too rigid with regard to their position on the issue of competence. As can be seen in the following, this recommendation was heeded. It was primarily the first secretary of the Brazilian embassy, Sergio Amando Frazao, who was honoured for his initiative in drawing up and wording the resolution, "... who with considerable sophistication worded it in such a way that it could win the votes of all members", as Dons Møller wrote. – The Brazilian was later awarded the *Dannebrogorden* (Silver Cross of the Order of the Dannebrog) for his work.²⁵

The essential factor, according to the Danish representative, was that the draft resolution completely left out the part of the preamble of the resolution on Puerto Rico which concerned the competence of the General Assembly to decide when a non-self-governing territory had attained a full measure of self-government. The Danish diplomat commented by saying that:

The administering countries were prepared to grin and bear the minor irritations once the main stumbling block had been removed, and the non-administering powers were kind enough not to insist on its inclusion. Moreover, the resolution seems to me to be more advantageous than the Puerto Rico resolution.

The small irritations Dons Møller alluded to were the references in the resolution to previous resolutions, notably 448 (V) and 742 (VIII), which Denmark and other non-administering powers were not happy with, or which were interpreted in a way that could not be accepted. This was primarily the case with wordings that implied that the 73 (e) Committee had the competence to examine information of a political nature.

²⁴ The main source regarding Danish policy during this phase of the meeting is Dons Møller's report of 15 September 1954 (15 pages) submitted by Borberg with cover letter, dated New York, 16 September 1954 together with Dons Møller's letter to Alex Mørch of the same date. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2.b., packet 2. – The presentation of the other speeches not made in Danish is based, as earlier, on the UN minutes in the *Summary Record*.

²⁵ Cf. Finn Petersen, *op. cit.* p. 48, note 21.

When presenting the draft resolution on the Greenland issue to the Committee, the *Brazilian* representative began by expressing his appreciation of the way in which Denmark had enabled the Committee to fulfil its obligations with regard to Resolutions 222 (III), 448 (V) and 742 (VIII). As far as India's proposal was concerned, he agreed that the Committee should establish a certain procedure for these types of cases, but said that, although subcommittees or working groups could of course be used, the Committee ought not restrict its own competence and prestige. The Committee should prepare these cases and leave it up to the General Assembly to make the decision. He expressed his satisfaction with the phrase employed by the Danish government in its statement of 3 September 1953, namely that Denmark considered "its responsibility arising from Chapter XI of the UN Charter as having ceased". He greatly valued the view that the administration of a non-self-governing territory was a responsibility exercised on behalf of an international community with the aim of helping the people of the territory towards political advancement. This was the underlying idea in Chapter XI of the UN Charter.

Judging by all the existing information, the Greenlanders had been completely free to decide whether they wished for their territory to become an integral part of Denmark. The information that had been given to the Committee in previous years showed that the people of Greenland had been in a position to make an intelligent choice about the most suitable political regime. Before the elected Greenland representatives had reached their decision, they had discussed the issue of integration in detail; one could say that the people of Greenland had exercised their right of self-determination to the fullest extent.

Greenland was in fact even better represented in the Danish Parliament than other parts of Denmark. All of the factors in the factor list could be applied to Greenland. Just for the sake of argument, he could express concern about cultural differences. However, he hoped that Greenland would be allowed to preserve its cultural heritage. There was no evidence to suggest that Denmark wished to assimilate Greenland culturally. He, too, would have preferred a referendum to have been held in Greenland. Nonetheless, the unanimous decision by the Provincial Council to adopt the solution of association with Denmark as an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark appeared to verify that this was the will of the entire people. The statements delivered by the Greenland delegates had convinced the Committee that there was now one non-self-governing territory less in the world.

The *Brazilian* representative called for the unanimous approval of the draft resolution.

The preamble of the draft resolution began with a reference to Resolution 222 (III) of 1948, with its stipulation that the UN be fully informed of constitutional amendments in connection with the termination of transmission of information, and a reference to the content of the Danish note to the Secretary-General dated 3 September 1953. There was a further reference to Resolution 742 (VIII), with its instructions to the Committee to study the submitted documentation in the light of the factor list in Resolution 742 (VIII) and to paragraph 2 of 448 (V), which instructed the Committee to study the submitted documentation and to report on

it at the plenary meeting. Finally, it referred to the Committee's examination of Denmark's documentation with regard to Resolution 448 (V). The documentation had been examined in the light of the fundamental principles enshrined in Chapter XI of the Charter, the provisions in Resolution 742 (VIII), and the verbal explanations provided by the Danish representatives.

The six operative points of the draft resolution were as follows:

- (1) appreciation is expressed for Denmark's inclusion of representatives elected by the Provincial Council of Greenland in the delegation for the purpose of informing the Committee about constitutional changes in Greenland;
- (2) the Committee takes note of the fact that the people of Greenland had freely exercised their right to self-determination when they reached a decision through their legally elected representatives on their new constitutional status;
- (3) the opinion is expressed that, on the basis of the documentation and the explanation provided, Greenland had freely reached the decision to become an integral part of Denmark on an equal constitutional and administrative footing with the rest of the Kingdom of Denmark;
- (4) the Committee is pleased to take note of the political progress made by the Greenlanders;
- (5) the Committee takes note of the opinion of the Danish government that, as a consequence of Greenland's new constitutional status, it considers its responsibility arising from Chapter XI of the UN Charter to have ceased and that the transmission of information pursuant to Article 73 (e) of the UN Charter should be terminated;
- (6) the Committee expresses its view – within its frame of reference and without prejudice to the final debate at the plenary meeting – that the existing information indicates that Greenland could be seen as falling outside the scope of Chapter XI of the UN Charter and that transmission of information pursuant to Article 73 was thus neither necessary nor fitting.²⁶

Prior to the voting in the Committee, *Ecuador* – which until then had kept to the background – made a lengthy speech. Its representative, Apunte, said that his delegation had been reluctant to approve the Danish government's decision. Part III of the new factor list did not precisely cover the particular case of Greenland. However, it had been established that part III could nonetheless be seen to cover Greenland, namely in the light of the key provisions in the resolution stating that each concrete case should be decided on according to the particular circumstances and by taking into account the people's right of self-determination. The statements made by the representatives for Denmark and Greenland had convinced the delegation from Ecuador that the desire for integration with Denmark

²⁶ *Cessation of the Transmission of Information under Article 73 (e) of the Charter: Greenland*. Brazil, Guatemala, India: Draft resolution A/AC.35/L.183 of 8 September 1954. Copy in the Danish National Archives, UM. 119.M.2.b., packet 2.

and for a new constitutional status not only reflected the initiative of the Provincial Council of Greenland, but also the freely expressed wishes of the people.

The delegation had concluded on the basis of the documentation provided by the Danish government and the additional statements made by its representatives on the Committee that Greenland's integration with Denmark was the result of a gradual process of cultural, economic, and political development in the territory. An assessment of the Greenlanders' growing participation in the political process over the previous one hundred years, which had culminated in 70% turnout of voters at the Danish *Folketing* elections in 1953, illustrated the importance which the Greenlanders attached to their political decisions. Ecuador was also impressed by the outstanding administrative and legal system that had been developed in the territory.

Ecuador was satisfied with the fact that the Danish government had granted Greenland a legal status that corresponded to that of the rest of the country, that the Greenlanders through the free expression of their will had approved the ensuing constitutional amendments, and that Greenland, as a consequence, had ceased to be a non-self-governing territory. Ecuador's representative praised Denmark for its exemplary approach in that it did not inform the UN through a unilateral decision that it wished to terminate the transmission of information on Greenland, but informed the UN about the Greenlanders' freely expressed decision – thus exercising its right of self-determination – to remain an integral part of Denmark. All in all, the delegation found the resolution acceptable and would vote in favour.

France was the next member to take the floor. The French representative (Pignon) said that France – notwithstanding its fundamental stance in the Committee – felt itself morally obliged to express its delegation's appreciation of Denmark's policy and interest for the people of Greenland. He reminded the Committee that France had not accepted Resolution 742 (VIII). France distanced itself from several debatable statements in the resolution. In the present matter, it had been sufficient to apply paragraph 4 of the said resolution, which stated that each specific case should be determined in the light of the particular circumstances, and thus the Committee merely took note of Denmark's decision to terminate the transmission of information on Greenland. The French delegation would have found it preferable for the text to be simpler than the existing one and for only the two first paragraphs of the preamble to be retained, which did not refer to Resolution 742 (VIII). France appreciated the tact shown by the proposing countries and would vote in favour of the draft to demonstrate its interest in the people of Greenland and its esteem for Denmark's conduct.

Dons Møller thanked the proposing countries for their initiative. Although the Danish delegation reserved the right in its explanation of its vote to discuss details in the draft, which it would prefer to be differently worded or altogether omitted, it could accept the draft and would vote in favour.

Indonesia's representative (Roesad) requested that a special vote be held on paragraph six of the operative part of the draft. Paragraph 6 was adopted with 10 votes in favour and 5 abstentions, which, according to Dons Møller's report, were Indonesia, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and Burma. The resolution was subsequently unanimously adopted in its entirety.

During the subsequent explanation of vote, *Great Britain's* representative (Gidden) said that his vote did not imply acceptance of the competence of the General Assembly to discuss political issues or determine if Denmark should or should not continue transmitting information on Greenland pursuant to Article 73 (e). The *Australian* representative (Loomes) said that he had also voted for the text as a whole, even though he had reservations about several points. Like France, he would have preferred a simpler text that merely took note of the information provided by Denmark and its decision to terminate the transmission of information on Greenland. He also said that Australia had voted against Resolution 742 (VIII) and had previously abstained from voting on Resolution 222 (III). Neither had his country supported Resolution 448 (V), since it had doubts about the extent to which the Committee could examine information of a political nature pursuant to Resolution 222 (III). He then went on to mention several examples of unacceptable use of language in the draft, including use of the word "political" in operative paragraph 4 and the word "opinion" in operative paragraph 5, which seemed to imply doubt as to the right of the Danish government to reach a final decision on Greenland's status. Australia had reservations in all these instances. The representative concluded by stating that it was the administering power alone which had the discretion to decide on the matter of termination of transmission of information. The *United States'* representative (Gerig) said that he had voted for the resolution despite having reservations about Resolution 742 (VIII). He agreed with the Australian representative that it was the administering power alone that had the competence to decide whether to cease reporting. *New Zealand's* representative (Scott) endorsed the American representative's view.

Dons Møller explained that even though his delegation would have preferred different wording in various places in the draft resolution – and likewise, the omission of a number of sentences – it valued the proposing countries' initiative and efforts to avoid issues of principle about which there were huge differences of opinion among the Committee members. His delegation had been pleased to vote for the text in its entirety. The delegation was delighted that its efforts had borne fruit and that the Committee had concluded its debate on the issue with a declaration that earned approval from all sides.

Møller went on to say that some people might perhaps assert that there was a certain inconsistency in the Danish delegation's voting. In the past, Denmark had voted against Resolution 448 (V) and 742 (VIII) and on previous occasions had declared that it could not endorse the inclusion in other resolutions of references to or deduction from Resolution 448 (V). Denmark had not altered its fundamental viewpoints, which were known to the Committee. He supported what Australia had said and had reservations about any interpretation which served to grant the Committee any competence to examine questions of a political nature. When voting, Denmark followed the principle that, although the resolution contained certain elements that the delegation could not regard as satisfactory, the delegation should not necessarily be prevented from voting for such a resolution, the main objective of which was acceptable or even desirable. He thanked all the Committee members for uniting behind a common statement.

Preliminary recapitulation

As expected, the debate on the Greenland issue in the 73 (e) Committee in September 1954 revolved yet again around the issue of competence. Once again there was a battle in progress at the UN about whether the General Assembly had the final word in cases concerning the termination of reporting to the UN – which was the view held by practically all of the non-administering countries – or if competence still lay with the administering powers alone. In principle, the latter countries all maintained their old positions, but needed to act more tactically and to show willingness to compromise. Otherwise, they would not be able to push a resolution through the General Assembly.

The debate at the meeting revealed that the non-administering powers felt strengthened by the adoption of 742 (VIII) in December 1953, whereby the 73 (e) Committee was charged with evaluating cases concerning the termination of transmission of information to the UN on the basis of the third factor list (which featured as an annex to Resolution 742). The statements made by the non-administering powers at the meeting of the 73 (e) Committee in September clearly show that they had agreed that such cases should be treated in principle on the basis of the new factor list, which should be applied as a kind of check list. As many of these countries pointed out at the meetings, they were also aware that the Greenland issue was a defining precedent in that it was the first time they were being asked to accept the integration of a former colony with the metropolitan country.

The striking aspect of the Committee meetings in September 1954, however, is that the above-mentioned consideration concerning competence was adapted to another consideration, which was rooted in the specific Danish-Greenland situation. It was clear from the start that there was no inclination in either of the two camps to treat the Greenland issue as a matter of principle. There seems to have been widespread agreement on both sides that the deep-seated division on the issue of competence should not be an impediment to reaching a decision in the case of Greenland. Against this backdrop, the meeting proceeded swiftly and without any sign of confrontation. The generally positive attitude was reflected in the brief text of the resolution, which was especially accommodating towards Denmark, and which was proposed by three non-administering powers and unanimously adopted. Seen in this setting, it is possible to conclude that, when the non-administering powers emphasised in 1954 the major significance of the case as setting a precedent, they were chiefly preoccupied with how the major colonial powers could be expected to use the outcome of the case of Greenland in the future.

There is perhaps not anything remarkable about the fact that the administering powers had nothing but praise and positive comments to make about Denmark and its relations with Greenland and, judging by their statements, they almost wanted to give Denmark a rousing farewell. The decisive factor was, of course, how the non-administering powers, who did after all have a clear majority in the General Assembly, positioned themselves. The draft resolution, which was accommodating towards Denmark, can ultimately be regarded as the outcome of careful consider-

ation by the non-administering powers of the *negative* and *positive* aspects of the case and the realisation that the positive aspects clearly outweighed the others.

How was this expressed?

If we first take a look at the negative points, they were (1) the option of integration itself, (2) election conditions in North and East Greenland, (3) the failure to hold a referendum, and (4) the issue of the possibility of the Danish government changing the decision at a later date.

With regard to (1), the majority of the non-administering powers instinctively opposed the option chosen in this case, namely allowing a colony to be integrated into the metropolitan country. As became apparent during the debate on factors in autumn 1953, many of the communist states considered this solution to be merely another form of colonialism. However, this interpretation was problematic in the case of Greenland, in that many of the non-administering countries realised that the Greenlanders, due to the size of their country, the lack of resources, and the small population size, could not independently maintain their own state and had to rely on external support. As mentioned, this was the essence of the statements made by Iraq, which contained a direct recommendation to join the two countries together. This was the same thought as the one expressed by Augo Lynge at the General Assembly on 11 November 1954, cf. the following. There were no other statements during the debate that indicated any other future solutions for Greenland, although several members wished to keep open the option of changing Greenland's new status and referred to the new paragraph in the factor list pertaining to this.

The issue of the lack of participation by North and East Greenland in the parliamentary elections (2) had caused, as mentioned earlier, Lannung considerable concern in 1953, since he saw this as a very colonial trait. His attempt to extend suffrage to the rest of Greenland had not been successful with the authorities in Copenhagen. However, the issue seems to have been dropped as a point of criticism during the meeting, as it became clear that the electoral structure in Greenland was due to environmental circumstances and would be improved once the technical means were available to do so. Augo Lynge's statements on this aspect had unquestionably made an impression.

The failure to hold a referendum (3) was more difficult to deal with and it was referred to by Burma, Guatemala, and Brazil. For many states, a key criticism of Denmark was that no referendum had been held in Greenland, while one had been held in Denmark. However, large member states such as India and Brazil did not want to allow this failure to stand in the way of a resolution and asserted that the population in Greenland had been informed and had had the opportunity to assert its political views. This view was also expressed in the draft resolution.

Finally, there was the fact that the revised Danish Constitution did not include provisions on changing Greenland's status at a later date (4). Eske Brun, when asked, clearly said that this addition was impossible. Here, it was the Iraqi representative who came to the rescue by saying that he understood that the constitution of a state could not contain such a provision, adding that he was confident that Denmark would find a way to resolve the situation in the future.

The picture of Denmark painted during the debate was highly complimentary. Apart from the somewhat exaggerated eulogy by the administering powers, the image put together in various ways by the non-administering powers was one of a society which had endeavoured within the framework of the UN to build a bridge between the administering powers and the non-administering powers. Just a short time after the end of the bloody Korean War in 1953, and against the backdrop of the growing confrontation between East and West, this was very positive.

The picture was reinforced by a positive image of Denmark's past as a colonial power. The speeches emphasised the fact that Denmark had protected the Greenlanders' culture and language and had eliminated illiteracy very early on. This last point in particular seems to have made an impression on the representatives from the non-administering powers, many of whom were extremely familiar with the problem of illiteracy. This circumstance was important in their appraisal of the Greenlanders' position on the matter of integration, in that many non-administering powers, judging by what their representatives said, equated reading ability with "political maturity" and had no doubt that the Greenlanders had reached this stage. With this apparently widely accepted image of Denmark as a benign colonial power, one could say that Denmark reaped the benefits of the efforts it had made in Greenland over many years, an effort which was not rooted in ulterior motives of a political nature. Another aspect was fulfilment to a reasonable degree of the various criteria of the factor list pertaining to rights and opportunities for political expression. The speeches by the representatives of, for example, Iraq and Ecuador indicated that among the non-administering powers there was generally appreciation for the fact that it was not possible to slavishly adhere to the factor list, but that the main emphasis should be on the actual wishes of the people. Last – and perhaps especially – there was a possibility for remedying the problems arising from the particular circumstances of the Greenlanders. It is quite probable that many of the administering powers, like Iraq, were preoccupied with how best to secure the future of a small and exposed polar community and that under the circumstances, they felt that there was no other alternative to integration with the metropolitan country.

In connection with the discussions, no interest was shown in examining demographic circumstances or historical details, including any claims to Greenland based on historical fact etc.

Conclusion of the Greenland issue at the UN: Meeting of the Fourth Committee and the General Assembly

Owing to the positive nature of the debate on the Greenland issue in the 73 (e) Committee, Denmark had good reason to be optimistic that the debate in the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly would be relatively smooth. Thus, there is no indication of any alteration to the established line of negotiation. At a meeting in New York on 5 October 1954 – apparently also attended by Foreign Minister H.C. Hansen – Dons Møller, Finn Friis, and Hermod Lannung jointly

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In new york, the UN committee for non-self-governing territories finally passed a resolution that information on greenland no longer needed to be transmitted due to the nation's equality with the rest of Denmark. The resolution will be presented to the general assembly on 21 september. In the committee, Denmark was praised numerous times for how it had handled the issue. Enquiries were made in the committee as to why north and east greenland had not participated in the folketing election. This question was answered by augo lynge and frederik lynge, who explained that it was due to practical difficulties. In future, however, these parts of the population of greenland will also be able to cast their vote in political elections.

The Greenlanders were informed of the proceedings in the UN by means of the radio news on 10 September 1954. Above is an extract in which, among other things, it was emphasised that Denmark had been praised for the way that the case had been presented in the UN.

prepared for negotiations in the Fourth Committee, i.e. they drew up instructions for themselves. According to the brief, their starting point should be that the transmission of information on Greenland had ceased and that Denmark presumed that the General Assembly would merely take note of the Danish notification of 3 September. A resolution on this subject would be ruled out, however. Therefore, it was proposed that the Danish delegation should work towards adoption of a resolution equivalent to the one adopted by the 73 (e) Committee. The delegation should vote against any new paragraph that might arise stating that the General Assembly had the competence to determine the matter. The delegation could decide of its own accord whether it ought to vote for a draft resolution as a whole, even if it did include such a paragraph on the competence of the General Assembly. Finally, the delegation should seek to ensure that no proposals were presented on sending a UN mission to Greenland.²⁷

Lannung initiated a discussion on the participation of representatives from Greenland in the forthcoming meetings of the Fourth Committee. It had long been Lannung's wish to allow the two Greenland members of parliament to take part in the plenary meeting. It is fair to say that his viewpoint had been very much

²⁷ Proposal for instructions drawn up by Dons Møller, Finn Friis, and Hermod Lannung; submitted by Borberg on 5 October 1954. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2.b., packet 2. – The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' approval of 18 October 1954. *Idem*.

bolstered by the draft resolution that had been adopted, which expressed appreciation of Denmark's inclusion of Greenland members in its delegation. At the meeting it was agreed that it would be desirable to have the Greenlanders present as members of the delegation during the continued debate. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was accordingly instructed to contact the two members of parliament from Greenland at their addresses in Copenhagen to enquire whether they would be willing to travel to New York again, which indeed they were. They informed the Prime Minister's Office that they were prepared to travel.²⁸

Meeting of the Fourth Committee²⁹

At the start of the debate on the Committee's agenda item concerning Greenland, Lannung gave a long speech in which he highlighted the unique physical conditions in Greenland.³⁰ He stressed that Greenland was a poor country where the people only just managed to establish basic living conditions. Without help from outside, only an extremely modest standard of living would be possible.

He also touched on the historical circumstances, pointing out that Greenland had never been a colony in the classic sense, but had been regarded back in the time of the Vikings as "a Nordic Dominion". He then talked about a number of the issues also covered by Eske Brun in his speech to the 73 (e) Committee (concerning the aspect of protection, cultural circumstances, the need to alter the Greenlanders' way of life as a result of the changed climate conditions etc.) He also described the extensive support provided by Denmark in the previous few

²⁸ Borberg to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 5 October 1954. The Danish National Archives, UM. U.83.a., packet 6; Eske Brun to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 15 October 1954. *Idem*. The two Greenland members of parliament requested that their stay in New York prior to their participation in the meeting be as short as possible. They did, however, wish to be there one or two days in advance of the meeting in New York. Their departure was on 1 November and, in line with the department's wishes, they were accompanied by chief of section Otto Jensen.

²⁹ The description of the meetings of the Fourth Committee and the General Assembly are based, provided no other source is given, on the official UN record: *Fourth Committee: Provisional Summary Record of meetings 127-132* (held on 10 November, 11 November, and 12 November 1954 respectively). Signature: A/C.4/SR. 427-432. 427 is dated 12 November; the rest, apart from 432, are dated 15 November. 432 is dated 16 November 1954. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a/47-54 together with annex, packet 2. – The record of the meetings written by the Danish delegation (29 pages long) (*Referat. 9. plenarforsamling: Ophør med indsendelse af oplysninger om Grønland. Dagsordenens punkt 32.a.*) [*Record of the 9th session of the General Assembly: Cessation of the Transmission of Information on Greenland, Item 32.a on the Agenda*] is dated New York, 25 November 1954. The Danish National Archives. UM. 8.U.83.a. packet 6. – Marked as submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

³⁰ *Statement by Hermod Lannung (Denmark) in the Fourth Committee 10, November 1954*. United Nations Press Release PM/2903 of 10 November 1954. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a/47-54 together with annex, packet 2. At the opening of the meetings of the Fourth Committee, Lannung had already mentioned the Greenland issue in a speech held on 26 October to mark Denmark's withdrawal from the 73 (e) Committee (*Statement by Mr Lannung (Denmark) in the Fourth Committee October 26th, 1954*). According to Borberg, the valedictory speech, which included an outline of the work of the 73 (e) Committee and proposals for changing methods of working, received a positive response from the "moderate states" in both camps. Copy of manuscript sent to Denmark with accompanying letter, 26 October 1954. The Danish National Archives, UM. 119. M.2., packet 8. A longer record of the speech can also be found under Finn Petersen, *op. cit.* pp. 50-52, note 21.

years for modernisation of Greenland society, in particular the health system. Here he was able to tell the members of the Committee that the number of hospital beds per capita in Greenland was at present double the equivalent figure for Denmark, but also added that there was still a great deal to do to bring down the incidence of tuberculosis in Greenland to the same level as in Denmark, which was one of the countries with the lowest tuberculosis mortality rate in the world. In 1951 it had been reported that per capita expenditure in Greenland would amount to approximately one thousand dollars, but now this figure had increased by almost 50%. It was not possible to contemplate the same level of per capita expenditure in Denmark. The conclusion was that much more had been spent on each individual Greenlander than on each individual person in the rest of Denmark.

Addressing the women present in the Committee, he pointed out that women in Greenland had, for a number of years, had the same legal status as men and that they were economically on an equal footing with men, since women received the same wages as men for the same work.

In a longer review of the political situation, Lannung talked about the Provincial Council of Greenland and subsequently described in detail political development in Greenland, notably the specific developments in connection with and subsequent to the election of the Provincial Council in 1951. Quoting Augo Lynge in particular, he explained the wish of the Greenlanders to have Greenland's constitutional status explicitly defined in connection with the amendment to the Constitution. He quoted Augo Lynge's words to the Provincial Council of Greenland, namely that it would not be satisfactory to have temporary constitutional provisions, since it would require many years of work to make them permanent. Lannung also quoted Lynge's request to the Provincial Council to approve the insertion of a paragraph in the new Constitution recognising Greenland as a county in Denmark and establishing that Greenland had representatives in the Danish Parliament.

Venezuela's representative (Rivas) said that, since the issue of factors had been attributed decisive importance, his delegation had maintained that a full measure of autonomy could be attained by attaining independence or another form of self-government, or through incorporation on equal terms with other parts of the country in question. Greenland came under the latter category. The Danish government's expenditure on Greenland was impressive. As the Danish representative had pointed out, the two deviations from the factor list were due to climate and geographical distances. It was clear that resources from the wealthier regions of a state were being used to benefit a less wealthy region, which happened in any sovereign state. The Danish representative had stated that the people of Greenland today were of Eskimo/Scandinavian origin through inter-marriage. He stressed the fact that South America had only attained independence when the people of mixed origin had joined in the struggle (!). He would support a draft resolution equivalent to the one adopted by the 73 (e) Committee.

The Netherlands' representative (Soeurmann) congratulated the Danish representative on his admirable presentation of his country's case. Since the Provincial Council of Greenland, freely elected by the Greenlanders, had unanimously approved the resolution, which recommended a constitutional change, there could be no doubt

that the country's new status fully reflected the wishes of the people. The plenary meeting should simply note with satisfaction that the population of yet another non-self-governing territory had attained the goal set by the UN Charter. He would also vote for any resolution akin to the one the 73 (e) Committee had adopted.

The *United States'* representative (Johnson) warmly welcomed the two representatives from Greenland. He expressed his government's appreciation of the Danish government's compliance with Resolution 222 (III). In the 73 (e) Committee, the US had shared the unanimous view that Greenland could now be regarded as falling outside the scope of Chapter XI of the UN Charter. He hoped that Denmark and Greenland would be successful and that they would prosper as one nation. He thanked Denmark for its valuable cooperation with the UN. Finally, he paid tribute to Lannung for his many years of valuable input in the Fourth Committee.

The representative of the *Philippines* (Carpio) congratulated the Danish government on its good work, which had led to the end of its responsibility as an administering power. He addressed the issue of competence, saying that his delegation firmly believed that the UN's function could not be limited to simply taking note of a decision by a non-administering power and pointed to the factors that should be considered with respect to Resolution 742 (VIII). In the 73 (e) Committee, the question had been raised about how the decision in favour of integration had been declared by the people of Greenland. He wondered whether a resolution from the Provincial Council had been the best way of expressing public opinion. There was universal suffrage in Greenland. Unless the Provincial Council of Greenland had been elected specifically to deal with the matter of integration, it would have been better to ascertain the wishes of the people through a special referendum. However, the statements from the Danish delegation seemed to show that the result would have been the same, whether expressed by the Provincial Council or by a referendum. He would thus accept the Greenlanders' spontaneous support for integration at face value.

Belgium's representative (Ryckmans) echoed the congratulations to Denmark and Greenland on the happy result of many centuries of endeavours in the Arctic territory. Greenland had become an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark in compliance with the freely expressed wishes of the people. Finally, he stressed that Belgium continued to be the fundamental guardian of the position maintained by the administering powers, saying that if there was a vote on the draft resolution in the 73 (e) Committee's report, he would only be able to vote in favour of the second paragraph of the preamble and paragraph 5 in the operative section. He could not take part in the rest of the voting for fundamental reasons, since the General Assembly did not have the competence to present any declaration concerning the sovereign decision by the Danish government.

The representative of *India* (Singh) said that India had meticulously examined the detailed documentation submitted by the Danish delegation. Denmark had continually informed the UN of political developments that could be used as a general background for examining the constitutional changes that had been implemented. He then referred to the resolution that had been put forward by India, Brazil, and Guatemala and was subsequently unanimously adopted. This resolution expressed the view that the information submitted indicated that Greenland could be regarded

as falling outside the scope of Chapter XI of the UN Charter. The Indian delegation had no reason to change this view in the Fourth Committee and felt that the General Assembly should make the final judgement accordingly. India recalled its proposal to dispatch a visiting mission but conceded that, in the case of Greenland, this would not be appropriate since so much information had been made available. In this context he also referred to the visit to Greenland by Hoo and Benson in 1950. He concluded by informing the delegates that India, Brazil, Guatemala, and Peru would put forward a draft resolution equivalent to the earlier draft resolution.

Mexico's representative (Joublanc-Rivas) congratulated the Danish representative on the Danish government's admirable work in Greenland. He had already had the opportunity to congratulate Denmark on its success in eliminating illiteracy in Greenland. Denmark's achievements in the area of education had been altogether exemplary. He was also impressed by the figure quoted by Lannung for per capita annual expenditure in Greenland. It was remarkable that a country such as Denmark, with a relatively small population, spent such a large amount on the welfare of the Greenlanders. The detailed information that the UN had been provided with had made it possible to ascertain the political progress achieved. He noted with satisfaction that there had been no indication of opposition from among the local inhabitants to the concept of integration on an equal footing with the metropolitan country. His delegation could vote for a resolution equivalent to the one which the 73 (e) Committee had adopted.

The Norwegian representative (Ofstedal) also congratulated the Danish government on integrating Greenland into the Kingdom of Denmark and congratulated the Danish representative on his skilful and sensitive representation of Greenland and Denmark on the Fourth Committee. Most of the historic details of the Norwegian representative's otherwise somewhat idiosyncratic speech were left out by the UN Secretariat in the Summary Record.³¹ It was merely recorded

³¹ The full text of the Norwegian speech can be found in the Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.83.a/47-54 with appendix, packet 2: *Speech delivered to the Fourth Committee by editor Christian Ofstedal (Norway), 10 November 1954*. – In one of the passages, which was not printed in the Summary Record, Ofstedal made a fuss about the description of Greenland's early history, saying that (in *Report on Greenland 1954*) he would have used the word "Norwegians" in place of "Norse" and "Norsemen" and (in the book *Greenland*), in place of "Scandinavians". He also told the meeting that Greenland's original Norse settlers – he mentioned Erik the Red and his son – came from exactly the same part of Western Norway as he himself. More importantly, Iceland and Greenland became part of Norway under the reign of the Norwegian kings. In practice, "these parts of Norway" remained under Norwegian reign until 1814. According to Ofstedal, Iceland and Greenland were simply forgotten at the negotiations for the Peace Treaty of Kiel in 1814 and thus came to be part of Denmark. Ofstedal was, however, wrong on this point. At the talks for the Treaty of Kiel, Sweden showed interest only in Norway itself. Article 4 of the Peace Treaty of Kiel concerns Denmark's renunciation of all rights to Norway and to the Norwegian throne, with the exception of Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and Iceland – "*la Grönlande, les îles de Færø et l'Islande non comprises*" (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Danske Traktater efter 1800 [Danish Treaties after 1800]*, collection one, vol. 1, 1877, p. 62). – Apart from this attempt to set the historical record straight, Ofstedal's attitude towards Denmark was absolutely positive and he concluded his speech with a twinkle in his eye: "This, Mr Chairman, to congratulate our neighbour and brother whom we know and appreciate for his good and great heart but whom we sometimes feel may need a little help with his short memory". – His speech was misunderstood by the newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*, which tried to conduct a press campaign on the matter, cf. Finn Petersen, *op. cit.* pp. 77-80, note 21.

that Oftedal briefly referred to Norway's role in Greenland's history and also the ruling by the Permanent Court of International Justice in 1932, according to which Denmark alone had sovereignty over the whole of Greenland, a ruling which both parties had accepted. The official minutes record that the Norwegian representative concluded by expressing his delegation's appreciation of the significant progress Greenland had made to date. He was convinced that the country would continue to flourish as an integral part of Denmark.

