

The Rise of Faroese Separatism

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The Rise of Faroese Separatism

*Danish-Faroese relations from 1906-1925 and
the radicalization of the national- and home rule question*

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Hans Andrias Sølvará: The Rise of Faroese Separatism

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Cover Photo: The Faroese Parliament building before the extension in 1907 with the residence of the Danish Governor in the background. © The National Heritage

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„In the beginning was the Word, and the Word ... became flesh and lived among us“
The Gospel of John

„People know what they do; frequently they know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does“

Michel Foucault

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Introduction

The main subject of my research is the political history of the Faroe Islands (Sølvará 2002, Sølvará 2003, Sølvará 2007, Sølvará 2011, Sølvará 2013, Sølvará 1213a, and Sølvará 2014). This text is an extensive summary of the essence of my research on the emergence of Faroese politics in the period 1906-1925, where the issues dealt with are given greater consideration. The foundation is the thesis I published in 2014 on the emergence and radicalization of Faroese politics in relation to the home rule question, but some methodological points and arguments are stressed a bit further here. The source material is only in part published in my work from 2013 and in the appendix to the 2014 thesis. Further, unpublished source material, which has never been used before, is also analysed here. The structure of this text is identical to the structure of the 2014 thesis. However, the perspective in the epilogue is extended to include the development into the 1950ies, when a new Republican Party became significant.

Faroese politics emerged in 1906 in part based on the splitting up of the Faroese national movement, which emerged in the mid-19th century. The main characteristics of the political history of the Faroe Islands are that while the islands were populated in the 9th century by Norwegians,¹ they later – in 1380 and definitely with the Treaty of Kiel in 1814 – became a part of the Danish Kingdom. This meant that the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the Faroese people, which had developed through the centuries, became subject to the pressures of Danish culture and

language (Sølvará 2012 and 2015). The Faroese language, which probably in the 15th century was about to separate from Norse and develop into a specific written (Faroese) language (see e.g. Debes 1982: 18; Rasmussen 1987: 55; Marnersdóttir and Sigurðardóttir 2011: 59; Jóansson 2012: 48) only survived the Reformation in the mid-16th century as the vernacular of the common people, while written Danish predominated in school, church and administration. The Reformation, which in many European countries with the help of the new printing technology (see Abel 2011: 79) strengthened the position of native languages (Anderson 1983: 43), only replaced Latin with Danish in the Faroe Islands.

Legally, the Faroese language, which was reconstituted as a written language by the Faroese theologian V. U. Hammershaimb and the Icelandic historian and linguist Jón Sigurðsson in 1846 (Rasmussen 1997: 73), only got equal rights with Danish in the school and church in 1939 (Sølvará 2012: 226). With the Home Rule Act of 1948, Faroese became the main language in the Faroe Islands. By then, in the period 1890-1901, written Faroese language, in the popular Faroese newspaper *Føringatíðindi*, for the first time (as a print-language) had reached a broader Faroese audience (Debes 1969; Matras 1969),² which according to Benedict Anderson's modern theory of nationalism (usually defined as primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent (see e.g. Gellner 1983: 1)) is a general precondition for the rise of any nationalism (Anderson 1983: 66-79).³ Traditionally, the national movement in the Faroe Island is claimed to have risen from a meeting in Tórshavn on December 26, 1888, where the intentions were the 'preservation' of Faroese culture and language (e.g. Debes 1982), but it was perhaps not quite so simple (e.g. Simonsen 2012). It can on the other hand be argued that the famous Christmas Meeting in 1888 functioned as the catalyst, which transmitted and

transformed the important work that was done by well-educated elites earlier in the century and made it accessible to a broader Faroese audience. However, the practical work for the development of the language and the political struggle for achieving recognition for the Faroese language were still mainly ahead.

At the same time, i.e. during the 19th century, the Faroese society was transformed from a peasant society of common people without an organized teaching, where the culture mainly was preserved and transformed through oral processes, to a (smack) fishing society (Joensen 1987: 35) with an organised public school and an educated local elite (Sølvará 2005a: 123-24).

Together with the struggle for increased political power for the ancient Faroese Parliament (*Løgting*), which only had consultative power in Faroese legislative matters and was led by the Danish governor in the Faroe Islands, the political battle for the recognition of Faroese language in school and church was a key subject in Faroese politics of the period 1906-1925.

It is, however, important to note that the Faroese struggle for increased power to the *Løgting*, which was abolished in 1816 and reconstituted in 1852, did not as is often claimed originate from a political disagreement in 1903/06, which resulted in the first political parties in the Faroe Islands. In the 19th century, several proposals were submitted to the *Løgting* with the intention to increase the power of the *Løgting*, e.g. in 1874, 1880, 1881, 1884, 1890, 1902 and 1905 (Sølvará 2002: 125-30).⁴ While the adopted (1874) proposal had intended to authorize the *Løgting* to elect its own chairperson,⁵ the rejected (1884) proposal, which Jóhan Hendrik Schrøter (the younger) had submitted, was so radical that it would have made it necessary to change the constitution (e.g. Harhoff 1993: 49). The *Løgting* also decided to request the Danish authorities to give the *Løgting* authority over a part of the taxes, but that was rejected by

the government (*Lagtingstidende* 1891: 7). This indicates that in relation to the national movement in the Faroe Islands it is not that obvious to distinguish between a purely cultural (i.e. completely unpolitical), conservative and preservative (i.e. with regard to the Faroese nationality and language) period and a subsequent political and innovative period (i.e. with regard to increased power to the *Løgting*) with political disagreement (see Debes 1982: 311); i.e. that the unifying and purely cultural period ended around 1903/06, when the new political period of disagreement developed. The Faroese political disagreement and struggle for increased power to the *Løgting* was not a consequence of a national movement, which mainly developed in the 1880ies and only had intended to 'preserve' Faroese nationality and language, but they were chronologically parallel, integrated and innovative, developments.

Furthermore, Faroese national and political awareness developed – or was “invented” (e.g. Gellner 1983: 55; Anderson 1983: 15; Hobsbawm and Ranger (ed.) 1983: 13-14 and Joensen 1991 and 2003) – within a greater Nordic context. The work for the 'preservation' and development of the Faroese language and culture, which subsequently became a central focus of the national movement in the Faroe Islands, had started already in the late 18th and in the beginning of the 19th century – in part inspired and performed by some intellectuals from abroad (see e.g. Simonsen 2012). To the first category we can mention the Faroese Jens Christian Svabo and Nicolaj Mohr, and to the second category we can – in addition to the previously mentioned – mention the Danes Hans Christian Lyngbye, Carl Christian Rafn, Rasmus Rask and Svend Grundtvig and the Faroese Jóhan Hendrik Schrøter (the older) and Jens Davidsen (see e.g. Sølvará 2014: 32-33). This foreign inspiration is a fact that has not been concealed in Faroese research (see e.g. Matras 1951 and Rasmussen 1997), and especially leading home rule or independence oriented

persons have recognized the importance of the origin or inspiration from non-Faroese intellectuals (see e.g. Jacobsen 1927: 79, 80 and 87; Rasmussen 1951: 33-37 and Hoydal 2000: 23). It is, however, equally important to note that the construction of the eventually victorious Faroese orthography from 1846 was partly an unintended consequence of the discourse, which was established about the Faroese language in the Danish Assembly of the Estates of the Realm (*Stættatinginum*) in Roskilde in 1844, where it in outline only was recognized as a (depraved) Danish dialect (Jensen 1934: 606 and Tarbensen 1993: 166. See also Grundtvig 1978). This intellectual work, which often is described as having been mainly oriented towards the ‘preservation’ of the Faroese language and culture, established a very important foundation for a subsequent development of a real national identity and awareness in the Faroe Islands.

Additionally, the national awakening in Denmark in the aftermath of the traumatic Danish defeat in the war with Prussia in 1864, which according to the historian Uffe Østergård had the consequence that a “denial of differences” within the remains of the now culturally more homogeneous Danish state became standard learning among the political establishment in Denmark, also provoked “national” reactions among the less “Danish” minorities in the Danish state, e.g. among the Faroese (Hettne and others 2006: 101 f and Østergård 2012: 38).

At the same time, the persistent Icelandic political struggle for independence from Denmark, granted in the treaty from 1918, which originated in some Icelandic political demands in the 1830ies, had at the turn of the 19th century (1800-1900), significant political and ideological influence on the leading Faroese home rule supporters – especially on the subsequent home rule leader Jóannes Patursson – who also wanted to extend the political power of the *Løgting*.

There were, however significant differences.⁶ While the Icelanders already in 1851 managed to avoid the

implementation of the first (1849) Danish constitution in Iceland, the Danish constitution was implemented in the Faroe Islands in 1850 without a discussion or resistance (Thorsteinsson 1990). Niels Winther (the first Faroese politician and the first representative in the Danish Parliament in 1851), who was the only contemporary Faroese to refer to the issue of the Danish constitution, apparently wanted the Danish authorities to implement it in the Faroe Islands (Winther 1850: 4). Furthermore, while the Icelanders already in 1839 had refused to be represented in any Danish representative assembly, the Faroese already in 1851, just as Jóannes Patursson later, in 1901, chose to stand for the Danish Parliament.

At the same time, Norway, which according to the Treaty of Kiel in 1814 became part of the Swedish King's territories and lost the North Atlantic territories Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands to the Danish King (see e.g. Nielsen 1886: 20; Nørregård 1954: 170; Feldbæk 1995: 24-34; Due-Nielsen and others (ed.): 2002: 511-13; Engberg 2009: 380; Wang 2013: 104-54), gained full independence from Sweden in 1905 (see e.g. Qvortrup 2014: 26-27). This development also influenced the Faroese home rule supporters and, more importantly, probably laid the foundation for a conflict between Denmark and Norway on the rights to the former Norwegian territories in the North Atlantic. The events in 1814 were not noted in the Faroe Islands until much later. However, when Norwegian nationalists in the aftermath of the very important events in 1905 put forward demands against Denmark regarding the former Norwegian territories in the North Atlantic, the emerging Faroese political parties (in part reluctantly) became part of a Danish, and later a broad Danish-Norwegian political discourse (Sølvará 2014). The Norwegian argument was that Norway had not recognized the Treaty of Kiel, which was an agreement signed by the Danish and Swedish Kings (e.g. Gjelsvik 1923).

The main hypothesis in my recent work is that this trans-

national Danish-Nordic context and discourse, which the new political parties in the Faroe Islands increasingly became part of in the period 1906-1925, influenced the development of local Faroese politics. Subsequently, this affected the relationship between the Faroe Islands and Denmark in such a way that the home rule movement, which developed in 1903/06 with good relations with the Danish state authorities, became increasingly radicalized and hostile against the Danish state authorities. It is, of course, necessary to distinguish between text (historical sources) and context, but in this research it has also been essential to distinguish between real context and the political discourse. These levels are not, of course, independent of each other, but each level can add completely new and important – even contradictory – aspects to the original tangible context

Theoretically, this work – most explicitly Sølvará 2014 – is influenced by the discourse theory (Fuglsang and Bitsch 2004: 389-416) originated from philosophers of language (Wittgenstein 1971, Hartnack 1990 and 1994), philosophers of science (e.g. Kuhn 1970, Gadamer 2004) and philosophers of social science (e.g. Foucault 1972, 1973 and 1979 and Sølvará 2005), where one of the main propositions is that meaning is generated in broad networks of social interactions and power relations and not just in the simple relationships between sentences and reality. It follows from this that language is not simply a tool to describe and give an objective representation of 'a language independent reality', but language is an integral part of the social reality itself (e.g. Collin 1999: 182-218). The meaning of a word depends on a personal level on how it is used and on a more general level, on the social context it is applied to. To say something is to do something (e.g. a promise will influence the actions of other people), but what happens is not always dependent on the person speaking – often it is dependent on elusive and impersonal social or political power relations (e.g. Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982 and Couzens (ed.) 1986).⁷



Niels Winther, lawyer and the first real Faroese politician. He was in 1851 the first Faroese citizen elected to the Danish Parliament and he was elected to the first *Logting* after the reconstruction in 1852. He published the first Faroese newspaper, *Færingetidende*, in 1852, where he especially criticised the Danish state officials. In 1857 he left the Faroe Islands for good and settled in Denmark.

In discourse theory, which is developed in different versions, the distinction between reality and language tends to disappear and on the general level, intended actions tend to be incorporated into broader and impersonal power relations.

This theoretical framework, more developed in Sølvará (2014: 9-16),⁸ is in my view suited to a conceptualization of general political developments that often seem to be incorporated in more general structures of social meaning and power relations. It especially seems well suited to conceptualizing the origin and development of Faroese politics, which emerged in 1906-25 under the influence of greater political interests and issues in Denmark and Norway.

It is, however, important to note that this empirical research is in no way dependent on all the philosophical implications of discourse theory, where it occasionally seems to be implied that reality itself is constructed in discourses (Sølvará 2005). In many ways, my work is a traditional empirical study of historical sources whose main aim is to gain knowledge of what really happened using the source-critical method. I am not going to argue that political meaning can be understood independent of any discourse, but I will argue that on the analytical level, a distinction can be made between the explicit meaning of tangible political actions and the more elusive political meaning that tangible political actions may constitute later on or in other contexts. While a historian with the source-critical method applied to important contemporary sources and context is often able to locate the content of political actions, it can be more difficult with this method to explain the broader development of politics and political awareness, which is often based on 'knowledge' that is more elusive. I am, of course, not in any philosophical, theoretical or general sense arguing for a context free knowledge. However, on the analytical and empirical level – especially in the Faroese example – I will argue that a distinction between the tangible Faroese context and a more elusive Danish and Scandinavian political discourse, which nonetheless

is very important for the development of Faroese politics and Danish-Faroese relations, is not only fruitful but also necessary when analysing the development of Faroese politics. I will also argue that it is necessary to make this distinction between real political context and the production of more elusive discursive 'knowledge' for political purposes in the Faroese political example itself. Examples have been analysed in my work (Sølvará 2014) and some will be reproduced here.

This analytical distinction between a tangible and a discursive level will be explicitly drawn in relation to the Faroese-Danish material on the specific Faroese political issues, which will be analysed here, while the broader Danish, Scandinavian and international context (e.g. the sovereignty of Norway (1905), the West Indian question (1916-17), the Icelandic question (1908-18), the Schleswig question and the Easter Crises (1920), the international decision on the Aland Islands (1921) and the Danish-Norwegian dispute on Eastern Greenland (1923-33), which also are relevant for the discursive level, will only be described in general terms. The presentation of these latter mentioned subjects will mainly be dependent on secondary material and other researchers, while the pivotal subjects are based on the primary sources.

The pivotal subjects analysed here are: 1) The 'Offer' from the Danish Government to the Faroese Parliament regarding greater Faroese home rule within the Danish realm, which the Faroese voters after a hard political debate rejected in 1906; 2) The 'Petition' of 1917 from home rule persons to British authorities regarding free passage for ships sailing to the Faroe Islands from Iceland during the dangerous sailing conditions under First World War, which later became part of Danish domestic politics, where it was almost treated as treason against the Danish authorities; 3) The 'Norwegian case' in 1923, which resulted in a Danish policy towards Faroe Islands that by and large neglected the Home Rule

Party politics. During an analysis of these three cases, I will try to answer the main question: why did the relationship between the Danish Government and the Faroese Home Rule Party, which had begun in harmony in 1906, become more troubled in the period and result in a hostile break in 1924?⁹

These three analyses are founded on thorough and extensive research of both published and unpublished sources. The most important published sources are documents and speeches published by the Faroese (*Løgting*) and Danish (*Rigsdag*) Parliaments in the period 1906-1925. The speeches particularly can be used to analyse the political discourse around Faroese politics in the Faroe Islands and in Denmark. Important contemporary sources, which have been published only recently, are the handwritten minutes from the meetings in the Danish Government. Despite thorough search for these very important minutes, other historians have not found them (Debes 1982: 379-80; Debes 1991: 154). Other historians who have been doing research on the political history of the Faroes in the period 1906-1925, therefore, have not utilized these sources.¹⁰ More importantly, these sources, which can be used to analyze what actually happened behind the hard political discourse and rhetoric, were not known to most contemporary political debaters in 1906-25. In other words, the contemporary political discourse was developed in the absence of knowledge of these sources. Newspapers – Faroese, Danish and Norwegian, from the period are also important sources. They can be used to analyse the development of the contemporary political discourse. I have also utilized relevant secondary material, doctoral thesis (e.g. Debes 1982; Rasmussen 1987; Jóansson 2012) and history books (e.g. Jacobsen 1927; Wåhlin and others 1994), relating to the context.

However, the most important sources are numerous unpublished sources in different archives in the Faroe Islands

and Denmark previously not utilized by other historians. At the National Archives (*Rigsarkivet*) in Copenhagen, I have investigated the personal and political archives of the Danish Prime Minister in 1908-09 and 1920-24, Niels Christian Neergaard. In these archives, I found numerous hitherto unutilized sources on Danish-Faroese relations from the period 1908-23. The most valuable contemporary sources – Faroese and Danish – I found at the Danish Parliament Library and Archive (*Folketingets Bibliotek og Arkiv*) in Copenhagen. In this archive, there are four boxes of sources relating to the political history of the Faroe Islands from the period 1906-19, gathered in 1918-19 by a Danish investigative committee, which – apparently for domestic political reasons in Denmark – was conducting extensive research of political issues in the Faroe Islands – the above-mentioned Petition of 1917. Many of these documents are published (*Bilag A 1919*), but the originals are only in the Danish Parliament archives and many of those documents are not published. These documents, which comprise both Danish and Faroese official documents and private correspondence between Faroese home rule persons, are invaluable for historians studying the political relations between the Faroe Islands and Denmark. Interestingly, apart from myself, only Danish historians (Wåhlin and others 1994) have apparently been interested in the documents. However, the Danish historians have only references to the printed version of the documents. This material also comprises hundreds of pages of inquiries of all the relevant persons and the reports of the committee. Its majority report, representing the political opposition, reveals clearly that the motives behind the committee were Danish domestic politics. The majority obviously intended to connect the Danish Prime Minister, C. Th. Zahle, to disputed actions of Faroese home rule supporters connected to the Petition. The Investigative Committee is in itself an integral part of the political discourse and can be used to analyze

the discourse, but independent studies that go beyond the political intention of the committee can be made because of its extensive archive.

At the National Archives in Tórshavn in the Faroe Islands (*Føroya Landsskjalasavn*), there is an overwhelming number of documents from the period, which have not been consulted or utilized by other historians. Further, there are numerous documents belonging to the Home Rule Party from the period 1905-1932, which are very important in the context of my studies.

Even though the Danish Investigative Committee of 1918-19 gathered a substantial number of documents in the Faroe Islands and searched for specific correspondence among leading home rule politicians, which the committee knew existed, they were not able to find them. In my research at the National Archives in the Faroe Islands, I have found copies of this correspondence, which must be regarded as key documents that indicate a perception of the Petition that explicitly contradicts the conclusion of the majority of the Danish Investigative Committee. These documents can – independent of the political discourse of the committee from 1918-19 – be used to analyse tangible actions and intentions of home rule supporters regarding the Petition to the British Government in 1917. The minutes from the local home rule meetings in Tórshavn in the period 1905-19 are also in the National Archives in the Faroe Islands. The committee of 1918-19 had transcripts of important passages of these minutes, but neither the committee nor the Danish historians mentioned above had access to the original minutes, which I have consulted. In the Faroese National Archives in Tórshavn, there are also 21 packages comprising extensive contemporary documents from the First World War relating to the Petition of 1917. The *Vørunevndin* (the Committee of Supplies), comprising the Faroese *Amtmaður* (the Chief Administrative Officer) as Chair and five representatives for the two existing political parties in the Faroe Islands, the

Unionist Party (*Sambandsflokkurin*) and the Home Rule Party (*Sjálvstýrisflokkurin*), produced this vast and important material during the First World War. This committee had the responsibility to ensure that supplies were always in the Faroe Islands for three months. This extensive material is invaluable for the research of Faroese politics during the First World War. The Danish historians were aware of the existence of this vast material (Wåhlin and others 1994: 213), but nothing in the book, e.g. references, reveals that they have used or even consulted it. Further, there is a package at the National Archives, comprising documents on Faroese Norwegian relations in the early 1920ies. These documents, which also comprise copies of secret documents from the Danish embassy in Christiania in Norway, are invaluable for the historical research of the political development in Danish-Faroese relations in early 1920ies.