Costa Rica's representative (Miss Orozco) congratulated the Danish representative on his clear and exhaustive speech. She believed that the fact that the people of Greenland had been able to read and write for a hundred or so years had been of fundamental importance in their attainment of self-government through integration with Denmark. She would vote in favour of a resolution equivalent to the one adopted by the 73 (e) Committee.

Cuba's representative (Miss Shelton) congratulated the Danish government on the way Greenland had attained self-government. She had particularly taken note of the Danish representative's statement that the Danish people had seen it as both their responsibility and a privilege to lead the people of Greenland towards the goal of self-government, which had now been attained. She would also vote for a resolution equivalent to the one adopted by the 73 (e) Committee.

Thailand's representative (Khoman) was very impressed by how much the Danish government had done for the Greenlanders in the course of their long association, which had now culminated in the integration of the people of Greenland of their own free will into the Kingdom of Denmark. It was a happy day for the UN, which could look upon this outcome as an example of fulfilment of the requirements of the UN Charter and an exact observance of the principle of the right of determination, which was one of the main pillars of the organisation. He wished Greenland luck and prosperity under its new and freely chosen status. He would support any resolution that took note of the new constitutional status of Greenland.

Peru's representative (Calle y Calle) agreed with the conclusion of the draft resolution, namely that Denmark's obligations arising from Chapter XI of the UN Charter had ceased as a consequence of the change to the territory's status. Peru had thus offered to be one of the proposing countries for a resolution acknowledging that the people of Greenland had exercised their right of self-determination and that the provisions in Chapter XI of the UN Charter were no longer applicable. Denmark's conduct both towards Greenland and the UN had been exemplary. The Greenlanders had made increasing progress in all areas thanks to their own efforts and those of the Danish government. Both should be congratulated.

El Salvador's representative (Quiros) said that the exhaustive and frank information that Denmark had continually provided on development in all aspects of life in Greenland, together with the documentation provided and the recent, admirable speech by the Danish representative, allowed his delegation to decide that Greenland should be regarded from now on as falling outside the scope of Chapter XI of the UN Charter. He was convinced that the people of Greenland

had been able to express their opinion freely, through informed and democratic processes, as to the status they desired. This ability was in keeping with the first factor in part II of the factor list, which was an annex to Resolution 742 (VIII). His delegation would vote in favour of a resolution equivalent to the one unanimously adopted by the 73 (e) Committee.

Haiti's representative (Dorsinville) said that his delegation had always been of the opinion that the goal for non-self-governing territories should be self-government in the form of full independence. The delegation had decided to modify its view to a certain extent and to vote for the factor list that had been presented as an annex to Resolution 742 (VIII), which took into consideration other separate forms of self-government, and pursuant to which each individual case should be determined in light of the particular circumstances. It seemed that in the case of Greenland, there had been no alternative to integration. He regretted that a referendum had not been held. The Provincial Council of Greenland certainly had the authority to speak on behalf of the people of Greenland. However, the natural way to reach a decision on the matter would have been to consult the people. As small as the population was, it was improbable that this consultation would have created any particular difficulties.

The Danish government had always provided detailed information on developments in all areas of life in Greenland. It should be congratulated on the successful conclusion of its work for the people of the territory.

The *Egyptian* representative (Osman) said that, pursuant to Resolution 637 A (VII), paragraph 2, the wishes of the people should be ascertained by referendum or by recognised democratic means, preferably under the auspices of the UN. In the case of Greenland, the 73 (e) Committee had been of the opinion that Greenland had decided of its own free will to become part of Denmark. His delegation could thus vote in favour of the resolution which the 73 (e) Committee had adopted. He would also like to congratulate the Danish government on the way it had carried out its mission in Greenland and praised Denmark for its willingness to cooperate while carrying out its obligations under Chapter XI. He pointed out that Denmark had notably facilitated the UN in its work by providing political information.

Syria's representative (Rifai) said that it was an undisputed fact that it was necessary to first know the freely expressed will of a people before determining whether a territory had attained full self-determination. The decision of the people in the case of Greenland was beyond doubt. He would vote in favour of the 73 (e) Committee's resolution or an equivalent resolution. He finally expressed approval for Lannung, who as a Danish delegate had always displayed a liberal attitude in matters concerning non-self-governing territories.

Pakistan's representative (Mohammed Mir Khan) also wished to congratulate the Danish government on its remarkable work in Greenland. It had educated the people of Greenland and had thus prepared them for determining their own economic and political status. Particularly praiseworthy was the fact that Denmark had taken the decision to educate the Greenlanders not just when the country was about to attain self-government, but a hundred years previously. The

Danish government had, of its own accord, provided information on the political situation in Greenland because it had undertaken, without any ulterior motive, to further the people's political maturity. This initiative was very encouraging for the Pakistani delegation, which would be pleased to see other administering powers do likewise.

The *Australian* representative (Clarey) said that the Danish government should be congratulated on its wise and informed policies and for its devotion, which had made it possible for the people of Greenland to achieve an esteemed place in the great nation of Denmark. The Greenlanders should also be congratulated on having made progress in all areas and on having attained a status equivalent to the status of the informed and highly developed population of Denmark. The Danish government had acted fully and precisely in keeping with the terms of Resolution 222 (III). There was no reason to doubt that the Greenlanders had unreservedly accepted their new status as a territory that was part of the Kingdom of Denmark. The UN had not heard any objections from the people. He said that not accepting the peoples' decision would be denying them the right to express their will. He thanked Lannung for his speech and said that it gave rise to two reflections. The first was that the attainment of self-government was not an easy task in a place where geographical and climate-related circumstances created huge difficulties. The second was that economic, social, and educational progress greatly determined how far political development progressed and how long a country needed in order to attain full self-determination. The Australian delegation hoped that the Fourth Committee and the General Assembly would take note of Greenland's new constitutional status and of the fact that Denmark was terminating the transmission of information.

The speech held by *New Zealand's* representative (Scott) consisted of a number of positive statements about Denmark, including appreciation for the information that was continually submitted to the General Assembly. He concluded by personally thanking Lannung, who had always made a valuable contribution to the discussion, both in the Fourth Committee and the 73 (e) Committee.

Colombia's representative (Canal) – after reading the 73 (e) Committee's report and hearing the Danish representative – was extremely pleased with Greenland's new situation. He congratulated the Danish government on its constant efforts to help the people of Greenland achieve their new rights. He would vote in favour of a resolution equivalent to the one adopted by the 73 (e) Committee.

Lebanon's representative (Itani) expressed his recognition for the work of the Danish government in social, economic, cultural, and educational areas. The delegation was not unaware of the special circumstances in the territory. The Danish government, which had Lebanon's sympathy and respect, could not be accused in any way of any imperialist intentions. Nonetheless, Lebanon felt it was necessary to draw attention to fundamental principles, which should never be abandoned. Lebanon would have preferred Denmark to act through the UN af-

ter applying universally recognised democratic methods. The Lebanese delegate did not wish to create difficulties for the Danish government; however, he felt the need to express his reservations about the procedure the government had followed, particularly with regard to the impact on the future of other non-self-governing territories. He reserved the right to make a later statement on the draft resolution.

Liberia's representative (Miss Brooks) recalled that the delegation had congratulated Denmark on 3 November on the way it had carried out its obligation to help the inhabitants of Greenland in their economic, cultural, and social development and on the information it had voluntarily provided on political progress. However, it was the delegation's fundamental view that a state could not withdraw from the obligations it had undertaken on the basis of bilateral or collective agreements simply by changing its constitution. Thus, the Danish government should have reached its decision after consultation with the UN. She reserved the right to make a later statement on the draft resolution.

At this point, the *Danish* representative (Lannung) took the floor. He said that he wished to correct a misunderstanding with regard to the freedom of choice factor, which had arisen due to the text of the report by the 73 (e) Committee, section IX, paragraph 60. Here, it was stated that the Danish representative had declared that there had not been a referendum in Greenland, and that even if a referendum had been held, it would only have covered the question of whether Greenland should continue as a non-self-governing territory or if it should be incorporated into Denmark. He felt that this statement taken out of its context was misleading. What Mr Brun had wished to convey was that, in connection with the issue of Greenland's status, no wish other than the desire for integration had ever been put forward or discussed at any time. No one had asked for any other options. He said that this was a factual, not legal, explanation. If a third wish or option had been proposed by the Greenlanders, no one would have thought for even an instant of preventing it from becoming an option.³²

Ecuador's representative (Apunte) took the factor list that was the annex to Resolution 742 (VIII) as his basis, the third part of which concerned integration with the metropolitan country. He felt that not all the factors could be applied to the case of Greenland, but that the main point, namely that the people could express their opinion freely through informed and democratic processes, had been satisfactorily fulfilled. The people of Greenland, who were literate, had been in a position to express a responsible and well-founded opinion. Consequently, the delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution. The delegation's doubts with regard to the motives behind the wish to become part of the Kingdom of Denmark had been assuaged by the explanations provided by the Danish representative and the members of the Provincial Council of Greenland. They had said that the Greenlanders had unanimously wished for

³² *Danish "point of clarification"*. The Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U. 83.a/47-54 with annex, packet 2.

integration with Denmark on equal terms. Even though the delegation would have wished for the Greenlanders to be given the opportunity to express themselves directly through a referendum, it had nonetheless expressed its agreement in the 73 (e) Committee that Greenland fell outside the scope of Chapter XI of the UN Charter. In the meantime, this decision had been reaffirmed by the speech by the Danish representative in the Fourth Committee. The delegation would approve a draft resolution equivalent to the one adopted by the 73 (e) Committee.

Yugoslavia's representative (Bozovic) also congratulated Denmark on the progress achieved in Greenland. He then examined the two main issues being debated, namely whether the people of the territory had attained full self-government within the meaning of the UN Charter and how the termination of transmission of information had come about. He added that the Yugoslavian delegation's opinion on the first point was well-known. In his view "free association" was hard to reconcile with the goal of Chapter XI since integration instead of full self-government meant internal and limited self-government. He felt that in Greenland's case, a great deal of progress had been made with respect to self-government. There were still shortcomings with regard to the extent of self-government and use of the right to vote; hopefully, however, this situation would soon be improved through joint efforts and he hoped that all the local bodies, including the Provincial Council, would soon be chaired by Greenlanders. He also hoped that the Provincial Council would be granted further rights and voting rights when the parliamentary elections were extended to all Greenlanders.

He mentioned in detail the different provisions in the factor list and regretted that the referendum in Denmark had not also included the people of Greenland. With respect to freedom of choice, the Danish representative had just explained that a third option would have been available to the people of Greenland if they had expressed such a wish. There was no provision concerning the possibility of changing its status in the future. The delegation felt that these three principles should have been applied. Negligence in this respect could create a dangerous precedent in future cases, which could easily be more complex. Finally, he distanced himself – by referring to Resolution 742 (VIII) – from the position that the role of the UN was merely to take note of the circumstances and to approve the unilateral decisions of the administering powers. Due to the procedure applied in the case of Greenland, which was based on the view that the administering powers had the sole competence to terminate obligations arising from the UN Charter, his delegation had to refrain for fundamental reasons from voting on a draft resolution equivalent to that of the 73 (e) Committee.

Uruguay's representative (Rodriguez Fabregat) said that Denmark set a splendid example of democracy in all areas. His objections in the case of Greenland were solely of a principle nature. It was highly unfortunate that there had not been a referendum to establish beyond all doubt the will of the people with regard to their status. It would have been an easy task to carry out in such a small and homogeneous population. A referendum led by an independent UN com-

mission could reveal the true wishes of the people. The role of the UN was not simply to receive information or take note of the cessation of such information, as suited the administering power. He reserved the right to make a later statement on the draft resolution. Under the present circumstances it would not be possible for his delegation to vote in favour of the resolution.

Greece's representative (Triantaphyllakos) said that the Danish government had always kept the Committee informed of Greenland's political development. It had guided Greenland towards self-government and self-determination as quickly as was possible through democratic, liberal, and informed processes. It was clear that the majority of Greenlanders wished to be united with Denmark as an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark.

Due to the important principles involved, the Greek delegation could not support a draft resolution like the one proposed by the 73 (e) Committee. First, the cessation of transmission of information should follow rather than precede self-government. Second, it was not clear whether the election of the Provincial Council had been held on the issue of what form self-government and self-determination should take. He had been delighted to hear the Danish representative's explanation concerning freedom of choice. However, this explanation was factual and not legal. The fact was that the Greenlanders had not been asked if they wished for a solution other than integration or if they wished to remain a non-self-governing territory. Even if it had been possible to ascertain the wishes of the people with regard to Resolution 637 (VII) by recognised democratic means, it would have been preferable to hold a referendum. The delegation did not doubt that the majority of the Greenlanders had made the decision on integration with Denmark of their own free will and that Denmark had fulfilled its obligations with regard to the UN Charter to offer the people the opportunity to exercise their right of self-determination as quickly as possible; however, taking into consideration the important principles involved, the Greek delegation could not support a draft resolution equivalent to the resolution of the 73 (e) Committee. According to Lannung's later statements, Greece's criticism came as no surprise, since Denmark had not supported Greece on the Cyprus issue.³³

After this series of critical speeches, the Danish delegation seems to have felt the need to change the mood in the assembly, and the two representatives from Greenland were put on the list of speakers, followed by Hermod Lannung.³⁴

Augo Lyngé thanked the delegates for their kind words and wishes for Greenland's future, also referring to Lannung's "instructive and objective" main speech. He also said that:

³³ Finn Petersen, *op. cit.* p. 55, note 21.

³⁴ On a note handwritten by Lannung just after the meeting it says: "At this point we let the Greenlanders speak – very effective", cf. Finn Petersen, *op. cit.* p. 56, note 21 and note 17.

This is certainly no completely ordinary event in world history that the people of a non-self-governing territory have, of their own accord, through the change to that territory's constitutional status brought about by the adoption of the revised Constitution of 5 June 1953, wished for and been granted permanent association with the metropolitan country as part of the Realm, on truly equal terms.

Lynge continued that this decision had come into being on the basis of the naturally and quietly evolved relationship between Greenland and Denmark. Since so many visible and invisible ties had developed between the two countries over the years, integration and political equality had only been a matter of time. Nonetheless, there were also other reasons behind it:

It had also happened out of necessity and had been guided by pure common sense, since the discrepancy between the small population size and the vastness of the country ruled out other options such as establishing an autonomous and independent state, partly because the economic prerequisites were not in place. In addition, there had not been any leanings towards secession in Greenland or any other demands for independence and the Greenlanders had never shown any desire for their own flag.

He emphasised that the government of the metropolitan country had always been "extremely humane and altruistic". The decision to integrate Greenland into Denmark had been taken "after careful consideration and was the crowning achievement after a very long period of quiet development". The Provincial Council had felt that the path towards full equality in all areas of life could only be attained within the framework of the same constitution. He concluded by saying that there was full consensus among Greenlanders on the matter, and that all of his fellow countrymen were delighted about the new constitution.

Frederik Lynge said that his long years of participation in political life in Greenland, where he had been a member of the Provincial Council since 1917, meant that he was in an ideal position to interpret his fellow countrymen's attachment and loyalty towards Denmark. He said that the Greenlanders had never felt oppressed or exploited. He explained that: "They had felt that they were a free people and citizens of Danish society, since due consideration had always been shown for the people's livelihood, their original culture and language".

After mentioning Denmark's work in the areas of education and healthcare, he said that, as a consequence of the strong ties between Denmark and Greenland, the Greenlanders had never thought about or wished for independence, not even during the dark period of separation from Denmark in the last world war. Nobody in Greenland had ever wished to be citizens of any other

realm than Denmark. He also said that the many signs of satisfaction concerning what the Constitution had given Greenland had served to underline that a referendum in Greenland on the country's integration into the Kingdom of Denmark would have been and still was superfluous. He firmly believed that the Greenlanders' affinity with Denmark was the reason why they had never requested a referendum either directly or indirectly.³⁵

Brazil's representative (Lyra) congratulated Denmark on the way it had carried out its duty with respect to Chapter XI of the UN Charter and for the way it had presented the issue of termination of the transmission of information. Thanks to the abundant information provided by the Danish government, it had been possible to observe the Greenlanders' progress towards self-government over eight years. The people had now freely exercised their right of self-determination through democratically elected representatives. The memorandum submitted had shown that the people of Greenland had been able to deliberate on the constitutional change which made Greenland an integral part of Denmark. The information provided to the UN left no doubt that the people of Greenland had been given every opportunity to choose the political status they deemed most suitable. The way in which the right of self-determination had been exercised was beyond reproach. Brazil had considered the matter in the light of part III of the factor list of Resolution 742 (VIII), and irrespective of the reservations Brazil had with respect to the list, Greenland's new constitutional status fulfilled all the factors listed in part III.

He then gave the Committee the new draft resolution (A/C.4/L.354) proposed by Brazil, Guatemala, India, and Peru. *Brazil's* representative said that the resolution had been drawn up with a view to avoiding any controversy about related issues. The representatives clearly had in mind the conflict over the matter of competence. He added that by adopting the proposal, the UN would demonstrate to the Danish government its approval of the way it had fulfilled the sacred duty assigned to it by the international community.

Lannung thanked the Brazilian delegation for the draft resolution, which he said the Danish delegation would be happy to vote for.

Guatemala was one of the proposing countries and apparently wished to explain its position. Its representative (Arenales) said that the doubts expressed by his delegation in the 73 (e) Committee had been expelled by the Danish representative. It had been able to accept the Danish position and to be one of the proposing countries in the 73 (e) Committee. Although there had not been a referendum in Greenland, the delegation still felt that the Greenlanders had had every opportunity to express their opinion. He further explained that the factor list was only an annex to Resolution 742 (VIII) and that the resolution allowed for flexible application and interpretation of the list. He recommended the draft

³⁵ *Member of Parliament Augo Lyngé's statement to the Fourth Committee on 11 November 1954; Member of Parliament Frederik Lyngé's statement to the Fourth Committee in November 1954.* Both in the Danish National Archives, UM. 8.U.83.a/47-54 with appendix, packet 2.

resolution, but kept open the position of his delegation with regard to similar cases in the future.

Argentina congratulated the Danish government for the positive conclusion of its responsibility pursuant to Chapter XI of the UN Charter. Denmark had loyally fulfilled its obligation to transmit information, including information on political circumstances. However, an act as important as integration into the metropolitan country should at the very least have been underpinned by a referendum. *Argentina* also had reservations about voting in favour of the resolution owing to the fact that Greenland came within the American security zone and owing to resolutions adopted at the inter-American conferences in Bogotá and Caracas. The delegation would abstain from voting.

Subsequently, the representative of the *Philippines* (Carpio) put forward a number of verbal proposals for amendments to the draft resolution. The proposing countries accepted three minor proposed amendments to the preamble, which concerned the language used. Particularly significant changes to the operative part – including the elimination of the whole of paragraph 2 (pursuant to which the General Assembly took note that Denmark considered its responsibility with regard to Chapter XI to have ceased) – were rejected. Most interesting perhaps is the fact that the representative wished for the text in operative paragraph 5 to be changed from “... Greenland freely decided ...” to “... the Greenland Council freely decided ...”, on the grounds that the opinion of the people of Greenland had not been expressed directly, but only through its elected representatives in the Provincial Council of Greenland.³⁶

In response to the questions, *Lannung* replied that it would have been easy to hold a referendum in Greenland if the people of Greenland had asked to be consulted. Since the Provincial Council had voted unanimously for integration, it was felt that a referendum would give rise to doubts about the sincerity of the wish that had been expressed by the Provincial Council. Neither had any wish for a referendum been expressed since. He added that the two *Folketing* members from Greenland had been elected with a large majority at the parliamentary elections in 1953. If the people had wished to criticise the procedure that had been followed, they would have done it at that opportunity. He was sure that those who had listened to him and to the two members of parliament from Greenland had understood that Denmark’s wholehearted wish had been to give Greenland a completely free choice. As far as the history of the territory was concerned, its status had been determined many years previously by a ruling by the Permanent Court of International Justice in The Hague, which had been complied with scrupulously.

He expressed his gratitude to the delegations from Brazil, Guatemala, India, and Peru, who had demonstrated a genuine desire to reconcile differences by

³⁶ Paragraph 5 of the draft resolution states: “5. Expresses the opinion that, from the documentation and the explanation provided, Greenland freely decided on its integration within the Kingdom of Denmark on an equal constitutional and administrative basis with the other parts of Denmark”.

putting forward a draft resolution. He appealed to the Committee members to refrain from presenting proposals for amendment, which would render the draft unacceptable.

Saudi Arabia's representative (Khadra) also congratulated Denmark on its work in Greenland. The success of the Danish administration in eliminating illiteracy and its tireless efforts to eradicate tuberculosis should serve as an example for all states, both administering as well as non-administering countries. His delegation was convinced that Greenland's integration had been completely in keeping with the people's right of self-determination and had been implemented fully in keeping with democratic methods. The Danish representative's statements, which had been supported by the representatives from Greenland, should remove any misunderstanding with regard to this point. The delegation welcomed the draft resolution and the representative personally thanked Lannung for his brilliant chairmanship of the Fourth Committee in 1949.

Honduras' representative (Duron) said that the delegation had concluded on the basis of the documents submitted and the statements made by the representatives that the people of Greenland, who were not illiterate, had been consulted in a correct manner and that their union with the Danish people was the democratic expression of their wishes. The delegation said it would support the draft resolution.

The *South African* representative (Sole) also congratulated Greenland and Denmark on Greenland becoming an integral part of the Kingdom of Denmark. The reason why he could not support the resolution was because it seemed to presuppose that the General Assembly had the competence to decide whether a non-autonomous territory had attained a sufficient degree of autonomy to justify the termination of transmission of information. The South African government believed that the administering power was the sole party that could judge on the matter of ceasing to be non-autonomous in compliance with Article 73.

South Africa's uncompromising statement, which presented the main position of the administering (and a number of other Western) countries on the issue of competence was immediately followed by the desire to put the other main position on the record in the form of a speech by Uruguay's representative, Rodrigez Fabregat, one of South America's highest-profile UN diplomats. He said that the draft resolution did not contain the slightest reference to the General Assembly's competence. He put forward a proposal for amendment (S/C.4/L.358), according to which an explicit definition of the competence of the General Assembly in such cases should be inserted in the preamble to the draft resolution by using the phrase: "Bearing in mind the competence of the General Assembly to decide whether a Non-Self-Governing Territory has or has not attained a full measure of self-government as referred to in Chapter XI of the Charter". The representative pointed out that such a paragraph had been inserted into the resolution on Puerto Rico, and that he could not see any reason why the present case should be any different.

At this stage, at which most of the delegates from the fifty or so countries who were present had prepared themselves for a quick vote – it was assumed that a

vote would result in an almost unanimous outcome – the tenor of the debate changed as a result of Uruguay’s proposal for amendment and it turned into a discussion about the issue of competence, not the least about the timeliness of raising this fundamental point on which, more than anything else, opinions at the UN were divided.

The long and somewhat unstructured debate initiated by *Uruguay* will not be presented here in any great detail, but rather an outline of some of the main features. Many of the countries did not conceal their irritation that the debate on the Greenland issue should now be weighed down by yet another tussle over the competence of the General Assembly. This circumstance was precisely what the proposing countries had sought to spare Denmark through a very careful choice of words in the draft resolution, which, although indirectly presupposing the General Assembly’s competence – in the first paragraph of the preamble of the draft resolution, the wording was “the responsible government concerned” – did not highlight it too much so as not to provoke the majority of the administering countries and jeopardise a resolution. The *Australian* representative explained in this context that the proposal for amendment could damage the Committee’s work by diverting the discussion from Greenland to the issue of the General Assembly’s competence. There were important principles at stake and the subject should be treated carefully.

Provoked by Uruguay’s proposal for amendment, a number of Western countries now felt compelled to formally distance themselves and put their fundamental position on the matter of competence on the record. This was the reaction of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Sweden. Denmark and a number of administering countries tried to tone down the competence issue and simply indicated or recalled their fundamental position.

It was also clear that even if a number of non-administering powers would vote in favour of Uruguay’s proposal for amendment, and indeed under the circumstances they had no other option now that it had been put forward, many of them were nonetheless irritated with Uruguay for not having approached the matter with the same subtlety shown by Brazil and the other proposing countries.³⁷ Many of these countries emphasised that it was completely unnecessary to confirm the General Assembly’s competence in the text of the resolution. For example, *Peru’s* representative caustically remarked that if he had had any doubt about the competence of the General Assembly, he would not have taken part in the discussion, which was a demonstration of precisely that competence. From a technical point of view, the proposal for amendment was unnecessary and his delegation would consequently abstain from voting.

³⁷ According to the Danish minutes of 25 November 1954 (p. 18), the most interesting aspect of the situation was “that a number of delegations of the non-administering powers – namely the delegations from Syria, Venezuela, El Salvador, Yemen, Guatemala, Thailand, Honduras, Mexico, India, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Cuba, Costa Rica and Chile – adopted a strongly critical attitude towards Uruguay’s initiative”.

Several countries appealed to Uruguay to withdraw the proposal for amendment but Uruguay's representative refused, saying that this was an important issue. Not mentioning it would create the impression that it was no longer a key issue. It had been adopted at several inter-American conferences. He did not think that the US had been offended when the paragraph had been inserted in the Puerto Rico resolution in 1953. The *United States'* representative was then compelled to correct him and explained that his delegation had indeed been offended (!).

Lannung also urged Uruguay to withdraw the proposal for amendment. He also tried to convince Uruguay in a number of talks outside of the meeting. He asked Uruguay's representative whether he thought it reasonable to force a country such as Denmark to vote against a resolution of this kind and to present the people of Greenland with a resolution that a large number of Greenland's friends would have supported had it not been for the proposed amendment.

At this stage, *Norway* came to Denmark's rescue and severely condemned the proposal for amendment that he said introduced a new and controversial principle to the debate. He proposed – unsuccessfully – that it should be regarded as a completely new proposal. His intention was definitely to detach the proposal for amendment from the Greenland issue and make it the subject of a separate vote.

Just before the vote on the proposal for amendment, *Lannung* expressed his deep regret for the fact that the requests to withdraw the proposal had been to no avail. He said that Denmark would have to vote against the proposal for amendment. The delegation would vote for the resolution as a whole since it accepted the Danish government's decision as corresponding to the wishes of the people of Greenland.

Uruguay's representative rejected Norway's demands. He could not accept – and his view was supported – that it was not a proposal for amendment with regard to the UN's procedural rules. He tried to smooth over relations with Denmark and Greenland, saying that he admired the Danish government and people as much as anyone else and that his initiative would not overshadow Denmark's achievements in Greenland in the slightest. This was a matter of principle and he regretted that he could not withdraw the amendment for proposal.

The vote on the proposal for amendment put forward by Uruguay was done by roll-call. The proposal was adopted with 33 votes in favour, 12 against, including Denmark, all the administering powers, South Africa, Canada, Norway, and Sweden. Five countries abstained from voting: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Israel.³⁸

³⁸ Previously, on the initiative of Belgium, the Philippines' proposal to slightly amend the second paragraph of the preamble, which registered Greenland's new status, had been adopted. The proposal was to insert the words "that of" between "equal to" and "other" in the original wording "... Greenland has become an integral part of the Danish Realm with a constitutional status equal to other parts of Denmark".

Before the vote on the final draft resolution, the Philippines demanded a vote on the proposals for amendment that had been put forward previously. Its own proposal to completely remove paragraph 2 and a proposal for amendment concerning paragraph 7 were rejected in the vote, however the proposal by the Philippines to introduce a new paragraph 6 was adopted. In place of the original text (“6. Notes with satisfaction the political advancement achieved by the people of Greenland”) the resolution would read: “6. Notes with satisfaction the achievement of self-government by the people of Greenland”. In this vote on a smaller point, 21 states voted in favour, 7 voted against, and 18 abstained. Denmark voted in favour since it regarded the text proposed by the Philippines as an improvement. In reality, it would mean inserting into the draft resolution the viewpoint that Lannung had fought for so vehemently for several years, namely that integration into the metropolitan country meant attainment of a full measure of self-government.

Thus, the resolution on Greenland was finally put to a vote as a whole. It was adopted with 34 votes in favour, 4 votes against (Belgium, Canada, South Africa, and Australia), and 12 abstentions (Afghanistan, Argentina, Colombia, France, Greece, Indonesia, Liberia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Uruguay, and Yugoslavia). As shown, the non-administering countries voted for it while the administering powers felt they could not support it after the addition of Uruguay’s proposal for amendment.

A few countries out of the sixty or so member states were not present at the voting; they included Iceland, whose representative refrained from voting due to the sensitivity of the issue in Iceland.³⁹

Voting in the General Assembly on 22 November 1954

At the more formal concluding debate in the General Assembly⁴⁰ – which took place on the basis of the Fourth Committee’s report (A/2795 of 19 November 1954) – the votes shifted to a certain extent, presumably because the somewhat heated debate on 12 November in the Fourth Committee was not as fresh in the delegates’ minds. This occurrence was clear from the explanations of the vote. Australia, Canada, and South Africa explained that they would now abstain from voting. They wished to demonstrate their agreement with the Danish govern-

³⁹ According to the minutes of the Danish delegation (p. 23), the representative of Iceland had indicated to the Danish delegation that if Iceland supported the Danish viewpoint in the Greenland issue, this would be perceived as a provocation by a small group of extreme nationalists in Iceland, who could use the opportunity to create unrest, e.g. by enquiries in Iceland’s parliament. For details on manifestations of Icelandic nationalism, see appendix 13 (Margit Bech Larsen, *Islandske krav på Danmark [Iceland’s Claims vis-à-vis Denmark]*).

⁴⁰ The final debate was delayed due to a memorial ceremony for the head of the Russian delegation, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrej Vyshinskij, who died suddenly that day. Vyshinskij was well-known and notorious as Stalin’s chief prosecutor at the show trials in Moscow in the late 1930s. – For a detailed report of the statements in the General Assembly, see Finn Petersen, *op. cit.* pp. 68ff, note 21.

ment that Greenland no longer fell within the scope of Chapter XI of the UN Charter.

On the other hand, Liberia, Colombia, Uruguay, and Yugoslavia explained, citing different reasons, why they now could vote for the resolution even though they had abstained from voting in the Fourth Committee. The representative of Uruguay, who had caused the commotion and clearly felt rather guilty towards the Danish representative, said that he hoped that the Danish delegation would interpret this change as a desire to avoid letting the Danish delegation down. He said that the two countries had participated together in a number of tasks in the Committee and had fought for the same principles.

At the voting, the new paragraph in the preamble concerning the competence of the General Assembly was adopted by 38 votes in favour and 15 votes against (Australia, Belgium, Britain, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Turkey, South Africa, and the US). Four countries abstained: Brazil, Costa Rica, Israel, and the Dominican Republic.

Paragraph 2 of the operative part of the draft resolution (in which the General Assembly took note of the fact that Denmark considered its responsibility arising from Chapter XI of the UN Charter to have ceased and was thus terminating the transmission of information on Greenland) was adopted by 51 votes in favour and 1 vote against (the Philippines). Three countries abstained: Afghanistan, Greece, and Indonesia.

The Greenland resolution as a whole (Resolution 849 (IX) of 22 November 1954) was adopted by 45 votes in favour and 1 vote against (Belgium). Eleven countries abstained: Afghanistan, Australia, Canada, France, Greece, Indonesia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. The delegations from Haiti, Nicaragua, and Iceland were not present. Denmark requested that the voting take place by roll-call.

Support for Denmark on the Greenland issue by the Eastern Bloc

One striking feature of the debate in the Fourth Committee and in the General Assembly was the virtual silence of the Soviet Union and the other Eastern Bloc countries and their approval of the draft resolution in the final voting. The Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc states thus supported Denmark even though briefly before in 1953 they had strongly opposed the form of self-government being proposed in this case, namely integration with the metropolitan country. Together with Yugoslavia, they regarded this option as a form of neo-colonialism. If the Soviet Union had repeated its earlier criticism at the debate in 1954 and stated that it would vote against the draft resolution, this decision would hardly have toppled the draft resolution, but it could have caused a number of countries that copied the example of the Soviet Union to follow suit. The result could have been a resolution that would have been controversial in the international community and continued to be a subject of international debate. This possibility was precisely what the Danes wished to avoid. In other words, it was because the Soviet Union adopted the posi-

tion it did and influenced four other votes (Czechoslovakia, Poland, the Ukraine, and White Russia) that the outcome of the vote was positive for Denmark.