Lastly, I am recently made aware of the existence of political diaries by leading Home Rule Party politician, Rasmus Rasmussen, from 1917-1919, now available at the Faroese National Library in Tórshavn (*Føroya Landsbókasavn*).¹¹ These political diaries, which often refer to an insider's knowledge on the Petition, have also been consulted during the work with this text.

The source material is extensive and represents the relevant Faroese and Danish authorities. However, from a methodological view, it might be argued that the archives of the Danish Minister of Justice responsible for Faroese matters could have been consulted. It might also be argued that British, German or Icelandic archives and sources could have been consulted.

A research in those directions could indeed have been relevant and might have opened new perspectives on other developments, but the limitation of this research to Danish-Faroese relations makes it less obvious to delve into British, German or Icelandic archives. Further, the Petition itself was never exposed to any British or German authorities. Anyway,

the material from the Danish Investigative Committee of 1918-19 comprises correspondence between the Danish and German Governments on Faroese issues during the First World War as well as correspondence with the Icelandic authorities and information about Danish negotiations with the British Government. Further, the extensive material from the Danish Prime Minister Niels Neergaard comprises numerous contemporary documents – classified documents – on Icelandic and Norwegian issues that I have utilised. Consequently, even if the perspective in this research is limited to Danish-Faroese relations, contemporary documents and international research (e.g. Feldbæk 1995, Due-Nielsen and others 2002, Cavell 2008, Engberg 2009, Thór and others 2012,) on this broader issue have been consulted.

It is a fact that the Danish Minister of Justice was in charge of Faroese matters, but the main subjects treated in this research – the Offer, the Petition and the Norwegian case, are related to broader *political* issues treated by the Danish Government as such. Apart from the Offer, which could have become – but never became – an administrative issue to deal with in the Ministry of Justice, these issues were in their Danish context general political issues. This is obvious in relation to the Norwegian case treated by the Danish Government and dealt with by the Prime Minister. It is equally obvious in relation to the Petition, where the Prime Minister C. Th. Zahle – who also was Minister of Justice – and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eric Scavenius, are the central figures. The Danish Government as a whole even dealt with the Offer, though it also became connected to the Minister of Justice. It even seems obvious – as I will argue – that historians because of a one-tracked focus on the Minister of Justice have been misguided in their search for new sources and have also misinterpreted the general context. Furthermore, in November 1982, the Faroese historian Hans Jacob Debes searched unsuccessfully for material regarding the Offer in the Danish Minister of

Justice's papers at the National Archives in Copenhagen (Debes 1982: 379-80). Since then it has become evident that additional material regarding it exists in the reports of the Prime Minister J. C. Christensen from the meetings in the Danish Government – and not in the archives of the Minister of Justice. However, correspondence between the Faroese authorities and the Minister of Justice on the Offer is preserved in the Faroese material. Furthermore, the Investigative Committee of 1918-19 collected vast material regarding Danish-Faroese relations from the period 1906-19 from e.g. the Danish Ministries – also from the Ministry of Justice – dealing with the Offer and the Petition. There is nothing in this vast material that adds anything to our knowledge of the Offer, but there are many documents from the Minister of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Petition. The material from the Ministry of Justice on the Petition is largely the result of the almost personal involvement of the *Amtmaður* – Svenning Rytter – in the Petition, and just as in 1906, the reports from the Faroese County (*Føroya Amt*) to the Ministry of Justice were dealt with as such by the Danish Government. Correspondence between the *Amtmaður* and the Ministry of Justice regarding the Norwegian case is also preserved in the Faroese National Archives in Tórshavn. To sum up, the main subjects in this research – the Offer, the Petition and the Norwegian case, are general Faroese political issues in Denmark treated by the Danish Government as such – not by the Minister of Justice. Therefore, the archives of the Danish Prime Minister Niels Th. Neergaard from the period 1906-24 are relevant, consulted and examined in relation to the main subjects analysed in this research, while the archives of the Ministry of Justice, largely available in other relevant archives have not been consulted. Further, in the period between the two governments of Niels Th Neergaard, that is the period 1909-20, C. Th. Zahle was Prime Minister in 1909-10 and in 1913-20 and Minister of Justice in the relevant period.

The relevant documents from the ministry of C. Th. Zahle, even confidential reports from the *Amtmaður* to the Ministry of Justice, are therefore preserved in the extensive archives of the Investigative Committee of 1918-19. Anyway, the broader political aspects of these three subjects – not the specific aspects – are in relation to the Danish angle pivotal to this research.

In order to get a wider perspective on Faroese politics, I will in the end also utilize research I have made on the political development in Danish-Faroese relations into the 1950ies, when the so-called Doctor-conflict (*Læknastríðið*) resulted in an armed conflict between Denmark and the Faroe Islands (Sølvará 2013a and 2014a). The current political system in the Faroe Islands, comprising four major political parties, was established during and partly because of this very dramatic conflict. This still ongoing research is based on extensive research of primary governmental sources at the National Archive in Tórshavn and private archives, which are listed among the other unpublished source-material in the references to this text.

Before I go to the pivotal issues, some information on the Faroese Parliament (*Løgting*) might be appropriate (see Sølvará 2002). In the period 1906-24, which in this context is the relevant period, the Faroese Parliament, the *Løgting*, was in general organized on the same legal framework basis as decreed by the Danish Parliament, the *Rigsdagen*, when the *Løgting* was reconstituted in 1852. The *Løgting* administered a number of areas in the administrative district on behalf of the Danish state authorities; and with regard to the legislative area, it functioned as a consultative body to the *Rigsdagen*, which had the legislative authority in the Danish Realm. The *Amtmaður* and the *Próstur* (the Dean) were both representatives in the *Løgting*. The *Amtmaður*, furthermore, was the Chairman of the *Løgting*; he summoned the *Løgting*, led the debate and dissolved it at the end of each sitting. If the *Løgting* had to be summoned for more than four weeks,

or it had to be called in for extraordinary sittings, this could only be done if either the *Amtmaður* or half the members of the *Løgting* consented. If the *Løgting* approved of something that the *Amtmaður* found to be in conflict with the rules, which the Danish authorities had brought into force in the Faroes, he had the authority to postpone the decision until a higher Danish authority had established its compliance with the legislation. The official communication between the *Løgting* and the Danish state authorities usually had to go through the *Amtmaður*, but two Faroese members of the Danish Parliament also represented the Faroese politics within the political system in Denmark. Between the short parliamentary sittings, the *Amtmaður* performed the duty of the *Løgting*.

It was at least as significant that at the dawn of the 20th century, an independent political system comprising independent political parties, which mainly related to the future political relation between Denmark and the Faroe Islands, was about to develop in the Faroe Islands.

The collaboration between the political system in the Faroe Islands and in Denmark began in harmony and ended in hard fought disputes at the end of this period. This thesis is a historical study of the connection between the emergence of Faroese politics and Danish-Faroese relations in the period 1906-25 and an attempt to explain this political development.

A disputed Offer

At the turn of the century, winds of change were blowing over Denmark. In spite of the democratic constitution, the King had preserved the right to appoint the government, but following the massive defeat of the royalist minded Conservative (*Højre*) Party at the general election to the Danish Parliament in 1901, he gave up and appointed a Liberal (*Venstre*) Party Government, which advocated for parliamentarism and had the vast majority in the Danish Parliament. From now on parliamentarism became an integral part of the political system in Denmark. The new Liberal Government fully dominated the *Folketing* and was in favour of further democratization. Consequently, Iceland was acknowledged Home Government in 1903 and a special minister responsible for Iceland who was living in Iceland was appointed in 1904 (Dybdal 1984: 507). The two Faroese members of the Danish Parliament, who were replaced in 1901, became also engaged in this *Venstre* awakening of the Danish Democracy. In the years following 1901, time for change also appeared to have come to the Faroe Islands.

The Faroese member of the Danish Parliament, Jóannes Patursson, the subsequent leader of the Home Rule Party, formally founded in 1909, came to the Faroe Islands in late April 1906 with an Offer regarding greater local Faroese home rule in the Danish realm. The Offer was presented to the *Løgting* in a letter from Jóannes Patursson of May 12, 1906 and confirmed to the *Løgting* in a letter from the Ministry of Justice on June 1, 1906. Jóannes Patursson claimed that this was an Offer from a unanimous Danish



It was in this small house in the front that the *Løgting* dealt with the Offer in 1906. The house was raised in 1856 to shelter the reconstituted *Løgting* of 1852. It was unchanged until 1907. The magnitude of the glorious residence of the *Amtmaður* on the hill in the background compared to the simplicity of the residence of the *Løgting* gives a clear impression of his superiority over the *Løgting*.

Government, but several books on Faroese history indicate that the Danish Government later on claimed that it was only a personal Offer from the Danish Minister of Justice, Peter Adler Alberti (e.g. Steining 1953: 143-44; Steining 1958: 238; Høgenesen 1968: 69; West 1972: 124; Thorsteinsson 1990: 345; Skála 1992: 12). The historian Hans Jacob Debes does not mention the subsequent political accusations of the Danish Government against Peter Adler Alberti, but just as Petur Martin Rasmussen (Rasmussen 1987: 37), he also appears to argue that Peter Adler Alberti was the decisive political figure in the Danish Government behind this Offer to the *Løgting* (Debes 1991: 86).

Even if the Faroese voters at the subsequent general elections to the Danish Parliament on June 22, 1906 and the Faroese *Løgting* on July 18, 1906 rejected the Offer, it has played a key role in Faroese politics and in preserved history. However, as the references above indicate, important aspects regarding the origin and content of the Offer remain

unanswered. In this section, questions of the origin, content and character of the Offer will be reconsidered. Two main questions will be tackled. Firstly, the question if the Offer originated from the Danish Government or only from Peter Adler Alberti. Secondly, alleged discrepancies between the official governmental Offer, signed by Alberti, and the version of Jóannes Patursson will be studied. Lastly, the political relevance of the Offer and the treatment of it will be evaluated.

It has not been possible to trace this particular subsequent claim (allegedly originating from the Danish Government of 1906) of the decisive role of Alberti in relation to the Offer further back than to the text of the Danish historian Jørgen Staining from 1953. However, it is interesting to note that Alberti on July 24, 1908 resigned from the Danish Government following accusations from e.g. the Danish parliamentarian Frederik Borgbjerg of the Social Democratic Party against him of having misused his authority as Minister of Justice to gain personal advantages. By then, dubious monetary transactions in the saving bank (*Sjællands Bondestands Sparekasse*), where Alberti was Chair of the Board, were well known in internal banking-circles. The Danish newspapers, especially *Politiken*, continued to pursue these accusations of banking irregularities against Alberti, and on September 8, 1908 Alberti eventually gave up, met at the Court in Copenhagen, and gave himself up as a deceiver. He declared himself guilty of embezzlement of about 9 million kroner from the saving bank. This staggering amount from forgery and irregularities concealed by Alberti since 1888 was later calculated to be 15 million kroner. It is possible to get an impression of the tremendous scope of his embezzlement when we know that the income of the Danish state budget of 1909-10, which was debated in the Danish Parliament in September 1908, was 93½ million kroner. The Prime Minister J. C. Christensen, who in spite of warnings defended and in May 1908, when he also functioned as Minister of Finance, lent Alberti 1½ million kroner from

the state to save the troubled saving bank, was forced to resign from government on October 12, 1908 because of this involvement in the financial scandal. Niels Th. Neergaard replaced him as Prime Minister. Subsequently, Alberti was accused of forgery and irregularities in the saving banks accounts. In 1910, Alberti was sentenced to 8 years behind bars (Lyngby 1987).

These events constitute an important context for the political interpretations of the Offer. In the aftermath of the Alberti case, members of the government, especially J. C. Christensen, certainly had both opportunity and motives to blame Alberti for the political failures of the government. And according to historiography, they did this in relation to the rejected Offer.

It is, however, interesting that neither Jóannes Patursson nor any other of the contemporary sources ever appear to connect the origin of the Offer to Alberti.¹² In the decisive letter to the *Løgting* of May 12, 1906, Jóannes Patursson specifically mentions the Minister of Finance, Vilhelm Lassen and then the Minister of Traffic, Svend Høgsbro. Only after explicitly mentioned negotiations with them did he after further negotiations receive an Offer from the collective Danish Government (*Lagtingstidende, Tillæg. Den overordentlige Samling I Maj 1906: 12; Sølvará 2013: 47-48*). His political opponents in the Faroese *Løgting*, especially Oliver Effersøe, one of the founding fathers of the Unionist Party of 1906 (*Sambandsflokkurin*), mentions only the Offer from “the Government”¹³ in the report to the *Løgting* of September 1, 1906 (*Lagtingstidende, Den ordentlige Samling 1906: 2; Sølvará 2013: 55*). Later, Jóannes Patursson in addition to these two mentioned Sigurd Berg, while Peter A. Alberti was only mentioned peripherally in relation to his formal position as the minister of the Faroe Islands (*Bilag V 1919: 249 and 571*). The decisive point appears to be that the handwritten minutes of the meeting in the Danish Government of March 6, 1906, written and signed by the

Danish Prime Minister J. C. Christensen, explicitly mentions a proposal from Jóannes Patursson, which the Minister of Finance, Vilhelm Lassen, on Mars 6, 1906 had brought before the collective Danish Government (*Ministtermødeprotokol 1905-1908* 1992: 78). These minutes were unknown to contemporary political debaters in the Faroe Islands and until recently also to subsequent historians dealing with the subject (e.g. Debes 1982: 379-80). It can by implication be demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt that this is the Offer, and that a unanimous government of 1906 gave the Offer to Jóannes Patursson (Sølvará 2014: 61-65). Consequently, the subsequent allegations regarding the private Offer of Peter Adler Alberti must be false.

From this, we may conclude two things. Firstly, that Vilhelm Lassen was the leading Danish minister in relation to the negotiations of Jóannes Patursson about the Offer. Secondly, that Jóannes Patursson was quite right when he claimed that the Offer was from the government.

Interestingly, Peter Adler Alberti in a speech in the Danish Parliament on October 25, 1906, when he was still the Minister of Justice, talked about the Offer that “the Government at that time in the spring had put forward ... through me” (Sølvará 2013: 80). By then, the Faroese voters and subsequently the Faroese *Løgting* had already rejected the Offer, but in his speech in the *Folketing* in the spring, i.e. March 23, 1906, which he referred to on October 25, 1906, he had also referred to the Offer from the “Government” (Sølvará 2013: 63-64). The occasion was some critical questions that the new Faroese member of the *Folketing*, Oliver Effersøe from the Unionist Party (who had replaced Jóannes Patursson after the general election on June 22, 1906), had put forward to Alberti on e.g. the origin of the Offer, but interestingly, Alberti only perceived himself as the Danish Government messenger, which also is in full compliance with the chronology of the matter. Of course, at that time in October 1906, when Peter Adler



Alberti was still a highly respected and powerful Minister of Justice, nobody in the Danish Government used these occasions to correct him, but the handwritten minutes from the previous meeting in the government on March 6, 1906 prove that Alberti was right.

The remaining question is, if this incorrect story about the private Offer of Alberti is a subsequent historical construction preserved only in later (Faroese) historiography or if the story had any real political significance in the contemporary political discourse. Even if the story is false, some Danish Ministers from 1906 for political reasons could have created

Jóannes Patursson claimed already in 1906 that he had received the Offer from the collective Danish Government, but subsequent historians have questioned his claim. An analysis of the relevant contemporary sources proves beyond any reasonable doubt that Jóannes Patursson was quite right. He was influenced by the Icelandic struggle for autonomy in the Danish Kingdom and had personal relations to Iceland – his wife, Guðný Eiríksdóttir, was Icelandic. However, the Icelandic influence can also be overestimated. The Icelanders had already in 1839 refused to be represented in any Danish assembly, while the Faroese as Jóannes Patursson in 1901 chose to stand for the Danish Parliament.

it in the aftermath of the fall of Alberti from political power in July 1908, which also appears to be the context of the story about Alberti preserved in Faroese historiography.¹⁴ It is easy to establish that the history books mentioned above are all connected. All of them appear to have the story from the same source (Steining 1953: 143-44), where the accusations against Alberti only implicitly (not explicitly as the later historians) appear to be connected with the Danish Government. It is quite interesting that Jørgen Steining without explicitly specifying from whom the accusations originated, only claims that “After Alberti’s fall they¹⁵ strongly emphasized his responsibility for the government’s offer”, while the later historians use the specifying words “the government” instead of the unspecified “they” (Sølvará 2011: 21 and 31). In this context, even the mere existence of groundless accusations from the government against Alberti appear to be questionable. It is, however, difficult to trace this story further back than to 1953, but there is a likely candidate to the origin of the story as early as in 1908.

On October 3, 1908, shortly after Alberti resigned from the government on July 24, 1908, and about a month after Alberti gave himself up at the Court in Copenhagen, Oliver Effersøe wrote in an article in *Dimmalætting*, the unionist newspaper, that “the big-time swindler” (*Storsvindleren*) Peter Adler Alberti and Jóannes Patursson were friends and that the Offer was the work of Alberti and even part of his “treachery” (*svindlerier*). He claimed that Jóannes Patursson and Peter Adler Alberti were “fathers to the so-called Offer-scandal”. The key person, the Minister of Finance, Vilhelm Lassen, who died on April 6, 1908, could not respond to these accusations from Oliver Effersøe against Alberti, but Jóannes Patursson was furious and neither forgot this nor ever forgave Oliver Effersøe. In *Tingakrossur*, the newspaper of home rule supporters dated October 7, 1908, Jóannes Patursson defended the ministers of 1906 against the implicit accusations made against them by Oliver Effersøe



Peter Adler Alberti (the tall man in the left of the picture), the Danish Minister of Justice in 1906, was later accused of having put forward a personal Offer to Jóannes Patursson, but there are no proofs of that in the relevant contemporary sources. The story was invented for political reasons.

and protested strongly against all intentions to connect the Offer, which was from the collective Danish Government of 1906, to the subsequent Alberti-scandal. With an explicit reference to the Offer, Jóannes Patursson claimed that Oliver Effersøe would not be able to point out any treachery in the position of Alberti on *this* subject (Sølvará 2014: 93, 95-96); a claim that appears to be in full compliance with all the relevant and contemporary sources on the issue.

At the same time, Oliver Effersøe also wrote a letter to the reorganized Danish Government regarding the question of the relations between Denmark and the Faroe Islands. The Danish Government at a meeting on October 19, 1908, debated this letter, but it was decided to expose a possible official statement in parliament until March 1909 (Kaarsted (ed.) 1975: 13). The opportunity would be a possible question from Oliver Effersøe to the Minister of Justice.

On March 6, 1909, Oliver Effersøe actually put forward the same accusation against Alberti in another speech in the Danish Parliament and connected the Offer with

him. He claimed that as far as it was possible to know, the former Minister of Justice led the negotiations. However, as these negotiations between Jóannes Patursson and Peter Adler Alberti about the Offer in 1906 according to Oliver Effersøe were secret, it was difficult to know exactly what had happened. Oliver Effersøe assumed that the former Minister of Justice had had a decisive influence and what happened in 1906 could not have happened without Alberti. This was in direct contradiction to a report to the committee of 1918-19 from the eyewitness Jóannes Patursson, who only peripherally mentioned Alberti and in full compliance with e.g. the minutes of the Danish Government from March 1906, claimed that the Offer was mainly a result of the interest of Vilhelm Lassen, Minister of Finance, in the matter (*Bilag V* 1919: 249 and 571). Of course, Oliver Effersøe, who was employed as Sheriff (*Sýslumaður*) in Suðuroy in the Faroe Islands, when the negotiations about the Offer were in Copenhagen in March 1906, may not have been the most reliable witness to the origin and content of these negotiations, but his intention in 1909 was most likely only exploitative political tactics. It is clear that his motive was to give the Danish Government of 1909 a political opportunity to distance itself from the Offer of 1906. This is very interesting from a discursive political perspective, where the battle for political power and influence is the most important subject. However, from a tangible source critical angle, it is more relevant that former ministers in the Danish Government of 1906, notably Svend Høgsbro, who had replaced Alberti as Minister of Justice on July 24, 1906, and still was the Minister of Justice in March 1909, clearly stated in the official response to the speech and remarks of Oliver Effersøe about the origin of the Offer that it had been put forward on behalf of the collective Danish Government of 1906. The Prime Minister in 1906, J. C. Christensen, who until the end trusted Alberti and therefore eventually

was betrayed and deceived by him, also answered without accusing Alberti of anything.¹⁶ Interestingly, the Minister of Justice explicitly defended the fallen Alberti against the accusations made by Oliver Effersøe. Svend Høgsbro said that he had no reason to believe that the former Minister of Justice had said or promised anything that went beyond the authorisation he had from the Danish Government (Sølvará 2014: 65).