Once again, Hermod Lannung had taken the initiative. He had contacted the Soviet Union prior to the decisive negotiations. This contact presumably took place without the knowledge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Knowledge about this matter only exists based on a brief report of the episode which Lannung gave to a young historian.⁴¹ According to this report, Lannung had talks with the Russian delegate, the Soviet Union's ambassador to Washington, Sorubin, and managed to convince him that the integration of Greenland with Denmark and subsequent Danish sovereignty ought, from the Soviet Union's point of view, to be preferable to an independent Greenland, which would involuntarily become very dependent on the US (!).

There is no reason to doubt that such talks actually took place. The following factors played a role:

- Lannung, who married a Russian and was a widower,⁴² had nurtured close contacts with Russian diplomats since 1945 and seems to have had full access to the Soviet Union's representatives. The Russians certainly trusted him.
- Another aspect is Lannung's openly declared, long resistance to the American presence in Greenland, which is relatively clear. At a national congress of the Social Liberal Party in May 1950 he talked of "the USA's occupation of Greenland" and recommended that the Danish Brigade – he said that Denmark had nothing to do in Germany – should be stationed in Greenland to carry out surveillance duties. The language he employed when talking about the American presence was no different from that of Aksel Larsen from the Communist Party. At the first reading of the bill on parliamentary elections in Greenland in the *Landsting* on 12 May 1953, Lannung alluded to the US as "the major foreign power which at present has been granted certain special rights in Greenland".⁴³ It is presumably reasonable to interpret his very dedicated, almost manic input into the Greenland issue as being, if not rooted in, then at least partly affected by, a feeling of unease about the extent of the American commitment in Greenland and by a fear of the superpower's actual intentions.

⁴¹ Finn Petersen, *op. cit.* p. 74, note 21.

⁴² Cf. article on Hermod Lannung in *Dansk biografisk leksikon [Danish Biographical Dictionary]*, third edition, vol. 8, 1981, pp. 522f. – In an interesting letter dated 11 September 1950, Henrik Kauffmann recommends Lannung to a colleague – the Danish diplomatic representative to Mexico. Kauffmann calls Lannung "my friend" and says that when Lannung visits Washington, he (Kauffmann) usually invites Lannung to stay at his house. The letter also says: "There are not many other people with whom you can have such an interesting conversation with on international relations in general and, moreover, Lannung is an expert on relations with Russia. His late wife was of Russian origin and he himself speaks some Russian and is probably still the lawyer for the Russian Embassy in Copenhagen ...". The Danish National Archives, UM. 120. G.37., folio: Hermod Lannung.

⁴³ For the statement at the congress, see the newspaper extract with the report of the statement in Lannung's archive. The Danish National Archives. Hermod Lannung private archive, packet. no. 14: folio 7, miscellaneous; *Rigsdagstidende. Overordentlige samling 1953. Forhandlingerne i landstinget [Extraordinary collection 1953: Debates in the Danish Parliament]*, 1953, section 31.

Presumably, Lannung reached the conclusion very early on in the post-war period – he started putting forward the idea of integration from 1948 onwards, at the same time as Eske Brun – that, if any limits were to be imposed on the Americans in Greenland, the only model worth considering was the model of integration.

Among the politicians and officials there were certainly some who shared Lannung's view, although the desire in the late 1940s to get the Americans to leave Greenland had not materialised into any concrete action. Even after the establishment of NATO, there was a very widespread feeling of reserve about the US among Social Liberals, Social Democrats, and, obviously, also in the Communist Party.

Of course, a situation in which the chief delegate of a NATO country instructs the Soviet ambassador to the US about how the Soviet Union can best serve its strategic interests in Greenland with regard to the other superpower is somewhat topsy-turvy. We have no way of knowing whether Lannung really convinced the Soviet diplomat, as he himself interpreted the outcome of his talks, or if the Soviet diplomat was independently able to make the very same, quite obvious, strategic calculation. From a slightly wider perspective, this episode, and the Eastern Bloc's support in 1954, indicates that the US factor should not be forgotten in the web of factors which determined the actions and reactions of both Denmark and the international community in connection with the Greenland issue. For Lannung, who for so many years had the biggest influence on Denmark's policy on Greenland at the UN, this factor was perhaps the most important.

Conclusion

The debate in the Fourth Committee and the General Assembly on Denmark's termination of the transmission of information on Greenland to the UN as a consequence of the amendment to the Danish Constitution in 1953 proceeded in a much more relaxed tone than the corresponding debates in the committee on the United States and the Netherland's termination of transmission of information on Puerto Rico and Surinam/the Dutch Antilles respectively. The latter case became prolonged due to dissatisfaction with the conduct of the Netherlands. This tone reflected the fact that the member states were much more sympathetic towards Denmark, which was generally regarded as having a clean record as a colonial power, seen as a support for the UN, and as an active advocate of international cooperation in the first years of the Cold War.

The main positions from the meeting of the 73 (e) Committee were reiterated in variations. The main impression was that, similar to the smaller committee, Denmark had been an exemplary colonial power, which during its long administration of Greenland had safeguarded the culture and way of life of a small and vulnerable population. As in the smaller committee, a link was made between

the early eradication of illiteracy and the growth of political consciousness among the Greenlanders. Many speeches expressed admiration for the extent of the process of modernisation which had now begun in Greenland – and especially for Denmark’s expenditure in this respect – particularly in the areas of health and education.

In summary, Denmark’s achievements in Greenland were praised by all of the members, including those who were critical of the procedure which Denmark had followed, and quite a number of countries used expressions and phrases that were hard to outdo. On the whole, the days spent negotiating and the negotiations in the 73 (e) Committee were clearly an unprecedented pinnacle of international recognition for many years of Danish efforts in Greenland and for Danish democracy and political culture. At the same time, there was widespread recognition for Hermod Lannung’s work at the UN.

As in the 73 (e) Committee, some countries were critical of the procedure which Denmark had followed in the matter, but not with regard to Greenland’s integration with Denmark as such. However, these critics were few in number (Argentina, the Philippines, Greece, Haiti, Uruguay, and Yugoslavia). For some countries, it was important to put on the record that integration with the metropolitan country normally required a referendum.

Most of the countries felt that UN rules – here the requirement of the factor list of taking into careful consideration the wishes and interests of the local population – had been observed and that they should pass on quickly to the acknowledgement of, or – as the majority definitely saw it – acceptance of Denmark’s view on the matter.

The resolution on Greenland would certainly have been adopted almost unanimously had it not been for Uruguay’s proposal for amendment, which elicited automatic reactions and exposed the fundamental gap between the administering powers on the one hand (supported by Western countries such as the Nordic countries and Canada) and the non-administering powers on the other hand. It was, however, symptomatic of the debate at these meetings that a number of non-administering powers were irritated with Uruguay for having unnecessarily overplayed the competence card and for casting a shadow over the international community’s recognition of Greenland’s integration with Denmark. Their statements should be taken as an indication of the fact that some countries felt it was a “shame” that the Danes and the Greenlanders were being embroiled in a discussion about principles; at the same time, however, the feeling was also expressed by both sides of the spectrum that the proposal for amendment would damage the Fourth Committee by widening the gulf more than necessary. Behind the statements to this effect lay a feeling of uncertainty about whether the cooperation on colonies at the UN could continue at all if the two camps were not on speaking terms.

Uruguay’s demand created a commotion and automatically divided the Committee into two fronts on the issue of competence, but seemed ultimately only to result in the resolution on Greenland having fewer yes votes than it would otherwise have got.

Notably, Denmark received support from the Eastern Bloc, which generally remained silent except for Yugoslavia, which made several speeches. The Eastern Bloc, which was otherwise an opponent of integration with the metropolitan country, voted in this case in favour of the draft resolution. According to the chief Danish negotiator, Hermod Lannung, he had succeeded in convincing the Soviet representative which outcome of the Greenland issue would be in the Soviet Union's best interests.

12 · Conclusion

Erik Beukel and Frede P. Jensen

Examining the circumstances surrounding Greenland's change of status with the constitutional amendment of 1953 from colony to having equal rights in the Kingdom of Denmark can be summed up in five main points: 1) Why Greenland's status became a political problem after World War II; 2) Greenland's integration as a Danish-Greenland project; 3) the issue of Greenland at the UN; 4) the issue of international law; and 5) why the integration solution was so desirable.

Why did Greenland's status become a political problem?

The issue of changing Greenland's status as a Danish colony came to the fore in the first few years after World War II as a result of a number of political and social initiatives and changes at both the Greenland-Danish and the international levels. In Greenland, the separation from Denmark and the American presence during the war created new conditions for change among the people of Greenland and their relationship with the surrounding world. In the international context, it was primarily Greenland's position in the new big power politics of the first few years of the Cold War and the decolonisation process in the UN that contributed to bringing the issue of Greenland's status into the limelight.

The connection with Denmark was interrupted during the occupation of 1940-1945. This interruption meant that Greenland could develop without Copenhagen's help or interference and that external relationships had to be established. Thus, these years saw developments both in Greenland society and in the country's relationship with the US and Canada that came to represent a strong challenge to Denmark's traditional policy on Greenland. Economically and culturally, Greenland became much more open to the surrounding world than before, with new connections and ties appearing that were further developed outside the control of the Danish authorities. Economic conditions clearly improved during the war. There were new markets for Greenland goods and new products appeared for sale in shops in Greenland. Greenlanders could see for themselves that big differences existed between their own standard of living and life in other Western countries, and the belief grew that their own conditions could be changed and improved. This view was especially true of a group of Greenlanders and Danish officials in Nuuk, where the conviction grew that Greenland neither would nor should revert to its traditional role after the war. Simply put, Greenlanders had discovered that they were part of a larger world and that their own world could change. After the war, returning Danish officials

brought this message home from Greenland to the mother country, which came as a surprise to Danish politicians and officials interested in Greenland who had spent the war in Denmark.

The issue of Greenland's new status also became pressing as the Cold War developed – especially in light of Greenland's role in America's military strategy toward the Soviet Union. After the war, it was crucial that the US quickly make it clear to Danish diplomats and the Danish foreign minister that it had no intention of giving up its military presence in Greenland. However, the Danish ambassador in Washington, Henrik Kauffmann, failed to inform the Danish government of the full extent of America's wishes. For the government of Knud Kristensen (1945-1947), the American wishes came as an unpleasant surprise that it failed to share with the public or with the Danish Parliament. The Danish government clearly had a limited understanding of the new geopolitical map during the Cold War and often ran into difficulties when demands were raised in Parliament for greater clarity on American activities in Greenland. The Hedtoft government (1947-1950) also played a kind of double game as it tried to cope with conflicting expectations and requirements from the US as an ally, from the Danish public, and from the people of Greenland. In 1951, the Eriksen-Kraft government, backed by the Social Democratic Party, signed a new agreement with the US on the defence of Greenland, replacing the controversial agreement made by Henrik Kauffmann in 1941. The new defence agreement increased the need for a solution to the problem of Greenland's status, while Danish politicians became more and more aware that if Greenland was not to slide slowly away from Denmark, it would have to have equal rights in the Kingdom.

During and after World War II, attitudes towards the colonial system changed in favour of colonies having the right to independence in the same way that other nations had gradually achieved self-determination. The key change was that while the dominant view from the beginning of the century had been that the colonial system could and should be reformed – but not discarded – after 1945, it was no longer regarded as legitimate to try to improve the colonial system. The right of peoples to self-determination had become a norm that also applied outside Europe, so the colonial system needed to be abolished rather than just improved. The new thinking was reflected in the UN Charter, but only in the form of general principles and norms for the economic and social development of non-self-governing territories, cf. the section below on international law. The Charter established no organisational body that could monitor compliance with these principles, so their practical significance depended on the outcome of a political struggle between the administering and non-administering countries. This struggle intensified as many former colonies became independent and were accepted as members of the UN. Although Denmark was very keen on supporting the development of the UN, it was only under pressure that it accepted, in 1946, Greenland being regarded as a non-self-governing territory, i.e. as a colony for which information had to be sent to the UN. This circumstance meant that the process of decolonisation

influenced Danish policy in favour of a change in Greenland's status as a colony. Over time, it became of the utmost importance for Denmark to get rid of the negatively loaded label "colonial power".

Greenland's integration as a Danish-Greenland project

Greenland's integration became a Danish-Greenland project, but it was not a project in which the two countries' views had equal weight. A number of historical, economic, and political factors meant that Danes in Copenhagen and in Nuuk were generally in complete control of the whole process, while Greenlanders supported Danish initiatives with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Gradually, however, the Greenlanders became more self-confident in relation to the Danes and achieved a more independent role in the collaborative project. No active opposition to the integration project seems to have existed either in Greenland or in Denmark – but there was sometimes dissatisfaction in Greenland about particular outcomes of the integration project and Danish initiatives. The main issue involved complaints concerning the lack of equal rights between Greenlanders and Danes, i.e. that there was not enough integration. Integration followed two paths: One path included a number of economic, social, and political initiatives launched in the second half of the 1940s, while the other was a constitutional process in the early 1950s that resulted in Greenland's equality as a part of the Kingdom of Denmark in the Constitution of 1953.

With regard to the economic and social path, the Greenland issue started playing a role in Danish public life and politics after a group of journalists visited Greenland and subsequently wrote reports in the press in the autumn of 1946. Considerable differences existed in how dramatically the various sections of the press described the poor social and health conditions in Greenland, but the popular image of Greenland as a country populated by happy Eskimos was ruined for good. Even before this press campaign, conflicting views had already emerged at a narrower political-administrative level between modernists who were zealous about reform and traditionalists who were sceptical about reform. Many of the modernists were officials in Greenland who had returned home to Denmark and thought that after the war it was time to start modernising Greenland both economically and politically. They were supported by a group of Greenland decision makers who – while not uncritical of the initiatives of the Danish officials – generally shared the modernists' view of how Greenland should be developed. Sceptical about such moves, the traditionalists were of the opinion that a vulnerable Greenland still in need of Denmark's protection was thus at risk of being destroyed. The press campaign on health conditions in Greenland greatly strengthened those advocating reform. When the Hedtoft government took office at the end of 1947, Prime Minister Hedtoft especially became involved in a new Danish policy on Greenland, for example, with a very notable trip to Greenland in the summer of 1948. Among the officials was the former chief administrative officer and, as of 1 January 1949, the director of the



Johannes Nielsen's painting The Constitutional Commission of 1946. The painting shows some of the politicians who, from 1946 onwards, worked on drafting the 1953 Constitution. Standing, from the left: Jørgen Jørgensen (R), Hans Hedtoft (S), Aksel Møller (K), Gustav Pedersen (S), Ole Bjørn Kraft (K), Aksel Larsen (DKP), and Bertel Dahlgaard (R). Sitting, from the left: Helge Madsen (RF), J.P. Stensballe (V), Holger Eriksen (S), Erik Eriksen (V), and Niels Elgaard (V). (Library, Archives and Information Service of the Danish Parliament) (Folketingets Bibliotek og Arkiv). For abbreviations of Danish political parties, see index.

Greenland Administration, Eske Brun, the most important proponent of a complete change in Danish policy on Greenland, while the previous director, Knud Oldendow, stood for a traditional Greenland policy. After the Greenland Commission's report and the passing of the new Greenland Act of 1950, there was a fundamental change in Danish policy concerning Greenland. The central theme from this point on was carrying out a large number of reforms on health, business economics, educational policy, and political administration in Greenland.

Negotiations on changing Greenland's constitutional status took place in the first instance in the Parliamentary subcommittee on Greenland in February and March 1952, where the two Greenland representatives played an active role. Agreement was reached on a solution for Greenland between the members chosen by the Greenland Provincial Council and the Danish members of the subcommittee on Greenland in which Greenland would become an integrated part of the Kingdom of Denmark and elect representatives to Parliament (*Folketinget*) on an equal basis with the population in the rest of the Kingdom. This solution was endorsed by the Constitutional Commission that asked law professors Poul Andersen and Alf Ross to prepare an expert opinion on the matter that could be used in the preparation of a proposal to the Greenland Provincial Council at its meeting in September with a view to obtaining the council's approval of the new agreement. However, Alf Ross threw a bombshell into the commission's work by

suggesting an agreement equivalent, in principle, to the Faroese Home Rule Act of 1948. This suggestion was in conflict with particularly the wishes of Denmark but also those of Greenland, and with the policy pursued for years by Denmark at the UN based on a pure and simple integration solution. As a result, Ross' model was discarded, and when the Greenland Provincial Council met to consider the new agreement, all they had was a summary of the two professors' joint draft for a constitutional amendment exactly equivalent to that proposed by the subcommittee on Greenland. It was approved by the Provincial Council, although several members complained about the short amount of time set aside to discuss the issue of the government.

At no point had Greenland put forward any wish for an independence model or for a Faroese solution – both of which were, of course, well-known options in Greenland. Since support for the integration model was so strong in Greenland, the Provincial Council could probably have been informed of Alf Ross' separate statement without any risk of their not backing the government's proposal. One important motive for not doing this – and for asking Ross to change his separate statement in January 1953 – was the government's worry that the statement from the internationally renowned professor in its original wording could come to play a negative role when the integration solution for Greenland was presented at the UN. It could be interpreted as disunity in Denmark and possibly be used by countries opposed to the integration option, thus turning the issue of Greenland into an international hot potato.

The affair grew when Ross protested about his dissenting view not being included in the Constitutional Commission's report. For the government, it was important that the professor's dissent should not become public knowledge, and a strong appeal was made to him to withdraw his separate statement. He was simultaneously informed of the latest development in the UN with regard to the interpretation of Article 73 of the Charter, especially the significance of the "factors" resolution adopted on 10 December 1952. On this basis, he amended his separate statement and it was included in the Constitutional Commission's report. Ross' international law and UN political arguments had undergone a significant change in the new version, and he had completely omitted what he called his ideological arguments. The special statement was thus expressed in a manner that must have been satisfactory from the point of view of the government and the Constitutional Commission, because in its new form the statement could hardly cause any difficulties at the UN.

The Greenland issue at the UN

In 1946, the Danish authorities agreed to send reports on Greenland to the UN, thereby acknowledging that Greenland had the status of a colony and that Denmark was a colonial power like the UK, France, Belgium, and so on. The admission came as the result of pressure on Denmark at the UN that Danish UN diplomats felt their country could not ignore. Opinions about whether this was

warranted were divided in Copenhagen, where prominent people in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in the Greenland Administration took the view that Denmark was in no way a traditional colonial power and therefore should not report. The prevailing view was that there was nothing whatsoever to be ashamed of regarding Greenland. The explanations provided were *that* private exploitation of the country had been hindered; *that* the state had never exploited Greenland either; *that* local self-government had existed since 1860; and *that*, after the war, Greenland had been allowed to spend considerably more than the country had yielded in terms of income. What was not pointed out, however, was the long national connection between Greenland and Denmark stretching back to the Middle Ages, which meant that Greenland came under the crown of Norway until 1814, after which it came under the crown of Denmark.

In the following years, the reports from the colonial powers on conditions in subjugated territories became an important element in the fight to free the colonies at the UN. In an increasingly critical discussion about colonies, the non-administering powers, chiefly the former colonies, aimed at giving the UN the same comprehensive competence in the field of colonies as it had in relation to the mandate territories. While the administering countries (colonial powers) tried to insist that Article 73 of the UN Charter solely obliged them to only supply information, such that the reports were of a purely non-political and technical nature, Third-World countries tried to broaden the reporting requirement to cover, for instance, political conditions in the territories and a discussion of them at the UN. From the end of the 1940s onward, Denmark came to play a relatively prominent role in the decolonisation committee (Fourth Committee) that handled these matters. Denmark's leading representative in this area, Hermod Lannung, an expert on both mandates and colonies, soon came to the fore in the work at the UN on decolonisation. In his work, Lannung could make use of his close contacts with developing countries, the UN Secretariat, and the communist world. In 1948 and 1949, strong conflicts arose over the continuation of the special committee that specifically handled the reports submitted. Lannung and Denmark followed the US on the matter of the continuation of the committee and steered a cautious course based on the idea that it was better to face discussing the colonial issue and having influence in the parity-based special committee than in the much broader Fourth Committee or the General Assembly.

Over the years, Hermod Lannung's policy at the UN was closely coordinated with the officials in the Greenland Administration/Greenland Department, while contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was more distant. Lannung and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreed on the main objectives of Danish policy concerning Greenland, but certainly not always on the means. In 1948, Lannung basically represented the same view as Eske Brun, the leading figure in the Greenland Administration, that in light of the heated discussion at the UN on the colonial issue, it was important to end Greenland's status as a colony and give it equal status with Denmark. They both predicted a deeper involvement from the non-colonial powers in Greenland's affairs if its colonial status did not

come to an end. For Lannung, there was also scepticism about America's intentions in Greenland. His extensive activity at the UN from 1948 to 1954 can be seen as a concentrated effort to end Greenland's status as a colony before Denmark became inconveniently tied down by the UN. As early as the 1948 report, Denmark announced that it would investigate the possibility of making Greenland an equal part of the Kingdom of Denmark, an objective that remained the main goal from then on.

Over the following years, Danish UN policy on Greenland also focused on avoiding Greenland being drawn into the increasingly heated discussion between administering and non-administering powers. Denmark succeeded in this period in gaining an international reputation as a progressive colonial power. This success was partly due to the fact that Denmark supported the reporting institution at the UN by sending exceptionally long and detailed reports on Greenland (in comparison with other countries' reports), but also by including political information in the reports, thus breaking its solidarity with the colonial powers. The annual Greenland reports usually contained a tactical element because the authors of the individual sections did not conceal areas where Denmark had harvested profits. At the same time, however, the reports contained a solid statistical analysis of a number of matters, for instance, in the areas of economics and health. The reports seem to have distinguished themselves qualitatively and quantitatively compared to reports sent in by other countries. During the discussion of the Greenland Resolution in 1954, the reports were mentioned particularly positively, with one country (El Salvador) noting their frank nature.

Denmark's invitation to two prominent UN officials (Hoo and Benson) to visit Greenland in 1950 also had a significant propaganda effect. The officials' trip and the subsequent reporting reminded people of the "visiting missions" to colonial territories that were such a coveted goal for the non-administering powers and that, for the same reason, were taboo for the administering powers. Despite this openness – which was one of Lannung's many ideas – Denmark in reality had more in common with the more conservative colonial powers (such as the Netherlands and Belgium) on the issue of who had competence when a colonial status was to be phased out, but refrained for tactical reasons from an excessive display of these views in front of the majority of the non-administering powers. In this case, it was also a matter of accumulating the goodwill that might be needed when the Greenland issue was discussed at the UN.

While the Fourth Committee on decolonisation could not reach an agreement on the so-called *question of competence*, i.e. whether it was the metropolitan country or the General Assembly that had the last word when a colonial status was to be brought to an end and reporting stopped, it did succeed to some extent in building a bridge between the conflicting interpretations of Article 73 of the UN Charter in another important area through the so-called *lists of factors*. These were sets of criteria that could be referred to in connection with discussions on whether or not a territory was covered by the provisions in the UN Charter (Article 73). Denmark, via Hermod Lannung, was heavily involved in the difficult negotiations regarding the preparation of the first list of factors

from January 1952. On the basis of this list, the administering powers achieved an initial provisional agreement that progress in relation to self-government could be made not only through independence, but also through a territory's voluntary association with the mother country on equal terms. This option meant that the future for colonial territories now allowed two options: A path towards independence and one towards integration with the metropolitan country. Although a number of countries protested at the thought that self-government could be achieved by voluntarily joining the metropolitan country, a consolidated list of factors was passed in December 1952 for future use as a guide on these matters for member countries and the UN. The two-option model for territories to achieve self-government was not Denmark's invention alone, but Denmark was heavily involved in the work of formulating the concept and gaining acceptance of the model in the UN setting. Lannung's strong commitment on this matter was very clearly dictated by a wish to achieve international acceptance for a model that allowed Greenland's integration into Denmark.

Consistent with its position on the issue of competence, Denmark did not, after negotiations with the Greenlanders, ask the UN before making Greenland an integrated part of the kingdom, but only sent a message to the UN Secretary-General giving its reasons for this decision. After the constitutional amendment of June 1953, Denmark no longer saw itself as a colonial power. Consequently, it began to scale down its activities in the UN's decolonisation committee. The postponement of the UN's handling of the Greenland issue for an entire year was presumably seen as thwarting Denmark's plan. The wishes of the large colonial powers, who for various reasons did not want the UN agenda in 1953 to be burdened by the Greenland issue as well, were followed instead.

When the handling of the final phase of the Greenland issue began in what the UN calls the Article 73 (e) Committee in the autumn of 1954, the UN Secretariat stated in response to a question from India in the opening discussion that the UN had received no responses challenging the validity of the change in Greenland's status. Furthermore, the issue was dealt with quickly in a positive atmosphere and with broad acceptance of the integration of Greenland into Denmark. This acceptance was also reflected in the short, and for Denmark, extremely accommodating resolution text, which was drawn up by Brazil with a view to navigating around disagreements involving the extent of the General Assembly's competence. While not stated explicitly in the text, the circumstances of course show that the resolution was prepared with the objective of having it pass in the General Assembly. The Committee noted in the resolution, for instance, that the people of Greenland had freely exercised their right of self-determination since the decision on the new constitutional status was made by their legally elected representatives; also expressed was the view that Greenland had freely made the decision about integration on equal terms with the rest of Denmark. Furthermore, the resolution noted that the Danish government regarded its reporting obligation under Chapter XI as terminated as a result of Greenland's new constitutional position.

During the meetings, especially in the Fourth Committee, the non-administering powers used as their basis the new list of factors from 27 November 1953, which declared the General Assembly's competence in these matters; nevertheless, both committee meetings and General Assembly meetings were characterised by widespread agreement that the differences regarding the issue of competence should not be an obstacle to settling the issue of Greenland. Based on the analysis undertaken here, the passing of this resolution, which was so favourable for Denmark, can ultimately be regarded as the outcome of the non-administering powers balancing the negative and the positive aspects of the Greenland case against one another to find that the latter weighed the most. The result was the adoption of a concise Greenland resolution by a very large majority in the General Assembly on 22 November 1954.

The negative aspects included the fact that a referendum had not been held in Greenland, that the population in North and East Greenland could not take part in parliamentary elections, and that there was no provision in the Danish Constitution to change the decision. The main complaint was the lack of a referendum, which for a few countries was an important item because, for example, a referendum on the Constitution had been held in Denmark. Denmark defended this arrangement by arguing, for instance, that the subject had been thoroughly discussed among the general public in Greenland and in the Provincial Council, and that a Danish call for a referendum could have been interpreted as a lack of confidence in the politicians on the Greenland Provincial Council involved in the negotiations. No mention was made of the fact that no formal requirement existed for holding a referendum when a fundamental change in a territory's status occurred. The list of factors applicable when the constitutional change was made in Denmark in June 1953 said that the views of the population should be "freely expressed by informed and democratic processes". The implications of this formulation could be open to various interpretations, but a number of contributions during the debates on the Greenland resolution in 1954 made it clear that people felt that this item on the list of factors had been accomplished. The Danish and Greenland representatives in the Fourth Committee and the General Assembly naturally also had this view. For the Danish government, the key point – as mentioned – was that the list of factors was solely for guidance. And in the end, no one voted against the resolution on the grounds that no referendum had been held. This vote warrants the interpretation that the regret expressed by several states about the lack of a referendum should be seen as a matter of precedence: Requiring a referendum could become inevitable the next time a similar resolution came before the UN.

All in all, the negative evaluation of especially the Danish procedures in the decision about Greenland's integration into the Kingdom of Denmark was outweighed by a general, very favourable attitude toward Danish policy on Greenland. Denmark's merits in relation to Greenland were listed in contribution after contribution. Denmark was presented as a progressive colonial power that had protected the people of Greenland through a far-sighted administration and had safeguarded Greenland's culture and language. A number of

Third-World countries were visibly impressed by the fact that illiteracy had already been eliminated in the 1800s, and seemed to view the ability to read and write as synonymous with political maturity. Finally, several countries also seemed to accept the main Danish position that Greenland needed comprehensive help from outside if it was to achieve a reasonable standard of living.

The issue of international law

Ideas about the right of self-determination and decolonisation had gained ground particularly after World War I, but only had the status of a political-ethical ideology. There was no legal focus on decolonisation before the UN Charter. The UN Charter's Article 1, point 2 makes respect for the principle of self-determination of peoples one of the purposes of the UN, but the principle's foundation lacks the legal content to back it up and does not in itself particularly give colonies the right to independence. Instead, Chapter XI of the UN Charter establishes a special protective regime for colonies (non-self-governing territories) etc. Chapter XI foresees a progressive development towards colonial self-government that the colonial powers commit themselves to promoting as a "sacred trust". The absence in Chapter XI of references to the colonies' right of self-determination and right of secession was due to opposition from the colonial powers. According to Chapter XI, colonial powers must ensure gradual and progressive decolonisation. It was assumed that the UN would only play a minor role as the receiver of regular information from the colonial powers on the economic, social, and educational situation in the colonies.

After 1945, dissatisfaction with the weak decolonisation approach in Chapter XI led a majority in the General Assembly to push for recognition of a colonial right of self-determination and for a strengthening of UN powers in relation to colonial administration. Throughout the 1950s, however, the colonial powers refused to recognise a colonial right of self-determination, including the right of secession, just as in the same period the colonial powers in particular denied, with reference to the content of Chapter XI, that the General Assembly had the competence to establish criteria for whether a colony had achieved self-government (the lists of factors). It was not until 1960 that the colonial powers gave up their opposition to the colonial right of self-determination and to international principles for its execution. Resolution 1514 on the right of colonies to immediate self-determination and independence was passed without dissent and with only a few abstentions. Resolution 1541 on the principles for deciding whether a territory had achieved full self-government was similarly adopted (almost) without opposition. During the 1960s, decolonisation rapidly became government policy. In 1966, two universal UN human rights conventions were passed that in Article I refer to colonial peoples' right of self-determination. In 1970, the General Assembly unanimously passed Resolution 2625, which with reference to the right of peoples to self-determination, confirmed the content of Resolutions 1514 and 1541. The following year, the International Court in The Hague con-

firmed for the first time that the colonial right of self-determination was a norm of international law.

Thus, based on this situation, the conclusion must be drawn that the right of colonies to self-determination and the principles for the execution of the right of colonies to self-determination cannot have been established as binding norms in international law before 1960 when Resolutions 1514 and 1541 were adopted. At the time of Greenland's integration into Denmark (1953) and the General Assembly's approval thereof in Resolution 849 (1954), Denmark as a colonial power was only bound under international law by the obligations that follow from the UN Charter's Chapter XI. In 1946, Denmark had already recognised its responsibility as an administering power in relation to Greenland as a colony (non-self-governing territory) under the UN Charter's Chapter XI – albeit after being pressured to do so. Thus, in accordance with the UN Charter, Denmark had accepted as a “sacred trust” the promotion of the development, welfare, and interests of Greenland, including the promotion of self-government, cf. Article 73 (b), and a specific commitment to transmit (accurate) statistical information on Greenland's economic, social, and educational situation to the UN Secretary-General, cf. Article 73 (e).

After agreement was reached in 1952 between Greenland and Danish representatives in the Greenland subcommittee on Greenland's integration into the Kingdom of Denmark and after the integration had taken effect with the constitutional amendment of June 1953, the Danish government informed the UN that Denmark would no longer be reporting on Greenland. In Resolution 849 from 1954, the General Assembly accepted that Denmark no longer had to transmit information on Greenland in pursuance of Chapter XI. In the Resolution, the General Assembly recognised, almost unanimously, that Greenland's integration was an expression of the free exercise of the right of the people of Greenland of self-determination.

In some ways, Greenland's exercising of its right of self-determination in connection with the integration into Denmark did not fully live up to the General Assembly's general criteria. In particular, it can be claimed *that* in many respects, Greenland in 1953 was not sufficiently developed politically, socially, and educationally to exercise self-determination, and that Denmark should thus have maintained the colonial regime instead, in accordance with Chapter XI, to promote a progressive development towards Greenland's self-government; *that* the endorsement from Greenland's Provincial Council was not an optimal democratic process, and the fact that Greenland was not given an explicit opportunity to choose independence can be criticised, even though, as mentioned, it was naturally familiar with both the independence model and the Faroese arrangement, and even though they agreed to support integration. On the other hand, it must be noted that the General Assembly nevertheless approved integration with full knowledge of these facts, and that integration into the metropolitan country appeared in the lists of factors as one of the routes to self-determination. Hence, the approval was not surprising, especially calling to mind that the lists of factors were only meant as guidelines and were subject to a specific case-by-case evalua-

tion. Apparently, the conviction that Greenland's change of status was in accordance with the wishes of the people of Greenland was decisive for the General Assembly's approval of Greenland's integration into Denmark.