However, the government, which since 1906 had been under steady pressure from two Faroese Unionist Party members of the Danish Parliament, used this situation to declare a final withdrawal of the Offer to the Faroese *Løgting*. Three years after the government originally had put forward the Offer, the Minister of Justice, Svend Høgsbro, used the speech of Oliver Effersøe as an opportunity to state that the rejected Offer of the government would not be put forward again. The rejected Offer, which had not been renewed by the former Danish Government of 1906, would also not be put forward again by the present government. Oliver Effersøe who had utilised the Alberti-scandal to give a completely misleading description of the Offer had presumably achieved exactly what he had intended. In October 1906, Alberti had not withdrawn the rejected Offer, but he had only stated that the government would respect any Faroese majority in the *Løgting* – also in the future. This was, of course, pointed out and utilised politically by the optimistic home rule supporters who expected that in the future they would achieve their goal through a majority in the *Løgting*. This was apparently the political-tactical reason underlying the accusations of Oliver Effersøe in the *Folketing* and in March 1909, he achieved a major political victory over the home rule agenda, when the government explicitly withdrew the Offer of 1906. It is very likely that Oliver Effersøe, when he on the discursive level connected Alberti and the Alberti scandal, which belonged to a quite different context, to the



Oliver Effersøe defeated Jóannes Patursson at the election to the Danish parliament in 1906. In his first speech in the Danish Parliament, he declared that “We Faroese feel completely like Danish” and he continuously accused Jóannes Patursson and Faroese home rule supporters for being separatists.

origin of the Offer, influenced the Danish authorities to withdraw the Offer, but it had been certainly given by the government.

This perception of the decisive influence of the efforts by Oliver Effersøe is supported by the fact that when his question regarding the Offer in October 1908 was treated by the Danish Government, it was decided by the government that the Minister of Justice should answer a potential question from Oliver Effersøe in March 1909, i.e. when the finance bill was debated in the parliament, and that he at that occasion “in lenient form should maintain the Offer” (Kaarsted (ed.) 1975: 13-15). This Offer, which also was commented by J. C. Christensen in the *Folketing* in March 1909, was definitely “lenient” compared to the Offer from 1906; and the fact that e.g. the possibility of an annual state subsidy, which was never rejected by the government in 1906, apparently was explicitly rejected by J. C. Christensen in March 1909 (Sølvará 2014: 67), can be explained by this. However, and in this context more importantly, Svend Høgsbro also explicitly ‘withdrew’ the Offer at that same occasion on March 5, 1909.

On the other hand, it was hardly Svend Høgsbro or any minister listening to him who later claimed that the Offer was only a private Offer from Alberti. In addition, how could any of the Danish ministers of 1906 have put forward such an accusation against Alberti, when they all had to know that it was documented in the ministerial protocol from 1906 that the Offer was brought before the collective government by the Minister of Finance, Vilhelm Lassen, where it was both debated and accepted by the unanimous Danish Government? Furthermore, the former Prime Minister of 1906 had signed the minutes from the Danish Government’s meetings, where the Offer was dealt with, and Svend Høgsbro had explicitly declared the opposite in the Danish Parliament. Lastly, in March, June and October 1906, as minister of the Faroe Islands, Alberti had on behalf

of and even with explicit authorization from the collective government stated that the Offer was from the government (Sølvará 2013: 53, 64, 65 and 80). Consequently, it is very difficult to comprehend that any Danish ministers from 1906 subsequently could have put forward those accusations against Alberti.

Further, even if the story about the private offer of Alberti, which is preserved in (Faroese) historiography, often is claimed to have originated from the Danish Government, it can be argued that this false accusation most likely originated from the writings of Oliver Effersøe and his speech in 1908-09 (Sølvará 2011: 31). The fact that Alberti as the minister of Iceland was connected to the Icelandic Home Government of 1904 and actually appointed the new Icelandic minister in Iceland (Thorsteinsson 1985: 234) might have contributed in connecting him to the origin of the government's Offer. The very unlikely story of an accusation against Alberti by the government, which is preserved in the (Faroese) historiography, most likely developed from a later misreading of the muddled text of Jørgen Steining from 1953, where the word "they" referred to the speech of Oliver Effersøe in the Danish Parliament on March 6, 1909 and never explicitly to any Cabinet Ministers of the Danish Government of 1901-08.¹⁷

However, the broader Faroese political discourse, which was created around the suspicious interpretation of the Offer, did not *originate* with the claims made by Oliver Effersøe in 1908-09. Even if Oliver Effersøe reproduced his story of the Offer in *Dimmalætting* on March 25, 1909, and later on,¹⁸ it can be argued that the discourse in which the Offer was interpreted independently of its original context actually *ended* with his speech in 1909. The origin of an interpretation of the Offer from the Danish Government in relation to a politically fabricated discourse that extended its original political content and context can be traced back to 1906.

From these considerations, we depart from the disputed

question of the *origin* of the Offer to the question of the alleged discrepancy between the *content* of the Offer from – what we now know – the “collective government” and the presentation of the Offer by Jóannes Patursson.

The misleading story about the private Offer from Alberti, which most likely is a political fabrication created in the Faroese political discourse around 1908–09, appears to be widely accepted in Faroese historiography. However, the broader picture of the content of the Offer, which is preserved in the (Faroese) historiography, also appears to be misleading. In Faroese historiography, it has been argued that the Offer from the government as it was presented in the *Løgting* by Jóannes Patursson granted the *Løgting* legislative power in Faroese matters (Debes 1982: 298). The Offer has often been compared with the Home Rule Law of 1948, which granted the *Løgting* legislative power in Faroese matters (Wang 1965: 24; West 172: 124; Thorsteinsson 1990: 344–45; Thorsteinsson and Rasmussen 1999: 493; Sølvará 2002: 147, 294 and Hansen and Joensen 2006: 190–91). These claims might be based on the fact that the Unionist Party in the *Løgting* in 1906 declared that some had compared the Offer with the Icelandic Home Rule Law (in Icelandic the “Støðulög”, but in content it is comparable with the Faroese Home Rule Law from 1948 that granted the *Løgting* legislative power in Faroese matters – Debes 1994: 56–59) from 1871 – a claim that Oliver Effersøe in the Danish Parliament in 1909 presented as a mere fact (Sølvará 2014: 96–97). These claims, apparently not founded on the Offer itself, make it necessary to look further into the real content of the Offer of 1906.

Interestingly, in the minutes of the governmental meeting on March 6, 1906 the Offer is presented as “a question of taxes and customs in the Faroe Islands” and on May 31, 1906 as “the Faroese tax question” (*Ministtermødeprotokol 1905–1908* 1992: 78, 88). It appears even more interestingly that an analysis of the differences between the wordings

in the written Offer that Jóannes Patursson presented to the *Løgting* on May 12, 1906 and the subsequent official description of it in a letter from Alberti dated June 1, 1906 (Sølvará 2013: 47-48, 52-53), which the *Løgting* on May 20, 1906 had asked for, reveals verbal differences, but no real discrepancies (Sølvará 2014: 74-88). In the written presentation of the Offer, presented to the *Løgting* on May 12, 1906, Jóannes Patursson e.g. *never* claims that the Offer granted the *Løgting* legislative power.¹⁹ This is, of course, the decisive historical document in relation to the perception of the Offer by Jóannes Patursson. However, it is interesting that Jóannes Patursson in accordance with the minutes from the government meetings also in less vital articles usually describes the Offer as a “financial reorganization/home rule” (Sølvará 2014: 62, 79, 91-92) of the relationship between the Faroe Islands and Denmark. This corresponds with the fact that it was the Minister of Finance who was the leading figure in the Danish Government behind the Offer, which also is clearly alluded to in other contemporary sources. In a public speech in Tórshavn on May 5, 1906 Jóannes Patursson is explicitly cited as saying that the Offer he had got from the “Government” was an “Offer to take over both the direct and the indirect taxes” – nothing else. Subsequently, though, he mentions a single minister – maybe Alberti – who had said to him that the *Løgting* should also have “greater influence on the laws” (Sølvará 2014: 62). However, in the context it seems obvious that this was not part of the Offer from the “Government”, and neither does the wording imply legislative power to the *Løgting*. In another public speech in Tórshavn on April 22, 1906 Jóannes Patursson is cited as saying, “What the extended Legislative Authority is concerned, this question has not been the object of further discussion in Denmark” (Sølvará 2014: 88). Even here, it is not clear if “extended Legislative Authority”, which obviously does not refer to the Offer or any explicit promises from the Danish Government, implies that *Jóannes Patursson*

personally wanted real legislative power for the Løgting.²⁰ In an article in the Home Rule Party newspaper on June 3, 1906 Jóannes Patursson explicitly states “... that it would cause several major difficulties more for us to have sorted the legal home rule (Legislation) than would arise to fix the financial home rule must be regarded as obvious” (Sølvará 2014: 79). From these references, selected from different periods in the electoral campaign to the *Folketing* 22 June 1906,²¹ it appears to be obvious that Jóannes Patursson knew that the Offer did not imply real legislative power for the Løgting. More importantly, even if these quotes should imply that Jóannes Patursson personally wanted real legislative power to the Løgting, they do not give the Faroese readers that impression of the Offer either. However, these two – the government Offer and the personal views of Jóannes Patursson – somehow seem to have become entangled in the picture of the Offer preserved in the (Faroese) historiography.

The picture of a major discrepancy between the version of the Offer of Jóannes Patursson and that of the Danish Government seems to be so established in the Faroese historiography that historians dealing with the subject have found it necessary to explain this alleged fact – sometimes in quite opposite directions. The Danish historian Jørgen Steining claims that Jóannes Patursson completely missed the ability to render the view of other people correctly (Steining 1953: 144) and that his rendering of the Offer was quite wrong (Steining 1958: 239). He even explicitly says that Alberti in October 1906 had “claimed” that the perception of Jóannes Patursson of the Offer did not correspond with the Offer from him (Steining 1953: 146).²² The Faroese historian Hans Jacob Debes on the other hand defends Jóannes Patursson and argues that the other Faroese member in the Danish Parliament, the *Amtmaður* Christian Barentsen, must have known about the negotiations in Copenhagen. He indicates that Christian Barentsen would not have defended the perception of Jóannes Patursson of the Offer in the

Løgting, which he did, if it did not correspond with reality. He even explicitly claims that Alberti had seen the vital letter of Jóannes Patursson to the *Løgting* dated May 12, 1906 (Debes 1993: 144; see also Debes 1982: 298-99). A critical examination of the relevant contemporary documents indicates that they are both wrong (Sølvará 2014: 54-55 and 74-88).

The unspoken premise of Hans Jacob Debes is that Christian Bærentsen was in Copenhagen during the negotiations about the Offer in 1906. However, Jóannes Patursson explicitly states in a speech in 1906 that Christian Bærentsen at that time had left Copenhagen and that he was left alone negotiating with the government.²³ Further, nothing indicates that Alberti had seen the letter about the May 12, 1906 Offer to the *Løgting* beforehand. On the contrary, it is implicit in the discussions in the newspapers that Alberti had not seen the letter. This was common knowledge in 1906. In addition, how could Jóannes Patursson, who came to the Faroe Islands from Copenhagen in the end of April 1906, have shown the letter presented to the *Løgting* on May 12, 1906, dated the same day in the Faroe Islands, to Alberti? Moreover, why should he only have shown it to Alberti when he had negotiated with Vilhelm Lassen, Svend Høgsbro and Sigurd Berg? This is, however, irrelevant because there is no discrepancy between his letter to the *Løgting* and the Offer from the government.

Consequently, the statement of Jørgen Steining regarding the claim made by Alberti about a discrepancy between the Offer given by him and the perception of it by Jóannes Patursson appears incorrect in two ways. Firstly, in the speech in the Danish Parliament on October 25, 1906, Alberti was talking about an Offer from the “Government” and not about an Offer from “him” as Jørgen Steining claims. Secondly, Alberti neither “claimed” nor for that sake even mentioned any disagreement at all between his own perception and that of Jóannes Patursson of the Offer.²⁴ On the contrary,

12. Møde:
Tirsdag d. 6. Marts 1906 i Marineministeriet.
Landsbrugsministeren havde ueldt Forfald.

Forbøjet blev:

- Finansministeren foretogde Forslag til Lov om Lehn. d. H. Hofbetjentens Pension. Billigedes.
- Samme Minister foretogde et Spørgsmaal om Skat, her og Afgifter paa Fodveed, navnlig søledes, at der lagdes flere Skatter paa Jerns til Penj for Arubt Kommissær. Folkethingssmaal Patursson havde forebragt Sagen for Finansministeren.
- Høvedet næste Fredag.

Mødet havde
J. Patursson

The Danish Ministerial Protocol demonstrates that the Minister of Finance, Vilhelm Lassen, on March 6, 1917 presented a proposal from Jóannes Patursson for the collective Danish Government.

Alberti in the Danish Parliament was explicitly defending Jóannes Patursson against the accusations of Oliver Effersøe (Sølvará 2013: 79-80).

The only real difference between the letter of Jóannes Patursson to the *Løgting* of May 12, 1906 and the answer from the government to the *Løgting* of June 1, 1906, signed by the Minister of Justice, was that Jóannes Patursson had mentioned the possibility of an annual Danish state subsidy, which as a result of a subsequent application from the *Løgting* to the government could become a consequence of the Offer – this does not appear to have been an original part of it.²⁵ However, this ellipsis can easily be explained by the fact that the subsidy issue was not mentioned in the inquiry from the *Løgting* to the Minister of Justice of May 20, 1906. Therefore, the minister who as the *Løgting* requested consulted the

government before he answered did not comment on the issue in the answer to the *Løgting* (Sølvará 2014: 80-85).

The fact that e.g. J. C. Christensen in the parliament in March 1909, i.e. three years later, described the Offer in such a manner that the annual state subsidy apparently never had been an option can as previously argued be explained by the fact that the two Faroese members of the *Rigsdagen* since 1906 had represented political opponents of the Offer and that the new Danish Government in October 1908 as a consequence of this political reality had decided to present the Offer to Oliver Effersøe in the *Folketing* in a more “lenient form”.

There is no reason to cast any serious doubts on the credibility of Jóannes Patursson or Peter Adler Alberti in order to explain alleged discrepancies between their respective versions of the Offer because the difference between their versions can easily be explained without any such dubious assumptions. Further, the minutes from the government meeting on May 31, 1906 prove that Alberti consulted the whole Danish Government before he *and* the Minister of Finance, Vilhelm Lassen, were authorised to answer the *Løgting* in the letter of June 1, 1906 (*Ministtermødeprotokol 1905-1908* 1992: 88). Svend Høgsbro who was involved in the negotiations about the Offer in 1906 questioned any irregularity from Alberti in this matter (Sølvará 2014: 65). In addition, verbal differences between their two versions seem to imply the oral origin and nature of the whole case well known to contemporary Faroese debaters.

Thus, while none of these subsequent explanations are convincing or even appear to be necessary, it is interesting to point out that according to Jóannes Patursson, the Offer originated from unsuccessful negotiations in Copenhagen about a Danish appropriation to finance a new telephone network in the Faroe Islands (Sølvará 2014: 55, 57-60). This was why the Minister of Finance was the important figure

in the negotiations. Jóannes Patursson appears both in his speeches in the Danish Parliament in 1906 and even in some speeches in Tórshavn explicitly to connect the origin of the Offer to some very practical financial issues. However, as we shall see, in the Faroe Islands, the Offer nearly immediately appears to have been interpreted in close relation to the more ideological and political discourse concerning greater political Faroese home rule in the Danish realm. This fact as well as the source-critical difficulty in establishing any real discrepancy between the version of Jóannes Patursson and that of the Danish Government of the Offer indicates that the explanation of these discrepancies preserved in the (Faroese) historiography are to be explained differently.

In 1903, Jóannes Patursson published a pamphlet on Faroese politics (*Færøsk Politik* 1903), where his Faroese vision of greater financial and political home rule in the Danish realm was formulated, but this does not imply that he regarded the Offer as the fulfilment of the vision in his book. Nor was the political goal in the pamphlet separation, but only Faroese home rule. The concept legislation was not explicitly mentioned in the pamphlet in relation to the proposed extended authority of the *Løgting*, but it was explicitly proposed that the *Løgting* should have the authority to send passed proposals to laws (on specific Faroese matters) directly to the government to sanction and the special Faroese tax assessment should be executed by the *Løgting* under the supervision of the government (Patursson 1903: 136-37). However, especially his opponents in the *Løgting* immediately interpreted the Offer in the context of a *radical* version of his pamphlet.²⁶ This is already evident in the report from the unionists to the *Løgting* in September 1906 (Sølvará 2013: 56-57). Regardless of the exact content of the Offer of Jóannes Patursson, which Effersøe later (in 1919) acknowledged was basically in agreement with the Offer from the government, it was characterized in several contemporary statements by the political opponents as

something that basically contradicted the Offer from the Danish Government (Sølvará 2014: 85-86). The Offer was described as a radical home rule similar to the Icelandic Home Rule Law from 1871, where the *Løgting* would be like the Danish Parliament with legislative power and complete power over the finances. This politics of Jóannes Patursson and his supporters would eventually lead to separation from Denmark. The alleged radical Offer of Jóannes Patursson was claimed to be fundamentally different from the quite moderate Offer from the Danish Government and his alleged lies were eventually crowned in 1908-09, when Peter Alberti was dismissed from the government as Minister of Justice and was accused and subsequently convicted of forgery.

The distinction between the three analytical levels, the text (i.e. the historical sources), the context (e.g. *Færøsk Politik*)²⁷ and the discourse (e.g. the Alberti scandal) appear to be obvious in relation to the development of the interpretation of the Offer. Furthermore, it appears to be obvious that each level provides new and important clues to the political interpretation of the Offer, which apparently have explicit consequences for the political history of the Offer. This subsequent construction of an invented political narrative of the origin and content of the Offer appears to have been so persistently and repeatedly performed that it – in spite of the fact that this political narrative was neither ritualized nor institutionalized – draws the attention to the phenomena that the English historian Eric Hobsbawm in a famous article has characterized as “the invention of tradition” (Hobsbawm and Ranger (ed.): 1983: 1-14). In addition, a political discourse in which the Offer subsequently was interpreted relatively independent of its original content and context was already established in the Faroe Islands before Jóannes Patursson in the end of April 1906 came to the Faroe Islands with the Offer.

Jóannes Patursson had in January 1906 already declared that the increased spending of the *Løgting* should partly

be financed by a tax on alcohol. This placed him in direct opposition to the strong temperance movement in the Faroe Islands and the political opponents declared that there were only two parties in the Faeroes, the Temperance Party (*Afholdspartiet*) and the Alcohol Party (*Brændevinspartiet*). These descriptions of the combating political sides were persistently used in the unionist newspaper before the elections to the *Folketing* and *Løgting* in the summer 1906. His political opponents claimed in *Dimmalætting* that the temperance question ought to be the basis for the splitting-up into political parties in the Faroe Islands (Jacobsen 1995: 74). This theme was also connected to increased taxes that were believed to be the consequences of the Offer – especially if a Danish state subsidy was insecure – and Jóannes Patursson was declared as enemy number one of sobriety (Debes 1982: 280 and 290).