On a few individual points, Denmark had given the General Assembly incomplete or debatable information in connection with Greenland's integration, including information about Greenland's history and the ethnic composition of its population. Regarding these individual points, it could in a way be argued that there was a formal breach of the conditions in the UN Charter's Article 73 (e). It is not possible today to fully determine whether more truthful information on, for example, the country's ethnic composition etc. would have influenced the states in the General Assembly to take another view. It seems very improbable, however, given that Resolution 849 chiefly emphasises the democratic process that preceded Greenland's consent to integration and that integration gave Greenland and Greenlanders constitutionally equal status with other parts of the Kingdom of Denmark.

As a result, the conclusion can be drawn that Greenland's integration as an equal part of the Kingdom of Denmark in 1953 was internationally recognised as an expression of the exercise of the right of the people of Greenland to self-determination. The sequence of events leading up to integration and the General Assembly's approval thereof do not provide a reason for challenging the validity, under international law, of the integration that took place.

Why was the integration solution desirable?

Why did Denmark pursue with such determination a policy at the UN aimed at obtaining international acceptance of Greenland becoming an integrated part of Denmark? Why were Danish politicians and officials so keen on integrating Greenland into Denmark and maintaining a close connection with a country on the other side of the Atlantic? And why were Greenland's politicians also interested in this solution?

To begin, part of the explanation is that the Danes felt, on the one hand, an *obligation* to help the Greenlanders and, on the other, they also *wished* to remain in Greenland for a number of reasons. This sense of obligation was primarily due to the fact that Greenland could not stand on its own feet because of the modest size of its population, the resources available, the climate and the natural conditions. The population of Greenland was economically vulnerable and needed assistance if even a reasonable standard of living was to be maintained. This evaluation seems to have been one of the main premises for both Danes *and Greenlanders* in the course of events leading to agreement concerning the integration of Greenland into Denmark. Attention was drawn to this matter by both Danes and Greenlanders in the UN General Assembly in the debate on the Greenland resolution. Augo Lynge's argument for integration in the UN's Fourth Committee on 10 October 1954 was probably the most powerful; he emphasised that the disproportion between the smallness of the population and

vastness of the country excluded the formation of an independent Greenland state. The economic preconditions for this formation were not present. This circumstance was also largely why, explained Augo Lynge, there had been no inclination towards secession in Greenland. In accordance with this outlook, Greenlanders needed help and Denmark was under a heavy obligation due to their long-standing relationship with one another. As mentioned, the US expressed a wish to purchase Greenland in 1947, but handing Greenland over to the US or suggesting that Greenland seek support from the US or Canada would obviously have been an admission of national failure.

Part of the sense of obligation Denmark felt was a *strong wish* to also have a prominent Danish presence in Greenland in the future and to keep Greenland as a part of the Kingdom of Denmark. This wish was anchored in *interests of state* and especially in terms of *identity* and *national considerations*.

Looking at the *interests of state* first, possessing Greenland for so many years had very clearly improved Denmark's status in various ways in the world at large, thus making Denmark more interesting and significant from an international perspective. This status could be felt both at the state level and in the field of science, which already enjoyed considerable media coverage in the early 1900s. After World War II, this status was expressed in the attention shown by the Americans, which resulted in quite a close military collaboration in Greenland. Another important Danish interest of state – the defence of Greenland – was also to a large extent taken care of by the US because of Greenland's significance for the defence of North America, thus giving Denmark an asset in negotiations with the US, which could be exploited to some degree. However, it is difficult to say what conclusions Danish decision makers drew from the changed national security situation during this early stage of the Cold War. For instance, it is uncertain to what extent Danish decision makers viewed the growing American commitment in Greenland as also strengthening security in the southern Danish area. Hans Hedtoft perhaps looked at the matter in this way, but Hermod Lannung certainly did not. For Danish diplomacy, the large-scale American presence in Greenland was also a burden at times, as Denmark came under attack from the communist bloc – a situation that required attention.

In this context, the so-called “Greenland card” should also be mentioned, i.e. the idea that Denmark, due to its possession of Greenland, reaped a number of substantial advantages and concessions in relation to the US during the Cold War. Unquestionably, the card existed and was occasionally played when Danish politicians came under pressure from the US or in NATO, but researchers and commentators are far from agreeing on its actual value. The Greenland card seems to have had very little significance as a political tool in the early phase of the Cold War covered by this paper. The significance of Greenland's strategic position, which of course was important, should not be exaggerated either, though it decreased noticeably with the onset of the missile age in the 1960s. Due to its position in the Baltic Sea, Denmark also had a “strait card” that must be regarded as having considerable significance in the overall picture. Nevertheless, both the “strait card” and the “Greenland card” meant that Denmark was impor-

tant to the Americans. Denmark had status in relation to the US and thus a certain amount of goodwill that allowed, on occasion, greater room for manoeuvring.

At the beginning of the 1950s, the issue of Greenland's status became highly topical among Danish decision makers because Denmark found itself in a peculiar collaboration-and-conflict relationship with the US concerning Greenland. The integration model was doubtlessly strengthened by the prominent American presence in Greenland, which solved the problem of the defence of Greenland during the Cold War on the one hand, but simultaneously intertwined Greenland into America's defence planning and strategy, giving rise to substantial uncertainty in Denmark as to America's plans for Greenland. Some Danish politicians who supported membership in NATO ostensibly had emotional difficulty in accepting the large-scale American presence in Greenland. As a result, they believed that having as strong a position as possible in relation to the US in Greenland was vital and that the integration solution was most useful in this regard.

As for *economic interests*, there is nothing to suggest that they had special significance for Danish policy on Greenland. Industrial interests such as fishing had some influence on the government's economic considerations concerning the issue of Greenland, but there is no indication they had any significance for the overall policy on Greenland.

Important explanatory factors can unmistakably be found on an *emotional* level and regarding *identity*, where many ties linked the two countries, which in numerous ways also shared a common history. This was also the view among the people of Greenland. In Denmark, the notion of "Greenland" had an aura of something exotic and exciting – a view that was partly due to a lack of knowledge about everyday life in Greenland. This aura was the product of countless individual factors; for example, to name a few: Films about Greenland, the Greenland expeditions and their colourful leaders, the Greenland case against Norway at the beginning of the 1930s, and the separation during World War II, which roused emotions very much. The years following World War II showed that there was widespread sympathy in the Danish population for the people of Greenland. The various press campaigns in Denmark were the product of indignation over inequities in Greenland and demonstrated that this sympathy was a factor in Danish political life.

A form of Danish *nationalism*, which was occasionally expressed, for instance, in speeches at the UN and in the Greenland reports, is also worth mentioning. An unreflecting national self-understanding can sometimes be seen in the interpretation of Denmark's laudable motives and efforts. There are also traces of a patriarchal attitude, presumably rooted in the fact that Denmark had been managing Greenland since the 1700s and had deeply ingrown notions on how an arctic territory should be administered. Nationalism was also expressed in the instinctive efforts of the decision makers to hold on to the remaining parts of the formerly quite extensive Kingdom of Denmark. These efforts were accompanied by exceedingly varied ideas depending on which decision maker was involved.

Notions about a wide-ranging kingdom with extensive territorial waters, including the southern Danish and North Atlantic possessions, played a role for some.

Hence, the Danish policy on Greenland around 1950 was based on complex notions and motives in which historically justified commitments, strong emotional considerations, matters of identity, and interests of state all played a role. The weight given to the various aspects differed from decision maker to decision maker, but the goal seemed to be the same. The unanimous support given by Danish opinion shapers and decision makers (Eske Brun, Hans Hedtoft, Hermod Lannung etc.) to the pure and simple integration model was probably due to their inability to imagine that Danish commitments, considerations, and interests regarding Greenland could be managed differently. Moreover, a crucial condition was that they, regarding the prospect of Greenland's future, were able to agree with Greenland's politicians, who based on experience and the conditions in Greenland, wanted the same model.

Appendix 1 · Terms of reference for preparing a historical study of Greenland's change in status from a colony to an equal part of the Kingdom of Denmark pursuant to the Constitutional Amendment of 1953

The Danish government requests the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) to prepare a historical analysis of the years 1945 to 1954 describing Greenland's change in status from colony to an equal part of the Kingdom of Denmark pursuant to the Constitutional Amendment of 1953. The study will cover the course of events in Denmark and Greenland as well as the debate in the UN upon receiving notification of this matter.

The study will be submitted to the Danish government by 1 October 2006 in preparation for subsequent publication.

Source materials

DIIS is expected, to the extent necessary, to apply for access to UN documents with the support of the relevant Danish authorities.

In addition, the basis for DIIS's study will include documents that might be in the possession of the relevant state authorities, especially the Prime Minister's Office, the High Commissioner of Greenland (formerly the Governor of Greenland), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, and the former Ministry for Greenland. Furthermore, DIIS may request access to records held by other authorities.

Detailed guidelines for DIIS's access to and use of documentation held by Danish authorities can be found in the appendix to the terms of reference. These guidelines correspond to the applicable guidelines for DIIS's research on the study of Denmark's national security situation during the Cold War. DIIS's research must be carried out on the best possible foundation.

In the final study, the publication of any documents supplied to DIIS for research purposes that are not freely available must be agreed upon by the relevant authorities. DIIS is permitted to supplement the study's basis by conducting interviews with politicians, civil servants, journalists, and any other relevant people with special knowledge about the events of the period in question.

Greenland's Home Rule government has declared that relevant documents will be provided at DIIS's request under conditions the Home Rule government will specify.

Appendix to the government's terms of reference

Recommended guidelines for access to the relevant Danish authorities' documentation concerning DIIS's preparation of a historical study of Greenland's change in status from a colony to an equal part of the Kingdom of Denmark pursuant to the Constitutional Amendment of 1953

DIIS will be given access to necessary documents from the Prime Minister's Office, the High Commissioner of Greenland (formerly the Governor of Greenland), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, and the former Ministry for Greenland. DIIS may request access to records held by other authorities.

DIIS's access to documentation is regulated by the Danish Public Information Act, the Archive Act, and circular no. 204 of 7 December 2001 from the Prime Minister's Office on the protection of information of common interest for the nations of NATO, the EU, or WEU, as well as other classified information and information necessary to protect for security reasons.

This involves allowing DIIS to access the authorities' records under special conditions. The authorities will thus make an effort to provide access to archives and provide more availability to the greatest extent possible. The following recommended guidelines for access will apply to DIIS:

1. Access to the authorities' records, which have been transferred to the National Archives, will comply with the rules prescribed in the Archive Act and with normal practice.
2. Access to records that have not yet been transferred to the National Archives will be administered by the authority in possession of the records. Access is regulated by the Archive Act or the Public Information Act according to items 2.a.-2.d; see below.
 - a. DIIS's staff is given access – with the limitation specified in item 2.b. – to review the relevant records of all relevant authorities.
 - b. The authorities can make decisions on a case-by-case basis if DIIS wishes to review any particularly sensitive materials.
 - c. DIIS's access to additional materials will be determined by the content of specific requests.
 - d. Both classified and unclassified records may only be copied or removed by arrangement with the appropriate authorities.
3. Access to materials in compliance with items 2.a. – 2.d. is given on the condition that DIIS's staff accepts a duty of confidentiality when imposed and has the security clearance stipulated in the circular of 2001 from the Prime Minister's Office. The duty of confidentiality is evaluated by the authorities as required on an ongoing basis with consideration given to national security, the defense of the Kingdom, relations with foreign powers, and third parties. The duty of confidentiality is valid until further notice.

4. DIIS's staff will be advised about the specific nature of the duty of confidentiality. Consequently, DIIS's staff will show the necessary consideration (i.e. by anonymisation) for the protection of information for national security reasons, defense of the Kingdom, relations with foreign powers, and third parties.
5. Without consent from the issuer, DIIS will not use classified materials, including those of foreign origin and other materials covered by the duty of confidentiality. Permission from the appropriate authority, company, or private individual should, if necessary, be obtained in advance. By agreement, documents may be paraphrased, if they cannot be included in the references, as long as the authority is consulted when the manuscript is submitted for review.
6. DIIS is permitted to conduct interviews with civil servants, politicians, journalists, and any other relevant people with special knowledge about the events of the period in question. To the extent possible, the authorities will, in response to a concrete request – in consideration of the interests worthy of protection mentioned in item 3 – nullify the duty of confidentiality, wholly or in part, for former or present staff.
7. The authorities are prepared to assist in the release of materials for appendices in connection with DIIS's publication of the study.
8. Regardless of any increase in activity in the wake of DIIS's study, researchers not involved in the project, along with others who wish to gain access to the authorities' records, will be treated in accordance with normal practice.

Appendix 2 · Memorandum of 4 March 2005 from Greenland's Home Rule government. Clarification of the issue concerning analysis of the process preceding Greenland's change of status in 1953

In a letter to the prime minister dated 20 December 2004, the head of the Home Rule government proposed that, among other things, the following topic be discussed at a meeting scheduled for 1 February 2005: "The other subject concerns Greenland's incorporation into the Kingdom of Denmark in 1953 and the possibility of analysing the process that took place at that time."

The Prime Minister's Office requested a clarification of what the commissioned study will involve. The following list contains suggested items for clarification.

Earlier historical studies (Finn Petersen: *Debate on the Greenland Issue at the UN, 1946-54*, Odense, 1975) have shown that between 1946-1953, it was essential to Danish politicians and administrators that Greenland should not be considered a colony; therefore, Denmark should not be lumped together with the real colonial powers.

At the same time, the Provincial Council wanted to be on equal footing with Denmark. At a meeting of the Provincial Council in September 1951, Augo Lynge remarked:

First, one should continue to extend and strengthen ties with Denmark politically, culturally, and linguistically to emphasise that Greenland is part of Denmark and wishes always to remain as such. Greenland and its people – Greenlanders and Danes – should have full equality with other Danish citizens. Therefore, we must maintain our wish that Greenland, in the future, be allowed to have Greenland representatives in the Danish Parliament. Greenland's representatives must be able to speak to Parliament on behalf of their people without intermediaries, just like the Faroese ...

The North Atlantic Group's (NAG) report confirms this impression, but naturally also gives rise to questions about the procedure that was followed, namely:

A. Internally

- 1) Why was no referendum held in Greenland about the change in the Constitution and thus the change in Greenland's status? The fact that Augo Lynge and the

Provincial Council's position was presumably representative of the general population is insufficient grounds for not holding a referendum.

- 2) When a presentation to the Provincial Council took place in September 1952 instead, why was the the Provincial Council not informed of the following three options specified in the UN Charter, articles 73-74, and the lists of factors from 1952-1953: 1) Independence, 2) integration, and 3) freer association (the proposal for the change in status contained in the amendment to the Constitution resulted in integration, the only option presented to the Provincial Council).
- 3) Why was the Provincial Council not presented with Poul Andersen and Alf Ross's separate statements to the Constitutional Commission – only with their joint declaration? Alf Ross's separate statement also mentioned options 1) and 3).

B. Externally. In relation to the UN

- 4) What political and administrative considerations went into the reports given to the UN's Fourth Committee in 1946-1954 and which, according to the submitted material, appear to have had the "tactical" aim of achieving the above-mentioned goal?
- 5) In addition, available quotations show that criticism arose concerning the misleading information submitted to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1999 and to the Committee for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 2000. This criticism should not be included in the historical study, but information already disclosed could be clarified administratively. According to the NAG report (p. 172), Jakob Møller Lyberth participated in some of ECOSOC's meetings.

When seen through the lens of external relations (in relation to the UN), the issue of Greenland's change in status from that of a colony to an equal part of the Kingdom of Denmark is closely tied to the internal process of reform that started, among other things, after Hans Hedtoft's trip to Greenland. This matter should probably also be included in the study. Consequently, the study should cover the period of 1946-1953.

Appendix 3 · Original expert opinion of 17 June 1952 provided by Poul Andersen and Alf Ross

Expert opinion on the constitutional status of Greenland and the Faroe Islands

Dear Prime Minister Erik Eriksen

With reference to your letter dated 11 June, in which the Prime Minister requested us to provide a joint expert opinion concerning the problems which could arise if Greenland's constitutional status was changed to make the country an integral part of the Danish Realm with representation in the Danish Parliament, as well as an expert opinion concerning changes to the Constitution which would be desirable after the adoption of the so-called Faroese Home Rule Act, we would like herewith to present our findings.

Greenland, as a Danish colony, is subject to the general administration of the Danish state in accordance with the Constitution, including the legislative body, irrespective of the fact that Greenland is not, or, according to the Constitution, cannot be, represented in the Danish Parliament. In addition, constitutional provisions such as § 78 concerning custody and imprisonment and § 80 concerning property rights do not apply in Greenland.

The envisaged change to Greenland's constitutional status can be implemented through a constitutional provision establishing that the Constitution applies to all parts of the Realm, and that Greenland is consequently represented in the Danish Parliament. Furthermore, there should presumably be a proviso that certain provisions may be

departed from as far as Greenland is concerned, if for local considerations such departure is deemed necessary. For example, with respect to §§ 71, 72, and 78, of Law no. 271 of 14 June 1951 concerning the Administration of Justice in Greenland, the content of which is in a number of respects irreconcilable with the aforementioned paragraphs. We are not in a position to make a statement about the extent to which it might be necessary to make a corresponding proviso with regard to the provision in the future constitution concerning the right to vote and eligibility for election to the Danish Parliament. Finally, it is clear that in §§ 18 and 30, the word "country" should be changed to the word "Realm", since with the envisaged change, there would no longer be any reason to make a distinction between these terms.

The constitutional provisions could be worded as follows:

§ X

The provisions in this Constitution apply to all parts of the Danish Realm. As a consequence Greenland shall in the future be represented in the Danish Parliament.

The provisions in §§ ... 71, 72, and 78 may be departed from by Statute as far as Greenland is concerned, if for local considerations such departure is deemed necessary.

§ 18 and § 30

"The country" should be changed to "the Realm".

As far as the Faroe Islands are concerned, we do not consider an amendment to the Constitution to be necessary as a result of the Faroese Home Rule Act. This law has been passed on the presumption that the solution adopted is in line with the current constitution, and there does not appear to be any reason to reject this presumption.

Co-signee Poul Andersen wishes to add the following to the above:

A constitutional provision referring to special self-government in Greenland should be regarded as unnecessary and inappropriate. The matter of self-government of this nature is presumably not currently relevant, and it is possible that a provision on self-government could have unfortunate consequences. Both economic and other conditions in Greenland also pose a considerable impediment to the introduction of self-government in Greenland beyond local self-government, which is referred to in the provision in § 89 of the Constitution.

A constitutional provision paving the way for home rule on the Faroe Islands that goes beyond the Faroese Home Rule Act or home rule that could be introduced without a new constitutional provision should be considered inadvisable.

Co-signee Alf Ross, in his capacity as expert in international law, wishes to state the following:

As far as Greenland is concerned, the question arises of how integration should be assessed with respect to Denmark's obligation arising from the UN Charter. As is well known, Denmark has recognised that Greenland constitutes a non-self-governing territory and that Denmark is thus, with respect to Greenland, subject to the obligations arising from Chapter XI of the UN Charter, particularly the obligation according to Article 73 (b) "to develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions, according to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and their varying stages of advancement".

This obligation to "develop self-government", as can be seen from the negotiations at the San Francisco Conference, is deliberately expressed in cautious terms. Although Chapter XI is based on the presumption that the people in the non-self-governing territories have a moral right to attain "a full measure of self-government", i.e. independence, there was no desire to impose an obligation to further po-

litical development to this extent. A proposal to give the obligation such a scope was withdrawn after it was recognised by the non-administering powers that self-government does not preclude independence. On the basis of the negotiations that have taken place, it may be assumed that the term "self-government", as applied in Article 73 (b), embraces different degrees of self-government. To its fullest extent, the term is identical with full independence. Less encompassing, it means limited independence, such as a constituent state might have within a federation, or even just administrative self-government not involving any kind of independence, such as in the case of a district. Article 73 (b) does not indicate how far self-government is to be developed within this scale, but simply talks of "progressive development ... according to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and their varying stages of advancement."

The question here is to what extent a solution whereby Greenland is made an integral part of the Realm, on equal terms with the rest of Denmark, will be recognised by the United Nations as being in compliance with Denmark's obligations arising from Article 73 (b). In support, it can be said that the Greenlanders would be granted a measure of self-government, namely customary local self-government, which is in keeping with their stage of advancement. On the other hand, it can be said that this kind of integration, whereby a colonial territory is being incorporated into an extended community, conflicts with the idea expressed in the UN Charter of progressive development towards higher forms of self-government, and that it robs the people under colonial rule of the opportunity to move towards full independence over time.

As far as I am aware, discussions within the United Nations have revealed different viewpoints without the organisation actually having adopted a position on the issue thus far.

Considering the aforementioned relationship with the United Nations and the potential criticism the organisation or individual members

could present with regard to a solution such as the one being proposed, the question arises whether it would be appropriate to add a provision to the Constitution that – similarly to the Faroese Home Rule Act no. 137 of 23 March 1948, § 1 – states that Greenland constitutes a self-governing society within the Danish Realm and that the scope and structure of this self-government is stipulated by law. In ideological terms, such a provision would mean that Greenland has a special position within the Realm in keeping with the idea contained in the UN Charter of the right of people under colonial rule to progressive development towards a higher form of self-government. In addition, it is up to the Danish legislative body to determine at any time the scope and type of self-government.

In my view, there should be such a provision. Fundamental recognition of Greenland's special status within the Danish Realm would best harmonise with the ideological view of the status of colonial people expressed in the UN Charter and which presumably also coincides with the Danish view. In this sense, the goal cannot be to assimilate smaller ethnographic groups, but to further their development towards self-government within the framework of a community, while at the same time recognising the distinctive character of their culture. By pursuing this line, Denmark will be in the strongest position to fend off criticism from other parties. Furthermore, I firmly believe that the fundamental recognition of Greenland's right to self-government, irrespective of whether this issue is or is not of current relevance, will provide the best basis in the long run for a solution for Greenland that is to the satisfaction of both the Danes and the Greenlanders.

As far as the Faroe Islands are concerned, I would like to add that even if a constitutional provision of the kind mentioned above is not considered necessary, I nonetheless feel that it would be natural and desirable in connection with the revision of the Constitution to write the special status granted to the Faroe Islands into the

Constitution. This is certainly unavoidable if Greenland's fundamental right to self-government is recognised in the Constitution. I am not saying that the Constitution should include the present home-rule solution, but simply that it should be stated – borrowing phrases from the Home-Rule Act – that the Faroe Islands, by virtue of their special status in national, historical, and geographical respects, constitute a self-governing society within the Danish Realm, and that the scope and structure of this self-government is established by law.

On the basis of these considerations, I recommend that the following provisions be written into the Constitution:

§ I

The Danish Realm constitutes one entity. All of its parts are represented in the Danish Parliament. By virtue of their special status in national, historical, and geographical respects, the Faroe Islands and Greenland each constitute a self-governing society within the entity of the Realm. The scope and structure of this self-government is established by law.

§ X

The provisions in §§ ... 71, 72, and 78 may be departed from by Statute as far as Greenland is concerned, if for local considerations such departure is deemed necessary.

§§ 18 and 30

“The country” should be changed to “the Realm”.

If it is felt that solely the Faroe Islands should be given special status, the provisions could be worded as follows:

§ X

The provisions in this Constitution apply to all parts of the Danish Realm. As a consequence Greenland shall be represented in the Danish Parliament in the future.

By virtue of their special status in national, historical, and geographical respects, the Faroe Islands constitute a self-governing society within the Realm. The scope and structure of this self-government is established by law.

The provisions in §§ ... 71, 72, and 78 may be departed from by Statute as far as Greenland is concerned, if for local considerations such departure is deemed necessary.

§§ 18 and 30

“The country” should be changed to “the Realm”.

Signed Alf Ross

Yours respectfully
Signed Poul Andersen

Appendix 4 · Expert opinion of 17 June 1952 provided by Poul Andersen and Alf Ross, with the amended separate statement by Alf Ross of January 1953

*Copenhagen, 17 June 1952 **

Appendix 2

Professor *Poul Andersen*, J.D. and
Professor *Alf Ross*, LL.D., d.phil:

Expert opinion on the constitutional status of Greenland and the Faroe Islands

Dear Prime Minister Erik Eriksen

With reference to a letter dated 11 June, in which the Prime Minister requested us to provide a joint expert opinion concerning the problems which could arise if Greenland's constitutional status was changed to make the country an integral part of the Danish Realm with representation in the Danish Parliament, as well as an expert opinion concerning changes to the Constitution which would be desirable after the adoption of the so-called Faroese Home Rule Act, we would like herewith to present our findings.

Greenland, as a Danish colony, is subject to the general administration of the Danish state in accordance with the Constitution, including the legislative body, irrespective of the fact that Greenland is not, or, according to the Constitution, cannot be, represented in the Danish Parliament. In addition, constitutional provisions such as § 78 concerning custody and imprisonment and § 80 concerning property rights do not apply in Greenland.

The envisaged change to Greenland's constitutional status can be implemented through a constitutional provision establishing that the Constitution applies to all parts of the Realm, and that Greenland is consequently represented in the Danish Parliament. Furthermore, there should presumably be a proviso that certain provisions may be departed from as far as Greenland is concerned, if for local considerations such departure is deemed necessary. For example, with respect to §§ 71, 72, and 78, of Law no. 271 of 14 June 1951 concerning the Administration of Justice in Greenland, the content of which is in a number of respects irreconcilable with the aforementioned paragraphs. We are not in a position to make a statement about the extent to which it might be necessary to make a corresponding proviso with regard to the provision in the future Constitution concerning the right to vote and eligibility for election to the Danish Parliament. Finally, it is clear that in §§ 18 and 30, the word "country" should be changed to the word "Realm", since with the envisaged change, there would no longer be any reason to make a distinction between these terms.

* With later changes.

The necessary constitutional provisions could be worded as follows:

§ X

The provisions in this Constitution apply to all parts of the Danish Realm. As a consequence Greenland shall in the future be represented in the Danish Parliament.

The provisions in §§ ... 71, 72, and 78 may be departed from by Statute as far as Greenland is concerned, if for local considerations such departure is deemed necessary.

§ 18 and § 30

“The country” should be changed to “the Realm”.

As far as the Faroe Islands are concerned, we do not consider an amendment to the Constitution to be necessary as a result of the Faroese Home Rule Act. This law has been passed on the presumption that the solution adopted is in line with the current Constitution, and there does not appear to be any reason to reject this presumption.

Co-signee Poul Andersen wishes to add the following:

A constitutional provision referring to special self-government in Greenland should be regarded as unnecessary and inappropriate. The question of self-government of this kind is presumably not currently relevant, and it is possible that a provision on self-government could have unfortunate consequences. Both the economic circumstances and other circumstances in Greenland pose a considerable impediment to the introduction of self-government in Greenland beyond local self-government, which is referred to in the provision in § 89 of the Constitution.

A constitutional provision paving the way for home rule on the Faroe Islands that goes beyond the Faroese Home Rule Act or home rule that could be introduced without any new constitutional provision should be considered inappropriate.

Co-signee Alf Ross, in his capacity as expert in international law, wishes to state the following:

As far as Greenland is concerned, the question arises of how integration should be assessed with respect to Denmark’s obligation arising from the UN Charter. As is well known, Denmark has recognised that Greenland constitutes a non-self-governing territory and that Denmark is thus, with respect to Greenland, subject to the obligations arising from Chapter XI of the UN Charter, particularly the obligation according to Article 73 (b) “to develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions, according to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and their varying stages of advancement”.

This obligation to “develop self-government”, as can be seen from the negotiations at the San Francisco Conference, is deliberately expressed in cautious terms. Although Chapter XI is based on the presumption that the people in the non-self-governing territories have a moral right to attain “a full measure of self-government”, i.e. independence, there was no desire to impose an obligation to further political development to this extent. A proposal to give the obligation such a scope was withdrawn after it was recognised by the non-administering powers that self-government does not preclude independence. On the basis of the negotiations that have taken place, it may be assumed that the term “self-government”, as applied in Article 73 (b), embraces different degrees of self-government. In the most far-reaching sense, it is identical with full independence. In the least far-reaching sense, it means limited independence, such as a con-

stituent state might have within a federation, or even just administrative self-government not involving any kind of independence, such as in the case of a district. Article 73 (b) does not indicate how far self-government is to be developed within this graduating scale, but simply talks of “progressive development ... according to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and their varying stages of advancement”.

The question here is to what extent a solution whereby Greenland is made an integral part of the Realm, on equal terms with the rest of Denmark, will be recognised by the United Nations as being in compliance with Denmark’s obligations arising from Article 73 (b). Relevant to this question is the United Nations General Assembly Resolution of 10 December 1952 concerning *factors that shall be taken into consideration when determining whether a territory is or is not a territory whose peoples have attained a full measure of self-government*. This resolution presupposes that the obligation arising from Chapter XI of the UN Charter, under certain conditions, may also be fulfilled if a territory which has hitherto been a colony is united with the metropolitan country, provided that the local people freely assent to it. Of course, this resolution does not offer a definitive solution to the matter at hand since it includes a decision to establish a new ad hoc committee to further examine the “factors” issue. Notwithstanding this basic uncertainty, it can be reasonably expected that there will be no fundamental changes to the aforementioned view, and it may thus be assumed that the solution being considered, whereby Greenland is made into an integral part of the Danish Realm, would not be met with any objections at the United Nations.

Yours respectfully

Signed **Alf Ross**

Signed **Poul Andersen**

Appendix 5 · Prime Minister Erik Eriksen's letter of 13 August 1952 officially requesting the issue to be presented to the Provincial Council of Greenland

Highly confidential

Copenhagen, 13 August 1952

In connection with the elaboration of a proposal for a new constitution, the Danish Constitutional Commission has discussed the possibility of changing Greenland's constitutional status to make Greenland an integral part of the Danish Realm with representation in the Danish Parliament.

During the negotiations in the committee under the Danish Constitutional Commission, which is examining this question, it has been emphasised that Greenland's present status as a Danish colony means that the country is subject to the general administration of the Danish state in accordance with the Constitution, including the legislative body, irrespective of the fact that Greenland is not, or, according to the Constitution, cannot be represented in the Danish Parliament. In addition, constitutional provisions such as § 78 concerning custody and imprisonment and § 80 concerning property rights do not apply in Greenland.

In the opinion of the committee, the envisaged change to Greenland's constitutional status could be implemented through a constitutional provision establishing that the Constitution applies to all parts of the Realm, and that Greenland is consequently represented in the Danish Parliament.

Furthermore, the committee feels that, as far as Greenland is concerned, constitutional provisions should be departed from if for local considerations such departure is deemed necessary, such as with regard to the administration of justice.

Consequently, the committee proposes that the draft constitution contain a provision with the following wording:

“The provisions in this Constitution apply to all parts of the Danish Realm. As a consequence Greenland shall in the future be represented in the Danish Parliament.

The provisions in §§ 71, 72, and 78 may be departed from by Statute as far as Greenland is concerned, if for local considerations such departure is deemed necessary”.

In addition to the aforementioned wording, the committee draws attention to the fact that various issues of a practical nature arise in connection with the election procedure in the case of electing Greenland members of parliament. If they are to be elected directly, it should be expected that it will not be possible in all circumstances to hold a snap election in Greenland at the same time as elections here in Denmark. If, for example, an election was held during winter, it would be practically impossible to send members from Greenland to Denmark directly after the new elections. Therefore, the committee believes that it would be appropriate to include a provision in the Constitution pursuant to which detailed regulations concerning the method of election in the case of Greenland members of parliament, including whether the representatives should be elected by direct or indirect elections or be elected for a certain term independently of the Danish Parliament’s election term, are laid down in the law.

While drawing attention to the fact that the aforementioned proposal has been endorsed by the government, I would like to authorise you herewith on behalf of the government to present the case, on the basis of the information given above, to the Provincial Council of Greenland for deliberation, with reference to § 7 of Law no. 271 of 27 May 1950 on the Provincial Council of Greenland and its municipal councils.