They claimed that the taxes had to be tripled in Tórshavn and sevenfolded in the villages as a consequence of the Offer, but the preconditions for these calculations were 1) that there would be no state subsidy and 2) that the intention with the Offer was to separate the Faroe Islands completely from Denmark, two preconditions that were respectively dubious and simply incorrect (Debes 1982: 299-300). The first precondition, which was never verified by the Danish Government, would, of course, be clarified during the subsequent negotiations between local Faroese and Danish state authorities and the second was simply false. There was nothing in the Offer that indicated that the *Løgting* should take over all the economic obligations of the Danish state authorities in the Faroe Islands – only a part of them. It was also claimed by Oliver Effersøe that Jóannes Patursson and his party's politics was to separate the Faroe Islands completely from Denmark and then it would be necessary for the Faroe Islands to have "Minister of War, General and an Army" (*Tingakrossur*, May, 30, 1906).

In the end, those in favour of the Offer could not con-

vince the majority of the voters and therefore in 1906, the opponents won all three elections in the Faroe Islands. In the *Løgting*, they got 12 out of 20 representatives elected, in the *Folketing* (first chamber in the Danish Parliament), they got their candidate elected and the majority in the *Løgting* elected their candidate to the *Landsting* (second chamber in the Parliament). Subsequently, the unionist majority in the *Løgting* on September 8, 1906 rejected the Offer. This indicates that it was the political discourse, juxtaposed against the dichotomy of alcohol, taxes and separation from Denmark versus sobriety, state subsidy and union with Denmark – established in the Faroe Islands already in January 1906 – which obviously coloured the way in which the Offer was interpreted in relation to the already existent dominating Faroese version of a separatist Offer – and not the explicit and tangible content of the Offer itself. In this context, it seems relevant to mention that Faroese constructions could start to develop independent of any document or communication with the Danish Government that could have restricted the number of possible discursive developments. The only known documents in the beginning were – apart from the comments of Alberti and Patursson in the *Folketing* in March 1906, – the unofficial letter of Jóannes Patursson to the *Løgting* and his statements and information given in different public speeches in the Faroe Islands. This is why it is important to point out that there was no communication between Jóannes Patursson and the government when he left Copenhagen with an oral Offer in the end of April 1906. The Offer, in the light of this previously established Faroese context, could easily be subjected to the development of a relatively independent discursive construction that became politically important in 1906-09.

It is significant that when the discussion of the Offer moved from Denmark to the Faroe Islands, it was not just a shift from Danish to Faroese interpretations of the same important sources or only a shift from a Danish to a Faroese context. It

also implied an important shift from the political discourse in Denmark, where the Offer was initially interpreted in relation to a practical reorganization of the financial system in a Danish County, to a Faroese political discourse, where e.g. the home rule question already had become a highly disputed political issue (a condition affecting the contemporary contradictory political interpretations of the Offer as well as a condition to keep in mind by subsequent historians analysing the subject). During this change of discourses, the originally decisive importance of the Minister of Finance in relation to the Offer being reduced and eventually nearly disappearing, while the mainly formal role of the Minister of Justice eventually was constructed as the decisive role seems to be quite obvious from a critical examination of the relevant contemporary sources.

However, in this development, it was so decisive in relation to the further establishment, manifestation and extension of the political discourse that those who were against the Offer won all three elections in the Faroe Islands in 1906 and dominated the political scene in the years to come. The immediate outcome of the political struggle about the Offer was the establishment of two political parties in the Faroe Islands; a division formally based on the relations to Denmark – not on the temperance question. Those who were against the Offer established the Unionist Party with a program that expressed the demand that the relations between the Faroe Islands and Denmark remained unchanged. The supporters of the Offer established the Home Rule Party with a program that expressed that the party would work for as extensive a local Faroese home rule as could be obtained in the Danish realm with the support of the Danish Government and Parliament. The Home Rule Party wanted the Faroese language acknowledged in school and church, while the Unionist Party wanted Danish language to maintain its dominating position in the Faroe Islands. However, the political reality was that the Unionist Party in the years to

come dominated the political arena in the Faroe Islands. More crucially, in relation to Danish-Faroese relations, the Unionist Party maintained in praxis a monopoly to express views and influence the political establishment in Denmark on local Faroese politics through the two representatives in the Danish Parliament. The first leader of the Unionist Party, Friðrikkur Petersen, and Oliver Effersøe, the toughest political opponent of Jóannes Patursson and the Offer, became the two Faroese members in the Danish Parliament. Jóannes Patursson, who lost the seat in the *Folketing* and the battle for the Offer to Oliver Effersøe, became the Home Rule Party leader.

It has been pointed out that already before the formal establishment of the two political parties, Oliver Effersøe and the opponents of the Offer had apparently succeeded in creating a political discourse in the Faroe Islands, where the Offer became a radical home rule program without basis in any promises from the Danish Government. Furthermore, home rule supporters were stigmatized as belonging to the Alcohol Party. Already in 1906, the Offer was said to be mainly the fabrication of Jóannes Patursson, and in 1908, Oliver Effersøe characterized it as a part of the treachery of Peter Adler Alberti. The political discourse in the Faroe Islands was harsh, especially when the unionists accused the home rule supporters of being separatists. As established, Oliver Effersøe succeeded in his attempt to convince the Danish Government in the Danish Parliament in 1909 to issue a statement that the support to the Offer and the politics of the Home Rule party was withdrawn. This was part of a deliberate politics from the Unionist Party that began already in 1906. Before the elections in 1906, Jóannes Patursson had a good relationship with Danish authorities, but immediately after the elections, Oliver Effersøe also tried to undermine Faroese home rule supporters in the Danish Parliament. In his first speech in the Danish Parliament on October 23, 1906, he used all his rhetoric skills to characterize

his opponents as the separatists. In this first speech in the *Folketing*, he used the word separatists thirteen times to characterize the home rule supporters, while he referred to the Unionist Party as the State Party (*Rigspartiet*). In this deliberate use of a constructed dichotomy, he also characterized the home rule supporters as belonging to the Decline Party (*Tilbagegangspartiet*) while his own Unionist Party was the Progressive Party (*Fremskridtspartiet*). Another clear example is the previously mentioned politically decisive speech he held in the Danish Parliament in 1909 when he mentioned the Offer from 1906. In this speech, he declared that the result of the political struggle in 1906 was the establishment of a real separatist party (*et egentligt separatistisk parti*). In a passage in this speech comprising four lines, he used the word separatist four times (Sølvará 2014: 305).

Peter Adler Alberti, who by subsequent historians has been accused of having claimed that the perception of the Offer by Jóannes Patursson was wrong, actually defended Jóannes Patursson against the accusations of Oliver Effersøe. In his speech in the Danish Parliament on October 25, 1906, where he answered Oliver Effersøe, he claimed that Jóannes Patursson, whom they all honoured, had in his position and activity as a parliamentarian in the Danish parliament expressed wishes for a somewhat greater authority for the *Løgting*, but he had never heard him express anything about separating the Faroe Islands from Denmark or anything that should or could lead in that direction (Sølvará 2013: 79).²⁸ However, this deliberate Unionist Party attempt to undermine the politics of the Home Rule Party was performed so convincingly subsequent to 1906 that many successive professional historians have also disputed the alleged content of the Offer and some have even questioned the very authority given to Jóannes Patursson by the government to present any Offer to the *Løgting*.

These accusations were in a contemporary tangible political context false, but the rationale behind the unionist

accusations against the home rule supporters was, of course, that in their perspective this politics would eventually lead to separation from Denmark. The home rule supporters who were not represented in the Danish Parliament could not respond to these accusations. However, these accusations echoed in a speech by Jóannes Patursson held in Tórshavn in 1907, where he in front of the Danish King stated, “that there is none of us, not a single one, who wants to depart from you”. At the same time, he gave the Danish King his vow of fidelity (Sølvará 2014: 241).²⁹ None of the home rule supporters was a separatist at this time and the Home Rule Party was not a separatist party – the party only wanted extended local Faroese home rule in the Danish realm (Sølvará 2014: 379). However, because of the biased and one-sided information about Faroese politics flowing from the political system in the Faroe Islands to the political system in Denmark, the dominating view of the Home Rule Party in Denmark apparently made it into a separatist party. This was e.g. the impression of the popular Danish view of the Home Rule Party that was expressed by Johan Christian Helms, the Danish Judge (*Sorinskrivarin*) in the Faroe Islands in 1903-11. Helms, a Dane with first hand knowledge on the subject, also claimed that this view of the Home Rule Party, which was promoted by Oliver Effersøe, was incorrect (Sølvará 2014: 103). This was, however, not just the popular Danish view of the politics of the Home Rule Party; in an internal governmental report on the more critical development in Iceland, dated January 2, 1909 to the Danish Prime Minister Niels Th. Neergaard, the Danish expert in Danish state matters, especially on Iceland, Knud Berlin, also warned him against a separatist movement that according to Knud Berlin was already full blown in the Faroe Islands (Sølvará 2014: 69).

The perception of Oliver Effersøe of a separatist Faroese home rule movement was clearly influencing the political system in Denmark even before the formal establishment of the

Home Rule Party. Jørgen Steining claims that Oliver Effersøe indirectly utilized the distrust in the Danish Parliament towards Iceland in the aftermath of the election to the *Althing* in early 1909, where a Danish-Icelandic committee proposal of 1908, which had not clearly recognised Iceland as a sovereign state, was rejected (Thór and others 2012: 408-10),³⁰ to influence the Danish Government to draw the line clearly between Faroe Islands and Iceland (Steining 1953: 146). The report given by Knud Berlin to the Prime Minister may support his view. Furthermore, it is as stated before evident that the Danish Government changed its perception of the Offer in a negative way in the period between October 1908 and March 1909, which also is exactly the period when the Danish-Icelandic dispute developed and occupied the recourses of the Danish Government (Kaarsted (ed.) 1975: 28-31). This political discourse, which apparently also was extended to involve real Danish challenges with Iceland, might have influenced the decision of the government to withdraw the support to the Home Rule Party politics in March 1909. The political discourse of a separatist home rule movement, which was presented in the Danish Parliament, probably provoked a response in Denmark because of this Icelandic context. Furthermore, even if the relations between Danish authorities and the Home Rule Party remained relatively positive in the following years, this political discourse might subsequently have influenced Home Rule Party politics.

At the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, relations between Jóannes Patursson and the Danish authorities might have become more troubled, but he was hardly a separatist at that time as some have claimed (Wåhlin and others 1994: 32). However, some ten years later, in 1919, in a different context than in 1909, but where the Icelandic context of the sovereignty of 1918 also had an important influence, and after the period 1906-15, when the Unionist Party representatives alone had represented Faroese politics in the Danish Parliament, Jóannes Patursson proclaimed that

all these accusations against the Home Rule Party members of being separatists and traitors might eventually create separatists where there were none (Sølvará 2014: 305). Jóannes Patursson was here anticipating some central aspects of modern discourse theory where language is claimed to be an integrated or even constituent part of reality with the power to affect or even construct reality. This might well be the fact with the radicalization of political views of the Home Rule Party in the years after the defeat in 1906.

The unionist winners of the political struggle in the Faroe Islands more or less consciously constructed the political discourse in the Faroe Islands that subsequently also affected the political discourse on Faroese politics in Denmark. However, the unintended consequence was that the defeated Home Rule Party as well as the political climate in the Faroe Islands became increasingly hostile and radicalized. Eventually, this political discourse, oriented around the axle separation from or full integration in Denmark,³¹ contributed to undermine the relatively good relations between the Home Rule Party and the Danish state authorities.

On the operational level, the unionist winners apparently developed the Faroese political discourse in the years following 1906. However, on the more ideological level, it was the important political pamphlet *Færøsk Politik* from 1903 written by Jóannes Patursson that became the discursive reference of the political struggle in the Faroe Islands in the years following 1906 – a political pamphlet that almost got paradigmatic status in the Faroe Islands (Sølvará 2014: 73 and 101-02). The political discourse was developed around the Home Rule Party sympathies and the Unionist Party antipathies to this important political pamphlet from 1903. Independent of the original content of the Offer, it was nevertheless interpreted in this vital context. This concludes analyses of relevant material available for this research.

However, the formal political relations between the Faroe Islands and Denmark that connect the respective political

systems through the Danish Governor (*Amtmaður*) in Tórshavn and the two Faroese representatives in the Danish Parliament in Copenhagen are important for understanding the development of the political relations between the Faroe Islands and Denmark. The important role of the Faroese representatives in the Danish Parliament has already been indicated, but this would prove to be even more important some years later when the Danish Governor too came to play a crucial role in the development of Danish-Faroese relations. However, these political developments are also connected to subsequent effects and contemporary interpretation of the previous political history of the Faroe Islands.

The Danish connection and treason

It took some years for the Home Rule Party to recover from the defeat in 1906. The Unionist Party dominated Faroese politics through its majority in the *Løgting* until 1918 and had both representatives in the Danish Parliament until 1915. The defeated Home Rule Party, whose members – especially the leader – not being in a position to respond or defend themselves in the Danish Parliament, were accused of untruthfulness against the Danish Government, separatism and connected to the “treachery” of the convicted “big-time swindler” Alberti, and faced hard times during these years. In 1910, the party was unable to prevent the unionist majority in the *Løgting* (15-6) from passing a proposal that would establish Danish as the educational language in the Faroese public schools (Sølvará 2013: 167-69). Two years later, a unanimous *Løgting* passed a proposal that – even if it did establish Danish as the main language in the church – allowed the Faroese language to be used under certain conditions (Sølvará 2013: 169-70). The Danish state authorities, who had the final decision in legislative matters, accepted the proposals passed in the *Løgting* and made them law in 1912, while the Home Rule Party disapproved of the dominant position of the Danish language.

The Home Rule Party position in the *Løgting* was to become even worse in 1911 when the Dane Svenning Rytter, who became politically attached to the Unionist Party, replaced the home-rule oriented *Amtmaður*, Christian Bærentsen, the only Faroese *Amtmaður* ever. Svenning Rytter as *Amtmaður* was Chair in the *Løgting* and voted with the Unionist Party



Svenning Rytter, the Faroese Governor in 1911-18, perceived himself as the defender of the “Danishness” in the Faroe Islands, a Danish outpost in the Atlantic. His support to the Unionist Party and persistent opposition to the Home Rule Party made him deeply involved in local Faroese politics.

in the *Løgting*. Together with the unionists, he (Sølvará 2014: 94) expressed himself very uncompromisingly and took a tough stance against the home rule supporters who struggled for better conditions for the Faroese language. He characterized home rule supporters as being untruthful, lazy, fanatics or even very evil-minded (Sølvará 2014: 188-89). His unconditional political commitment to the Unionist Party and personal accusations against the home rule supporters made him very unpopular with them. It appears that they were struggling against the elected majority in the *Løgting* as well as against the institution itself.

During the First World War, when relations with Denmark were slacker because of the wartime conditions in the North Atlantic, the political opportunities changed in favour of the Home Rule Party. Two incidents illustrate this change in Faroese politics. The first is that the Home Rule Party candidate Edward Mortensen won the election to the first chamber in the Danish Parliament (*Folketing*) on March 12, 1915 over the Unionist Party candidate Andras Samuelsen. This was the first time since 1906 – the first time in the history of the Home Rule Party – that a Home Rule Party candidate represented the Faroe Islands in the Danish Parliament. The Unionist Party monopoly in the Danish Parliament was broken. However, the Unionist Party preserved the unbroken monopoly in the second chamber in the Danish Parliament because the unionist majority in the *Løgting* later that year chose the unionist candidate Friðrikkur Petersen to represent the Faroe Islands in the *Landsting*. In the context of the unionists’ accusations against home rule supporters as being separatists, it is interesting to note that the Home Rule Party representative in the Danish Parliament voted in favour of the Danish constitution in 1915 (Sølvará 2014: 281). It is even more interesting that according to Edward Mortensen, it was Jóannes Patursson who asked him to run for the Danish Parliament (Mitens 1964: 78-82). The second was that on July 29, 1915 six Home Rule Party

members put a proposal to the *Løgting* that would grant the *Løgting* legislative power in domestic Faroese matters (Sølvará 2014: 253). Among them was Jóannes Patursson. The unionist majority in the *Løgting* rejected the proposal, but this indicated that the Home Rule Party was about to recover from the long-lasting defeat to the unionist opponents in 1906.

The Home Rule Party was actually victorious at the first wartime election to the *Løgting* in 1916 when the party got 542 votes and five representatives in the *Løgting*, while the Unionist Party got only 397 votes and four representatives (Hansen and Thulesen 2003: 15 and 152). However, the election to the *Løgting* this year was only in the southern part of the Faroe Islands and the Unionist Party therefore maintained the (marginal) majority of the elected representatives in the *Løgting*, 10-9 – apart from the officials, the *Amtmaður*, Svenning Rytter, and the *Próstur*, Friðrikkur Petersen, who both supported the Unionist Party in the *Løgting*. However, this hinted at a future change in the balance of power in the Faroese Parliament.

Subsequently in 1917, the actions of the home rule supporters left its mark and became the centre of Faroese politics and Danish Faroese relations in the years that followed. These actions were on the tangible political level connected to wartime problems of supplying the Faroe Islands with necessary merchandise, but on the broader discursive level, they were connected to accusations made against the Home Rule Party of having a separatist agenda.

In this section, I will look further into the matter concerning the Petition of 1917 mentioned in the introduction. It deals, in particular, with the position of the *Amtmaður* and the Investigative Committee on one side, and the position of the members of the Home Rule Party on the other side. Four main questions are discussed: Firstly, the question whether the petitioners intended to or attempted to send the Petition to the British Government without informing

Danish authorities as the *Amtmaður* and the Investigative Committee claimed. Secondly, the question whether or to what extent the Petition had an autonomous separatist political agenda as the *Amtmaður* and the Investigative Committee suspected. Thirdly, why this matter became part of Danish politics in the period after 1918; and finally, the political significance of the Investigative Committee will be discussed in relation to a broader Danish state context and the significance of the committee on the discursive level will be discussed.

From the election to the *Løgting* on February 28, 1916 to the election on April 24, 1918, which is the period in which the events in this section take place, there were 9 members of the Home Rule Party and 10 members of the Unionist Party in the *Løgting* in addition to the *Próstur* and the *Amtmaður*. The 20th elected member of the *Løgting* was Andreas Evensen, who was an independent member until April 27, 1917, when he formally took over the duty as *Próstur* after Friðrikkur Petersen. Svenning Rytter, the *Amtmaður*, voted with the Unionist Party and the *Próstur* was a unionist until Friðrikkur Petersen died on April 27, 1917. However, when Andreas Evensen – who never really took over as *Próstur* – became sick and died on October 12, 1917, the home rule partisan Jákup Dahl was temporarily appointed and in 1918, constituted as *Próstur* in the Faroe Islands. During this period, the Unionist Party had the majority in the *Løgting*, just as it had had since the political party division in 1906, but the Home Rule Party had the best election ever to the *Løgting* in 1916. Thus, the Home Rule Party confidence increased during First World War as the ties to Denmark weakened.

In August 1914, at the outbreak of war, the *Løgting* appointed a Committee of Supplies, the *Vørunevndin*, comprising the *Amtmaður*, three members of the Unionist Party and two members of the Home Rule Party. It was the duty of the *Vørunevndin* to make sure that there were

supplies for three months on the islands at any time. To begin with, there were no difficulties in ensuring this. However, in February 1917, two and a half years into the war, the transport route to the Faroes became affected by the German submarine warfare as well as the British demand – Order in council – from March 11, 1915 that all vessels sailing in the North Atlantic Ocean had to enter a British harbour for a contraband clearance (Sølvará 2014: 126-27). This was part of the strategic attempts by combating powers to isolate each other from importing any supplies from the neutral countries. The consequence was that from February 1917 ships sailing to or from the Faroe Islands had to enter a British harbour, Kirkwall, where they were at risk and were attacked by German submarines (Sølvará 2014: 129). The result was that no ships and supplies came to Faroe Islands for about two months.

The fact that there was a shortage of supplies in the Faroe Islands can be demonstrated from the telegraphic correspondence the *Amtmaður* had with Danish authorities and Icelandic businesses in February 1917. Four things can be concluded from the telegrams: Firstly, the *Amtmaður* and *Vorunevndin* had tried to get supplies from Iceland to the Faroe Islands via the United States as early as the beginning of February 1917. Secondly, the possibility of getting supplies through this route was slim. Thirdly, the shortage of supplies could become a serious matter towards the end of April 1917 if no supplies had come to the Faroe Islands by then; and finally, that in March 1917, the Home Rule Party members of the *Løgting*, who were also working on the problem, knew, that it would not be easy to get supplies imported from Iceland (Sølvará 2014: 130-32). However, documentation from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs proves without any doubt that as long as the British authorities upheld the demand for contraband checks in British harbours, which were extremely dangerous for vessels to visit after February 1, 1917, the only safe route for the Faroe Islands would be

a route to the west, to Iceland and America, according to the ministry (Sølvará 2014: 211-12).

In February 1917, the leader of the Home Rule Party, Jóannes Patursson, attempted to get the *Amtmaður* to summon the *Løgting* in order to discuss the challenge concerning the transport route to the Faroe Islands. However, neither the *Amtmaður* nor the majority of the *Løgting* supported him. Only seven out of the 22 members agreed with Jóannes Patursson on this particular matter. He therefore gave up the idea of summoning the *Løgting* at that time.

Two members of the Home Rule Party, Rasmus Rasmussen and Símun Pauli úr Konoy, who later did not agree with Jóannes Patursson on summoning the *Løgting*, were members of the *Vørunevndin*.³² The correspondence between the *Amtmaður* and the Danish state authorities demonstrates that in February 1917, the *Vørunevndin* was working on getting supplies to the Faroe Islands from Denmark or Iceland. This was presumably the main reason why the two members of the Home Rule Party did not support Jóannes Patursson. Additionally, they might have undermined their own work and position in the *Vørunevndin* if they accepted the request. However, the work of the *Vørunevndin* seemed to be difficult for two reasons: Firstly, no goods could be brought to the Faroes unless the British allowed vessels to sail to the islands without having to call at British harbours within the danger zone. Secondly, in February and March 1917, the *Løgting* was informed about the fact that there was a shortage of supplies in Iceland as well. These two obstacles were difficult to overcome. The Danish Prime Minister, Carl Theodor Zahle, was not pleased with the British high handed political decision, which was interfering in what he and the Danish Government already in 1915 characterized as domestic Danish transport (Sølvará 2014: 134). Yet, it would be difficult for the weak Denmark to force the super power of Britain in war mode to yield to the demand of contraband clearance, which had its basis in the British isolation policy towards Germany.

This resulted in the fact that in mid-March 1917, the Danish Government secretly sent the warship “Islands Falk” to the Faroes (Zahle 1974: 109). The reason why this was done in secret was that warships were exempted from the demand of entering British harbours for contraband checks. However, the condition was that neither merchandise nor passengers were to be on board. This condition was violated by the Danish Government because on board “Islands Falk” was, besides passengers and mail, 40 tons of margarine, matches and petroleum, which were the supplies lacking in the Faroe Islands according to the *Amtmaður*. Later on, negotiations were opened with the British in order to get cargo vessels from the Faroe Islands to Copenhagen being exempted from entering British harbours for checks, but it became soon clear (also to the petitioners) that this route was ruled out (Sølvará 2014: 211).

Thus, a number of members of the Home Rule Party continued to believe that more could and should be done in order to get the British to yield the demands of contraband checks so that, for instance, supplies could come from Iceland to the Faroe Islands. On March 6, 1917, the *Havnar Framburðsfelag*, The Constituency Association of the Home Rule Party, agreed to send a Petition regarding this matter to the British Consul in Tórshavn. This proposal was unanimously passed at the meeting, Rasmus Rasmussen included. The British Consul, who was not interested in getting involved in local Faroese politics without having the approval of the *Amtmaður*, did not wish to do anything about the Petition, which he received from Jóannes Patursson on March 7, 1917. Therefore, Jóannes Patursson contacted the *Amtmaður*, who gave his endorsement on March 8, 1917. However, the British Consul did not consider it to be sufficiently sincere, and therefore did not give this Petition anymore consideration.

Nevertheless, there appears to be some indication that Jóannes Patursson did try to send the Petition consented by the *Havnar Framburðsfelag* on March 6, 1917 to the

British Government without the knowledge of the Danish authorities. The reason why his attempt was not successful is a different matter relating to the fact that the British Consul, as expected, was reluctant to turn to the British Government on behalf of the Home Rule Party without the approval of the *Amtmaður*. However, the *Amtmaður* at this time does not appear to have seen this as any problem as he subsequently gave the Consul his endorsement. Furthermore, the *Amtmaður* had previously – with success – given the Association of Faroese Shipmaster and Navigator an endorsement for a similar Petition on February 24, 1917 regarding sales of fish in Iceland. This Petition had actually inspired the *Havnar Framburðsfelag* on March 6, 1917.

The members of the Home Rule Party, however, did not give up. A few days later, on March 12, 1917, an article written by Jóhan Mortensen, the editor of the home rule-biased Faroese newspaper, *Føroyatíðindi*, advised the *Løgting* to step in on behalf of the suffering Faroese people and turn directly to the British War Office requesting free passage for the Faroese vessels carrying necessary supplies from the most convenient country for freighting goods. According to Jóhan Mortensen, it was the obligation of the *Løgting* to contact the British authorities, not the duty of the *Havnar Framburðsfelag* or the Home Rule Party or a part of the party. This article greatly influenced the politics of the members of the Home Rule Party in the *Løgting*. On March 17, 1917, the *Havnar Framburðsfelag* held a meeting to discuss the requisite transport issue. A proposal for a Petition to the British Government in order to have vessels exempted from the contraband clearance in British harbour was presented to the participants, and the following day, when Rasmus Rasmussen, who this time really did not agree,³³ was not present, the proposal was finally accepted in the *Havnar Framburðsfelag*.³⁴

It was interestingly originally drawn up in Danish – the official language in the *Løgting* – and had the title ”To the



Disagreements between the unionists and home rule supporters were discussed in the *Løgting*. It has been argued that the Faroese Unionist Party originated from the new class of conservative merchants and the upper classes in the new society who opposed paying taxes (Skála 1992: 12). Even if there might be a piece of truth in this claim, it must be modified. It was not only the upper classes, but also the vast majority of the Faroese voters, who in 1906 rejected the Offer, which would have given the *Løgting* the authority to collect taxes in the Faroe Islands. Jonathan Wylie has in a survey shown that the profile of the two parties' members of the *Løgting* in the period 1906-24 was a bit different (Wylie 1987: 158-61). While – apart from peasants – teachers and the cultural elite predominated a bit in the Home Rule Party, there were more merchants in the Unionist Party. Furthermore, while the Unionist Party appeared to represent an alliance between Tórshavn and the villages, the Home Rule Party apparently represented an alliance between Tórshavn and the (fishing) towns. In addition, the home rule supporters were younger than the unionists, but everywhere in the Faroe Islands voters in 1906-24 tended to vote against the existing establishment.

Government of Great Britain”. It began with these words: “The people on the Faroe Islands hereby send through us, the undersigned members of the Faroese Parliament, the following Petition in confidence to the British Government High-Mindedness: ‘The Government of Great Britain is petitioned to give us, the people of the Faroe Islands,

permission to sail goods, mail and passengers between Iceland and the Faroe Islands, and that the ships conveying this transport are exempted from the duty to pass the danger zone and call at British harbours at outward bound and homeward bound ...' The signed men and women of the Faroe Islands over the age of 18 give the above Petition our full support ... In March 1917" (Sølvará 2014: 139-41). Their intention was to bolster the demands in the letter with signatures from as many people as possible in the Faroe Islands.

On March 19, 1917, a member of the Home Rule Party, Andreas Ziska, sent a telegram to Jóhan Mortensen, which read as follows: "I have presented to the *Framburðsfelag* the same proposal you put forward in *Føroyatíðindi* regarding a Petition to the British Government ... this was consented ... and the plan is that the Petition is to be signed by women and men over the age of 18 and telegraphed to the British Government in London" (Sølvará 2014: 141). Neither the Petition itself nor the telegram from Andreas Ziska to Jóhan Mortensen explicitly mentioned that the *Løgting* should be behind the Petition. However, that must have been the implicit intention as Jóhan Mortensen had explicitly suggested this in his article in *Føroyatíðindi*, referred to by Andreas Ziska in his telegram. The fact that the Petition was originally written and distributed in Danish also appears to imply discussion in the *Løgting* and involvement of Danish authorities. Further, the minutes of the decisive meeting in *Havnar Framburðsfelag* on March 18, 1917 demonstrate that it should be sent to the British Government "through the *Løgting*" (Sølvará 2014: 141).³⁵ This corresponds fully to the fact that the *Havnar Framburðsfelag* at the same meeting unanimously agreed to support Home Rule Party members of the *Løgting* in their new claim to have the *Løgting* summoned to deal with the supply question (*Gerðabók fyri Havnar Framburðsfelag* 1905-1919, March 18, 1917). Thus, Jóannes Patursson wrote to the *Amtmaður* on March 20, 1917, once

more trying to get him to summon the *Løgting* to deal with the matter (Sølvará 2013: 104). This time the Home Rule Party members of the Committee of Supplies, who were not present at the meeting in the *Havnar Framburðsfelag* in March 18, 1917, did not support the claim.³⁶ However, the Petition referred to the “undersigned members of the Faroese Parliament”. The telegram from Andreas Ziska to Jóhan Mortensen also stated that it should be “sent to the British Government in London” – the Danish authorities were not mentioned in the telegram. The latter is evident as the Petition itself was addressed to “The Government of Great Britain”, but, of course, this does not imply that it should be *sent* directly to the British Government.

Nevertheless, it appears as if the purpose of the *Havnar Framburðsfelag* was to send the latter Petition, accepted on March 18, 1917, to the British authorities without directly informing the Danish authorities in Copenhagen. This was similar to the precedence set in the Petition of the Shipmasters and Navigators of February 24, 1917 as was done with the Petition of March 6, 1917. The vital difference was, however, that the latter was apparently to be sent through the *Løgting*, – the Faroese Parliament – and thus also formally through the *Amtmaður*, the supreme representative of Denmark in the Faroe Islands who was Chairman in the *Løgting*. The *Amtmaður*, who could postpone decisions of the *Løgting* until they were confirmed by the government, would probably vote against the proposal, but that point is irrelevant here.

Yet, the Petition alarmed the *Vørunevndin*, the majority of the *Løgting* and the *Amtmaður*. On March 21, 1917, a unanimous *Vørunevnd* published a poster, which warned heavily against signing it.³⁷ The explicit argument was that such a Petition could interfere with the ongoing negotiations between the Danish and the British Governments, and the *Vørunevndin* believed that the prospect of the negotiations ending successfully was good. The following day, the *Amtmaður* called for a meeting of the *Løgting* on March 28,

1917. Four days prior to the meeting, on March 24, 1917, the *Amtmaður* sent a secret telegram to the Danish Government informing them about the reason why the *Løgting* was being summoned, and in the end stated that there was no reason for the Danish Government to do anything further in this matter. Svenning Rytter did not mention that the petitioners planned to send the Petition to London through the *Løgting*, but he gave the Danish Government the impression that they intended to deliver the Petition directly to the government in London (Sølvará 2014: 145-50).

The ministerial protocol of the Danish Government from March 26, 1917 shows how the ministers related to the information from the *Amtmaður* (Kaarsted (ed.) 1973: 123 and 145). The Minister of Foreign Affairs estimated that if lack of patriotic feelings towards the Danish Realm could lead the Faroese people to sign such a Petition, it was important that it was rejected in Britain. This indicates that if the *Amtmaður* was right when saying that members of the Home Rule Party on their own initiative planned to contact the British authorities directly – without involving Danish authorities or the *Løgting* – the Minister of Foreign Affairs did believe the activity to be doubtful, however without causing any direct harm. In March 1917, neither the *Amtmaður* nor the Minister of Foreign Affairs found it necessary to take any further action in the matter for the time being. However, in this context, we must bear in mind that it is very doubtful if the *Amtmaður* was correct in his accusations. Since February 14, 1917, the petitioners in vain had tried to get the *Løgting* summoned to deal with the supply problem. Now they had succeeded and the *Løgting* was to deal with the Petition.

On the same day as the Danish Government discussed the telegram from the *Amtmaður*, March 26, 1917, Jóannes Patursson received a telegram from Guðmundur Björnsson, the President of the first chamber of the Icelandic Parliament, the *Althing*. This telegram was a reply to one sent the day

before to Björnsson regarding the possibility of sending supplies from Iceland to the Faroe Islands. Jóannes Patursson needed an affirmative answer from him, as it seemed likely that the Home Rule Party proposal would be overthrown in the *Løgting* scheduled for two days later. In the telegram, there was no commitment from the President of the *Althing* to send supplies from Iceland. However, he had talked to the First Minister of Iceland and stated that: "You have to apply for permission from the British to the mentioned transport of supplies, with support from the Danish Ambassador in London and the British Consul in Tórshavn, for our supplies are tied by the agreement with England that nothing must be re-exported from here" (Sølvará 2014: 153). Apart from the fact that the President of the *Althing* supported the core of the Petition, it is interesting that he suggested that it could be sent through the Danish Ambassador in London with assistance from the British Consul in Tórshavn – just as had been done on March 6, 1917.³⁸ Interestingly, a connection through the Danish Ambassador in London appears to be implicit already in the important article in *Føroyatíðindi* of March 12, 1917 and in the Petition of March 18, 1917 itself, where it was referred to a Faroese precedence during the Napoleonic Wars, in 1808,³⁹ for contacting the British Government through the Danish Consul in London regarding supplies to the Faroes (Sølvará 2013: 89-99 and 133-34).⁴⁰ Furthermore, according to a secret report from the *Amtmaður* to the Ministry of Justice, dated April 18, 1917, Jóannes Patursson had explicitly mentioned the proposal of the President of the *Althing* in the *Løgting* during the debate on the Petition in early April 1917. However, the *Amtmaður* explicitly warned the Danish Government against believing these words of Jóannes Patursson (Sølvará 2014: 192).

In the days following March 28, 1917, when the *Løgting* was summoned to discuss the Petition, it became obvious that the *Amtmaður* and the members of the Unionist Party, who together made up the majority in the *Løgting*, would

reject the proposal from the Home Rule Party. As early as March 23, 1917, the *Amtmaður* had received a telegram from the Icelandic Government that stated that because of shortages of supplies, it was for the time being not possible for them to send supplies to the Faroe Islands, subject to the pre-condition that the British Government permitted them to re-export supplies to the Faroe Islands (*Beretning* 1919: 37-38). However, the fatal stab was presumably given on March 31, 1917, when the *Løgting* received a telegram from the Danish Government saying that the steamer "Island" on April 2, 1917 was to leave Copenhagen bound for the Faroe Islands with 700 tons supplies (Sølvará 2013: 105). Internal correspondence between members of the Home Rule Party shows that some of them had doubts when this message came from Copenhagen (Sølvará 2014: 158). On April 3, 1917, a majority in the *Løgting* – the members of the Unionist Party, *Vørunevndin* and the *Amtmaður* – decided that an indispensable principle regarding contacts from the Faroe Islands to other governments was that it must go through the "relevant Danish state authorities" (Sølvará 2014: 159). By this, the majority of the *Løgting* refused to agree with the Petition written by some members of the Home Rule Party. However, an occasional ship from Copenhagen did not solve the permanent problem with supplies and it did not open a new attractive route towards the west to Iceland and America.

The petitioners, led by Jóannes Patursson, had already started collecting signatures around the islands, despite warnings from the *Vørunevndin* and the *Amtmaður*. In mid-April, they had collected 3,242 signatures, but they could no longer send the Petition through the *Løgting* to London. Therefore, the text was translated into English and telegraphed to the Danish Ambassador in London on April 17, 1917 together with a testimonial containing information regarding the signatures, which was signed by six out of nine members of the Home Rule Party. At the same time,

Edward Mortensen was informed about the expedition of the Petition. Two days later, a large envelope containing a copy of the Petition and some of the original signatures was sent by mail to the British Consul in Tórshavn. This was the procedure, which the President of the *Althing* had proposed in the telegram of March 26, 1917. However, the British Consul who upheld the position that he did not want to interfere with local Faroese politics, never opened the envelope, but returned it unopened to sender. It is, however, important to note that this proposal from the President of the *Althing* was originally never intended as a proposal of *independently* contacting the Danish Ambassador in London and the British Consul in Tórshavn, but it was clearly a proposal for achieving *complimentary* support from the Danish Ambassador in London and the Consul in Tórshavn.

It is interesting to note that the petitioners thereby apparently did exactly what Jóannes Patursson according to the *Amtmaður* had informed the *Løgting* about in the beginning of April 1917. It is also interesting to note that when the *Amtmaður* informed the Ministry of Justice about these intentions on April 18, 1917, he did not know that the Petition had been sent to the Danish Ambassador in London the day before (Sølvará 2013: 127). However, the *Amtmaður* regarded these intentions as more acceptable compared to the – according to him – original intentions of the petitioners to send the Petition directly to the British Government, that he wrote to the Ministry of Justice that it should not believe the words of Jóannes Patursson (Sølvará 2013: 124). A contradiction appears to be evident in his report when he later in the text states that the Petition no doubt eventually would be sent to the Danish Government or to the Danish Ambassador in London (Sølvará 2013: 127). This indicates that the *Amtmaður* wanted to describe the petitioners to the Danish Government in relation to their – in his belief – original intentions to bypass all Danish state authorities, while it was the resistance from him and



Simun Pauli úr Konoy (picture) and Rasmus Rasmussen were engaged in the Fishermen's Association, while Kristin í Geil (editor of *Tingakrossi*) and Andreas Ziska were engaged in the Union of Workers in Tórshavn. According to the diary of Rasmus Rasmussen, there were disagreements between these two groups (note 41). However, this indicates the unionist engagement of supporters of the Home Rule Party, which potentially was in conflict with interests of the Kings Yeomen Jóannes Patursson.

the unionist majority in the *Løgting* that subsequently forced them to consider delivering the Petition through the Danish authorities. The whole context of the confidential report of April 18, 1917 from the *Amtmaður* to the Ministry of Justice appears to imply that if or when this did happen – which it actually did on April 17, 1917 – and the Ministry of Justice had thanked the majority in the *Løgting* for loyal treatment of the Petition – which it did on June 22, 1917 (*Bilag A* 1919: 32) – this would be the end of the whole matter.

However, the crucial question *later* became whether the members of the Home Rule Party by this act, unknown to the *Amtmaður* on April 18, 1917, intended to send the Petition to the British Government without informing the "relevant Danish state authorities". The original intention of March 18, 1917 should have been to transmit the Petition directly to the British Government in London, but later it was allegedly attempted to first transmit it through the *Løgting*, then through the Danish Ambassador in London and eventually through the British Consul in Tórshavn. The original purpose – especially the purpose of Jóannes Patursson on March 18, 1917 was according to the *Amtmaður* to achieve independent Faroese negotiations with the British state authorities to pave the way for the dissolution of the union between Denmark and the Faroe Islands (Sølvará 2014: 188-89). The members of the Home Rule Party on the contrary claimed the intention was never to send the Petition directly to the British Government. It was eventually sent to the Danish Ambassador in London with approval from the Danish Government with the sole purpose of improving the transport of supplies to the Faroe Islands – from north-west (Sølvará 2014: 179-80). The petitioners later claimed that the British Consul in Tórshavn had only received a number of the original signatures for inspection so that he could verify their existence if the British state authorities in London, who were to receive the Petition from the Danish Ambassador in London, requested them.