Chairman of the Provincial Council of Greenland
Governor P.H. Lundsteen
Nuuk

Appendix 6 · Letter of 13 August 1952 containing personal and highly-confiden- tial information from Prime Minister Erik Eriksen to Governor Lundsteen

Highly confidential

Copenhagen, 13 August 1952

Dear Governor Lundsteen

In another letter bearing the same date, I officially requested that you on behalf of the government present the Provincial Council of Greenland with a proposal for a new constitutional provision concerning the constitutional status of Greenland. The provision has been adopted by the committee under the Constitutional Commission of which I am chairman.

For your own personal information, I am enclosing a highly-confidential document, namely an expert opinion that was drawn up by professors Poul Andersen and Alf Ross for use by the committee when examining the issue.

As you will see, the professors have written a joint statement, and this statement, after having been examined by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Greenland Department, has been approved both by the committee and the government. The official letter from the government to you bearing today's date is based on this joint statement.

Each of the professors, however, has also submitted a separate statement:

Professor Andersen is of the view that a constitutional provision referring to special self-government in Greenland should be regarded as unnecessary and inappropriate because the question of such self-government is not currently relevant and because such a provision might have unfortunate consequences.

Professor Ross looks at the issue in relation to Denmark's obligation arising from the UN Charter, since Denmark has recognised that Greenland is a non-self-governing territory, which means that Denmark is obliged "to develop self-government, to take due account

of the political aspirations of the peoples ..." (Article 73 of the Charter). Thus, in Professor Ross' opinion, Denmark is obliged to ensure that there is development towards full independence, at least within the framework of a community.

Both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Greenland Department have advised against Professor Ross' proposed provisions being included in the Constitution. It is felt that such provisions conflict with the line of policy pursued so far with regard to Greenland as well as with the line of policy being followed by Denmark at the United Nations.

The Danish delegation to the UN has always stressed that its goal is for Greenland to be placed on an equal footing with other parts of the Danish Realm and for the Greenlanders to be granted equal rights with other Danish citizens. As a consequence, our obligations with regard to Article 73 of the UN Charter should cease.

In other words, Denmark has striven for recognition of the fact that the obligation of the metropolitan country to further the interests of a non-self-governing territory can be fulfilled in two equally good ways: Either through the development of self-government with a view to independence, or through the attainment of equal status with other parts of the metropolitan country and thus participation in its government on equal terms with other citizens of the country.

During its examination of the issue, the committee approved the above-mentioned viewpoints and categorically opposed the considerations put forward by Professor Ross in his separate statement.

For further clarification of the issue, I enclose herewith a copy of the notes drawn up by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Greenland Department on the matter.

Since it is wished that the work of the Constitutional Commission should progress as quickly as possible, I would very much appreciate being informed by telegraph or by the quickest means about the Provincial Council's position on the government's proposal.

With kind regards, yours sincerely

Governor P.H. Lundsteen
Nuuk

Appendix 7 · UN Resolution 567 (VI) of 18 January 1952 with the first list of factors

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling that, in resolution 334(IV) adopted on 2 December 1949, the General Assembly invited any special committee which might be appointed on information transmitted under Article 73e of the Charter to examine the factors which should be taken into account in deciding whether any territory is or is not a territory whose people have not yet attained a full measure of self-government,

"Having examined the report on the matter prepared by the Special Committee on Information transmitted under Article 73e of the Charter,

"Having undertaken a revision of the above-mentioned factors,

"Considering that the production of a more definitive list of factors involves protracted and complex studies on the basis of more complete information than was available in 1951,

"1. Decides to take as a basis the list of factors drawn up at the sixth session of the General Assembly, which list is annexed to the present resolution;

"2. Invites the Members of the United Nations to transmit in writing to the Secretary-General, by 1 May 1952, a statement of the views of their governments on the factors which should be taken into account in deciding whether a territory is or is not a territory whose people have not yet attained a full measure of self-government;

"3. Appoints an Ad Hoc Committee of ten members comprising Australia, Belgium, Burma, Cuba, Denmark, France, Guatemala, Iraq, the United States of America and Venezuela, in order to carry out a further study of the factors which should be taken into account in deciding whether a territory is or is not a territory whose people have not yet attained a full measure of self-government;

"4. Invites the Ad Hoc Committee to take into account all information available, including that transmitted to the Secretary-General on the reasons which have led certain Administering Members to cease to transmit information on certain of these territories, and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its seventh regular session;

"5. Invites the Secretary-General to convene the Ad Hoc Committee in order that it may begin its work one week before the opening of the 1952 session of the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories."

ANNEX

Factors which should be taken into account in deciding whether a territory is or is not a territory whose people have not yet attained a full measure of self-government.

INTRODUCTION

1. The territories which are covered by Chapter XI of the Charter are those territories whose people have not yet attained a full measure of self-government. It may be noted that the expression "self-government" is qualified in the Charter by the words "full measure" in the English text, "*complètement*" in the French text, and "*plenitud*" in the Spanish text.

2. The task of the General Assembly, at present, is to indicate the factors which should be taken into account in determining whether the result of the advancement

The resolution proposed by the Committee (A/2057) was adopted by the General Assembly at its 361st plenary meeting on 18 January without further discussion, by 46 votes to none, with 7 abstentions, as resolution 567(VI). It read:

of the people of any given territory is such that that territory has reached a stage of self-government where it falls outside the scope of Article 73e of the Charter.

3. The condition under which the provisions of Chapter XI of the Charter cease to apply will be that the inhabitants of the territory have attained, through political advancement, a full measure of self-government. The fulfilment of this condition may be achieved by various means, involving in all cases the expression of the free will of the people. The two principal means are (a) the attainment of independence and (b) the union of the territory on a footing of equal status with other component parts of the metropolitan or other country or its association on the same conditions with the metropolitan or other country or countries. The extent to which the provisions of Article 73e continue to apply in the case of territories which have become neither independent nor fully integrated within another State but which have already attained a full measure of self-government in their internal affairs is a question which merits further study.

4. The two principal forms of political advancement, mentioned in the above paragraph, call for the consideration of different factors in determining whether a territory has or has not reached a stage of self-government where it falls outside the scope of Article 73e of the Charter.

5. Accordingly, the General Assembly lists under two separate headings below the factors to be taken into account, stressing that the list cannot be regarded as exhaustive or definitive, and that a single factor or particular combination of factors cannot be regarded as decisive in every case. Whether the peoples of a territory should be regarded as having reached a stage of self-government where there is no longer any obligation to transmit information should be solved in the light of the conditions enumerated under either of the two headings, taking into account the circumstances of each particular case, which will need to be studied separately.

6. Nevertheless, the General Assembly considers that the essential factors to be taken into account in deciding whether a Non-Self-Governing Territory has attained a full measure of self-government are the following:

(i) *Political advancement*: Political advancement of the population sufficient to enable them to decide upon the future destiny of the territory with due knowledge;

(ii) *Opinion of the population*: The opinion of the population of the Territory, freely expressed by informed and democratic processes, as to the status or change in status which they desire.

7. These factors apply both to Non-Self-Governing Territories which have achieved independence and to Non-Self-Governing Territories which have freely united or associated themselves on a footing of equal status with other component parts of the metropolitan or other country or countries. In the latter case, however, the following factors are also essential and should be taken into account:

(i) *Legislative representation*: Representation without discrimination in the central legislative organs on the same basis as other inhabitants and regions;

(ii) *Citizenship*: Citizenship without discrimination on the same basis as other inhabitants.

I. FACTORS INDICATIVE OF THE ATTAINMENT OF INDEPENDENCE OR OTHER SEPARATE SYSTEM OF SELF-GOVERNMENT

A. GENERAL

1. *Political advancement*: Political advancement of the population sufficient to enable them to decide upon the future destiny of the territory with due knowledge.

2. *Opinion of the population*: The opinion of the population of the territory, freely expressed by informed and democratic processes, as to the status or change in status which they desire.

B. INTERNATIONAL STATUS

1. *Independence*: The attainment of independence by the territory, or complete control over its external relations and internal affairs.

2. *Eligibility for membership in international organizations*: Eligibility for membership in the United Nations or for membership or associate membership in other international organizations; representation by delegates selected by the territorial government.

3. *General international relations*: Power to enter into direct relations of every kind with other governments and with international institutions, and to negotiate, sign and ratify international conventions.

4. *Voluntary limitation of sovereignty*: Degree to which the sovereignty of the territory is limited by its own free will when that territory has attained independence or other separate system of self-government.

C. INTERNAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

1. *Territorial government*: Freedom from control or interference by the government of another State in respect of the internal government (legislature, executive, judiciary) and administration of the territory.

2. *Participation of the population*: Effective participation of the population in the government of the territory by means of an adequate electoral and representative system.

3. *Economic and social jurisdiction*: Complete autonomy in respect of economic and social affairs.

II. FACTORS INDICATIVE OF THE FREE ASSOCIATION (WHETHER IN A FEDERAL OR UNITARY RELATIONSHIP) OF A TERRITORY ON EQUAL STATUS WITH OTHER COMPONENT PARTS OF THE METROPOLITAN OR OTHER COUNTRY

A. GENERAL

1. *Political advancement*: Political advancement of the population sufficient to enable them to decide upon the future destiny of the territory with due knowledge.

2. *Opinion of the population*: The opinion of the population of the territory, freely expressed by informed and democratic processes, as to the status or change in status which they desire.

3. *Geographical considerations*: Extent to which the relations of the territory with the capital of the central government may be affected by circumstances arising out of their respective geographical positions, such as separation by land, sea or other natural obstacles.

4. *Ethnic and cultural considerations*: Extent to which the population are of different race, language or religion or have a distinct cultural heritage, interests or aspira-

tions, distinguishing them from the peoples of the country with which they freely associate themselves.

5. *Constitutional considerations*: Association (a) by virtue of the constitution of the metropolitan country or (b) by virtue of a treaty or bilateral agreement affecting the status of the territory, taking into account (i) whether the constitutional guarantees extend equally to the associated territory, (ii) whether there are constitutional fields reserved to the territory, and (iii) whether there is provision for the participation of the territory on a basis of equality in any changes in the constitutional system of the State.

B. STATUS

1. *Legislative representation*: Representation without discrimination in the central legislative organs on the same basis as other inhabitants and regions.

2. *Citizenship*: Citizenship without discrimination on the same basis as other inhabitants.

3. *Government officials*: Appointment or election of officials from the territory on the same basis as those from other parts of the country.

C. INTERNAL CONSTITUTIONAL CONDITIONS

1. *Suffrage*: Universal and equal suffrage, free periodic elections by secret ballot, freedom of choice of electoral candidates.

2. *Local rights and status*: Equal rights and status for the inhabitants and local bodies of the territory as enjoyed by inhabitants and local bodies of other parts of the country.

3. *Local officials*: Appointment or election of officials in the territory on the same basis as those in other parts of the country.

4. *Internal legislation*: Complete legislative autonomy of the territory, by means of electoral and representative systems, in all matters which in accordance with the normal terms of association are, in the case of non-unitary systems, not reserved to the central government.

Appendix 8 · UN Resolution 648 (VII) of 10 December 1952 with the second list of factors

At this plenary meeting the draft resolution recommended by the Fourth Committee (A/2296) was adopted without discussion by the Assembly by a roll-call vote of 36 to 15, with 7 abstentions, as resolution 648 (VII). Voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Byelorussian SSR, Chile, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Liberia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Thailand, Ukrainian SSR, USSR, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

Against: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, France, Iceland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom, United States.

Abstaining: Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Greece, Israel, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay.

The resolution read:

"The General Assembly,

"Taking into account the obligation to transmit information, accepted in virtue of Article 73 e of the Charter, by the Members which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of Territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government,

"Taking into account that this obligation remains in force with regard to each Territory until such time as the objectives of Chapter XI of the Charter are fulfilled,

"Taking into account the statement contained in resolution 222 (III), adopted by the General Assembly on 3 November 1948, to the effect that it is essential for the United Nations to be informed of any change that may take place in the constitutional status of any Non-Self-Governing Territory, and that, not later than six months after the submission of the aforesaid information, such information as may be required in such cases should be communicated, including information about the constitution, legislative acts or executive orders regarding the government of the Territory as well as about the constitutional relationship of the Territory to the government of the metropolitan country,

"Having examined the report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Factors (Non-Self-Governing Territories),

"Recognizing that, in deciding whether a Territory has or has not attained a full measure of self-government, an enumeration of factors would be a useful guide both for the General Assembly and for the Administering Member concerned,

"Having regard to its resolution 567 (VI) of 18 January 1952,

"1. Approves provisionally the annexed list of factors which may serve as a guide, both for the General Assembly and for the Members of the United Nations which have or assume responsibilities for the adminis-

tration of Non-Self-Governing Territories, in deciding whether a Territory has or has not attained a full measure of self-government;

"2. Recognizes that each concrete case should be considered and decided in the light of the particular circumstances of that case and taking into account the right of self-determination of peoples;

"3. Declares that the factors, while serving as a guide in determining whether the obligations as set forth in Article 73 e of the Charter still exist, should in no way be interpreted as a hindrance to the attainment of a full measure of self-government by the Non-Self-Governing Territories;

"4. Further declares that, for a Territory to be deemed self-governing in economic, social or educational affairs, it is essential that its people shall have attained a full measure of self-government as referred to in Chapter XI of the Charter;

"5. Recommends that, provisionally, the annexed list of factors should be taken into account in any case which the General Assembly examines resulting from any communication received by the Secretary-General in virtue of General Assembly resolution 222 (III) concerning the cessation of the transmission of information under Article 73 e of the Charter, or in relation to other questions that may arise concerning the existence of an obligation to transmit information under this Article;

"6. Decides to set up a new *Ad Hoc* Committee of ten Members, consisting of Australia, Belgium, Burma, Cuba, Guatemala, Iraq, Netherlands, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Venezuela, with instructions to continue and carry out a more thorough study of the factors which will have to be taken into account in deciding whether a Territory has or has not attained a full measure of self-government;

"7. Invites the said Committee to take into account, *inter alia*, the list of factors prepared in 1952 by the *Ad Hoc* Committee set up under General Assembly resolution 567 (VI) and the statements transmitted by governments in compliance with the aforementioned resolution and, further, to take into account the following additional elements:

"(a) The possibility of defining the concept of a full measure of self-government for the purposes of Chapter XI of the Charter;

"(b) The features guaranteeing the principle of the self-determination of peoples in relation to Chapter XI of the Charter;

"(c) The manifestation of the freely expressed will of the peoples in relation to the determination of their national and international status for the purposes of Chapter XI of the Charter;

"8. Invites all Members of the United Nations to transmit in writing to the Secretary-General, by 1 May 1953, a statement of the views of their governments on the subjects contained in the terms of reference of the Committee;

"9. Requests the Secretary-General to convene the *Ad Hoc* Committee so that it may begin its work not later than four weeks before the opening of the 1953 session of the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories."

ANNEX

FACTORS INDICATIVE OF THE ATTAINMENT OF INDEPENDENCE OR OF OTHER SEPARATE SYSTEMS OF SELF-GOVERNMENT

FIRST PART

Factors indicative of the attainment of independence

A. *International status*

1. *International responsibility.* Full international responsibility of the territory for the acts inherent in the exercise of its external sovereignty and for the corresponding acts in the administration of its internal affairs.

2. *Eligibility for membership in the United Nations.*

3. *General international relations.* Power to enter into direct relations of every kind with other governments and with international institutions and to negotiate, sign and ratify international instruments.

4. *National defence.* Freedom of the territory to enter into arrangements concerning its national defence.

B. *Internal self-government*

1. *Form of government.* Complete freedom of the people of the territory to choose the form of government which they desire.

2. *Territorial government.* Freedom from control or interference by the government of another State in respect of the internal government (legislature, executive, judiciary) and administration of the Territory.

3. *Economic, social and cultural jurisdiction.* Complete autonomy in respect of economic, social and cultural affairs.

SECOND PART

Factors indicative of the attainment of other separate systems of self-government

A. *General*

1. *Political advancement.* Political advancement of the population sufficient to enable them to decide upon the future destiny of the territory with due knowledge.

2. *Opinion of the population.* The opinion of the population of the territory, freely expressed by informed and democratic processes, as to the status or change in status which they desire.

3. *Voluntary limitation of sovereignty.* Degree to which the sovereignty of the territory is limited by its own free will when that territory has attained a separate system of self-government.

B. *International status*

1. *General international relations.* Degree or extent to which the territory exercises the power to enter freely into direct relations of every kind with other governments and with international institutions and to negotiate, sign and ratify international instruments freely.

2. *Eligibility for membership in the United Nations.*

C. *Internal self-government*

1. *Territorial government.* Nature and measure of control or interference, if any, by the government of another State in respect of the internal government, for example, in respect of the following:

Legislature: The enactment of laws for the territory by an indigenous body whether fully elected by free and democratic processes or lawfully constituted in a manner receiving the free consent of the population;

Executive: The selection of members of the executive branch of the government by the competent authority in the territory receiving consent of the indigenous population, whether that authority is hereditary or elected, having regard also to the nature and measure of control, if any, by an outside agency on that authority, whether directly or indirectly exercised in the constitution and conduct of the executive branch of the government;

Judiciary: The establishment of courts of law and the selection of judges.

2. *Participation of the population.* Effective participation of the population in the government of the territory: (a) Is there an adequate and appropriate electoral and representative system? (b) Is this electoral system conducted without direct or indirect interference from a foreign government?*

3. *Economic, social and cultural jurisdiction.* Degree of autonomy in respect of economic, social and cultural affairs, as illustrated by the degree of freedom from economic pressure as exercised, for example, by a foreign minority group which, by virtue of the help of a foreign Power, has acquired a privileged economic status prejudicial to the general economic interest of the people of the territory; and by the degree of freedom and lack of discrimination against the indigenous population of the territory in social legislation and social developments.

Factors indicative of the free association of a territory with other component parts of the metropolitan or other country

A. *General*

1. *Political advancement.* Political advancement of the population sufficient to enable them to decide upon the future destiny of the territory with due knowledge.

2. *Opinion of the population.* The opinion of the population of the territory, freely expressed by informed

* For example, the following questions would be relevant:

(i) Has each adult inhabitant equal power (subject to special safeguards for minorities) to determine the character of the government of the territory?

(ii) Is this power exercised freely, i.e., is there an absence of undue influence over and coercion of the voter and of the imposition of disabilities on particular political parties? Some tests which can be used in the application of this factor are as follows:

(a) The existence of effective measures to ensure the democratic expression of the will of the people;

(b) The existence of more than one political party in the territory;

(c) The existence of a secret ballot;

(d) The existence of legal prohibitions on the exercise of undemocratic practices in the course of elections;

(e) The existence of the individual elector of a choice between candidates of differing political parties;

(f) The absence of "martial law" and similar measures at election times;

(iii) Is each individual free to express his political opinions, to support or oppose any political party or cause, and to criticize the government of the day?

and democratic processes, as to the status or change in status which they desire.

3. *Geographical considerations.* Extent to which the relations of the territory with the capital of the central government may be affected by circumstances arising out of their respective geographical positions, such as separation by land, sea or other natural obstacles.

4. *Ethnic and cultural considerations.* Extent to which the population are of different race, language or religion or have a distinct cultural heritage, interests or aspirations, distinguishing them from the peoples of the country with which they freely associate themselves.

5. *Constitutional considerations.* Association (a) by virtue of the constitution of the metropolitan country; or (b) by virtue of a treaty or bilateral agreement affecting the status of the territory, taking into account (i) whether the constitutional guarantees extend equally to the associated territory, (ii) whether there are powers in certain matters constitutionally reserved to the territory or to the central authority, and (iii) whether there is provision for the participation of the territory on a basis of equality in any changes in the constitutional system of the State.

B. *Status*

1. *Legislative representation.* Representation without discrimination in the central legislative organs on the same basis as other inhabitants and regions.

2. *Citizenship.* Citizenship without discrimination on the same basis as other inhabitants.

3. *Government officials.* Eligibility of officials from the territory to all public offices of the central authority, by appointment or election, on the same basis as those from other parts of the country.

C. *Internal constitutional conditions*

1. *Suffrage.* Universal and equal suffrage, and free periodic elections, characterized by an absence of undue influence over and coercion of the voter or of the imposition of disabilities on particular political parties.**

2. *Local rights and status.* In a unitary system equal rights and status for the inhabitants and local bodies of the territory as enjoyed by inhabitants and local bodies of other parts of the country; in a federal system an identical degree of self-government for the inhabitants and local bodies of all parts of the federation.

3. *Local officials.* Appointment or election of officials in the territory on the same basis as those in other parts of the country.

4. *Internal legislation.* Local self-government of the same scope and under the same conditions as enjoyed by other parts of the country.

Appendix 9 · UN Resolution 742 (VIII) of 27 November 1953 with the third list of factors

adopted by 32 votes to 19, with 6 abstentions, as resolution 742 (VIII). It read:

"The General Assembly,

"Bearing in mind the principles embodied in the Declaration regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories and the objectives set forth in Chapter XI of the Charter,

"Recalling the provisions of resolutions 567(VI) and 648(VII), adopted by the General Assembly on 18 January and 10 December 1952 respectively, indicating the value of establishing a list of factors which should be taken into account in deciding whether a Territory has or has not attained a full measure of self-government,

"Having regard to the competence of the General Assembly to consider the principles that should guide the United Nations and the Member States in the implementation of obligations arising from Chapter XI of the Charter and to make recommendations in connexion with them,

"Having examined the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Factors (Non-Self-Governing Territories) set up by resolution 648(VII),

"1. Takes note of the conclusions of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Factors (Non-Self-Governing Territories);

"2. Approves the list of factors as adopted by the Fourth Committee;

"3. Recommends that the annexed list of factors should be used by the General Assembly and the Administering Members as a guide in determining whether any Territory, due to changes in its constitutional status, is or is no longer within the scope of Chapter XI of the Charter, in order that, in view of the documentation provided under resolution 222(III) of 3 November 1948, a decision may be taken by the General Assembly on the continuation or cessation of the transmission of information required by Chapter XI of the Charter;

"4. Reasserts that each concrete case should be considered and decided upon in the light of the particular circumstances of that case and taking into account the right of self-determination of peoples;

"5. Considers that the validity of any form of association between a Non-Self-Governing Territory and a metropolitan or any other country essentially depends on the freely expressed will of the people at the time of the taking of the decision;

"6. Considers that the manner in which Territories referred to in Chapter XI of the Charter can become fully self-governing is primarily through the attainment of independence, although it is recognized that self-government can also be achieved by association with another State or group of States if this is done freely and on the basis of absolute equality;

"7. Reaffirms that the factors, while serving as a guide in determining whether the obligations as set forth in Chapter XI of the Charter shall exist, should in no way be interpreted as a hindrance to the attainment of a full measure of self-government by a Non-Self-Governing Territory;

"8. Further reaffirms that, for a Territory to be deemed self-governing in economic, social or educational affairs, it is essential that its people shall have attained a full measure of self-government;

The draft resolution recommended by the Fourth Committee (A/2556 I), including the annex which contained the list of factors, was

"9. *Instructs* the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories to study any documentation transmitted hereafter under resolution 222(III) in the light of the list of factors approved by the present resolution, and other relevant considerations which may arise from each concrete case of cessation of information;

"10. *Recommends* that the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories take the initiative of proposing modifications at any time to improve the list of factors, as may seem necessary in the light of circumstances."

ANNEX

LIST OF FACTORS

FACTORS INDICATIVE OF THE ATTAINMENT OF INDEPENDENCE OR OF OTHER SEPARATE SYSTEMS OF SELF-GOVERNMENT

First part

FACTORS INDICATIVE OF THE ATTAINMENT OF INDEPENDENCE

A. *International status*

1. *International responsibility.* Full international responsibility of the Territory for the acts inherent in the exercise of its external sovereignty and for the corresponding acts in the administration of its internal affairs.

2. *Eligibility for membership in the United Nations.*

3. *General international relations.* Power to enter into direct relations of every kind with other governments and with international institutions and to negotiate, sign and ratify international instruments.

4. *National defence.* Sovereign right to provide for its national defence.

B. *Internal self-government*

1. *Form of government.* Complete freedom of the people of the Territory to choose the form of government which they desire.

2. *Territorial government.* Freedom from control or interference by the government of another State in respect of the internal government (legislature, executive, judiciary, and administration of the Territory).

3. *Economic, social and cultural jurisdiction.* Complete autonomy in respect of economic, social and cultural affairs.

Second part

FACTORS INDICATIVE OF THE ATTAINMENT OF OTHER SEPARATE SYSTEMS OF SELF-GOVERNMENT

A. *General*

1. *Opinion of the population.* The opinion of the population of the Territory, freely expressed by informed and democratic processes, as to the status or change in status which they desire.

2. *Freedom of choice.* Freedom of choosing on the basis of the right of self-determination of peoples between several possibilities, including independence.

3. *Voluntary limitation of sovereignty.* Degree of evidence that the attribute or attributes of sovereignty which are not individually exercised will be collectively

exercised by the larger entity thus associated and the freedom of the population of a Territory which has associated itself with the metropolitan country to modify at any time this status through the expression of their will by democratic means.

4. *Geographical considerations.* Extent to which the relations of the Non-Self-Governing Territory with the capital of the metropolitan government may be affected by circumstances arising out of their respective geographical positions, such as separation by land, sea or other natural obstacles; and extent to which the interests of boundary States may be affected, bearing in mind the general principle of good-neighbourliness referred to in Article 74 of the Charter.

5. *Ethnic and cultural considerations.* Extent to which the populations are of different race, language or religion or have a distinct cultural heritage, interests or aspirations, distinguishing them from the peoples of the country with which they freely associate themselves.

6. *Political advancement.* Political advancement of the population sufficient to enable them to decide upon the future destiny of the Territory with due knowledge.

B. *International status*

1. *General international relations.* Degree or extent to which the Territory exercises the power to enter freely into direct relations of every kind with other governments and with international institutions and to negotiate, sign and ratify international instruments freely. Degree or extent to which the metropolitan country is bound, through constitutional provisions or legislative means, by the freely expressed wishes of the Territory in negotiating, signing and ratifying international conventions which may influence conditions in the Territory.

2. *Change of political status.* The right of the metropolitan country or the Territory to change the political status of that Territory in the light of the consideration whether that Territory is or is not subject to any claim or litigation on the part of another State.

3. *Eligibility for membership in the United Nations.*

C. *Internal self-government*

1. *Territorial government.* Nature and measure of control or interference, if any, by the government of another State in respect of the internal government, for example, in respect of the following:

Legislature: The enactment of laws for the Territory by an indigenous body whether fully elected by free and democratic processes or lawfully constituted in a manner receiving the free consent of the population;

Executive: The selection of members of the executive branch of the government by the competent authority in the Territory receiving consent of the indigenous population, whether that authority is hereditary or elected, having regard also to the nature and measure of control, if any, by an outside agency on that authority, whether directly or indirectly exercised in the constitution and conduct of the executive branch of the government;

Judiciary: The establishment of courts of law and the selection of judges.

2. *Participation of the population.* Effective participation of the population in the government of the Territory: (a) Is there an adequate and appropriate

electoral and representative system? (b) Is this electoral system conducted without direct or indirect interference from a foreign government?

3. *Economic, social and cultural jurisdiction.* Degree of autonomy in respect of economic, social and cultural affairs, as illustrated by the degree of freedom from economic pressure as exercised, for example, by a foreign minority group which, by virtue of the help of a foreign Power, has acquired a privileged economic status prejudicial to the general economic interest of the people of the Territory; and by the degree of freedom and lack of discrimination against the indigenous population of the Territory in social legislation and social developments.

Third part

FACTORS INDICATIVE OF THE FREE ASSOCIATION OF A TERRITORY ON EQUAL BASIS WITH THE METROPOLITAN OR OTHER COUNTRY AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THAT COUNTRY OR IN ANY OTHER FORM

A. General

1. *Opinion of the population.* The opinion of the population of the Territory, freely expressed by informed and democratic processes, as to the status or change in status which they desire.

2. *Freedom of choice.* The freedom of the population of a Non-Self-Governing Territory which has associated itself with the metropolitan country as an integral part of that country or in any other form to modify this status through the expression of their will by democratic means.

3. *Geographical considerations.* Extent to which the relations of the Territory with the capital of the central government may be affected by circumstances arising out of their respective geographical positions, such as separation by land, sea or other natural obstacles. The right of the metropolitan country or the Territory to change the political status of that Territory in the light of the consideration whether that Territory is or is not subject to any claim or litigation on the part of another State.

4. *Ethnic and cultural considerations.* Extent to which the population are of different race, language or religion or have a distinct cultural heritage, interests or aspirations, distinguishing them from the peoples of the country with which they freely associate themselves.

5. *Political advancement.* Political advancement of the population sufficient to enable them to decide upon the future destiny of the Territory with due knowledge.

6. *Constitutional considerations.* Association by virtue of a treaty or bilateral agreement affecting the status of the Territory, taking into account (i) whether the constitutional guarantees extend equally to the associated Territory, (ii) whether there are powers in certain matters constitutionally reserved to the Territory or to the central authority, and (iii) whether there is provision for the participation of the Territory on a basis of equality in any changes in the constitutional system of the State.

B. Status

1. *Legislative representation.* Representation without discrimination in the central legislative organs on the same basis as other inhabitants and regions.

2. *Participation of the population.* Effective participation of the population in the government of the

Territory: (a) Is there an adequate and appropriate electoral and representative system? (b) Is this electoral system conducted without direct or indirect interference from a foreign government?*

3. *Citizenship.* Citizenship without discrimination on the same basis as other inhabitants.

4. *Government officials.* Eligibility of officials from the Territory to all public offices of the central authority, by appointment or election, on the same basis as those from other parts of the country.

C. Internal constitutional conditions

1. *Suffrage.* Universal and equal suffrage, and free periodic elections, characterized by an absence of undue influence over and coercion of the voter or of the imposition of disabilities on particular political parties.**

2. *Local rights and status.* In a unitary system equal rights and status for the inhabitants and local bodies of

* For example, the following questions would be relevant:

(i) Has each adult inhabitant equal power (subject to special safeguards for minorities) to determine the character of the government of the Territory?

(ii) Is this power exercised freely, i.e., is there an absence of undue influence over and coercion of the voter and of the imposition of disabilities on particular political parties?

Some tests which can be used in the application of this factor are as follows:

(a) The existence of effective measures to ensure the democratic expression of the will of the people;

(b) The existence of more than one political party in the Territory;

(c) The existence of a secret ballot;

(d) The existence of legal prohibitions on the exercise of undemocratic practices in the course of elections;

(e) The existence for the individual elector of a choice between candidates of differing political parties;

(f) The absence of "martial law" and similar measures at election times;

(iii) Is each individual free to express his political opinions, to support or oppose any political party or cause, and to criticize the government of the day?

** For example, the following tests would be relevant:

(a) The existence of effective measures to ensure the democratic expression of the will of the people;

(b) The existence of more than one political party in the Territory;

(c) The existence of a secret ballot;

(d) The existence of legal prohibitions on the exercise of undemocratic practices in the course of elections;

(e) The existence for the individual elector of a choice between candidates of differing political parties;

(f) The absence of "martial law" and similar measures at election times;

(g) Freedom of each individual to express his political opinions, to support or oppose any political party or cause, and to criticize the government of the day.

the Territory as enjoyed by inhabitants and local bodies of other parts of the country; in a federal system an identical degree of self-government for the inhabitants and local bodies of all parts of the federation.

3. *Local officials.* Appointment or election of officials in the Territory on the same basis as those in other parts of the country.

4. *Internal legislation.* Local self-government of the same scope and under the same conditions as enjoyed by other parts of the country.

5. *Economic, social and cultural jurisdiction.* Degree of autonomy in respect of economic, social and cultural affairs, as illustrated by the degree of freedom from economic pressure as exercised, for example, by a foreign minority group which, by virtue of the help of a foreign Power, has acquired a privileged economic status prejudicial to the general economic interest of the people of the Territory; and by the degree of freedom and lack of discrimination against the indigenous population of the Territory in social legislation and social developments.

Appendix 10 · UN Resolution 849 (IX) of 22 November 1954 (the Greenland Resolution)

GENERAL ASSEMBLY — NINTH SESSION

A/AC.35/L.155 and Corr.1. Communication from Denmark concerning Greenland.

A/2729 and Corr.1. Report of Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories.

GREENLAND

FOURTH COMMITTEE, meetings 423, 427-432, 439.

A/C.4/L.354. Brazil, Guatemala, India, Peru joint draft resolution (adopted, as amended: operative paragraph 2 by 42 votes to 1, with 9 abstentions; operative paragraph 4 by 39 votes to 1, with 11 abstentions; operative paragraph 7 by 37 votes to 1, with 13 abstentions; draft resolution, as a whole, by 35 votes to 4, with 12 abstentions).