The *Amtmaður*, who had made it clear that he did not think much about the Faroese home rule movement, wrote a long confidential report to the Ministry of Justice on April 18, 1917, in which he presented a completely different interpretation to that of the members of the Home Rule Party. In the confidential report among other things, it was written: "Patursson's aim was *partly* to hit the majority in the *Løgting*, the Unionist Party, in a manner that made it appear to the public as though it was not the Danish authorities or the committee set by the *Løgting* that had opened way for food supplies, but on the contrary, there were some members of the Home Rule Party headed by King's Yeoman Patursson, this was done *partly* to form as close an alliance with Iceland as possible, and preferably so that the Faeroes became dependent on Iceland with regard to supplies, *partly*, and maybe in particular to set *precedent for direct* negotiations between 'the Faroese people' and a foreign state without informing Danish authorities (similar to what has happened during the war in Iceland) with the purpose of preparing the dissolution of the constitutional connection between the Faeroes and Denmark, and *partly* to show that at a critical time in Faroese history, it has been necessary to call upon assistance from Iceland and Britain in order to get food supplies to the Faeroes as the Danish Government was unwilling or unable to do anything" (Sølvará 2014: 188-89). According to this confidential report, which the *Amtmaður* sent the Ministry of Justice on April 18, 1917, the Petition was not at all about the transport of supplies to the Faroe Islands; it was only about autonomous political actions against the Unionist Party in the *Løgting*, but more so, it was against the presence of Danish authority in the Faroe Islands.

Although the accusation from the *Amtmaður* of treasonous intentions was only based on suspicion, there was probably some truth to the argument that the Petition was somewhat politically motivated. First of all, the *Vørunevndin* had already

tried to get supplies from Iceland to the Faroe Islands, yet there had been little results. In addition to this, while the Icelanders had made it clear in February 1917 that it would be difficult for them to send supplies, 700 tons of supplies were sent to the Faroes from Copenhagen on April 2, 1917. Apparently, Iceland might not be the most obvious place to approach for getting supplies to the Faroe Islands, but politically, this route was probably important for the home rule movement to try. However, the general exemption from the contraband clearance in British harbour in the danger zone was the vital and also the only possible goal to reach on this particular route over Iceland to America, because the British stated that such an exemption could not be given on the route between the Faroe Islands and Denmark (Sølvará 2014: 211).

There is, nevertheless, no evidence that the Danish Government agreed with the *Amtmaður*, when arguing that something irregular was intended and attempted through the Petition. On the contrary, almost everything the Faroese petitioners had done in this regard had been conveyed to the government beforehand by Edward Mortensen, the Faroese representative in the Danish Parliament. For instance, Edward Mortensen, who already in a letter of March, 26, 1917 had been informed about the Petition, wrote in a letter to Jóannes Patursson, dated April, 5, 1917, that both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs had said to him that it was only natural that the Faroe Islands and Iceland collaborated in these troubled times (Sølvará 2014: 156). This appears to be confirmed by C. Th. Zahle himself. In 1919, C. Th. Zahle informed the Investigative Committee about some conversations he had with Edward Mortensen in early April 1917, where the latter beforehand informed him about the intended Petition to the Danish Ambassador in London. C. Th. Zahle had in this context said that it was good that the Faroese in these troubled times showed interest in their own matters (*Bilag V* 1919:

298). Before telegraphing the Petition to London, Jóannes Patursson had received a letter from Edward Mortensen, which (according to a preserved copy) stated: "I have spoken to Zahle and Minister of Foreign Affairs Scavenius ... and they understood the natural basis for your action. Scavenius ... did not have anything against a Petition being sent to the Ambassador like you said you planned on doing ... and that he then would give the Ambassador instructions" (Sølvará 2014: 171). Thus, the contemporary opposition against the Petition from 1917 apparently did not come from the authorities in Copenhagen; it came largely from the *Amtmaður* and the Unionist Party majority in the Faroese *Løgting*.

Even Rasmus Rasmussen who was a hard opponent of the Petition explicitly rejected the possibility of a separatist agenda with the Petition, which was put forward in some Danish newspapers, when he commented this issue in his diary on June 10, 1917. At the same time, he claimed that the Petition originated from Andreas Ziska – not from Jóannes Patursson.⁴¹ This latter claim made by Rasmus Rasmussen, which explicitly contradicts the claim of the *Amtmaður* about the origin with Jóannes Patursson, complies fully with the relevant sources.

However, in April 1917 even the *Amtmaður* – who explicitly had accused the petitioners of having had separatist and treasonous intentions with the Petition – does not appear to have considered that the expedition of the Petition to the British Government given the way that it eventually was delivered would need any legal or political actions from the authorities. This might clearly be concluded from his report to the Ministry of Justice of April 18, 1917.

These things indicate that the political content of the Petition in its contemporary context was not state politically motivated in terms of the "preparing of the dissolution of the constitutional connection between the Faeroes and Denmark", but it was local political – turned against the

majority in the *Løgting* comprising the members of the Unionist Party and the *Amtmaður*. This local focus even appears to be the perception of Rasmus Rasmussen, whose judgement of the Petition was negative, when he emphasized the political content of the Petition.⁴² In order to win acceptance for the home rule politics in the Faroe Islands, and thereby break down the long-lasting political monopoly of the Unionist Party since 1906, the transport matter became a clear case for the Home Rule Party to trade upon. However, it is not at all certain that the Petition was anti-Danish for this reason. The contemporary sources actually indicate the opposite. The central role of Edward Mortensen in the matter clearly indicates a close cooperation between the petitioners and Danish authorities in Copenhagen.

The Petition, which was telegraphed to the Danish Ambassador in London and to Edward Mortensen in Copenhagen on April 17, 1917, was hardly of any decisive importance for the transport of supplies to the Faroe Islands. However, it did have an effect as Danish and British authorities opened negotiations for a free passage between the Faroe Islands and Iceland – without contraband checks in British harbour. Interestingly, the Danish Foreign Minister explicitly appeared to contradict the poster from the *Vorunevndin* of March 21, 1917 when he wrote to the Investigative Committee that negotiations between the Danish and British Governments regarding a free passage to Iceland and America only began *after* and as a *consequence* of the Petition sent to the Danish authorities on April 17, 1917 (Sølvará 2014: 353).⁴³ On May 18, 1917, the Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs told the Danish Ambassador in London to work in favour of the Petition, and the British Government permitted vessels applying for passage to sail supplies between the United States and the Faroe Islands if they entered the harbour of Halifax in Canada, which was outside the declared danger zone in the North Atlantic, for the demanded British contraband clearance. Nevertheless,

when vessels applied for a specific license, it sometimes turned out to be difficult for them to get a so-called letter of assurance, which was necessary in order for the ships to leave the harbour – this was especially the case with transport of petroleum, but not with food. However, some vessels got the letter of assurance and went to Halifax outside the declared danger zone before heading to the Faroe Islands with basic goods, but the general relief from the British clearance demands in the North Atlantic did not come until the summer of 1918 when it also became possible to import petroleum (Sølvará 2014: 212-13). This general British decision to suspend the contraband checks was a result of the fact that Britain, France and the USA were winning the war against Germany and Austria-Hungary in the summer of 1918, but the contraband clearance in Halifax in 1917 was a decisive step in the right direction. In 1918, it was no longer important for Britain to maintain control over the traffic in the North Atlantic.

This could have been the end of the Petition matter, and it could have been forgotten for what it was – a political initiative regarding transport of supplies, which was taken up, with local political undertones, in the Faroe Islands in a period when political circumstances were difficult; and it could have ended in May 1917 in a worthy manner for all parts involved – maybe with the exception of the *Amtmaður*. However, the political context was very different in April 1918 when a very discontented *Amtmaður* started gaining acceptance for his point of view in the political system in Denmark. Therefore, the matter of the Petition got a sequel.

The Danish Prime Minister, Carl Th. Zahle enjoyed good relations with Edward Mortensen, the Faroese member in the *Folketing*, who became a member of the Home Rule Party. This cooperation gained greater importance when the parliamentary basis of his Social Liberal Government over the years eventually was reduced to the smallest possible margin (Mørch 2001: 112-13). This was presumably the main



It was Andreas Ziska who at a meeting in the *Havnar Framburðsfelag* on March 17, 1917 proposed to send a Petition to the British Government. He was chosen to be leader of the committee that should deal with the Petition. Sverre Patursson and Andreas Ziska, who was never a member of the *Løgting*, established later a socialist separatist party, but it was never represented in the *Løgting*. Andreas Ziska was in favor of separation from Denmark at the time of the famous Faroese referendum on September 14, 1946 (see Epilogue) and subsequently he supported the Republican Party from 1948.

reason why Carl Th. Zahle supported Edward Mortensen in the general election to the *Folketing* on April 22, 1918 – in vain might be added because Edward Mortensen lost the election to the unionist candidate Andras Samuelsen. However, it was a problem for Carl Th. Zahle that Edward Mortensen had been one of the leading men supporting the Petition that the *Amtmaður* together with the Unionist Party had disputed during the war. The *Amtmaður* never felt greatly supported by Carl Th. Zahle in this matter, but when he received a telegram on March 15, 1918 from Carl Th. Zahle in which he was asked to inform Mortensen that Zahle supported him, the *Amtmaður* really felt let down by the Prime Minister. On March 17, 1918, the *Amtmaður* Svenning Rytter together with the *Sorinskriverin* (the judge) and the *Fútin* (head of the police in the Faroe Islands) requested to be moved to different positions – otherwise they would resign (Sølvará 2014: 201). At the same time, the *Amtmaður* started gathering documentation to prove that the petitioners had intended and also planned to send the Petition without the knowledge of the Danish authorities. This material was posted to the Danish Government on March 26, 1918.

This saw the Danish political involvement increase. At this point, the Petition, originally a local political matter in the Faroe Islands that in its contemporary Faroese context was discussed on the basis of the local Faroese political discourse, became part of a different political context and a different political discourse in Denmark. While the political discourse in the Faroe Islands was constructed around the specific context of the home rule question, the political discourse in Denmark was constructed around a complex political context regarding the political struggle for the governmental power in Denmark. The parliamentary opposition against the Zahle Government, which was particularly strong in the *Landsting*, agreed on July 5, 1918 to appoint a committee to investigate the support given by Zahle to the member of

the Home Rule Party before the election on April 22, 1918 concurrent with the matter regarding the Petition of March 1917. The committee numbered 11 men – Jóannes Patursson represented the *Radikale* (the Danish Radical Left Party) in the committee – and presented its work on January 15, 1920 with the publication of 920 closely written pages of information, including bulky documents and depositions. Jóannes Patursson was not in Copenhagen during the time the report was finished and published. The majority of the Investigative Committee represented the opposition and accused him and other members of the Home Rule Party of ”damaging behaviour towards the state” verging on ”high treason” regarding the Petition of 1917. Moreover, the Zahle Government was accused of acting from narrow party-political interests that damaged the relationship between Denmark and the Faroe Islands. The minority, who represented the Danish Government, on the contrary, found nothing irregular in the matter of the Petition and accused the majority of acting from narrow party-politics and damaging the relations between the Faroe Islands and Denmark.

In analysing this vast material, it is necessary to distinguish between the sources, the context of the Investigative Committee (the struggle for governmental power in Denmark) and the political discourse (accusations of separatism, damaging behaviour and high treason), which the committee developed about petitioners in the efforts to connect Zahle to such intentions.

The tone in the majority report was not always very objective, and the conclusions, which mostly coincided with points of view of Svenning Rytter, were not always well founded. The committee had e.g. found a telegram from Edward Mortensen to Jóannes Patursson, which was mentioned in the report: ”The most reassuring telegram in this connection was a telegram dated 29 March from Mr. Mortensen to Mr. Patursson, which went as follows: ‘700 tons

of food supplies will be sent to the Faeroes before Easter. If necessary, I am willing to travel to London, but I presume for the time being that it is not necessary. Awaiting further information.” Mr. Patursson had rendered this telegram to the committee starting with the word ”willing”, thus excluding the message about the forthcoming arrival of 700 tons of food supplies as well as the sentence ‘If necessary’ ... At the same time, Patursson had informed the committee that after receiving the telegram on March 31, he read the telegram in the same manner to the *Løgting*. This concealment of the fact that help was on its way for the Faroese people and that it came from Copenhagen can only be understood when scrupulously recalling the situation Mr. Patursson was in at that time ... It must especially have been a thorn in his side that the supplies came from Copenhagen, and not from Iceland to where the movement of the Petition should teach the people of the Faroe Islands to turn to as its natural asylum when in need ... ” (Sølvará 2014: 206). At first glance, it seems as if the majority of the committee was right when arguing that Jóannes Patursson withheld important information from the *Løgting* in order to make it easier for him to gain a general acceptance of the Petition. However, a closer examination indicates that this is not that clear.

On March 31, 1917 at 1 pm, that is on the same day as Jóannes Patursson received the above-mentioned telegram, the *Løgting* was informed of the 700 tons of supplies on its way to the Faeroes through another telegram sent to the *Amtmaður* from the Ministry of Justice (Sølvará 2013: 105). When considering this, it was not the most important information in the telegram from Edward Mortensen that Jóannes Patursson excluded in his reading to the *Løgting*, but it was information the *Løgting* already had. However, what the *Løgting* did not know was that Mortensen had said he was willing to travel to London with the Petition, although he was somewhat doubtful when he received the

information about the 700 tons coming from Copenhagen. It also seems to be obvious that the whole context was that Edward Mortensen should get the necessary authorization from the Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs (Sølvará 2014: 154). This was what Patursson informed the *Løgting* about on March 31, 1917 – for local-political reasons, which had nothing to do with treasonous activities. Two things can be concluded from this. Firstly, that the majority of the committee – not Jóannes Patursson – was untruthful on this point. Secondly, that Jóannes Patursson in the *Løgting* had intended to send the Petition to London through the Faroese representative in the Danish Parliament who was in contact with the Danish Government – and not directly to the British authorities.

All things considered, it can be concluded that the petitioners tried to send a Petition to the British Government – without directly involving Danish authorities – on March 7, 1917 when they contacted the British Consul in Tórshavn, but the decisive point is that this was done with precedence to the Shipmasters and Navigators Petition of February 24, 1917, which the *Amtmaður* had both accepted and recommended. The petitioners intended to send another Petition via the *Løgting* (and the *Amtmaður*) on March 18, 1917 when the *Framburðsfelag* agreed to write the latter Petition “To the Government of Great Britain”. Thus, it appears to be difficult to see that the petitioners committed any serious acts to overrule any authority – not even the *Amtmaður* – and the latter proposal explicitly involved Danish state authorities.

The *Amtmaður* indirectly approved the procedures regarding the British Consul on March 8, 1917 when he recommended the first Petition to the Consul. In addition to this, the original and quite innocent plan to send the latter Petition to the British Government via the *Løgting* and the *Amtmaður* – even directly involving authorization from the Danish Government – never went through. On April 3, 1917,

the majority of the *Løgting* overthrew the suggestion from the Home Rule Party. Furthermore, the petitioners had received an informal approval from the Danish Government, sent through a letter from Edward Mortensen, which allowed the Petition to be sent to the Danish Ambassador in London and at the same time to the Faroese representative in the Danish Parliament in Copenhagen – exactly as the petitioners did. Moreover, neither the *Amtmaður* nor members of the Home Rule Party could really have believed that the British Consul would send the envelope containing the copy of the Petition that he had received on April 19, 1917 directly to the British Government, especially when he had refused to do so on March 7, 1917. This view was explicitly confirmed by Rasmus Rasmussen in his diary (Rasmussen, Diary, March 22, 1917).⁴⁴ Even if he had sent the Petition to the British Government, the actions of the petitioners could hardly have been perceived by the *Amtmaður* as any serious violation of his authority when he e.g. on April 8, 1917 had accepted and even recommended a similar Petition from the same petitioners to the British Government who used approximately the same procedures. It can also be proved from his own report to the Ministry of Justice on the discussions in the *Løgting* that he on April 3, 1917 suspected – he even appears to have accepted it⁴⁵ – that the petitioners intended to use the same procedures with the later Petition (Sølvará 2014: 192-93). However, later on he accused them of using exactly these procedures of trying to go beyond the Danish Government with the Petition (Sølvará 2014: 179). This discrepancy in the actions of the *Amtmaður* was actually explicitly put forward before the Investigative Committee by the Danish Foreign Minister Erik Scavenius in 1919 (Sølvará 2014: 183). Finally, internal correspondence between the petitioners appears to indicate that it – just as the petitioners later claimed – was never part of the original intentions of the petitioners that the British Consul should send the signatures to London. This is e.g. indicated in a letter

from a leading petitioner to another petitioner, dated April 13, 1917, i.e. several days before the Petition was delivered to the British Consul in Tórshavn. In this letter to Jóhan Mortensen, written by Andreas Ziska, the man who according to the committee, was hand in glove with Jóannes Patursson (*Beretning* 1919: 30), it was clearly stated that the Petition should be sent to the Danish Ambassador in London and to the Faroese member of the Danish Parliament. Subsequently in the letter, it was stated, “We intend also to send a copy in English translation to the British Consul in Tórshavn and simultaneously send him the originals for inspection so he can convince himself and his government about the truth in what is transmitted. I don’t think there is any reason to have the Judge to attest the signatures. ... When the British Consul receives the Originals for inspection it is sufficient guarantee” (Sølvará 2014: 184). Andreas Ziska also requested Jóhan Mortensen to inform the petitioners in Suðuroy that he and Jóannes Patursson had discussed this matter and that they agreed (Sølvará 2013: 150-51). The context in which the British Consul is mentioned clearly indicates that the letter to him was subordinate to the telegrams to the Danish Ambassador in London and Edward Mortensen in Copenhagen. Furthermore, the words “the truth in what is transmitted” appear to refer to the truth in what was intended first to be transmitted through the Danish Ambassador in London – e.g. information about the number of the signatures, while the originals were only delivered to the British Consul in Tórshavn. Thus, the reference in the letter on the “truth” appears to be external and indicates that the material to be sent to the British Consul was intended to be secondary in relation to the previously mentioned telegrams to be sent to the Ambassador and to Edward Mortensen. In any case, it is quite clear that the letter to the British Consul should be understood in context of the important role of Edward Mortensen regarding the matter.⁴⁶ This was hardly intended as an independent contact to the British Consul

to transmit it to the British Government” (*Bilag A 1919*: 47). However, in his critical questions to Prime Minister Zahle about the Petition to “the British Government”, dated July 23, 1917, motivated by the Home Rule Party’s political proclamation of governmental support and the importance of the Petition, he does not even mention this conversation. Interestingly, he only refers to the “Ambassador in London”, never to the British Consul (*Bilag A 1919*: 33-34), which appears to imply that he had not earlier perceived the subject to have any significance. Furthermore, members of the political opposition in the Danish Parliament had not either perceived the letter and the questions from the *Amtmaður* as an accusation against the petitioners of having tried to send the Petition directly to the British Government.⁴⁷ It is also obvious that the *Amtmaður* only wanted an answer that could be used to calm the local political agitation in the Faroe Islands at that time – he was not asking the Danish Government to do anything with regard to the expedition of the Petition more than three months earlier. C. Th. Zahle, therefore, did not mention the British Consul in his somewhat critical answer of August 18, 1917 (*Bilag A 1919*: 36).⁴⁸ It was not until November 3, 1917, more than four months later, that the *Amtmaður* in a letter to C. Th. Zahle mentioned his conversation on June 24, 1917 with the British Consul and his alleged accusations against the petitioners. The explicit occasion was then a speech by Edward Mortensen in the *Folketing* on October 29, 1917 in which he had claimed that the petitioners never had intended to bypass the Danish state authorities, as the *Amtmaður* apparently had claimed in a previous discussion in the *Løgting* on September 1, 1917.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the Petition was never sent directly to the British authorities (*Bilag A 1919*: 39).

The most likely explanation of the fact that the *Amtmaður* in spite of his information of June 24, 1917 apparently still was reluctant to accuse the petitioners of having tried to bypass the Danish Government through the Consul appears

to have been the fact that he had himself, without previously informing the government, on March 8, 1917 recommended the similar Petition from *Havnar Framburðsfelag* of March 7, 1917 to the Consul.⁵⁰ It would have been difficult for the *Amtmaður* to argue against the same procedures that he with his recommendation to the Consul previously appeared to have accepted. Moreover, the second Petition was, as the *Amtmaður* had 'predicted' in his confidential report to the Ministry of Justice of April 18, 1917, eventually transmitted with support from the Danish Government.