A/C.4/L.358. Uruguay amendment to joint draft resolution.

Adopted by roll-call vote of 33 to 12, with 5 abstentions, as follows: *In favour*: Afghanistan, Argentina, Burma, Byelorussian SSR, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Ukrainian SSR, USSR, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia. *Against*: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom, United States. *Abstaining*: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Israel.

Philippines oral amendments to joint draft resolution: To delete operative paragraph 2 (rejected by 18 votes to 9, with 16 abstentions).

To replace in operative paragraph 6 words "political advancement achieved" by words "achievement of self-government" (adopted by 21 votes to 7, with 18 abstentions).

To redraft operative paragraph 7 to read, "Considered that in the circumstances Chapter XI of the

Charter regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories is no longer applicable to Greenland" (rejected by 17 votes to 17, with 15 abstentions).

To delete operative paragraph 8 withdrawn; other drafting amendments accepted by sponsors of joint draft.

A/2795. Report of Fourth Committee.

PLENARY MEETINGS, 498, 499.

RESOLUTION 849(IX), as recommended by Fourth Committee, A/2795, adopted by the Assembly on 22 November: second paragraph of preamble adopted by 53 votes to 1, with 2 abstentions; operative paragraph 2 by 51 votes to 1, with 3 abstentions; and last paragraph of preamble by roll-call vote of 38 to 15, with 4 abstentions; resolution, as a whole, by roll-call vote of 45 to 1 with 11 abstentions.

The roll-call vote of 38 to 15 on the last paragraph of preamble was as follows: *In favour*: Afghanistan, Argentina, Bolivia, Burma, Byelorussian SSR, Chile, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Mexico, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Thailand, Ukrainian SSR, USSR, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia. *Against*: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Turkey, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom, United States. *Abstaining*: Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Israel.

The roll-call vote of 45 to 1, with 11 abstentions, on the resolution, as a whole, was as follows: *In favour*: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Byelorussian SSR, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel,

Lebanon, Liberia, Mexico, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, Ukrainian SSR, USSR, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia. *Against:* Belgium. *Abstaining:* Afghanistan, Australia, Canada, France, Greece, Indonesia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom.

The General Assembly,

"Recalling that, by resolution 222(III) of 3 November 1948, the General Assembly, while welcoming any development of self-government in Non-Self-Governing Territories, considers it essential that the United Nations be informed of any change in the constitutional status of any such Territory as a result of which the responsible Government concerned thinks it unnecessary to transmit further information in respect of that Territory under Article 73c of the Charter,

"Having received from the Government of Denmark a communication dated 3 September 1953 informing the Secretary-General that, as a result of the constitutional amendment adopted on 5 June 1953, Greenland has become an integral part of the Danish Realm with a constitutional status equal to that of other parts of Denmark and that, as a consequence of this constitutional change, the Danish Government regarded its responsibilities under Chapter XI of the Charter in respect of Greenland as terminated and had, therefore, decided to bring to an end the transmission of information under Article 73c of the Charter,

"Considering that resolution 742(VIII) adopted by the General Assembly on 27 November 1953 instructs the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories to study any documentation transmitted under resolution 222(III) in the light of the list of factors approved by resolution 742(VIII) and other relevant considerations that may arise from each concrete case,

"Having studied the report prepared by the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories during its session of 1954 on the question of the cessation of the transmission of information on Greenland and presented to the General Assembly in conformity with paragraph 2 of resolution 448(V) of 12 December 1950,

"Having examined the communication of the Government of Denmark in the light of the basic principles and objectives embodied in Chapter XI of the Charter, the criteria established by the list of factors, and of all the other elements of judgment pertinent to the issue,

"Bearing in mind the competence of the General Assembly to decide whether a Non-Self-Governing Territory has or has not attained a full measure of self-government as referred to in Chapter XI of the Charter,

"1. Takes note of the conclusions set forth by the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories in its resolution;

"2. Takes note of the opinion of the Government of Denmark that due to the new constitutional status

of Greenland the Government of Denmark regards its responsibilities according to Chapter XI of the Charter as terminated" and that consequently the transmission of information under Article 73c of the Charter in respect of Greenland should be brought to an end;

"3. Commends the action of the Member State concerned in including in its delegation to the General Assembly representatives elected by the National Council of Greenland for the purpose of furnishing information on constitutional changes in Greenland;

"4. Takes note that when deciding on their new constitutional status, through their duly elected representatives, the people of Greenland have freely exercised their right to self-determination;

"5. Expresses the opinion that, from the documentation and the explanations provided, Greenland freely decided on its integration within the Kingdom of Denmark on an equal constitutional and administrative basis with the other parts of Denmark;

"6. Notes with satisfaction the achievement of self-government by the people of Greenland;

"7. Considers that due to these circumstances the Declaration regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories with the provisions established under it in Chapter XI of the Charter can no longer be applied to Greenland;

"8. Considers it appropriate that the transmission of information in respect of Greenland under Article 73c of the Charter should now cease."

Appendix 11 · Important bodies in the administration of Greenland

Overview of important institutions and bodies mentioned in this study.

1925-1950	The Greenland Administration	Directorate referring to the minister of the interior and the minister of culture and ecclesiastical affairs. During World War II, the Danish government's authority was taken over by the governor's administration.
1950-1955	Greenland Department at the Prime Minister's Office (2nd Department)	The Greenland Laws of 27 May 1950 replaced the separate administration of Greenland with laws for the different branches of government. The Greenland Administration was consequently renamed the Greenland Department at the Prime Minister's Office as of 1 July 1950.
1955-1987	Ministry for Greenland	The Greenland Department was part of this ministry. After the establishment of the ministry, many areas of responsibility were transferred to the ordinary specific ministries. In the decade following Home Rule in 1979, many responsibilities were transferred from the ministry to Greenland's Home Rule government.
1911-1979	Greenland's Provincial Councils	Until 1950, two provincial councils existed: One for South Greenland and one for North Greenland. In 1950, the law changed and established only one Provincial Council. This arrangement included West Greenland, where approximately 90% of the population lived, but it did not cover the sparsely populated East and North Greenland. Beginning in the 1960s, Provincial Council elections included all of Greenland. Members were elected based on their personal qualities, not according to political party. Political parties were not formed until the late 1970s. All legislation that exclusively affected Greenland was presented to the Provincial Council for commentary before it was presented to the <i>Folketing</i> . In addition to this consultative function, the Provincial Council was gradually given more matters for determination, e.g. in the areas of social services and the protection of animals. After 1950, only the governor exercised legal control. Until 1967, he was automatically head of the Provincial Council.
1953-present	The <i>Folketing</i>	After the constitutional changes of 1953, two <i>Folketing</i> members are elected in Greenland. "Parliament" refers to the <i>Rigsdag</i> , which was made up of the <i>Folketing</i> and the <i>Landsting</i> until 1953, when a constitutional revision abolished the <i>Landsting</i> . During the majority of the period under discussion, the <i>Folketing</i> was thus only one of the chambers of the then bicameral Danish Parliament.
1925-1953	The Greenland Committee of the Danish Parliament	Set up in 1925 as a standing committee. Consisted of four <i>Folketing</i> members and four <i>Landsting</i> members until 1953, when it was succeeded by the <i>Folketing's</i> Greenland Committee. The Committee had ten members, two of whom were elected in Greenland. From 1950 to 1953, Greenland's Provincial Council appointed two members to the Committee.
1946-1953	The Constitutional Commission of 1946	The Commission consisted of the prime minister, the minister of justice and the minister of the interior, twenty-two party-appointed MPs, and one representative from the Faroe Islands. Among others, the Commission appointed Professor Poul Andersen, LL.D., and Professor Alf Ross, LL.D., d.phil., as special experts. Their expert opinion on the constitutional position of Greenland and the Faroe Islands is provided in appendices 3 and 4 of this study.
1948-1950	The Greenland Commission	The main Commission comprised sixteen members. Its nine subcommittees totalled one hundred and six members, including twelve Greenlanders. The Commission's report of February 1950 formed the basis of a reform of eight laws concerning conditions in Greenland. The report contained a section on Greenland's future constitutional position within the Kingdom of Denmark.

Appendix 12 · Change of status in 1953: The Greenlanders' relationship with Denmark from 1945 to 1954

Jens Heinrich

Introduction

Greenlanders have often been depicted in the literature, particularly from 1945 to 1954, as conforming to authority¹ and avoiding conflict in that Greenlanders had traditionally dealt with difficult situations differently than Europeans.² On the surface, this depiction might mean that a study of the Greenlanders' attitudes toward the relationship between Denmark and Greenland during the years immediately following World War II would not produce any appreciable results since the sources do not contain any traces of these attitudes. From 1946 to 1954, however, the newspapers frequently contained reader-to-reader appeals calling for everyone to participate in the social debate and to do their best to help the country reach the same stage of civilisation as Denmark.³ This was a time of expectations, uncertainty, and making up one's mind about the development and which course to follow. At the same time, Greenlanders undeniably wanted to change the government of the country.⁴

Gratitude for Danish efforts to speed up the progress of Greenland and the Greenlanders was widespread: "We have every possible reason to be grateful for the assistance provided by Denmark, but we must also lend a helping hand", writes Knud Heilmann.⁵ The Greenlanders thought that they should take more responsibility and contribute to shaping the development.

The relationship between Greenlanders and Danes has been compared to the relationship between a parent and child.⁶ Before greater equality between the two peoples could be achieved, Greenlanders would have to endure an extended period of learning, education, and enlightenment. Greenlanders would have to become independent⁷ as a people, but this process of independence would need to occur within the framework of the Kingdom of Denmark.

¹ A. Olsen, *Grønland*, 1971, no. 4, p. 119.

² In this case, conflict management in a West European context is the same as direct verbal confrontation with the party or parties in conflict. See Klaus George Hansen, "Development on 'Greenland Terms?'" *Grønland*, 1989, no. 10, pp. 309-315.

³ Enok Sandgreen, *AG (Atuagagdliutit/Grønlandsposten)* 1952, pp. 110-111.

⁴ Kristoffer Lynges's proposal of 1938, pp. 29-30 & 33 in the Greenland Provincial Council's talks 1938-1947, JH Schultz A/S, Copenhagen, 1948. See also: Mathias Storch's "Strejflys over Grønland" ["Gleam of light over Greenland"], 1930, with regard to social relations before World War II.

⁵ A Greenlander living in Frederikshavn, *AG* 1952, p. 122.

⁶ Jørgen Fleischer, interview, 10 August 2006.

⁷ Peter Nielsen, *AG*, 1953, p. 311.

One crucial aspect for understanding the Greenlanders' relationship with Denmark involved the extent to which the Greenlanders acquired Danish attitudes through interaction. This, in any case, is a reasonable idea. Although they were certainly capable of independent thought, the Greenlanders' frames of reference prevented them from envisaging secession from Denmark as the Icelanders had done in 1944. Attitudes towards their relationship with Denmark changed concurrently with the rising educational level of Greenlanders in the period after G-50.⁸ Simultaneously, the inequality of Greenlanders and Danes was increasingly felt by the Greenlanders to be a direct expression of inferiority. The term independence, used in the sense of secession from Denmark, was believed to be used for the first time by Ulrik Rosing in an interview in AG.⁹

On 31 December 1954, there were eleven local newspapers¹⁰ in addition to *Atuagagdliutit/Grønlandsposten* from Godthåb/Nuuk and *Avangnamiok* from Godhavn/Qeqertarsuaq. On 31 December 1950, the population numbered 23,642, rising to 27,101 by 31 December 1955. The newspapers studied here were selected on the basis of a representativity criterion, meaning that not every newspaper from that period was examined.

Direct references in the source materials

- 1) Is there a direct reference in newspapers and periodicals to different attitudes regarding the relationship between Greenland and Denmark?
- 2) Is there any criticism of Greenland politicians about this issue?
- 3) Is there any mention or criticism of Greenland's colonial status?
- 4) Are there any pronouncements in Greenland concerning the Greenland issue in the UN?
- 5) Are there any direct demands for independence?
- 6) Are there any indications that people wanted a greater degree of self-determination than what the politicians found acceptable?
- 7) Is this issue ever mentioned or discussed?
- 8) Is there any mention of Thule Air Base or any of the other American bases?

Indirect references in the source materials

- 1) Are there any indirect indications that different opinions about these issues existed?
- 2) Are there any references to independent political movements making demands on Denmark and/or the US – apart from those openly expressed?

⁸ The Greenland Commission's Report, Copenhagen, 1950.

⁹ AG is the abbreviation for the newspaper *Atuagagdliutit/Grønlandsposten*; the two newspapers were merged in 1952.

¹⁰ In 1954, the following newspapers existed in Greenland: Monthly municipal newspaper (Upernavik), *Nasigfik* (from May 1954, Umanak), *Qutdlæg* (Qutdlægssat), *Iluliarmiok* (Jakobshavn), *Paortoq* (Holsteinsborg), *Meteôre* (Sukkertoppen), *Kamikken* (Nuuk), *Pamiut Avisia* (Frederikshåb), *Qaqortoq* and *Qualaleq Savautilik* (Julianehåb), and *Tusardluarneq* (Nanortalik), Report on Greenland, 1954, no. 7, pp. 6-7.

Opportunities for expression

When one establishes what psychological space and limitations concerning opportunities for expression existed at that time, the system was indubitably authoritarian and paternalistic. The authorities apparently firmly suppressed critical voices, as the following examples will illustrate.

Svend Frederiksen, who was the son of a Danish priest, had grown up in Holsteinsborg/Sisimiut and was married to a Greenlander. In 1932, he was dismissed from the teacher training college in Nuuk due to disagreements with the management about the language of instruction. He was also expelled from Greenland. Subsequently, his request to re-enter the country was denied.¹¹ Another example of this uncompromising policy that the authorities followed was the expulsion of Augo Lynge to Egedesminde in 1942. He was expelled because of the authorities' concern about the effect the *Nunatta Qitornai* (Our Nation's Children) association could have on young people.¹²

An unequivocal evaluation of the amount of censorship the authorities otherwise exercised over the media at this time is not possible. There was, however, some inherent risk in protesting about conditions before the reform in 1950, both for Danes and Greenlanders.¹³ Seemingly paradoxical, however, is the fact that the authorities advocated the maturation of Greenland's population by promoting public debate among Greenlanders. For example, they supported newspapers and periodicals while simultaneously and ostensibly maintaining a certain degree of intolerance towards dissidence.

A potent self-censorship, exemplified in the debate between Gerhard Egede and Frederik Lynge, cf. below, appears to have been practiced among Greenlanders.

Associations

In 1942, while he was a lecturer at the teacher training college in Nuuk, Augo Lynge founded the *Nunatta Qitornai* association. This association published *Inusugtok*, a magazine for members. The association aimed to raise the Greenlanders' competencies, particularly in relation to Danish superiority.¹⁴ Shortly afterwards, Lynge was transferred, cf. above, to the school in Egedesminde, ostensibly because the authorities feared the impact the association might have on the situation in Nuuk.¹⁵ Undocumented rumours maintain that Lynge harboured sympathies for the Germans, something that also contributed to his transfer. During World War II, sympathy towards Nazism seems to have existed. The relevance of closely scrutinising Nazi sympathisers among the Greenlanders during this period might therefore

¹¹ Klaus George Hansen, *Grønland*, 1993, no. 1, pp. 30-36.

¹² Jørgen Fleischer, interview, 10 August 2006.

¹³ Ole Vinding, *Kalâtdlit*, May/June 1950, p. 5 and Carl Broberg, *Kalâtdlit*, December 1947, p. 5.

¹⁴ Jørgen Fleischer, interview, 10 August 2006.

¹⁵ Undocumented rumours reported that Augo Lynge harboured sympathy for Nazism; see Hans Anthon Lynge in the newspaper *Kalaaleq*.

be questioned. The people who were dissatisfied with the Danish presence and superiority might have thought: The enemy of my enemy is my friend, i.e. the Danes in Greenland were on the side of the Allies and the Nazis were their enemies, so siding with the Nazis was the preferable choice. The possibility of German victory would have given the sympathisers an advantage in a completely different reform than the one finally achieved.

An alternative yet obvious conclusion is that the authorities cynically labelled dissidents as Nazi sympathisers to clip their wings. At the same time, Greenlanders were presumably ignorant about the true nature of Nazism. Germany's success in the first years of the war had earned them a number of "fans". Whatever the truth might be, documentation exists that indicates the presence of some kind of Nazi activity. Greenland National Museum and Archive possesses in its collection an armband bearing a Nazi logo with a polar bear sitting on the swastika. These circumstances were, however, never subjected to public debate in Greenland, just as a number of circumstances in Denmark during World War II were previously taboo.

Pekatiġit Kalâtdlit (The Greenlandic Society) was formed in Copenhagen in 1939. Its objective was to provide a forum for debate and discussion among Greenlanders. Since the society's magazine was not directly related to the Greenland Administration, its articles were likely of a freer nature. Greenland's conformance to authority is exemplified in Angmalortok Olsen's article "Greenlander in Denmark", in which some people felt that the Greenland Administration should have been asked for permission before the society was formed.¹⁶ Nothing indicates the existence of any independent political movements that advocated severing ties with Denmark during this time.

Newspapers

Groenlandica, Greenland's national research library, possesses a comprehensive, though incomplete, collection of Greenland newspapers. The newspapers are generally organised in annual or multi-annual compilations. Four Greenland newspapers (*Atuagagdliutit*, *Avangnâmiok*, *Nalunaerutit*, and *Sujumut*) can be found on Groenlandica's website at <http://www.aviisitoqqat.gl>.

Kalâtdlit (1939-1945 and 1947-1959)

In 1939, *Pekatiġit Kalâtdlit* (The Greenlandic Society) was established in Copenhagen by Svend Frederiksen in collaboration with others. From its inception, the society's magazine was bilingual, a rarity for Greenland publications of the time. The magazine received a set annual contribution from public funds, which was DKK 1,200 in 1951. That year, the society's total expenses amounted to DKK 5,600. The society and consequently its magazine were neither directly nor indirectly under the influence of the authorities. The magazine's frequency of publication varied, but at

¹⁶ Angmalortok Olsen, *Grønland*, 1971, no. 4, p. 118.

times it was published every other month. From the start of 1954, it was published monthly. From September/October 1952, there was a gap in publication until November/December 1953. The length of each magazine varied by a maximum of 24 pages. On 1 January 1954, the society had 260 members.

The promotion of the Greenlander's rights and conditions formed part of the society's activities. For example, in June 1953, it sent a letter to the Provincial Council detailing the disparity in pay between Greenlanders and Danes in Greenland. In the society's opinion, Greenland was characterised by a lack of political freedom and by the lack of opportunity for independent development; the district councils, some of whose members were Danish civil servants, thus elected the Provincial Council's members until the reform. Carl Broberg, who was the chairman of the society, believed that the dependence of the Provincial Council's members on the Greenland Administration prevented free development. His concrete wish for the future was "... that the Greenlanders attain the right to live their lives as freely in Greenland as the Danes do here [in Denmark - JH], and that they be permitted to determine their own affairs independently".¹⁷ Broberg also hoped that the Greenland Commission, appointed in 1948, would create conditions whereby, "... everyone would have equal rights in the eyes of the law, equal rights to work and equal pay, equal rights in Denmark and Greenland".¹⁸ He further stated that a change in direction was needed if relations between Greenland and Denmark were to remain undamaged:

"... we do not want things to continue developing along the same lines as they have until now. The guardianship, this bondage, which the Administration still enforces on the Greenlanders must cease".¹⁹

Concerning the Greenlanders' lack of freedom, he stated:

Just imagine, every young Greenlander who comes down here [to Denmark – JH] must sign in advance a declaration to the Administration to the effect that he submits to its supervision and rules. A Greenlander here does not have permission to enter the free labour market and, should he violate this bondage, which has occurred in two or three cases, the Administration will forbid him from finding employment in his profession in Greenland. A Greenland smith married a Danish girl in Denmark against the Administration's wishes. In the spring, his application for employment as a smith in Greenland was rejected by the Administration. Two days later, he read in a newspaper that the Administration was looking for smiths in Greenland. This is what the Administration's dictatorship is like. It has no use for those who will not obey.²⁰

¹⁷ Carl Broberg, *Kalâtdlit*, June 1947, p. 4.

¹⁸ Carl Broberg, *Kalâtdlit*, September 1948, p. 12.

¹⁹ Carl Broberg, *Kalâtdlit*, December 1947, p. 5.

²⁰ Carl Broberg, *Kalâtdlit*, June 1948, p. 4.

Greenlanders had a hard row to hoe in order to become informed, educated, and skilled: “If the Greenlander is not to become ‘a second-class citizen in his own country’, it will become a matter of life and death to learn thoroughness, order, and perseverance in steady daily work, even at times when the work no longer seems exciting, and especially to co-operate extensively”.²¹

Despite the arrival of formal equality in 1953 following a change in the Constitution, in practice the differences between Danes and Greenlanders made it necessary for the two groups to be treated differently: “The assertion that Greenlanders and Danes have equal status after the new Constitution became effective does not prove correct in reality. There is no genuine equality. The current situation might be defined as a paradox where equality between Greenlanders and Danes can be achieved by not treating them as equals”.²² The dissimilarities between Danes and Greenlanders also meant that the question of the matter rested on the differences of two cultures: “The Greenlanders belong with the Danes and are their friends, yet they are not Danes, but rather an independent people with its own language and culture, and with a different history (even though Denmark and Greenland also share a common history)”.²³

The Greenland Report of 1946 was seen as having a dampening effect on the forces and energy that grew out of World War II when Greenland was not being governed from Copenhagen and when there was a subsequent growth of self-confidence and hope for a future development in a distinctly different direction. The monopoly and protection system²⁴ were to be abolished. Denmark was regarded as the teacher for the underage country of Greenland – Greenlanders (and Danes) never had any doubt that they had much to learn and many skills to gain before a greater degree of self-administration/self-government could be realised: “The Danish government ought to feel its responsibility for the Greenland population and introduce a better social order through which to teach the Greenlanders independence”.²⁵

The lack of equality between the two groups posed a problem for cooperation, which had not been good to begin with. The report’s proposal for expanding the powers of the Provincial Council and municipal councils was well received, but at the same time there were complaints about, for example, workmen not being able to obtain management positions in their fields:²⁶ “It is fair enough for large enterprises in Greenland to have Danish bosses, since no Greenlander can currently cope. But the ordinary workshops should have a Greenlander as an independent boss”.²⁷

²¹ Holger Balle, *Kalâtdlit*, December 1954, p. 10, originally from “News about the Greenland church”.

²² Knud Hertling, *Kalâtdlit*, November/December 1953, p. 13.

²³ Holger Balle, *Kalâtdlit*, December 1954, p. 9.

²⁴ Ole Vinding, *Kalâtdlit*, September 1948, p. 4.

²⁵ Ole Vinding, *Kalâtdlit*, September 1948, p. 5 (originally Carl Broberg from the article “Grønland og Danmark” [“Greenland and Denmark”], *Kulturkampen*, 1938, nos. 6-7).

²⁶ Editor Hans Olsen, *Kalâtdlit*, June 1950, p. 3.

²⁷ Carl Broberg, *Kalâtdlit*, June 1950, p. 7.

Frederik Lyngé is quoted in Carl Broberg's article of February 1954, where he questions whether or not Denmark ever put money into Greenland when taking into account the income from cryolite. Lyngé was someone who went very far in his efforts to assert the Greenlanders' position in relation to the Danes. However, nothing indicates that Lyngé harboured any desires for secession or independence.

Greenland should be formed into a modern society with the same opportunities and rights for its citizens as in Denmark. Denmark functioned as a role model in numerous ways as it was often the only other society that Greenlanders knew. Therefore, trade unions were also inspired by Danish ones.

When the legislation specified in the Commission's report [G-50 – JH] becomes effective, the "Co-operative National Trade Unions" will seek further negotiations with the Prime Minister's Office to bring about the necessary contact with the interested parties in Greenland and with the possible result that, through these negotiations, the trade unions in Denmark will be able to study conditions there and to start preliminary talks with the object of establishing a Greenland trade union for the protection of the interests of Greenland workers. We hope that these efforts on the part of the "Co-operative National Trade Unions" will be positively received by the Greenlanders so that a well-ordered, working society can be shaped in Greenland and lead to a good climate of co-operation between employer and employee.²⁸

Grønlandsposten (1942-1950)

In 1942, *Grønlandsposten* was established in Godthåb/Nuuk. The newspaper was printed in Danish and thus intended also for the educated Greenlanders.²⁹ Although the newspaper wished to forge ties between Danes and Greenlanders, it was not the most likely paper to publish criticism of social conditions.

In 1948, the paper began collaborating with *Atuagagdliutit*. Among other things, they lent, traded, and translated articles that might be of interest to their respective paper's readers. The editor of the paper changed a number of times during this period. The first editor, Christian Vibe, left in 1947 and Kjeld Rask Therkilsen took over. Kristoffer Lyngé was, for a time, the editor in chief. From August 1949, Jacob Sehested-Grove was the editor.

In his article "We do not want access to fishing in Greenland's coastal waters and fjords for Danish fishermen", Lauritz Kreutzmann criticised the fishermen's conditions and the granting of fishing permits to non-Greenland fishermen. In addition,

²⁸ Carl Broberg, *Kalátliit*, July/August 1950, pp. 3-4

²⁹ Christian Vibe, 1947.

criticism was also given concerning the Provincial Council's failure to protect the citizens' (fishermen's) interests.³⁰

The proposed appointment of the Greenland Commission in 1948 inspired a number of articles in which both Danes and Greenlanders spoke out on issues relevant to the Commission. Interest in the debate blossomed, and the paper received contributions from all over the country, although most of them came from Danes and high-ranking Greenlanders. In response to this series of articles, the paper initiated a poll to gauge who was for or against the appointment.

The series of articles began in no. 3, 1948, where it was stated that now was the time for a new and better form of government that could be achieved through a commission (assistant Kåle Rosing, Nuuk). It should comprise specialists without any interference from Greenlanders! Trust and contact between Copenhagen and Greenland had been damaged in the years immediately following the war rather than during the war (assistant Jens Friis, Nuuk).³¹ The following issue described debate meetings in Egedesminde. Articles poured in from all quarters: Unclear conditions and bad solutions require specialists (Stud farm manager N.I. Høgh, Godthåb); When Greenlanders are represented on the commission, it will mean that things cannot be decided over people's heads (Pastor Niels Lyng, Fiskerøset); The administration and industry should be reformed by means of a commission (Provincial Council member, head catechist Søren Kaspersen, Egedesminde).³²

The matter of the commission's appointment continued to be turned inside out in the next three issues of the paper: Yes to a commission if it means that the Provincial Council's wish for a change in the administration's laws is fulfilled and is appointed in Greenland and that the Provincial Council and Parliament have the final say when the democratic rules are followed (Provincial Council member, assistant Peter Nielsen, Godhavn); all commercial groups must participate as well as both North and South Greenlanders (priest Andreas Høegh and Provincial Council member, assistant Peter Fleischer, Umanak);³³ the report of 1946 proposed a five-year plan that ought to be adhered to; if commissions are to be appointed, there should be several of them with different work areas and they should be located in Greenland so that the Greenlanders' opinions can be included (colonial manager Frederik Lyng, K`utdligssat);³⁴ a commission can incorporate the external and internal development in Greenland and can shape a solid foundation for the future (school principal, Frederik Nielsen, Julianehåb).³⁵

The poll, which ended with no. 10, 16 May 1948, indicated that 80.5% were in favour of a commission.

³⁰ 1947, no. 5, pp. 97-98.

³¹ 1948, no. 3, pp. 29-30.

³² 1948, no. 4, pp. 42-43.

³³ 1948, no. 5, pp. 55-56.

³⁴ In his book, Thorvald Stauning mentions Frederik Lyng when Lyng lived in Egedesminde and called him "... one of new Greenland's men. The Greenlander Frederik. Lyng is a member of the Provincial Council. In a fine speech, in Danish, he greeted the first prime minister to visit Greenland and expressed the Greenland people's happiness that this minister comes from the people". Thorvald Stauning, 1999, pp. 64-65.

³⁵ 1948, no. 6, pp. 64-66.

³⁶ 1948, no. 7, pp. 78-81.

The following year, the paper briefly touched on meetings in Denmark that included a senior UN official (Dr Victor Hoo, Deputy Secretary-General for trusteeship affairs), the government, and the Greenland Administration. Eske Brun, the director of the Greenland Administration, declared that since the major colonial powers had opposed the UN's request that they control the colonies, a Danish invitation to the UN for sending controllers to Greenland would be resented.³⁷

Throughout much of this period, issues relating to Greenland's fisheries made people's blood boil. In a summary of a discussion between Frederik Lynge and Gerhard Egede, Lynge protested against Prime Minister Hedtoft's "ultimatum" of 1948, which favoured giving foreign fishermen access to Greenland waters. He also protested that the Provincial Council had surrendered much too quickly and had not consulted the population. Gerhard Egede replied that a rejection of Hedtoft's proposal would have curbed development. He maintained that despite the fact that not all the items in the proposal were desirable, the Provincial Council had only signed it after careful deliberation.³⁸ The editor Kjeld Rask Therkilsen, who reported the discussion, labelled Frederik Lynge as a reactionary, while Gerhard Egede was characterised as progressive.³⁹ Frederik Lynge was from North Greenland (Egedesminde), where people were more likely to be critical of the government in Copenhagen. Gerhard Egede, on the other hand, was a priest from Narsaq.

Equality between Danes and Greenlanders was as hotly debated as the fisheries issue. In general, much debate about relations between Danes and Greenlanders took place. One article by sheep breeder Abel Christiansen concerned economic equality in Greenland: "Everyone must be Danish. Is there any advantage to being Danish? Yes, since there is no equality". Abel Christiansen, however, emphasised that he liked Danes, but that there should be equality.⁴⁰

In 1950, according to colonial manager Hans Jakobi, the relationship between Danes and Greenlanders was characterised as follows:

I hope that even more Greenlanders will gradually realise that among other things it is Denmark's task to establish such a relationship of trust with the population that they can be helped and counselled and have their eyes opened to the opportunities that exist for securing better living conditions through better organised work and better utilisation of the opportunities available, and not regard us as foreign elements.⁴¹

Augo Lynge was convinced that through information, education, and acquiring new skills, Greenlanders could develop and approach the European level. The perception that people of colour, including Greenlanders, were inferior to Europeans

³⁷ 1949, no. 1, p. 10.

³⁸ 1949, no. 3, pp. 31-32.

³⁹ Kjeld Rask Therkilsen, *Grønlandsposten*, 1949, no. 3, p. 31.

⁴⁰ 1949, no. 9, pp. 114-115.

⁴¹ Hans Jakobi, *Grønlandsposten*, January 1950, p. 9.

was an obstacle to equality. This perspective, however, had already been disputed by Halfdan Hendriksen, the chair of the Commission's 1949 trip: "It is my view that there are no differences between the various nations and population groups in the world other than those determined by geographic or economic conditions".⁴²

Augo Lynge commented thus: "These are apparently quite ordinary words, yet they imply a revolution in perception and they will have the most extensive consequences when realised. They constitute nothing less than a recognition of the Greenlander as being just as good as any other citizen of the world!"⁴³

Atuagagdliutit/Grønlandsposten – AG (1952-)

In 1952, the two Nuuk newspapers were merged and made bilingual. During Constitution Day celebrations on 5 June 1953 in Nuuk, Augo Lynge commented:

Now Greenland is a part of Denmark and the two-hundred-year colonial period has ended. The time of guardianship is over and from now on Greenland is on equal footing with other parts of the Kingdom of Denmark. Henceforth, we are one people; we are the same country and share the same destiny. Greenland and Denmark, so different in nature, are now one political unit. It is possible that some individuals in Greenland and Denmark might dispute the timing of this annexation, and that some might think it premature, but it is just as true that everyone in Greenland has the same desire: Greenland's unification with Denmark sooner or later, and that what has happened today is the wish of the majority.⁴⁴

On Constitution Day, Frederik Lynge spoke in Egedesminde: "This assimilation into the Kingdom of Denmark does not mean that we lose our national sentiment and character, or our language, but instead we must summon up the courage to compete with the rest of Denmark".⁴⁵

In August 1953, two Greenland representatives were to be elected to the Danish *Folketing*. During that month, the candidates were given space in the paper to present their programmes. As is well-known, Augo Lynge and Frederik Lynge won.