However, even in this much later letter of November 3, 1917 to C. Th. Zahle, which explicitly referred to his conversation with the British Consul, the *Amtmaður* interestingly only related that the Petition was "delivered" to the British Consul in Tórshavn, where it was "rejected by him". He did not write to C. Th. Zahle that the British Consul had "told him" that he had received the mentioned Petition with a "request to transmit it to the British Government" as he claimed on March 21, 1918, i.e. nearly five months later. This indicates that the *Amtmaður* even at that time actually did *not* know what the petitioners intended when they "delivered" the Petition to the British Consul on April 19, 1917.⁵¹ Furthermore, with a reference to his confidential report to the Ministry of Justice on April 18, 1917, where he apparently perceived the proposed transmission by Jóannes Patursson of the Petition through the British Consul and the Danish Ambassador in London or the Faroese member of the Danish Parliament as harmless and nothing else would happen (Sølvará 2013: 124 and 127), the *Amtmaður* now declared that the Petition "even was delivered to the British Consul". Circumstances that the *Amtmaður* obviously had perceived as harmless in April 1917 were apparently perceived as threatening in November 1917. This is revealing in itself, but the rendering of the conversation with the British Consul on June 24, 1917 in *his* letter to C. Th. Zahle on November 3, 1917 is also revealing in another context. On March 21,

1918 – i.e. after his decision of March 18, 1918 to resign as *Amtmaður* in the Faroe Islands and after the petitioners in *Tingakrossur* on March 20, 1918 had rejected all accusations and subsequently challenged him to present all the evidence underlying his allegations – eventually requested the British Consul in Tórshavn to confirm in writing the specific content of their conversation the year before, the British Consul in his written declaration only “assumed” that he also was asked to send the latter Petition to the British Government. The British Consul actually never did open the sealed envelope before he sent it back (*Bilag A 1919: 48*).

Thus, the British Consul actually did not confirm the subsequent perception of their conversation by the *Amtmaður*, which was explicitly described in his letter to the British Consul March 21, 1918. Neither did he contradict the self-confident claim made by the petitioners, apparently verified in contemporary correspondence between them, that the Consul should only have the original signatures for an “inspection” (*Bilag A 1919: 57*). In addition, if the Consul had opened the envelope he would have noted an enclosure stating that the Petition was telegraphed to the Danish Ambassador in London on April 17, 1917 and to Edward Mortensen, the Faroese member of the Danish Parliament, who also was informed of the matter, and that the Consul should have some of the original signatures for “inspection”. There was, as the committee’s majority report noted, no request from the petitioners’ to the British Consul in Tórshavn to refrain from sending the Petition to the British Government in London, but there was neither any “request” to him to send anything to British authorities. Furthermore, the information about the Petition previously being sent to the Danish Ambassador in London and to the Faroese representative in the Danish Parliament in Copenhagen also indicated that the Consul should wait for instructions from London or Copenhagen. However, in an addition written by Jóannes Patursson, the only active expression in

The relations between the Faroese Governor Svenning Rytter and the British Consul in Tórshavn Abraham George Coates (picture) were a bit stressed. Rasmus Rasmussen claims in his diary that Svenning Rytter had sent a letter of complaint about him to his superior, the British Ambassador in Copenhagen, where he accused Coates of having supported the separatist movement in the Faroe Island. These accusations were obviously ungrounded and the British Ambassador rejected them.



the enclosure stated: “We expect your favourable Assistance in Support of the Petition” (*Bilag V* 1919: 242-43). This sentence was apparently the only clue that the committee could find in order to throw suspicion on Jóannes Patursson of having intended to influence the British Consul to transmit the Petition directly to the British Government, but he claimed that the sentence was only inserted as an obligatory polite phrase towards the British Consul (*Beretning* 1919: 33). Significantly, the Investigative Committee had this information only from Jóannes Patursson himself who had neither tried nor even seemingly intended to conceal anything in relation to the origin and the content of the enclosure to the Consul. He apparently gave this information voluntarily to the Investigative Committee.⁵²

Furthermore, as previously argued, it appears to be dubious to treat the letters to the Ambassador and the Consul *independent* of each other – i.e. as *two* independent attempts to

bypass the Danish Government as the committee suspected. Firstly, these accusations only originated subsequently in an unofficial rendering of an elusive statement by the *Amtmaður* in a debate in the *Løgting* on September 1, 1917.⁵³ Secondly, this simply appears to be a contradiction in relation to the Danish Ambassador in London who was a Danish state authority. Thirdly, even in the advice that Jóannes Patursson had received on March 26, 1917 from the President of the *Althing*, the support from the Ambassador and the Consul was clearly only intended to be two aspects of the *same* solution (Sølvará 2013: 113). Fourthly, the same appears to be the case in the letter of April 13, 1917 from Andreas Ziska to Jóhan Mortensen, where it even was stated that Andreas Ziska and Jóannes Patursson agreed (Sølvará 2013: 150-51). Fifthly, the whole context was that the Faroese member of the *Folketing* had been informed and had contact with the Danish Government. Finally, both the petitioners and the *Amtmaður* already on March 23, 1917 knew that the British Consul in Tórshavn would not interfere without clear recommendations from the *Amtmaður* (Sølvará 2014: 186), which in this later context appears to imply that the petitioners *knew* that they needed recommendations from the *Amtmaður* or more likely other Danish state authorities.

This indicates two things. Firstly, the accusations of the *Amtmaður* against the petitioners developed in content and importance in the year following the sending of the Petition in April 1917. Secondly, that the developed allegations were founded on dubious assumptions. Apparently, the petitioners neither intended nor attempted to bypass the Danish authorities.

Based on the vast material of the committee, C. Th. Zahle who initially had good relations with the petitioners and never really had accepted the accusations of the *Amtmaður* concluded that nobody could have anything against the Petition itself. It was only a “purely formal error” that the petitioners had sent the Petition to the Ambassador in

London. More importantly, C. Th. Zahle concluded that the *Amtmaður* “no doubt wrongly claimed” that they “had tried” to send the Petition “directly to the British Government” (*Bilag V* 1919: 298).

Interestingly, even the *Amtmaður* later acknowledged to the Investigative Committee that it was quite odd that the fact that the Petition had been sent to the British Consul came to play such a central role because he perceived the case to be “quite indifferent” (*Bilag V* 1919: 53). Moreover, he did not, as previously, claim that the Consul had been requested to send the Petition to the British Government, but he only stated that “the Petition had been with the Consul”. This later perception given to the Investigative Committee on December 12, 1918 appears to correspond with his original (and more positive) actions on the matter in the period February-April 1917 as well as his lack of action in the period June-October 1917, but it appears to conflict with his negative actions from the period November 1917-March 1918.

On the other hand, it is obvious that the political focus of the *Amtmaður* changed as 1918 approached from the original act of the petitioners to alleged lack of political support from C. Th. Zahle.⁵⁴ The *Amtmaður* explicitly declared to the committee in November 1918 that in November 1917 nobody doubted that the Petition was “out of the world” (*Bilag V* 1919: 49). By then, i.e. in November 1917, therefore, it was not the Petition itself, finally dealt with in the right way on May 18, 1917, which eventually provoked the *Amtmaður* to sharpen his tone and views first towards C. Th. Zahle personally and then in public. It must be surmised to be the subsequent lack of support from C. Th. Zahle in relation to the political agitation of the Faroese petitioners in favour of the importance for the Petition.⁵⁵ From a specific Faroese perspective, it is actually in this change of focus, which happened in the period from April 1917 to March 1918 that the whole development from the

Faroese Petition of April 1917 to the Danish Investigative Committee of July 1918 must be explained. This focus on C. Th. Zahle, of course, – together with his indirect and direct support to the petitioners – became also an angle in the research of the committee, which linked to specific Danish perspectives. In this change of focus, the Petition too increasingly became intertwined with a Danish state context and was increasingly discussed and constructed within a Danish political discourse.

Consequently, the Investigative Committee (as well as later Danish historians) suspected the petitioners, especially Jóannes Patursson, but also Edward Mortensen, Andreas Ziska and others, of having acted against explicit orders of the Danish Government when they sent the Petition to the Danish Ambassador in London and simultaneously to the Faroese member of the Danish Parliament (*Folketinget*), Edward Mortensen, in Copenhagen. The underlying political context in Denmark was, of course, that the Danish Government of C. Th. Zahle in spite of the continuous reports of the *Amtmaður* on the intention of the petitioners had supported and in March 1918 even continued to support the Home Rule Party politicians, whose underlying intention with the previous Petition of April 17, 1917 should have been politically to bolster the Faroese separatist agenda. These accusations against the petitioners were – as already mentioned in relation to other issues – based on doubtful assumptions regarding e.g. missing letters from Edward Mortensen to Jóannes Patursson in which the petitioners claimed that the Danish Government had approved the procedures regarding it. The committee had not received these letters, but the majority report stated that “it is difficult to free oneself from the impression that the relevant letters from Mr. Mortensen must have contained something *quite different* than the claim of the Danish Governments approval” (*Beretning* 1919: 29). Later Danish historians in 1994 uncritically followed the assumptions of the committee though they seem to

keep it more explicitly open as to whether it was Edward Mortensen or Jóannes Patursson who had been untruthful: “Whatever has been written in these letters from Mortensen to Patursson, there is strong evidence, that Mortensen had *not* exactly received the government’s approval” (Wåhlin and others 1994: 104). It is quite interesting that the Investigative Committee had an officially verified copy of an original letter from Edward Mortensen to Andreas Ziska from April 8, 1917 – disputed by the same historians (Wåhlin and others 1994: 107-08)⁵⁶ – where exactly that kind of approval from the Danish Government was given to Andreas Ziska. In this letter Edward Mortensen explains that: “Scavenius understood the situation, and I got the impression that he had nothing against that a Petition was sent to the Danish Ambassador, as you write was the intention, and that he then would give the Ambassador instructions” (Sølvará 2013: 146, n 40). In spite of this letter, the committee – as the historians – put forward the suspicion or speculative hypothesis that Edward Mortensen had written a letter to Jóannes Patursson with a quite different message. Of course, this almost self-refuting hypothesis of the majority of the Investigative Committee appears to be very improbable and it is explicitly contradicted by a previously quoted letter from Edward Mortensen to Jóannes Patursson from April 5, 1917, which on this question has exactly the same message as the letter from Edward Mortensen to Andreas Ziska (Sølvará 2013: 146-48). This letter is not in the Investigative Committee archives at the Danish Parliament in Copenhagen, but it is preserved in a copy dated April 21, 1917 at the Faroese National Archives in Tórshavn.⁵⁷

It seems even more interesting that the Investigative Committee had an original letter from Andreas Ziska in Tórshavn to Edward Mortensen in Copenhagen, dated March 26, 1917, where Andreas Ziska explicitly asked Edward Mortensen if the petitioners were doing anything wrong by sending the Petition to the Danish Ambassador

in London. A comment in the upper left corner of the letter – apparently written by Edward Mortensen after receiving the letter – states “Have telegraphed to Patursson”. The letter of April 8, 1917 to Andreas Ziska was obviously an answer to this letter of March 26. Moreover, the committee also had acquired a telegram from Edward Mortensen to Jóannes Patursson of April 5, 1917, where he apparently answered this letter by giving the address of the Danish Ambassador in London and asked Jóannes Patursson to inform him when the Petition had been sent (Sølvará 2014: 168-70).⁵⁸ It is important to note that this was exactly what Jóannes Patursson did when he on April 17, 1917 – after having received the above-mentioned letter of April 5 from Edward Mortensen – telegraphed the Petition to the Danish Ambassador in London and simultaneously to Edward Mortensen in Copenhagen. Erik Scavenius – as also C. Th. Zahle – confirmed to the Investigative Committee in 1919 that Edward Mortensen had talked to him about the Petition before it was sent to the Danish Ambassador in London, and that he – though he under accusations from a suspicious interrogator of having helped the petitioners now “assumed” that he had meant that he “formally” should have the Petition first and that he then would give the Danish Ambassador in London instructions – had sympathized with the Petition (*Bilag V* 1919: 290-92). However, because of the British scrutiny of the telegram, Edward Mortensen did not receive it until some days after the Danish Ambassador had received his telegram. Therefore, Edward Mortensen could not inform the Foreign Ministry in Copenhagen about the telegraphing of the Petition until some days after the Danish Ambassador in London had already done so (*Bilag V* 1919: 538).

There does not appear to have been any real disagreement between the government and the petitioners about sending the Petition to the Danish Ambassador in London. However, questions about purely formal procedures, which apparently



Rasmus Rasmussen was as a member of the Committee of Supplies opposed to the Petition of March 18, 1917. In his diary, he writes that Jóannes Patursson was completely unfitted to be leader of the Home Rule Party. However, during the Norwegian case in 1923, i.e. six years later, he fully supported Jóannes Patursson against Oliver Effersøe’s apparent attempt to overthrow him as leader.

only came up because of a later combination of 1) the delay that the British scrutiny in April 1917 caused its telegraphic arrival to the Danish Government in Copenhagen and 2) the original accusations from the Investigative Committee against the petitioners of treason, became important in 1918-19. In 1917, this 'purely formal subject' was only regarded as a 'purely formal issue' by Scavenius. The subject appears to be so indifferent that one might suspect that the committee had a bad case when it at all focused on the issue and in the report even overlooked counter evidence.⁵⁹

If there is a slight difference in relation to questions of apparently "purely formal" character between respective renderings of Edward Mortensen and C. Th. Zahle/Erik Scavenius of the conversations in April 1917 in their testimonies before the committee in 1919, it could even be argued in favour of the testimony of Edward Mortensen. Before the April 22, 1918 general election to the Danish Parliament, C. Th. Zahle and Erik Scavenius needed the parliamentary support from Edward Mortensen, which might have put him in a favourable negotiating position with the government, while C. Th. Zahle and Erik Scavenius after the April 1918 election were struggling for the life of their Social Liberal Government and no longer could receive any help from the defeated and accused Edward Mortensen, who obviously was now in a less favourable position. This means that C. Th. Zahle and Erik Scavenius might have been inclined to give Edward Mortensen what he wanted in early April 1917, while they might have been more inclined to distance themselves from Edward Mortensen in 1919. Of course, in 1919, the accused Edward Mortensen was also inclined to emphasize his talks with C. Th. Zahle and Erik Scavenius in early April 1917, but his letters of April 5 and 8, 1917 to Jóannes Patursson and Andreas Ziska further support this probability argument in favour of the credibility of the testimony of Mortensen before the Investigative Committee.

Thus, it was predictable that the Minister of Foreign Affairs

on May 7, 1917 at a meeting in the Danish Government stated that after Edward Mortensen had "contacted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ... the case is going well" (*Sagen er nu i normal Gænge*) (Kaarsted (ed.) 1973: 145). As mentioned before, on May 18, 1917 he gave the Danish Ambassador in London orders to contact the British Government with the request in the Petition (*Bilag A*: 31). All things considered, the Petition had been sent in the right direction through the relevant Danish authorities with approval from the Danish Government. It is very difficult to see any real foundation behind the initial serious accusations from the *Amtmaður* and the majority of the Investigative Committee. More importantly, even the majority of the Investigative Committee eventually appears to have accepted the evidence and acknowledged that the majority of the petitioners had not intended to bypass the Danish authorities; but on the basis of previously mentioned dubious evidence, it could only suspect that this might have been an intention of Jóannes Patursson (*Beretning* 1919: 32-33).⁶⁰ Furthermore, while the *Amtmaður* originally had claimed that the petitioners originally had intended to send the Petition to the British Government bypassing *all* Danish authorities (*Bilag A* 1919: 22), the majority of the committee had to acknowledge that the original intention of the petitioners had been to transmit the Petition through the *Løgting* (*Beretning* 1919: 21). This resulted in the fact that although the initial accusations from the *Amtmaður* and the Investigative Committee were harsh, there was so little substance in the final accusations from the majority that the investigative work did not have any consequences for Faroese or Danish players in the matter, neither politically nor legally. The Investigative Committee report was dealt with in the Danish Parliament on March 3, 1920, where the only consequence was that Prime Minister C. Th. Zahle got a minor reprimand for giving misleading information to the Danish Parliament regarding the resignation of the three leading Faroese officials in 1918. The Petition from

1917 was never dealt with in the parliament in relation to the accusations in the majority report from the committee of 1918-19. The fact that the matter became so insignificant makes it interesting to ask why it became part of Danish politics in 1918 when the committee was subsequently ordered to conduct extensive investigation in the matter. The answer appears to be more related to Danish state politics than to local Faroese politics.

Firstly, there is little doubt that the reasons for setting up the Investigative Committee of the *Landsting* were politically and not legally motivated. Based on the evidence the *Amtmaður* had sent to Danish authorities, the *Landsting* suspected the broad case of the Petition – i.e. the Petition itself and the subsequent development in the relations between Svenning Rytter and C. Th. Zahle on the Petition that eventually caused the three officials to resign – to be so politically pressing on the C. Th. Zahle Government that it could be used to annoy it, or, if the *Landsting* was fortunate, it could even be used to overthrow it. This is obvious in the report where the committee ends its presentation of the supposed treasonous intentions of some petitioners with regard to the petition, which they allegedly had tried to send to the British Government with dubious intentions bypassing Danish authorities, by concluding that C. Th. Zahle by the *Amtmaður* had been well informed about every single step that the petitioners took (*Beretning* 1919: 33). The correspondence between the petitioners and the Danish Government through Edward Mortensen was on the other hand disputed by the committee. The first assumption for the political movement away from the Petition of the *Framburðsfelag* on March 1917 to the Investigative Committee of the *Landsting* in 1918-19 was about the political battle of governmental power in Denmark. Secondly, the Social Liberal Government of C. Th. Zahle, which had declining approval in the *Rigsdagen*, had been in power since 1913 and had been in charge of the selling of the West Indies to the

USA on April 1, 1917 and the recognition of Iceland as a sovereign state on December 1, 1918. Although, the *Rigsdagen* approved both agreements, the opposition was strong in the *Rigsdagen* as well as among the voters. In addition, the question regarding the return of Schleswig, which had been under German authority since 1864, to Danish rule became of great interest to Danish state politics as the end of the war approached.⁶¹ Therefore, it was not that strange that the Faroese Petition to the British Government, which the *Landsting* only broadly and biased had been informed about through the discontented *Amtmaður*, of conservative political powers in the Danish Parliament was connected to the challenges of disintegration in the Danish Realm. This is where the great state political assumptions for the course from the Petition of the *Framburðsfelag* to the committee of the *Landsting* were. These special state political circumstances made it possible for the conservative opposition to use the Petition from the *Framburðsfelag* in their favour in Danish domestic politics in 1918 in the *Landsting*. Thirdly, the fact that it had not been possible to connect Faroese affairs to Danish politics without the political and administrative systems between the Faroe Islands and Denmark behaving in a manner that made it possible and sometimes probable – in some circumstances – should be emphasized.⁶² This political system also implied that the Danish Government could lay its parliamentary foundation on the Faroese representative in the *Rigsdagen*, and it was quite likely that this was done when the Faroese representatives were the swing seat in Danish politics. This is how the support to Edward Mortensen by Carl Th. Zahle before the general election in April 1918 connected Faroese matters to Danish politics – through a seemingly very discontented *Amtmaður*. In this manner, Faroese politics became connected to the Danish state political context of 1918 and just as importantly it also became increasingly attached to a general political discourse in Denmark that produced 'knowledge' capable of annoying or overthrowing

the government. A Petition originally connected to shortage of supplies and local Faroese politics became in this discourse interpreted in a quite different and wider and far reaching context. This also had some unintended consequences.

The accusations against the petitioners were, as I have argued on the basis of the relevant contemporary sources, dubious in a Faroese context, but when this matter became part of a different political discourse connected to the political challenges in Denmark, it became possible to construct a picture of the Petition that related to the problems of disintegration in the former multinational state of Denmark. It is also evident that accusations against the petitioners of separatism and treason became politically more obvious and advantageous to construct for the majority of the committee in a historical perspective, where the Home Rule Party since 1906 in the Danish Parliament, had been accused of having separatism as its main political goal. The political discourse of a separatist minded Home Rule Party was already established within the Danish political system when the Investigative Committee in 1918 should investigate the Home Rule Party for political suspicion of treasonous intentions with the Petition. It is equally evident or at least probable that the discursive construction of a Home Rule Party, which even used treason in the struggle for a Faroese separation from Denmark, rendered it likely that the Home Rule Party itself became increasingly radicalized.