Augo Lynge's programme called for raising the standard of living, developing production technology in the fishing industry, and improving the society's human material (!) by means of spiritual and cultural progress. He concluded by saying: "The Greenland members of parliament must not destroy the goodwill that exists in Denmark toward Greenland. This good relationship of trust must be retained

⁴² Halfdan Hendriksen in Augo Lynge, *Grønlandsposten*, January 1950, p. 25.

⁴³ Augo Lynge, *Grønlandsposten*, January 1950, p. 25.

⁴⁴ AG, 1953, p. 210.

⁴⁵ AG, 1953, p. 213.

and intensified, and sensitive issues must be solved without affecting this relationship of trust between Greenland and Denmark”.⁴⁶

Frederik Nielsen, a boarding school principal for lower secondary students in Egedesminde/Aasiaat, was not elected to the *Folketing* in 1953. In his program, he touched upon the significance of the constitution thenceforth becoming applicable in Greenland:

We are aware that there have been occasions when the authorities have not always respected people, their homes, or their property rights. The authorities – invoking their rights – have sometimes abused the Greenlander’s faith in authority. But now, with the aid of the Constitution’s validity in Greenland, we can defend our rights as citizens in the Kingdom of Denmark.⁴⁷

Frederik Nielsen commented on the density of the population: “... I am in favour of the population moving together. Nowadays, one cannot continue living in places where there is no industry or where the industry is not sufficient for the necessary production”.⁴⁸

The American air base in Thule was frequently mentioned in *AG*, often in small items about the air base and the construction of the new settlement. In his article, “Goodbye to Thule”, Helge Christensen wrote:

... no pressure was exerted on the Thule people either by the Danes or the Americans [to move – JH] ... one of the best sealers said calmly and deliberately: ‘When we sealers move, the others will also leave because they can’t live without us.’ It may be true that everyone wanted to leave Thule ...⁴⁹

Nûp Avisia and Godthåb Avis (1951-1952)

Both *Nûp Avisia* and *Godthåb Avis* were local Nuuk newspapers established in 1951 and published four to five times a week. Kristoffer Lynge was the editor of the Greenland edition, while Sehested-Grove was editor of the Danish edition. The papers were typically one to two pages long. On par with *Atuagagdliutit/Grønlands-posten*, these papers provided a forum for opinions from both Greenlanders and Danes.

Not surprisingly, *Godthåb Avis* published an article about the new Greenland Defence Treaty of 27 April 1951.⁵⁰ Concerning this subject, Eske Brun was quoted

⁴⁶ Augo Lynge, *AG*, 1953, p. 302.

⁴⁷ Frederik Nielsen, *AG*, 1953, p. 308.

⁴⁸ Frederik Nielsen, *AG*, 1953, p. 309.

⁴⁹ Helge Christensen, *AG*, 1953, p. 270.

⁵⁰ *Godthåb Avis*, 28 April 1951, p. 1.

as saying: “Finally, we have confirmed once again the measures to be taken for the protection of the Greenland population’s rights ...”⁵¹

Kristoffer Lynge criticised Danish workers who were coming to Greenland by stating: “... that the Danish workers are not always good role models for the Greenlanders, neither from the work nor from a moral perspective”.⁵²

Harald Olrik, a former employee of the Greenland Administration, was quoted on 15 January 1951 for this harsh criticism of the Greenland Acts: “... it is unreasonable that Danish taxpayers must pay for the large deficit that will materialise. Olrik pointed out that the estimated equipment and operating costs were extremely optimistic ...”.⁵³

In Sika Heilmann’s opinion, future generations of Greenlanders should be proficient in Danish: “All of our children who are able to should learn to speak Danish since they will be the ones to tackle the future, and they should not be discouraged by being told that, as Greenlanders, they should not try their hand at the Danish language”.⁵⁴

The objective of the *Nunavta Kitornai* society, which offered instruction in Danish, was: “If we do not learn the languages of others, we will be shut out of their culture and their conception of the world”.⁵⁵

Greenland and Denmark’s relationship, in Sika Heilmann’s opinion, had formerly been and was still one where: “Right from childhood, we understood that up here, Denmark was regarded as a mother, and that perception still applies ...”⁵⁶

Nasigfik

Udkigsposten was founded in 1936 in Ummannaq but was later closed down in 1950. It reopened in 1954 as a bilingual paper. It was edited by Svend Leibhardt, Svend Erik Rasmussen, and Kristian Nielsen. The paper was bilingual in order to build a bridge between the two groups in Greenland:

I attach a great deal of importance to our newspaper being in both languages because this way we may perhaps get to know each other better. Those with Greenlandic as their mother tongue, and those with Danish, belong to the same people. But our ways of thinking and our attitudes toward life are different.⁵⁷

Regarding the imminent closure of two trading stations, Svend Erik Rasmussen directed the following criticism against the authorities and, in particular, the gov-

⁵¹ Eske Brun, *Godthåb Avis*, 2 May 1951, p. 1.

⁵² Kristoffer Lynge, *Godthåb Avis*, 4 May 1951, p. 1.

⁵³ *Godthåb Avis*, 15 January, 1951, p. 1.

⁵⁴ Sika Heilmann, *Godthåb Avis*, 1 February 1951, p. 1.

⁵⁵ Jørgen Lund, *Godthåb Avis*, 25 January 1951, p. 1.

⁵⁶ Sika Heilmann, *Godthåb Avis*, 1 February 1951, p. 1.

⁵⁷ Svend Erik Rasmussen, *Nasigfik*, August 1954, p. 1.

error: “If one removes – contrary to the population’s wishes – the shop and (as appears to be the case) the catechist as well as the midwife, then coercion is being practiced”.⁵⁸

Officially, people could move voluntarily, but such was not the case according to Svend Erik Rasmussen and Abraham Korneliussen. Feelings expressed in the newspaper stated that the decisions to close trading stations were being taken over the heads of the population:

... when the governor [P.H. Lundsteen – JH] was in Igdlorssuit last year, he decided at a meeting that Igdlorssuit should be closed down, but when the inhabitants are against it, it is coercion. But I am of the opinion that this is terribly wrong since I have read that the stations can only be relocated if it is in accordance with the inhabitants’ free will.⁵⁹

Johannes Leibhardt expressed his dissatisfaction about the inequality between Greenlanders and Danes, stating that Greenlanders came second where access to electric power was concerned: “We know that Greenland has been united with Denmark and that the Greenlander has thus become a citizen in the same society as the Dane. But when will we be rid of the colossal discrimination between the Greenlander and the Dane?”⁶⁰

In addition to the newspapers mentioned previously, a number of other newspapers dealt with the above topics. The remarks published in these newspapers do not appear to be significantly different in comparison to the ones reviewed above.

Atuagagdliutit (1861-1952)

Greenland’s first newspaper was established in 1861. Hinrich Rink, who was an inspector in South Greenland at the time, was the instigator. The purpose of the paper was to strengthen the Greenland identity. During the middle of the nineteenth century, people feared the loss of the Greenland way of life. They also feared that the culture would die out as a result of meeting the Western (and seemingly superior) culture. Among other things, the paper published collected Greenland legends and stories. In the 1930s, the paper’s objectives changed; it then turned its focus to the current social situation and the changes in commercial culture as well as the pattern of settlements.

Sujumut

Fremad, founded in 1934 in Sletten/Narsaq in the Julianehåb/Qaqortoq district, was edited by Frederik Høegh, a trading station manager. In 1946, the paper was

⁵⁸ Svend Erik Rasmussen, *Nasigfik*, October-November 1954, p. 2.

⁵⁹ Abraham Korneliussen, *Nasigfik*, October-November 1954, p. 5.

⁶⁰ Johannes Leibhardt, *Nasigfik*, December 1954, p. 3.

published monthly. The last page of each issue contained a Bible study section. In April 1946, a Danish article appeared in the paper, but otherwise the paper was mainly printed in Greenlandic. The paper was discontinued in 1949.

Avangnamiok (1913-1958)

Nordgrønlanderen, published in Greenlandic, was founded in 1913 in Godhavn/Qeqertarsuaq, the capital of North Greenland at the time.

Regional differences between the northern and southern areas of Greenland had previously given rise to disagreements, including joint cases in the Provincial Councils that affected the whole country. Fishing, which had been Greenland's staple industry since 1926, was primarily carried out in South Greenland, while sealing remained the main occupation in North Greenland. A feeling of dissociation could not have been avoided. To a certain extent, the north represented the original Greenland, while the south stood for the new Greenland and included an educated, concentrated population living in colonies. However, the settlement pattern in the north also reflected the trend of people moving towards larger communities. The border between North and South Greenland was located at Egedesminde/Aasiaat and Holsteinsborg/Sisimiut.

The paper contained a number of translated articles from *Readers' Digest*, as well as articles about horticulture in Greenland, the advancement of sealing, the improvement of health, and Bible study. Many pictures of royalty and major events abroad, particularly in Denmark, were also included.

In his travel book titled "My Travels in Greenland",⁶¹ Thorvald Stauning describes meeting someone named Dalager in Godhavn in 1930: "At a gathering on board the ship, I made the acquaintance of a refined Greenlandic named Dalager. He is an assistant to the governor and functioned most capably as an interpreter both in Godhavn and other places during my travels to the north".⁶² This very same Mr Dalager was editor of *Avangnamiok* for many years.

Conclusion

Direct references

1) Is there a direct reference in newspapers and periodicals to different opinions regarding the relationship between Greenland and Denmark?

In general, the opinions regarding Greenland and Denmark's relationship are about citizens in the same Kingdom who possess differences in language, lifestyle, and mentality. It was, however, hoped that the feeling of belonging and cooperation could be intensified. The lack of equality between Greenlanders and Danes, particularly in the areas of pay and managerial positions, was nevertheless not accepted. As Greenlanders pushed up against the boundaries be-

⁶¹ Thorvald Stauning, *Min Grønlandsferd [My Travels in Greenland]*, Stenbjerg Press, Give, 1999.

⁶² *Ibid.* p. 68.

tween themselves and the Danes, particularly in certain areas, for example, forced resettlement, dissatisfaction with the conditions and the division of power increased during this time.

- 2) Is there any criticism of Greenland politicians about this issue?

Examples of ordinary citizens criticising conditions are hard to find. The situation among Greenland politicians was very different. A significant part of the relations among the Greenland politicians sprang from the relations with Denmark and functioned within a prescribed framework. Stepping outside that framework without rebuke from colleagues was difficult.

- 3) Is there any mention or criticism of Greenland's colonial status?

Inequality, particularly in terms of pay and lack of managerial positions, was a topic that provoked dissatisfaction, but such complaints were directed at the Danish authorities and first appeared during the reform. In general, people wished to leave the old system behind and jump on the development bandwagon. However, the lack of certainty about which course to choose caused some hesitation at first.

- 4) Are there any pronouncements in Greenland concerning the Greenland issue in the UN?

The Greenland issue in the UN was barely touched upon. Newspapers contained notices and information about the defence treaty of 1951 between the US and Denmark, but these notices apparently did not provoke comments from the Greenlanders.

- 5) Are there any direct demands for independence?

The sources contain no sign of any movements or desires in favour of independence for Greenland. Based on the lack of references in the source materials, I believe that such a desire was beyond the Greenlanders' frame of reference.

- 6) Are there any indications that people wanted a greater degree of self-determination than what the politicians found acceptable?

The above-mentioned inequality of work and pay caused dissatisfaction. Greenlanders wanted information, education, and better skills, but these desires were to be achieved in collaboration with Denmark – with Denmark as the instructing party. On the parliamentary and cultural level, people hoped that the future would bring about the *de facto* equality the constitutional changes of 1953 had created in theory. When *de facto* equality did not come about, criticism of the conditions surfaced, but not until later.

- 7) Is this issue ever mentioned or discussed?

An increased right of self-determination was desired, but as mentioned above, only within the framework of collaboration with Denmark.

- 8) Is there any mention of Thule Air Base or any of the other American bases?

The defence treaty of 1951, as well as the construction of Thule Air Base and its purpose, were described in the newspapers. There is no mention in the sources of the relocation, which was later described as the forced transfer of the native people of Thule.

Indirect references

Frederik Lynge and Gerhard Egede's discussion indicates that some individuals were not exceedingly happy about the direction the development was taking.

The sources do not contain any references that indicate there were independent political movements making demands on Denmark or the US. The *Pekatigît Kalâtdlit* society was apparently the only independent opponent to the powers in existence, partly due to the society's location outside of Greenland, and partly because it was economically independent of the Greenland Administration.⁶³

However, this society did not, despite its critical attitude towards the system, entertain any thoughts, i.e. wishes for secession, about making radical changes in the relationship between Denmark and Greenland.

Concluding remarks

From the perspective of world history, the relationship between Denmark and Greenlanders has been extraordinary. For quite some time, Greenlanders were regarded as exemplary noble savages who had adapted to a very difficult environment. The Danes wanted to protect Greenland's culture against the influence of the Western world. During his visit in 1930, Thorvald Stauning explained:

If, after the abolition of private monopoly in 1774 there had been an opening for free market forces, the Eskimos would have become slaves of the capitalist traders, who would then have settled in Greenland, and the Eskimos would have become something other than what they are now. (...) And now after 180 years, there would not be much left of the old, free hunters.⁶⁴

The Danes perceived their relationship with Greenland and its people as involving assistance towards greater independence. At the same time, Denmark, the colonial master, unquestionably wanted to gain economic rewards from the country. The Greenlanders should stick to their knitting – sealing, which formed the foundation for running the colonies until the 1920s. Maintaining this circumstance included, among other things, closing the country to the outside world.

In the twentieth century, the world shrank and, over time, Greenland's isolation became more and more difficult to maintain. During World War II, Greenland acquired a strategically important role and the country's population caught a glimpse of a larger world through America's presence. More rights, freedoms, and obligations were all part of the new prospects for the Greenlanders around 1950 – when opportunities increased, so did official responsibilities. The reform meant that conditions would change drastically, but hopes for the future were high. Many Greenlanders, however, expressed dissatisfaction with their position on the side-

⁶³ The society did, however, receive a fixed annual contribution from the Provincial Council.

⁶⁴ Thorvald Stauning, 1999, pp. 129-130.

lines during development. Why were Greenlanders kept out of leadership positions? And why was unequal pay so rampant? These were common questions.

Equality, education, and information were some of the catchwords used by Greenland politicians. As time gradually passed, criticism arose, but not until after 1954.

Here, the point of departure was to review the sources for evidence of divergent viewpoints about Greenland and Denmark's relationship. Apparently, during this time any form of criticism of the relationship was offensive to both Danes and Greenlanders. Nevertheless, trained debaters did not hold back if they had something on their minds. Frederik Nielsen, Augo Lynge, and Frederik Lynge are examples of people with differing opinions who participated in the debates. Indisputably, extreme criticism was nevertheless not tolerated by either the Danish authorities or by Greenlanders. Two examples show that people were actually expelled, either from the colony or from the country (Svend Frederiksen and Augo Lynge).

Appendix 13 · Icelandic claims to Greenland

Margit Bech Larsen

Introduction – historical background

One aspect of the Danish decision makers' considerations with regard to Greenland was an issue involving Icelandic claims to sovereignty over Greenland.¹ The issue culminated in the years 1952-1954, but as early as about 1918, the notion that Iceland had a historical claim to Greenland had already taken root among certain groups in Iceland. In 1925, the Icelandic Parliament, the *Alting*, debated the Greenland issue. Against the backdrop of the Danish-Norwegian conflict over East Greenland in the early 1930s, the Icelandic Parliament unanimously decided that the government should also “look after Iceland's interests” in the issue of Greenland – including the matter of sovereignty over Greenland.² Throughout the 1940s the Member of Parliament for the Independence Party, Pétur Ottesen, put forward a series of proposals concerning the decision of the *Alting* in the Greenland issue.³ In 1948, a three-man commission was established to examine the legal aspects of the Icelandic sovereignty claim.

Ottesen based his proposal on theories that had been put forward by his fellow countryman Jón Dúason, who, since 1915, had been a tireless advocate of Icelandic sovereignty over Greenland. Taking as his point of departure Erik the Red's settlement in Greenland after the year 985, Dúason believed he could prove that Greenland came under Danish control purely by virtue of being Iceland's colonial dependency in 1380 when Iceland, together with Norway, came under the rule of

¹ The issue is only superficially described in existing literature. There is a very brief description by the historian Gunnar Karlsson of a paradoxical imperialism in Iceland in the 1920s and 1930s, when the idea of asserting a claim to sovereignty over Greenland, according to Karlsson, gained considerable support. See Gunnar Karlsson's *Iceland's 1100 Years: The History of a Marginal Society*, 2000, p. 313, and *The Nordic Peace*, Clive Archer and Pertti Joenniemi (eds.), 2003, p. 64. In addition, the issue is discussed in a short article by Jón Ólafur Ísberg, “Íslensk nýlendustefna”, from the journal *Sagnir*, vol. 10, 1989, pp. 90-95. The description here is mainly based on primary source material from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' archives, journal no. 8.U.73, 1 January 1952 through 3 January 1958, packet II, and on Kristján Sveinsson's unpublished MA degree paper from Aarhus University, 1998, entitled *Den islandske Grønlandssag. Kravet på Grønland i islandsk politik 1918-1960 [Iceland's Greenland Issue: Claim to Greenland in Icelandic Politics 1918-1960]*, which provides a thorough interpretation of events.

² The issue is outlined by Pétur Ottesen in the document “Forslag til tingsbeslutning om Grønlandsspørgsmålet forelagt af Pétur Ottesen den 3. februar 1953” [“Proposals concerning the decision of the *Alting* in the Greenland issue, put forward by Pétur Ottesen on 3 February 1953”]. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73. See also: Sveinsson, 1998, pp. 7-59.

³ In 1945, 1947, and 1948. “Forslag til tingsbeslutning om Grønlandsspørgsmålet forelagt af Pétur Ottesen den 3. februar 1953” [“Proposals concerning the decision of the *Alting* in the Greenland issue, put forward by Pétur Ottesen on 3 February 1953”]. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73. Ottesen was a member of the *Independence Party*, which was part of the governing coalition with the *Progressive Party* from 1950-1956. However, he stood in opposition to his own party on this issue. There are no clear divisions or motives along party lines in the Greenland issue.

the Danish king.⁴ In Dúason's view, Greenland's colonial relationship with Denmark should have ended after the personal union of Iceland with Denmark in 1918, and it certainly should have ended in 1944 when Iceland became an independent republic. According to Dúason, Iceland had a historical right to Greenland.⁵

It is difficult to reach any conclusion about how much support there was for the issue among the Icelanders. In January 1952, however, it seemed as if Ottesen and Dúason had been successful in raising support for their claim. Certainly the Danish envoy to Iceland, Bodil Begtrup, indicated in a report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Copenhagen that she thought the issue was attracting increasing attention; she stressed that Jón Dúason had been chosen as "man of the year" by the readers of one of Iceland's main newspapers, *Tíminn*, in a Christmas contest.⁶ In January 1952, Begtrup also reported about an article in the major Icelandic newspaper *Morgunblaðið* that was written by school teacher Sigurdur Magnússon. In this article, in connection with the account of a journey to Greenland, he suggested that Jón Dúason be made Minister of Greenland and "lead us in a campaign against the Danes presenting Jón's most exhaustive demands. Maybe this would at least result in the manuscripts being returned sooner and our sailors being permitted to store supplies in Greenland".⁷

Magnusson's article outlines the central issues around which Iceland's claim to Greenland revolved: 1) *National pride*: For Dúason, the Greenland issue was primarily a question of honour and the assertion of historical rights. During the process of Iceland's detachment from Denmark over several years, strong nationalist sentiments had developed on the island, furnishing the conditions for Dúason's theories with their focus on past days of glory, justice, and honour; 2) *Permission for Icelandic fishermen to land their catches and store supplies on Greenland*: Fishing had always been one of Iceland's main industries, and after World War II, large sums were invested in the modernisation of the country's fishing industry. In the early 1950s, however, international competition over local fishing grounds had increased so much that the Icelanders looked for new opportunities, and Greenland offered obvious attractions. The problem, though, was that the large distance between Iceland and the waters around Greenland meant that fishing there was difficult without bases on land where supplies and fuel could be stored and the catches could be transhipped. For this reason, Iceland required special agreements with the Danish government;⁸ 3) *Issue of the manuscripts*: On several occasions, the return of the

⁴ The Icelanders settled in the present-day Julianehåb district, and at its zenith the Norse settlement comprised approximately 3,000 inhabitants. Around the year 1500, however, the Norse settlements declined. See, for example, Jón R. Hjálmarsson, *History of Iceland*, Reykjavik, 1993, and *Ekstra Bladet*, 4 February 1953, "Íslandske politikere vil have Grønland tilbage" ("Icelandic politicians want Greenland back). The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73.

⁵ See, for example, Jón Dúason, *Die koloniale Stellung Grönlands* [*Greenland's Colonial Position*], Göttingen, 1955.

⁶ Report by Begtrup to C.A.C. Brun, 9 February 1952. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73.

⁷ Report by Begtrup to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 26 January 1952. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73.

⁸ See, for instance, Sveinsson, 1998, pp. 79ff. For a description of economic development in Iceland and the importance of fishing; see also: Björn Thorsteinsson, *Ísland* [*Iceland*], *Politikens Danmarks Historie* [*Politikens History of Denmark*], 1985, p. 288.

Icelandic manuscripts by Denmark was linked to the Greenland issue. In certain circles the notion prevailed that by pressuring the Danes on the matter of sovereignty, it might be possible to reach a special agreement on fishing in Greenland waters or bring about the return of the manuscripts.⁹

The first two circumstances in particular were key issues in the early 1950s. Naturally, changing Icelandic governments wanted optimal conditions for Icelandic fishermen with regard to fishing in Greenland waters, but there was never any support for the more radical ideas about Icelandic claims to Greenland. Dúason and his supporters were also proponents of extended fishing rights in Greenland waters, a territory which they described as a “land of milk and honey” where you could “haul in the fish,” and which was rich in natural resources such as coal and ore.¹⁰ However, they were opposed to compromising on the issue of sovereignty in favour of a more pragmatic policy and negotiations with the Danish government on fishing rights in Greenland waters. The debate in the early 1950s was characterised by a stark contrast between the government’s negotiation strategy and the uncompromising stance of the Dúason faction on the matter of sovereignty.

Dúason had no doubts about Iceland’s right to claim sovereignty over Greenland. In an article of November 1952, he attacked what he called the “*Morgunbladid* clique”, namely a group of people with connections to the editorial staff of the country’s biggest newspaper, the conservative *Morgunbladid*, because they had proposed that the government should consider how to improve conditions for the Icelandic ships that “fished in far away fishing grounds” (including Greenland). Dúason criticised this so-called clique for not counting Greenland waters as “domestic fishing grounds” – and thus belonging to Iceland. He asked:

Who could doubt the fact that the Greenland fishing grounds belong to Iceland or that the whole of Greenland belongs to Iceland and is under Icelandic supremacy? The *Morgunbladid* clique, which approve of the proposal, are not angered by the fact that the people [Icelanders] who discovered Greenland, explored it, occupied it, developed it and still own it, indeed are still developing it, have fewer rights there than any other nation and fewer rights than any other human being? This unpatriotic, half-Danish clique believes it is kind and charming of the Danes, our “fine Nordic kinsmen” to treat us in this way. What an unfathomable depth of servile spirit and lack of self-regard!

⁹ Also referred to in, for example, C.A.C. Brun’s report to Begtrup, 23 February 1953. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73.

¹⁰ In the article “Foråret er kommet til Grønland” [“Spring has come to Greenland”] in *Tíminn*, 24 April 1952, Jón Dúason talked of cod yields in Greenland waters that were better “than in anywhere else in the entire world,” and where the British and Faroese were simply “hauling in” the fish. See also report by Begtrup to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 26 January 1952, the Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73, according to which Sigurdur Magnússon, who is mentioned previously, described a “land of milk and honey,” and stated that “there are others apart from Jón Dúason who believe that Greenland, not only because of its mineral wealth, is one of the richest countries in the world”. See also: Sveinsson, 1998, p. 71.

(...) Why does it go unsaid that our “fine Nordic kinsmen” are the very same people who throughout the centuries have held our people in such servitude through suppression of commerce and bloody usury that our nation was practically stamped out and wiped off the face of the Earth – a “humanitarian” and “cultural effort”, which they are still engaged in against our national minority in Greenland.¹¹

Dúason’s demand was quite simply that the Danes should either relinquish Greenland to Iceland or fully open up the country to Icelandic industry. Otherwise, Iceland should significantly increase all taxes on Danish and Faroese ships and subsequently “appeal the Greenland case to an international court without delay”.¹² Negotiations on specific commercial rights, in Dúason’s opinion, should never be given higher priority than the struggle for the historical right to sovereignty over Greenland.

Dúason’s rhetoric was directed at an Icelandic people who were still very much under the influence of several years of struggle for their own sovereignty. Since the emergence of the Icelandic movement for independence in the atmosphere of romantic nationalism that prevailed among Icelandic students in Copenhagen in the 1830s, politics had for many Icelanders become synonymous with the struggle for independence.¹³ During the celebration of independence in June 1944, the republic was given prominence as an ancient institution in Iceland’s history, and the period from 1300 to 1944 was seen as a long struggle for freedom from the yoke of foreign powers.¹⁴ Icelandic identity was closely linked to this self-perception, and Dúason’s focus on Iceland as an oppressed country was one of the reasons why popular support for his demands grew. At the same time, it placed the issue of Greenland within the context of the Danish-Icelandic colonial relationship.

However, it was precisely this situation which led some Icelanders to call for a more moderate approach to Greenland. In February 1953, the editor of the news-

¹¹ Translation of an article by Jón Dúason in *Tíminn*, 6 November 1952: “Førstefødselsretten tilbudt for et måltid mad” [“Birthright sold for a mess of pottage”], the Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73. In the subsequent letter by Bodil Begtrup, she expressed her astonishment at the fact that a major government newspaper such as *Tíminn* found it necessary to give space to writing of this kind. Begtrup, report no. 629 to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 12 November 1952, the Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73. (cf. later treatment of the press debate in Iceland).

¹² Translation of the article in *Tíminn* by Jón Dúason, 6 November 1952: “Førstefødselsretten tilbudt for et måltid mad” [“Birthright sold for a mess of pottage”], UM 8.U.73. Dúason vehemently presented his theories from 1915 onwards. In 1927, he finished his dissertation; however, he was not awarded a doctorate either in Iceland or from the University of Copenhagen, as his work was considered unscientific. He finally acquired a Ph.D. in law from Oslo University in 1928. Generally, his work was heavily criticised by law experts. See also: Sveinsson, 1998, p. 48.

¹³ The Icelandic historian Gunnar Karlsson highlights Iceland’s geographical isolation and the structures of Icelandic society, with its high social and geographical mobility, as background factors to this nationalism. According to Karlsson, Icelanders were particularly receptive to nationalism, partly because “the Icelander had so little else to identify with – no estate or class, no district or region”. Gunnar Karlsson, “The Emergence of Nationalism in Iceland” in *Ethnicity and Nation Building in the Nordic World*, Sven Tägil (ed.), 1995, pp. 55-59.

¹⁴ Guðmundur Hálfðanarson “Discussing Europe: Icelandic nationalism and European integration”, in *Iceland and European Integration: On the Edge*, Baldur Thorhallsson (ed.), Routledge, 2004, p. 131.

paper *Tíminn*, Thorarinn Thorarinsson, wrote that there was a significant number of people who felt that the Icelanders should not demand sovereignty over Greenland, even if they had the right to in former times since, due to its previous history and small population, it was not fitting for Iceland to have power over another country or nation. Iceland's approach to the Greenland issue should be to seek to ensure that the Greenlanders themselves came to manage their own country. Thorarinsson's own attitude was that the Icelanders should "hold out a helping and encouraging hand to their powerless neighbours". He felt that the Icelanders should help the Greenlanders to attain independence, but that until this happened, Denmark and Iceland should have the same rights to Greenland – and, if necessary, the case should be decided by the International Court of Justice in The Hague.¹⁵

Establishment of a three-man commission and Pétur Ottesen's proposal in the Icelandic Parliament

The post-war economic upswing in Iceland led to large investments in the country's fishing industry, and for the first time, use of the fishing grounds around Greenland became a real possibility. This upswing also led to a focus once again on the matter of Icelandic sovereignty over Greenland, and the Greenland debate was rekindled in the Icelandic Parliament when Pétur Ottesen put forward a proposal in 1947 for a parliamentary decision calling upon the Icelandic government to work towards recognition of Icelandic commercial rights in Greenland. The result was that in 1948 the Icelandic government established a three-man commission to examine the judicial aspects of Iceland's demand on Greenland. In December 1952, the findings of the commission were presented in complete confidentiality to the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the title of "*Undersøgelse af hvorvidt Island kan have retskrav på Grønland*" [*Examination of the extent to which Iceland has legal claims to Greenland*].¹⁶

The members of the commission were the High Court judge Gizur Bergsteinsson, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs international law expert Hans G. Andersen, and law professor Olafur Johannesson at the University of Reykjavik. Bergsteinsson put together a draft for the commission that the two others subsequently compared with their own examinations and conclusions.¹⁷ The commission was later criticised by both Dúason and Ottesen, who believed that the work was not "thorough enough" and that the issue was being dragged out because it was not being worked on full-

¹⁵ Article in *Tíminn*, 8 February 1953, by editor Thorarinn Thorarinsson. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73. In the margins of the report with the translated article, Deputy Under-Secretary of State C.A.C. Brun noted: "Th. Th.'s article is priceless". Bodil Begtrup, 9 February 1953, no. VI, report to the minister of foreign affairs. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73.

¹⁶ Begtrup to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 30 December 1952: "Islands krav på suverænitet over Grønland, nr. 719" ["Iceland's claim to sovereignty over Greenland, no. 719]. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73.

¹⁷ Postscript by Bergsteinsson, 20 November 1952. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73.

time.¹⁸ There was also dissatisfaction with the commission's conclusion, which, on the basis of the ruling by the Permanent Court of International Justice on the 1933 case of Norway's claim to East Greenland, stressed that the Icelanders could not claim sovereignty over Greenland. Bergsteinsson concluded that:

The only thing the Icelanders can do and ought to do is to try through diplomatic channels to attain commercial rights in Greenland. The Danes still have an unsettled debt with the Icelanders for their suppression of commerce over many centuries. Conceding rights to Greenland could be part of their effort to make up for several centuries of injustice.¹⁹

In August 1952, the Danish envoy Bodil Begtrup had already reported back on a confidential conversation with the Icelandic minister of foreign affairs, Bjarni Benediktsson, in which he had stated that:

The expert opinion would probably be negative and that the government would thus reach a formal decision on the issue, but that considering the heated interest that had always surrounded the matter, he considered it necessary for the government to present the result of the lawyers' examinations and deliberations to the Icelandic Parliament.²⁰

This statement indicated that the commission's aim was also to enable the Icelandic government to use its opinion to stifle the issue in Parliament. According to historian Kristján Sveinsson, the reason why the Icelandic government needed the conclusions of the commission could have been because, following the large-scale protests of 1946 in connection with the installation of the United States Naval Air Base Keflavik, any issue that could appeal in any way to Icelandic nationalism had to be treated with extreme caution – “without nationalistic arguments or statements being either offensive or rejected as invalid in any way”.²¹

¹⁸ Report by Begtrup to the Danish National Archives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 3 December 1953, no. 688, “Islands ret til Grønland” [“Iceland's right to Greenland”] and report by Begtrup to Foreign Minister, H.C. Hansen, 23 February 1954, No. VIII, “Islands krav på Grønland” [“Iceland's claim to Greenland”]. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73. Here, it is noted, among other things, that Jón Dúason expressed his criticism of the commission in a 188-page book, of which 250 copies were in print.

¹⁹ Conclusion by Gizur Bergsteinsson, 1 December 1951. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73. In “Brev til udenrigsministeren fra folkeretsspecialisten Hans G. Andersen og professor Olafur Johannesson, dateret 10. nov. 1952” [“Letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs from international law experts Hans G. Andersen and Professor Olafur Johannesson, dated 10 November 1952”], the two other commission members support this conclusion.

²⁰ Report No. XXVI from Begtrup to Prime Minister Erik Eriksen, 22 August 1952. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73. Bodil Begtrup was already able to inform the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in March 1952 that both the head of the commission, Gizur Bergsteinsson, and commission member Hans Andersen had found that they did not think that Iceland could put forward a demand for sovereignty. Begtrup to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (C.A.C. Brun), 18 March 1952. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73.

²¹ Sveinsson, 1998, p. 85.

The commission's report was only published on 16 February 1953. Prior to its publication, Member of Parliament Pétur Ottesen, somewhat "unexpectedly", presented the following proposal for a decision to the Parliament on 3 February:

The Parliament decides to call upon the government to immediately put forward the demand to the Danish government to recognise Iceland's full sovereignty over Greenland. If the Danish government does not approve the demand, the Icelandic Parliament will announce its intention to refer the issue to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.²²

Prime Minister Steingrímur Steinthorsson said to Begtrup that same evening that: "The Icelandic government could be expected to oppose the proposal, even though the approaching elections made it difficult".²³ The problem for the Icelandic government was that, though it was aware of the pointlessness of such a demand for sovereignty over Greenland,²⁴ resistance to it, as already mentioned, could be viewed as unpatriotic and could be abused by the opposition. Moreover, there were economic aspects that had to be taken into consideration. Iceland's most important trade – fishing – was very much bound to the issue²⁵ and this meant that the government had to tread with care until parliamentary elections in summer 1953. Thus, there was a strong domestic policy aspect to the issue. Begtrup reported that: "The Icelandic government will have to arrange some kind of negotiations with the Danish government on fishing in West Greenland waters; however, Bjarni Benediktsson, who is a man of great reason, knows very well what the answer will be".²⁶

²² Telegram from Begtrup to Étrangères, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 4 February 1953. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73.

²³ Report by Begtrup to Ole Bjørn Kraft, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 4 February 1953, No. V, "Iceland's claim to Greenland". The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73.

²⁴ The Icelandic minister of foreign affairs, Bjarni Benediktsson, had said to Begtrup in January 1953 that he did not think that any "reasonable person" could claim sovereignty over the whole of Greenland after receiving the report. Bodil Begtrup to Nils Svenningsen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 12 January 1953. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73.

²⁵ Icelandic sailors and shipowners were among the most active in the matter. Pétur Ottesen reported that "sailors and shipowners have adopted several clear resolutions in which they have appealed to the government and the Parliament to try everything they can to obtain recognition of our right to commerce in and sovereignty over Greenland". "Forslag til tingsbeslutning om Grønlandsspørgsmålet forelagt af Pétur Ottesen den 3. februar 1953" ["Proposals concerning decision of the *Alting* in the Greenland issue, put forward by Pétur Ottesen on 3 February 1953"], the Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73.

²⁶ Begtrup wrote on this occasion to C.A.C. Brun that publication of the commission's report could be a "good weapon in the election campaign against the governing parties". Begtrup to C.A.C. Brun, 26 February 1953, the Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73. See also: Begtrup to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, no. 134, 2 March 1953. The Icelandic historian Guðmundur Hálfðanarson argues, in connection with the EU debate on Iceland, that there has generally been a large discrepancy between the words of Icelandic politicians and their actual deeds. Basically, their approach to major political issues is subject to a complex interplay of practical considerations about Iceland's economic interests and the strong nationalist traditions that have formed their political discourse and ideals. See the article "Discussing Europe: Icelandic nationalism and European integration" in *Iceland and European Integration: On the Edge*, Baldur Thorhallsson (ed.), Routledge, 2004, p. 130.

The Danes never concealed their attitude to the issue and, internally, Danish officials mostly expressed scorn for Iceland's demands. As early as January 1952, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasised in a letter to Begtrup: "We can take Iceland's threats with respect to Greenland extremely lightly".²⁷ In February 1953, Deputy Under-Secretary of State C.A.C. Brun had the following comment to make to the reaction of the Icelandic press to the commission:

Now that Iceland has finally taken the established commission seriously – which, as is widely known, we could not do over here, and, to be honest, we were completely indifferent about the outcome of its work, except for its effect on the issue of the manuscripts – it would be much wiser to quieten down now and not raise the issue of beginning negotiations with Denmark on 'Iceland's commercial rights in Greenland'. (...) There is no prospect whatsoever of Denmark being willing to grant Iceland special rights, compared to other nations, with regard to Greenland.²⁸

However, what the Danish envoy in Iceland was in fact concerned about was that the Greenland issue could be used to turn the mood of the people against Denmark – both in Iceland and in Greenland.²⁹ In a report of February 1952, Bodil Begtrup complained that the ship *Dronning Alexandrine's* tourist trip to Greenland would pass through Reykjavik:

And thus every propagandist in Iceland will have a practical opportunity to go to Greenland. *Thjodviljinn* (a communist newspaper) and to a certain extent also *Althydubladid* (a social democratic newspaper) are now abandoning the thought of Iceland's claim to Greenland³⁰ and are now focusing on propaganda for liberating their oppressed Eskimo brethren. There is no doubt that such a campaign involving radio programmes, invitations to Greenlanders and the establishment of a Greenland-Icelandic society will gain support here.³¹

²⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs reply to Begtrup, 31 January 1952. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73.

²⁸ C.A.C. Brun's letter to Begtrup, 23 January 1953. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73. A leading article in the conservative newspaper *Morgunbladid* of 18 February 1953 elicited this reaction from Brun.

²⁹ Something that C.A.C. Brun had already pointed out in 1947; cf. below, p. 453-454.

³⁰ That the communists in Iceland expressed a claim to Icelandic sovereignty over Greenland is, however, a rather unsubstantiated statement by Begtrup. On the contrary, the communists were among the few who had stated that Iceland could not talk of any claim to sovereignty over Greenland. On the other hand, they were eager to support their Greenland kinsmen against Danish imperialism. Sveinsson, 1998, p. 53.

³¹ Begtrup to C.A.C. Brun, 26 February 1953. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73. The same thought was expressed in Begtrup's report of 1952, when the Icelandic airline *Lofleidirs* went bankrupt, which the envoy described as "possibly a very good thing, since the almost daily connection between Iceland and Greenland seems to stimulate knowledge and criticism of what is going on in the neighbouring island". Report by Begtrup to C.A.C. Brun, 9 February 1952. The Danish National Archives, UM Ministry 8.U.73.

The discontentment with Iceland's debate was also clear from Begtrup's view of the country's press. She sharply criticised the fact that Iceland's biggest newspapers, such as the Progressive Party's party newspaper *Tíminn* and the conservative *Vísir*, constantly printed heated articles by Jón Dúason, and thus positioned themselves in opposition to the statements of the governing parties. In a talk with the Icelandic minister of foreign affairs, Bjarni Benediktsson, Begtrup referred to the Icelandic press' "unsympathetic and hostile attitude towards Denmark and everything Danish, particularly in connection with Greenland", and she pointed out that an atmosphere was thus being nurtured which would probably not be beneficial to Danish-Icelandic cooperation.³² Internally she analysed the contradiction between the declarations by the politicians and the articles in the party newspapers in a report of February 1953 to the Danish minister of foreign affairs, Ole Bjørn Kraft. Begtrup regarded this contradiction as an indication that the politicians were out of touch with their party newspapers, but she also stressed that the reason could be the aforementioned tactical one connected with the forthcoming elections.³³

The Icelandic Parliament did not manage to discuss Ottesen's proposal in the parliamentary session of winter 1953. It was only in March 1954 that Parliament discussed the procedure for debating Ottesen's proposal. According to Begtrup, the general opinion of the members of the government and Parliament was that it was only the attention being given to the popular Pétur Ottesen that was preventing the issue from coming to an end. The Danish envoy also stressed the problem that the continual speeches and writings by Ottesen and Jón Dúason perpetuated, particularly among the sailors, the belief in Iceland's legitimate claim to Greenland and thus created an anti-Danish sentiment that could emerge in other instances.³⁴ This was the threat for the Danish administration – the fear that this anti-Danish sentiment should spread throughout Iceland – and from there spread further to Greenland.

The importance of the Greenland issue for the position adopted by Iceland at the UN

The discussion about sovereignty over Greenland also had implications for Iceland's response at the UN when the Danish decision to end Greenland's colonial status was voted on in November 1954. Iceland's foreign minister told Bodil Begtrup that he would take up the issue in the Icelandic Parliament before the concluding debate at the UN on 22 November. In his view, the whole Greenland issue should be concluded as soon as possible as far as Iceland was concerned and the Icelandic

³² From Begtrup to Prime Minister Erik Eriksen, 22 August 1952. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73.

³³ Begtrup to Ole Bjørn Kraft, 9 February 1953, No. VI, "Iceland's claim to Greenland". The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73. See also: Sveinsson, 1998, pp. 70 ff.

³⁴ Begtrup to H.C. Hansen, 8 March 1954, No. X, "Iceland's claim to Greenland". The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73.

Parliament distanced itself from the proposal that Iceland should assert any claim to Greenland with respect to Denmark.³⁵

At the subsequent meeting of the Icelandic Parliament on 19 November, the Icelandic government put forward a proposal for Iceland's delegates at the UN General Assembly to be instructed to abstain from the voting in the General Assembly. The major issue here was whether Iceland voting at the UN General Assembly could be interpreted as recognition of Denmark's rights to Greenland.

The debate became protracted, with speeches by the prime minister, foreign minister, and finance minister, and it was vigorously emphasised that the government's position was not dictated by the will to accommodate Denmark or by a lack of appreciation for the situation of the Icelandic fishermen. However, not many arguments were presented in favour of Iceland claiming Greenland as a colony, or in favour of the Icelanders being able to look after the Greenlanders' problems. Finally, it was also emphasised that the Greenlanders had not been consulted about what they wanted.

The opposition parties were critical. The Social Democrats highlighted that the Icelandic Parliament had not adopted a position on the Greenland issue as a whole and Iceland consequently should not vote. The National Preservation Party questioned whether the Greenlanders had been consulted in a fully democratic way about their position on incorporation into the Kingdom of Denmark. The Communist Party represented the most extreme position and presented a proposal for decision, which requested the government to instruct Iceland's delegates to the UN "to vote against the UN's recognition of Greenland's incorporation into the Kingdom of Denmark and to protest loudly against this incorporation and sealing off of Greenland".³⁶

According to Begtrup, the debate revolved around criticism of the government, partly because it had not raised the matter in time. The critics made constant references to human rights and continually attacked Denmark's colonial rule by using terms such as disaster and genocide, saying that it was an obligation to rescue the Greenlanders. The incorporation into Denmark was declared undemocratic because a referendum had not been held in Greenland and because not all the Greenlanders had the right to vote. Begtrup felt that the repeated mention of these rights reflected the fact that Jón Dúason's propaganda about Iceland's historical right to Greenland had had an impact. She did, however, stress that the crux of the matter was the constant reference to how Iceland and its fishing industry could benefit from Greenland, and as a consequence, the argumentation became "an illogical mix of anger at Danish imperialism and the sovereignty claim, which would effectively impose the same situation on the Greenlanders".

Begtrup concluded the report of the meeting by pointing out that the "debate, which was at a very low level, revealed a lack of knowledge about the situation in

³⁵ Begtrup to H.C. Hansen, 22 November 1954, No. XXIII, "Iceland's claim to Greenland: Voting in the UN General Assembly". The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73.

³⁶ Begtrup to H.C. Hansen, 22 November 1954, No. XXIII, "Iceland's claim to Greenland: Voting in the UN General Assembly". The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73.

Greenland and the importance of the UN's responsibility, and, instead of ending in a vote, ended in nothing but bickering".

The Danish envoy also reported that, at the general meeting of the Fishermen's Association on 21 November, there was protest about the fact that the Icelandic delegation did not vote against Denmark at the UN, which meant that Iceland had lost "ancient rights and that they had lost commercial opportunities". Begtrup's analysis was that "if there had been more time, there would certainly have been hundreds of such resolutions".³⁷ Nonetheless, on 22 November, the Icelandic Parliament voted 30 votes to 20 in favour of Iceland's delegation continuing to abstain from voting at the UN. Five members of parliament from the government voted against the motion, together with members of the Social Democrats, the National Preservation Party, and the Communist Party.

Begtrup reported that the Icelandic Parliament's decision that Iceland should not vote against Denmark at the UN was criticised in the press and at trade union and party meetings. The Icelandic minister of foreign affairs assumed that the decision would mean a loss of votes for the governing parties at the next elections.³⁸

On 9 December, a member of the Icelandic delegation to the UN, press attaché Kristján Albertson, had to stand up for his government's decision in an article in *Morgunblaðid*. He emphasised that Iceland did not own Greenland. The country belonged to the Greenlanders, and they had wished for another government. Albertson talked of the praise that the Danish government had received at the UN and, according to Begtrup, he tried at the same time to "instruct the Icelanders in international etiquette".³⁹

Conclusion

The Danish authorities did not feel threatened by Iceland's demands; thus, they were never accommodated. In 1961, it was agreed to return the Icelandic manuscripts; however, this decision cannot be viewed as a result of the issue of Greenland. On the other hand, there was serious concern about the problem of the Icelanders whipping up anti-Danish sentiment both in Iceland and – more worryingly – in Greenland. This was a problem that the former envoy to Iceland, C.A.C. Brun, had

³⁷ Begtrup to H.C. Hansen, 22 November 1954, No. XXIII, "Iceland's claim to Greenland: Voting in the UN General Assembly". The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73.

³⁸ Begtrup to H.C. Hansen, No. XXVI, "Iceland's claim to Greenland", 7 December 1954. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73.

³⁹ Report by Begtrup to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, No. 715, "Iceland's claim to Greenland", 14 December 1954. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73. It should also be noted here that Icelandic foreign policy was a relatively new phenomenon in the early 1950s. The Icelanders had only had an independent foreign service for about ten years. The Icelandic political scientists Gunnar Helgi Kristinsson and Baldur Thorhallsson draw a connection between this situation and the nationalist rhetoric: "In the absence of a strong foreign service, a domestic army and strategic research institutes, there was no effective counterweight against the nationalist heritage". See "The Euro-sceptical political elite", in *Iceland and European Integration: On the Edge*, Baldur Thorhallsson (ed.), Routledge, 2004, p. 152.

outlined to Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft back in 1947. In a letter to Hedtoft, C.A.C. Brun expressed his irritation about Dúason and his colleagues agitating about Greenland, which C.A.C. Brun described as so absurd that it was impossible to protest about:

However, so was Hitler's propaganda – though not for the many people who did not trouble themselves to reflect on it. It is true that today, no responsible person takes Dúason seriously. But they do not think it is worthwhile protesting either. When this unchallenged folly has been drummed into the readers of *Visir*, *Ægir* and *Thjodviljinn* for enough time, it could bear fruit.⁴⁰

The anti-Danish campaign continued into the late 1950s. In 1955, the paper *Grænlandsvinurinn* [*Friends of Greenland*] was established as a part of an Iceland-Greenland association set up by, among others, Pétur Ottesen and Jón Dúason. Although Bodil Begtrup, in her report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, underlined that the legation did not think the paper was attributed much importance in political circles, she also pointed out:

... that it is financially backed by sailors' organisations, and it is presumed that the Communist Party, after the position it adopted in the Parliament on voting in New York, will use every opportunity to make the Greenlanders unhappy about the Danish government or seek cooperation with already dissatisfied factions.⁴¹

It has not been possible to follow this contact between Iceland and Greenland on the basis of the available material. Although Dúason and the "Friends of Greenland" continued in the late 1950s to lead the issue, it never reached a high political level again and slowly died out. The issue reflected the mix of national rhetoric and commercial interests that were a feature of politics in Iceland in the mid-twentieth century.

⁴⁰ Embassy in Reykjavik. C.A.C. Brun to Hans Hedtoft 20 November 1947. Quoted from Sveinsson, 1998, p. 75.

⁴¹ Report by Begtrup to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, No. 20. "Iceland's claim to Greenland", 14 January 1955. The Danish National Archives, UM 8.U.73. The Greenlanders received some of the information on the issue through radio news broadcasts, but always with a Danish slant, such as, for example, when the chairman of the Danish Parliament's Committee on Greenland declared on 6 January 1949 in response to Iceland's claims, "that the Icelanders are unaffected by humility". The Icelandic claims are mentioned several times in the Greenland radio broadcasts in the late 1940s, including on 12 August, 27 October, and 17 November 1947, as well as on 6 January 1949.

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Index of names

Danish abbreviations of political parties are as follows: DKP: Communist Party; K: Conservative People's Party; R: Social Liberals; RF: Justice Party (Georgist Party); S: Social Democrats; V: Liberal Party

- Al-Jamali, Muhammed Fadhil (UN representative of Iraq), 331, 334
- Albertsen, Truels (editor, Struer Social Democrat), 152
- Albertson, Kristjan (press *attaché*, Iceland's UN delegation), 453
- Alfredsson, Gudmundur (Icelandic professor, S.J.D.), 10, 90, 114-116, 118-119
- Andersen, Hans G. (professor, J.D., Iceland), 447
- Andersen, Poul (professor, J.D.), 253-254, 255, 256, 258-259, 263, 265, 268, 269-270, 374, 392, 423
- Appel, Elin (MP, V), 159
- Apunte Caballero, Gonzalo (UN representative of Ecuador), 341, 355
- Arenales, Emilio (UN representative of Guatemala), 333, 359
- Aung, Hla (UN representative of Burma), 331
- Bang, Jette (Greenland photographer), 16, 61, 181, 306, 319
- Barfod, Pie (Greenland Department secretary), 195
- Begtrup, Bodil (diplomat), 444, 448-454
- Benediktsson, Bjarni (Icelandic Minister of Foreign Affairs), 448-449, 451
- Benson, Dr Wilfrid (director, UN's Division of Information for Non-Self-Governing Territories), 196-197, 198, 226, 303-305, 332, 351, 377
- Berg, Sigurd (minister of the interior), 20
- Bergsteinsson, Gizur (Icelandic High Court judge), 447-448
- Bomholt, Julius (politician, S), 157, 262
- Borberg, William (diplomat), 191, 192, 202-203, 214, 215, 215, 227, 228, 232, 296, 302-303, 323
- Bozovic, Aleksander (UN representative of Yugoslavia) 356
- Broberg, Carl (chair, Kalátdlit), 429, 430
- Brooks, Angie E. (UN representative of Liberia), 355
- Brun, C.A.C. (diplomat), 56, 205-206, 224, 229-230, 263-264, 284, 450, 453-454,
- Brun, Eske (governor, vice-director and director of the Greenland Department) , 21-22, 26, 27-29, 31, 56, 117, 127-128, 131, 135, 137-138, 140-142, 144-145, 147, 149-151, 154, 156, 157, 160, 167, 178, 180, 189, 193, 198, 203, 207, 227, 231, 234, 240, 244, 247-249, 280, 283, 295, 300, 305, 321-323, 327-331, 332, 336, 337-338, 345, 348, 355, 367, 374, 376, 385, 433, 435
- Bugge, Aage (rural dean, Greenland), 135
- Buhl, Vilhelm (prime minister, S), 128
- Bunche, Ralph (American UN diplomat), 76
- Byrnes, James (American Secretary of State), 50
- Calle y Calle, Juan José (UN representative of Peru), 352
- Canal Rivas, Jaime (UN representative of Colombia), 354

- Carpio, Victorio D. (UN representative of the Philippines), 350, 360
- Chemnitz, Jørgen (Provincial Council member), 128
- Chemnitz, Kathrine (member of the Greenland Commission), 160
- Christensen, Helge (debater, Greenland), 435
- Christiansen, Abel (sheep breeder, Greenland), 433
- Churchill, Winston, 45, 70
- Clarey, P.J. (UN representative of Australia), 354
- Coe, Robert (American ambassador in Denmark), 117
- Cohn, Georg (international law expert), 168, 169, 171, 184-186, 205-206
- Cortier, Andrew (American UN civil servant), 10
- Dahl, Jens R. (diplomat), 49, 178
- Dahlgaard, Bertel (politician, member of the Constitutional Commission, R), 374
- Dalager, Peter (editor of *Avangnamiok*), 438
- Dam, P.M. (Faroese MP), 278
- Dorsinville, Max (UN representative of Haiti) 353
- Dúason, Jón (Icelandic author), 443-447, 451-452, 454
- Dulles, John Foster (American Secretary of State), 74
- Dúron, Jorge Fidel (UN representative of Honduras), 361
- Egede, Gerhardt (Provincial Council member), 18, 144-147, 163, 427, 433, 440
- Egede, Hans (missionary), 13, 15, 20, 63, 279, 281, 329, 335, 337
- Egede, Peter (Provincial Council member), 272, 274, 302, 304
- Eggert, Christian Holten (diplomat), 231-232
- Elgaard, Niels (MP, member of the Constitutional Commission, V), 277, 374
- Enoksen, Hans (prime minister), 9, 11
- Erik the Red, 443
- Eriksen, Erik (prime minister, V), 162, 247, 250-251, 253, 262, 264-265, 268-269, 275, 276, 277, 288, 372, 374
- Eriksen, Holger (member of the Constitutional Commission, S), 374
- Fabregat, Rodriquez (UN representative of Uruguay), 356, 361
- Fleischer, Jørgen (Greenland author), 11, 304
- Fleischer, Peter (Provincial Council member), 432
- Foighel, Isi (earlier minister, professor, LL.D.), 11
- Fortas, Abe (American Supreme Court judge), 76
- Frazaó, Sergio Amando (UN representative of Brazil), 339
- Frederiksen, Svend (co-founder of the Greenlandic Society), 427-428, 441
- Freuchen, Peter (explorer, journalist and author), 14, 280
- Friis, Finn (chief of section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs), 168, 171, 175, 179, 189, 202-203, 227-230, 265, 292, 294-295, 298, 300-301, 304, 316, 322, 325, 346
- Friis, Jens (assistant, Nuuk), 432
- Gad, Finn (historian, teacher college lecturer, Nuuk) 134, 288
- Gam, Mikael (debater, Greenland), 135
- Gerig, Benjamin (UN representative of the United States), 231, 289, 332, 343
- Gidden, B.O.B. (UN representative of Great Britain), 331, 343
- Hammarskjöld, Dag (UN Secretary-General), 296, 296
- Hansen, Hans Jakob (diplomat), 179
- Hansen, H.C. (prime minister, S), 240, 296, 305-306, 323-324, 346

- Harhoff, Frederik (professor, LL.D.), 11
- Hedtoft, Ella (wife of the prime minister), 215
- Hedtoft, Hans (prime minister, MP, member of the Constitutional Commission, S), 52, 125, 138-143, 145-153, 156, 157, 158-159, 161-162, 163, 163-165, 180, 215, 244, 247-251, 253, 277, 279, 281, 283, 305, 316, 372-373, 374, 383, 385, 392, 433, 454
- Heilmann, Knud (debater, Greenland), 425
- Heilmann, Sika (debater, Greenland), 436
- Hendriksen, Halfdan (Greenland Committee member, K), 157, 434
- Hertling, Knud (politician, minister for Greenland, S), 304
- Hindsgaul, Lisbeth (Greenland Committee member, K), 142
- Hitler, Adolf, 28, 454
- Holt, Paul (MP, Danish Collection), 134
- Hoo, Victor (deputy secretary-general for trusteeship matters, UN), 196, 198, 226, 305, 326, 331-332, 351, 377, 433
- Hvass, Frants (director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs), 170
- Høegh, Andreas (priest, Greenland), 432
- Høegh, Frederik (trading station manager, editor, *Sujumut*), 437
- Høgh, N.I. (stud farm manager, Nuuk), 432
- Højlund, Niels (author), 11
- Itani, Khalil (UN representative of Lebanon), 354
- Jakobi, Hans (colonial manager), 433
- Jensen-Broby, Jens Christian (MP, V), 159
- Johannesson, Olafur (professor, dr.jur, Iceland), 447
- Johnson, A.M. Ade (UN representative of the United States), 350
- Joubanc-Rivas, Luciano (UN representative of Mexico), 351
- Jørgensen, Jørgen (MP, member of the Constitutional Commission, R), 277, 374
- Kaspersen, Søren (Provincial Council member), 432
- Kauffmann, Henrik (diplomat, minister without portfolio), 21-25, 26, 27-29, 49-50, 52, 81, 170-171, 328, 372
- Khadra, Omar A. (UN representative of Saudi Arabia), 361
- Khalidy, Awni (UN representative of Iraq), 231, 289, 326, 330,
- Khoman, Thanat (UN representative of Thailand), 352
- Kjølsen, Frits Hammer (officer), 56
- Koch, H.H. (permanent undersecretary, chair of the Greenland Commission), 154, 156, 158, 163, 169,
- Korneliussen, Abraham (debater, Greenland), 437
- Kraft, Ole Bjørn (Minister of Foreign Affairs, member of the Constitutional Commission, K), 58, 162, 203, 229-230, 247, 261, 264-265, 295, 372, 374, 451
- Kreutzmann, Lauritz (fisherman, Greenland), 431
- Kristensen, Knud (prime minister, V), 51, 134, 136, 372
- Lannung, Hermod (barrister, UN delegate, politician, R), 10, 167, 172-173, 176, 178-180, 182-187, 188, 189-190, 195-197, 198, 198, 201-203, 206-214, 216, 218-223, 226-228, 230-231, 233-234, 236-245, 261, 264, 278, 280, 282-283, 287, 292, 297-299, 301, 303-308, 311, 314, 316, 318, 321-323, 327, 330, 334, 337, 345-351, 353-355, 357, 359-361, 363-364, 366-369, 376-378, 383, 385
- Larsen, Aksel (MP, Greenland Commission member, DKP), 147, 277, 282, 366, 374
- Leibhardt, Johs. (debater, Greenland), 437

- Leibhardt, Svend (editor, *Nasigfik*), 436
- Lenin, Vladimir Iljitj, 95
- Lidegaard, Bo (historian, dr.phil.), 24
- Lie, Trygve (UN Secretary-General), 10, 168, 193, 263
- Loomes, A.H. (UN representative of Australia), 335, 343
- Lundsteen, Poul H. (head of the Provincial Council), 255, 268-269, 271, 273-274, 326, 437
- Lynge, Augo (author, Provincial Council member, Greenland MP), 30, 128-129, 238, 248, 249, 249-251, 271-274, 278, 281, 295, 326-327, 336, 337, 345, 349, 357-358, 382-383, 391, 427, 433-434, 441
- Lynge, Finn (author), 34
- Lynge, Frederik (colonial manager, Provincial Council member, Greenland MP), 29, 129, 146-147, 249, 274, 295, 326-327, 335, 336, 358, 427, 431-434, 440-441
- Lynge, Hans (Provincial Council member), 18
- Lynge, Kristoffer (editor, *Grønlands-posten* and *Nûp Avisia*), 135, 431, 435-436
- Lynge, Niels (pastor, Greenland), 432
- Lyra, Heitor (UN representative of Brazil), 359
- Madsen, Helge (member of the Constitutional Commission, RF), 374
- Magnússon, Sigurdur (debater, Iceland), 444
- Malchau, O.H. (*Landsting* member, member of the Constitutional Commission, K), 262
- Marvel, Josiah (American ambassador in Copenhagen), 51
- Marquardt, Ole (historian, vice chancellor of Ilisimatusarfik, University of Greenland), 10
- McNeil, Hector (UN delegate for Great Britain), 190
- Melchior, M.G.I. (diplomat), 192
- Mikkelsen, Ejner (explorer), 280
- Mohammed Mir Khan (UN representative of Pakistan), 353
- Molotov, Vjatjeslav M. (Soviet Foreign Minister), 53
- Munk, Troels (diplomat), 204, 225, 227, 229
- Møller, Aksel (politician, member of Constitutional Commission, K), 374
- Møller, Andreas (department head), 157
- Møller, Christmas (Minister of Foreign Affairs, MP, K), 134
- Møller, Birger Dons (diplomat), 206, 311-312, 323, 334, 339, 342-343, 346
- Mørch, Alex (diplomat), 302, 305
- Nielsen, Finn (head of department, Greenland Department), 264, 322
- Nielsen, Frederik (Provincial Council member), 135, 248-249, 251-252, 273-274, 432, 435, 441
- Nielsen, Johannes (painter), 374
- Nielsen, Kristian (editor, *Nasigfik*), 436
- Nielsen, Peter (Provincial Council member), 128, 432
- Oftedal, Christian (UN representative of Norway), 351-352
- Oldendow, Knud H. (director of the Greenland Administration), 18, 49, 127-128, 130, 132-135, 136, 136-137, 142, 149, 150, 150-151, 374
- Olrik, Harald (Greenland Administration employee), 436
- Olsen, Angmalortok (debater, Greenland), 428
- Olsen, Knud (Provincial Council member), 272
- Orozco, Elsa (UN representative for Costa Rica), 352
- Osman, Hire (UN representative of Egypt), 353
- Ottesen, Pétur (*Alting* member, Independence Party, Island), 443-444, 447, 449, 451, 454

- Owen, David (UN vice secretary-general), 215
- Pedersen, Gustav (member of the Constitutional Committee, S), 374
- Petersen, Finn (historian), 391
- Petersen, Hanne (professor, LL.D.), 11
- Petersen, Robert (professor, dr.h.c.), 11
- Pignon, Leon (UN representative of France), 342
- Poynton, A.H. (British diplomat), 176
- Quiros, Roberto E. (UN representative of El Salvador), 352
- Rao, B. Shiva (UN representative of India), 191
- Rasmussen, Anders Fogh (prime minister, V), 9
- Rasmussen, Gustav (minister of foreign affairs), 50
- Rasmussen, Knud (explorer), 14, 143, 280-281
- Rasmussen, Svend Erik (editor, *Nasigfik*), 436-437
- Raynor, G. Hayden (American civil servant), 193-194
- Rechendorff, Frederik (diplomat), 204
- Reierman, Sven (minister secretary), 264
- Rifai, Najmuddine (UN representative of Syria), 353
- Rink, Hinrich (geographer, inspector in South Greenland), 299, 437
- Rivas, Víctor (UN representative of Venezuela), 232, 349
- Rockefeller, John D., 76
- Roesad, Laili (UN representative of Indonesia), 331-332, 342
- Roosevelt, Franklin D., 24, 45, 70,
- Rosendahl, Philip (vice-director, Greenland Administration), 172-173
- Rosing, Kåle (debater, Greenland), 432
- Rosing, Nikolaj (Provincial Council member), 272
- Rosing, Ulrik (debater, Greenland), 426
- Ross, Alf (professor, LL.D., dr.phil), 10, 238, 248, 253-254, 255, 255-271, 273, 275, 278, 283-286, 374-375, 392, 423
- Ryckmans (UN representative of Belgium), 350
- Schram-Nielsen, Erik (diplomat), 56, 176, 185
- Scott, J.V. (UN representative of New Zealand), 239, 334, 343, 354
- Sehested-Grove, Jacob (editor, *Grønlandsposten*), 431, 435
- Shelton, Silvia (UN representative of Cuba), 352
- Simony, C.F. (governor), 26, 31, 148-150, 161
- Singh, Avtar (UN representative of India), 330, 350
- Soeurmann (UN representative of the Netherlands), 349
- Soldatov, Aleksander A. (UN representative of the Soviet Union), 207
- Sole, D.B. (UN representative of South Africa), 361
- Spiermann, Ole (professor, Ph.D.), 11
- Spits, Dr A.I. (Dutch international law expert), 320-321, 331
- Stauning, Thorvald (prime minister, S), 15, 142, 438, 440
- Steen, Oluf (MP, R) 157
- Stegger Nielsen, S. (member of the Danish Parliament's Greenland Committee, V), 142
- Steinthorsson, Steingrímur (Prime Minister of Iceland), 449
- Stensballe, J.P. (*Landsting* member and member of the Constitutional Commission, V), 374
- Svane, Aksel (governor), 18, 22, 27, 147-148
- Sveinsson, Kristján (Icelandic historian), 448
- Sveistrup, P.P. (chief of section, Greenland Department), 179, 187, 189, 195-197, 198, 203, 207, 226, 231, 235, 240, 288, 291-292, 294, 300, 304-305, 323, 336

- Svenningsen, Nils (permanent under-secretary of state, Ministry of Foreign Affairs), 229, 295
- Sønderup, Jens (MP, V), 49
- Sørensen, Claus (fishing captain), 141, 150
- Therkilsen, Kjeld Rask (editor, *Grønlandsposten*), 431, 433
- Thorarinsson, Thorarinn (editor, *Tíminn*, Iceland), 447
- Tillge-Rasmussen, Sven (journalist), 172-173
- Triantaphyllakos, Constantin A. (UN representative of Greece), 357
- Venø, Christian (fishing captain, member of the Greenland Commission), 141
- Vibe, Christian (editor, *Grønlandsposten*), 431
- Vinding, Ole (journalist and author), 130-131
- Wilson, Woodrow, 43-44, 69, 95

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