Even if the accusations of the majority of the Investigative Committee against the C. Th. Zahle Government were more generally connected to the Danish politics towards the Faroe Islands – and not narrowly to the Petition – these accusations were so thin that on their own they could ill affect the Danish Government. However, in a general Danish state perspective of territorial disintegration challenges, the kind of political suspicions or accusations that the Investigative Committee expressed against the politics of the C. Th. Zahle Government towards the Faroe Islands indicated a general tendency towards a change in Danish politics.

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Have telegraphed to Patursson - 1917
Rigsd. Udg. J. 1918-1919 No. 40 1. 3
Thorshavn, den 26. Marts 1917.

Exp. Hver Fødselingsmand Edw. Mortensen!

I Indledning af Lovforslagets Sammenkomne
mit 26. da. vil jeg sige Dem en Del Oplysninger,
saa som forklare den foreliggende Situation
og den mærkelige Motivering for Sammen-
kaldelsen af denne ekstraordinære Lovforslags-
samling.

Saa havde her paa Tidspunktet nærmest
høj til den dominerende Sigtning paa Vare-
indvalget indtægter, og den Tavshed og Humme-
lighedspildhed, der kunde betynde disse
Mænd i al deres Virksomhed, var saa hoved-
sagen, at det nærmest mit blev betragtet
som Tidespilde at antage de mærkelige
Dispositioner og Foranstaltninger paa
Vareindvalget for at sige i en smule
i en anden Henseende. Selvom Kritik-
en ofte var berettiget, sagde og rettede sig
saa blev den af Vareindvalget helt upaa-
agtet ligesom ogsaa af Folk i Almindel-
lighed - Sandt er jo disse Tingene.

Der blev næsten ikke længere opret en
Tanke paa de møder og trænde Efter-
retninger, som modtoges fra Udlandets
vedrørende Urdemokratiske og deres
Indvirkning paa Handel og Skibsfarten.
Antagelsen af Vareindvalget lod alle

This letter of March 26, 1917 from Andreas Ziska in Tórshavn to Edward Mortensen in Copenhagen demonstrates that the petitioners asked Edward Mortensen if they were doing anything wrong in sending the Petition to the Danish Ambassador in London. Edward Mortensen answered e.g. in a telegram to Jóannes Patursson of April 5, 1917 where he asked him to inform him when the Petition was sent to the ambassador. Note the four words, here translated from Danish into English, "Have telegraphed to Patursson", in the upper left corner of the letter from Andreas Ziska that Edward Mortensen most likely wrote on it after having received it.

The C. Th. Zahle Social Liberal Government was defeated on March 29, 1920, two and a half months after the completion of the investigation. The change in government had nothing to do directly with the conclusions of the report of the committee, but the Schleswig case, which was the

occasion behind the dismissal of the government by the King, was part of the same disintegration challenges that coloured Danish politics during and after the war. Nevertheless, the fact that Svenning Rytter became the Minister of Justice – and therefore had overall responsibility for the Faroese affairs – in the new Liberal Government headed by Niels Th. Neergaard indicated that the new Danish Government was influenced by the whole matter of the Petition in its more Unionist Party oriented politics towards the Faroe Islands. The only tangible consequence of the investigative work and the accusations about treasonous political behaviour was that the relations between a strengthened and eventually more extensive Faroese home rule movement – meant that Jóannes Patursson became a true separatist – and the Danish state authorities in Copenhagen deteriorated considerably. At the election to the *Løgting* on April 24, 1918, for the first time in its history, the Home Rule party won the majority in the *Løgting*, and in 1923, when the relations had worsened substantially, Jóannes Patursson expressed his opinion about a Danish “heavy-handed policy” in the Faroe Islands and even mentioned the possibility of a “reunion with Norway”. The investigative work did not reveal any legal irregularities, but in the political arena, it was the majority report, and hardly the policies of C. Th. Zahle towards the Faroe Islands that was partly responsible for endangering the good relationship between authorities in Copenhagen and a strengthened Faroese home rule movement. The consequences of the committee are mainly to be found on the discursive level. From a tangible operational level, it could also be argued that the Faroese Home rule movement showed greater political skills than the conservative opposition in the *Landsting*, whose investigation apparently damaged the political relations between Denmark and the Faroe Islands in the years to come. The fall of the Social Liberal Government of C. Th. Zahle had nothing to do directly with the committee report, but the government had in the long political struggle since

1913 worn itself out and the majority report apparently also influenced the new Liberal Government of Niels Th. Neergaard. Consequently, the committee in general and the majority report specifically influenced the political relations between the Faroe Islands and Denmark in an apparently negative way.

The general context of the committee was the political struggle for governmental power in Denmark, connected to contemporary territorial challenges of the Danish state, but it were the political accusations against the petitioners on the discursive level, poorly founded in the sources and local Faroese context of the Petition that damaged the Danish-Faroese relations.

At a structural level, the Petition is one specific example of the fact that Faroese politics – because of the political system in the Kingdom – under certain circumstances can become involved in Danish politics bringing about rather unfortunate consequences for the political climate in the Danish Realm. As we shall see, this connection between Faroese and Danish politics would be evident once again in the 1920ies, but this time it was specific Faroese politics, which – in a different context – was the link connecting Faroese and Danish politics.

The return of the past

On June 13, 1923, the Norwegian professor of Law, Nikolaus Gjelsvik, declared in an interview in a Norwegian newspaper that Norway ought to demand that the Norwegian disagreement with Denmark on the Faroe Islands and Greenland ought to be brought before the Court of Arbitration under the League of Nations (Sølvará 2014: 367-71). He argued that the Faroe Islands would be much better off together with Norway than Denmark. Norway and the Faroe Islands were so alike in nature that Norwegian engineers much better than Danish could help the Faroese to construct roads and suggest solutions to utilize the natural water resources in the islands. Furthermore, the Norwegian fishing industry had developed knowledge that could be an advantage for the fishing industry in the Faroe Islands. He had visited the Faroe Islands in 1911 and said that Norway should demand a referendum in the Faroe Islands on the question of the islands belonging to Denmark or Norway. According to Nikolaus Gjelsvik, a fully free referendum would result in a Faroese majority for returning to Norway that would be at least as convincing as the Danish majority in Schleswig in 1920.

The reference to the League of Nations and the Schleswig question indicates that the context was the negotiations following the First World War that led to the peace treaty signed in Versailles in 1919. The treaty also resulted in the establishment of the League of Nations, which later became involved in the referendums on Danzig and Saar, the establishment of an international court and the protection of minorities became also part of the charter of the League

of Nations (MacMillan 2004: 517). The concept of national self-determination that played a decisive role in especially Woodrow Wilson's thoughts regarding the establishment of a permanent European peace was not explicitly mentioned in the peace treaty, but it got limited international recognition in the post-war efforts to establish lasting peace in Europe (Østerud 1984: 111-21; Engelstoft and Larsen 2013: 47 ff). It was obviously no coincidence that the Norwegian demands against Denmark regarding the former Norwegian territories were legally formulated and politically expressed in the aftermath of the First World War.

This interview, which wove together the various strands of the long common history of the Nordic countries, the highly disputed historical questions between Norway and Denmark regarding the Treaty of Kiel, the contemporary (1905-23) territorial demands from the young independent state of Norway against Denmark, and an increasingly disappointed Faroese home rule movement was fuel for the fire of a contemporary political environment in Scandinavia on the verge of explosion. This interview in the Norwegian newspaper was the match that set the fire ablaze and made history come alive in a contemporary (1923) context.

In this main section, I am going to analyse the Norwegian case of 1923, which influenced Faroese politics and put the Home Rule Party in a delicate position between the disputing Denmark and Norway. Two main questions will be explored. Firstly, an analysis of the broad historical and political conditions that made it possible to intertwine Danish and Faroese politics through the Norwegian case. Secondly, an analysis of how and for what purpose this case became intertwined in Faroese politics. Lastly, the more general question of the political importance and the political consequences of the Norwegian case will be considered. The general context is, as with the previous subjects, the political relationship between the Faroe Islands and Denmark and the political discourse will also be in the focus.

Since Norway in 1905 had become a fully independent

state, nationalistic Norwegian forces became increasingly aware of the lost greatness of a Norway that they wanted to restore. The nationalistic Norwegian aggression that was sometimes very literally expressed in the Norwegian newspapers, e.g. in an article by Albert Balchen, a barrister of the Norwegian Supreme Court, was for obvious historical reasons often directed towards Denmark and its role in the negotiations in Kiel in 1814 (Sølvará 2014: 361-63). Similarities between the history, culture and language of the Faroe Islands and Norway and impact of Danish culture and language made it obvious for Faroese Home Rule supporters and Norwegian language people (*Maalmænd*) to collaborate (Poulsen and Rosenberg 1907: 58). Already in 1908, when the first Nordic meeting was arranged in Voss in Norway, about 100 Faroese travelled to Norway (Sigurðardóttir 1990: 204), and in 1911 many Norwegians were in the Faroe Islands (Sølvará 2014: 370). In the meantime, in 1909, the Danish Government explicitly withdrew the Offer from 1906. In 1914 Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* was translated into Faroese, published and then distributed to all Faroese school children below 11 years with financial support from the Norwegian association *Noregs Ungdomslag* (Sølvará 2014: 264). From the perspective of the Home Rule Party, this was perceived as well-intentioned support from Norwegians to the Faroese language, while the perspectives of the Unionist Party or the Danish perceived this as an inappropriate intervention in domestic Faroese/Danish matters.

The common Faroese-Norwegian interests, potentially oriented against Denmark, were also implicit in other subjects. Norwegian hunters were struggling to gain hunting rights in Eastern Greenland, while the Faroese sought to gain fishing rights in Western Greenland. The Danish state, however, in accordance with the Danish Trade Monopoly in the colony of Greenland, which excluded foreign and Danish citizens from gaining any industrial rights in Greenland, was reluctant to give in (Gad 1984: 269). This Faroese-

Norwegian disagreement with the Danish state interests regarding fishing rights in Greenland was not settled in 1923.

As the collaboration between the Home Rule Party and e.g. the Norwegian language people developed, the tension between the Norwegian nationalists and the Faroese Home Rule Party on one side and the Danish authorities on the other side increased. The Norwegian Danish disagreement about the former Norwegian North Atlantic possessions would later – when Norwegian settlers in 1930 actually “occupied” an area in Eastern Greenland (Gad 1984: 269-73) – develop into a real international conflict, while disagreements between the Home Rule Party and the Danish state authorities also increased because of the Investigative Committee and the fruitless Home Rule Party attempt to strengthen the authority of the *Løgting* and the position of the Faroese language in the Faroese society. At the April 24, 1918 election, following in the wake of the Petition, the Home Rule Party, for the first time ever, got the majority in the *Løgting* – but not among the voters. The Home Rule Party preserved the majority in the *Løgting* until the election act was changed in 1924. During these years from 1918-1923, the *Løgting* passed numerous proposals, which involved increasing the power of the *Løgting* and the position of the Faroese language in the school and the church, sometimes with an additional vote from a member of the Unionist Party, but the Danish state authorities rejected them all (Sølvará 2013: 167-70). In relation to the 1920 referendum on a new Danish Constitution, the *Løgting* passed a proposal to grant itself legislative power in domestic Faroese matters, but the proposal was somehow never dealt with in the Danish Parliament (Sølvará 2014: 255).⁶³ Occasionally – as in 1919 – the Unionist Party minority in the *Løgting* wrote to the Danish Government and advised them to decide against the Home Rule Party majority proposals in the *Løgting* (Sølvará 2014: 255). On other occasions – as in 1918 – when the



Andras Samuelsen raised the Norwegian case in the Danish Parliament. He was as the other leading figure in the Unionist Party, Oliver Effersøe, apart from politician, sheriff (*sýslumaður*) in the Faroes. At a meeting in the Danish *Venstre* Party, he had accepted to establish the Investigative Committee.

Danish Government proposed to set a committee with members from both Faroese political parties and experts in order to reach an agreement on a reorganization of the constitutional relations between the Faroe Islands and Denmark, the Unionist Party simply refused to participate in the committee work. At the same time, the Unionist Party accused the Home Rule Party supporters of having real separatist intentions (Sølvará 2014: 253-54).

The unionist minority obstructed the attempts by the majority in the *Løgting* to change the status of the *Løgting* or the Faroese language. However, eventually the Faroese parties could reach a compromise on a democratization of the *Løgting*. This, in fact, historical compromise, which preserved the *Løgting* as a consultative body, was passed in 1922 (Sølvará 2014: 256). It intended to make the *Løgting* a democratic institution per se – leaving the *Próstur* completely out of the *Løgting* and the *Amtmaður* without a vote, while the *Løgting* was to choose its own Chair. It was also stated in the proposal that the Danish authorities would now be legally obliged to consult the *Løgting* before any law regarding internal Faroese matters was passed in the Danish Parliament – and not as before only might choose to consult the *Løgting*. This particular provision must have been a cardinal issue for the Home Rule Party in order to reach this historical compromise because the proposal did not grant the *Løgting* legislative power in internal Faroese matters – a subject that had become a key issue for the Home Rule Party supporters. This proposal was unanimously passed in the *Løgting*. Only three Home Rule Party parliamentarians abstained from voting in the *Løgting*.

In March 1923, when the proposal was discussed in the Danish Parliament, both Faroese members Andras Samuelsen and Oliver Effersøe were again from the Unionist Party. Before the proposal was passed in the Danish Parliament, some changes were made to it despite warnings from a Danish member of the opposition. One of the changes was that the

Danish authorities only “as far as possible” would consult the *Løgting* before specific laws regarding the Faroe Islands were passed in the Danish Parliament (Sølvará 2014: 257-60). The purpose of the original proposal that was passed in the *Løgting* was to prevent the Danish state authorities from changing proposals to laws on specific Faroese matters without asking the *Løgting*, but this change in the law text actually re-allowed the Danish state authorities to do exactly that. Frederik Borgbjerg, a wise Danish member of the Danish Parliament from the Social Democratic opposition, who in 1907-08 had contributed to the fall of Alberti, argued that even if these changes maybe were unimportant in themselves, it was not wise to change a unanimous proposal from the *Løgting*. He argued that there would always be people who would be interested in making mountains out of molehills. He referred to Norway where small things according to him had created great problems between Denmark and Norway because somebody in Norway got the opportunity to use these small things in their political agenda. However, Andras Samuelson who had voted for the proposal in the *Løgting* could not see how these minor changes could mean anything. He asked the Danish Parliament to pass the changed proposal and with these clear recommendations, the proposal was passed.

As indicated above, the relations between Denmark and Norway were strained in 1923. The Unionists Party members in the Danish Parliament had succeeded in overruling the Home Rule Party majority proposals in the *Løgting*. After five years with the majority in the *Løgting*, the Danish authorities had accepted none of the major issues passed in the *Løgting* by the Home Rule Party. Furthermore, the relations between the Danish authorities and the Home Rule Party deteriorated because of the Investigative Committee, but they became even worse after May 5, 1920, when Svenning Rytter became Minister of Justice in the new Liberal Government and got the responsibility for Faroese relations. Immediately after that, on May 29, 1920, the Home Rule Party in the

Løgting passed a no-confidence motion against the Minister of Justice (Sølvará 2014: 220). This was the historical and political context when Nikolaus Gjelsvik in June 1923 gave an interview to the Norwegian newspaper, *Den 17 Mai*.

The scene was once more set for an intertwining of Danish and Faroese politics, but this time the Home Rule Party really was discontented and might have reasons to express it in public. Simultaneously, the notion of self-determination was about to gain international recognition.

The first comments in response to the opinions of Nikolaus Gjelsvik came from Denmark. The conservative Danish newspaper *Nationaltidende* had an article on the subject on June 13, 1923 (Sølvará 2013: 202-05). This Danish article reproduced the interview in the Norwegian newspaper, but the Danish newspaper also had requested the Faroese representative in the Danish Parliament, Oliver Effersøe, to comment on the interview with Nikolaus Gjelsvik. Oliver Effersøe was according to *Nationaltidende* astonished and claimed that even if the Faroe Islands was a former Norwegian (tributary) territory, the inhabitants had never been purely Norwegians. The evidence suggested that Iceland was populated from Norway, but similar evidence did not exist in relation to the Faroe Islands. Furthermore, according to Oliver Effersøe, the population in the Faroes was almost extinguished during the Black Death in the Middle Ages and had since been repopulated – recently by many Danish officials who married in the islands. He stated that he who was 60 years old had never heard any Faroese who were old when he was a child express the opinion that the Faroe Islands should belong to Norway. However, in 1911, the Home Rule Party had invited Norwegians to the Faroe Islands under the slogan “Back to Norway”. Nevertheless, the important thing according to Oliver Effersøe was that the Faroese population without any protest from Norway a long time ago had accepted the political association with Denmark. In a potential referendum, they would state that an association with Norway would be out of the question.

Jóannes Patursson who was in Norway did not notice this interview with Oliver Effersøe in the Danish newspaper until later, but when he was made aware of it, he felt that he had to react. In a telegram to the Norwegian Telegram Bureau on June 27, 1923, reprinted in several Norwegian and Danish newspapers, he came up with an answer to Oliver Effersøe (Sølvará 2013: 166-67). Jóannes Patursson stated that when Oliver Effersøe claimed that there was no wish in the Faroe Islands to have an association with Norway it ought only to be understood in that way that there was no wish in the Faroe Islands to come under Norway with the same “heavy-handed policy” that Denmark at the time maintained over the Faroe Islands. Before the people in the Faroe Islands could take a stand to the question of a reunion with Norway, there had to be an agreement between the Faroe Islands and Norway defining the terms behind a potential association. In order to illustrate his accusations against the Danish authorities maintaining a heavy-handed policy against the Faroe Islands, he used some of the proposals passed in the *Løgting*, which the Danish authorities had chosen not to accept.

Without specifying the expression “Danish rule”, which might also apply to the Faroese unionists, he stated that Danish rule demanded that Danish language (not spoken by any Faroese) should be the educational language in Faroese public schools; Danish rule disallowed the use of Faroese language in Faroese churches; it disallowed the use of Faroese psalms in Faroese churches; Danish rule rejected passing Faroese proposals as laws even if these are unanimously passed in the *Løgting* in 2, 3 and 4 following sessions after each other; Danish rule simply changed proposals from the *Løgting* and elevated them to law in a different form without the knowledge or acceptance of the *Løgting*; without the knowledge or will of the *Løgting*, Danish rule made Danish laws valid in the Faroe Islands. He ended the telegram by stating that even if Oliver Effersøe personally thought that this foreign rule was the most ideal, he should have kept the opinion for himself. Few would agree with him.

Jóannes Patursson also claimed that the Faroese population was just as Norwegian as the population in Western Norway and in Iceland. The immigration had been minimal and had not affected the original Norwegian population more than in Iceland and Western Norway.

Of course, the case was not that simple, the political dispute about home rule was mainly a local Faroese dispute, but it seems quite clear from this that the relations between Jóannes Patursson and Danish authorities had become very troubled. However, it is important to note that Jóannes Patursson only reacted against quoted statements from Oliver Effersøe. Further, these statements constituted the context behind his proclamation of the need to reach an agreement between the Faroe Islands and Norway before a possible Faroese referendum regarding a potential Faroese reunion with Norway, first mentioned by Nikolaus Gjelsvik and then commented on by Oliver Effersøe, could be held. It was not Jóannes Patursson who originally had raised the Norwegian subject in the political agenda.

However, the accusations against the Danish authorities and the comments of Jóannes Patursson on the aforementioned Faroese reunion with Norway put forward in the telegram of June 27, 1923 were at once noted and discussed in Copenhagen. At a meeting in the Danish Government on June 28, 1923, it was decided that the Minister of Justice, Svenning Rytter, should temporarily contact Oliver Effersøe regarding the statements of Jóannes Patursson in Norway (Kaarsted (ed.) 1977: 201). Of course, we don't know exactly what was said at the government meeting or what Svenning Rytter and Oliver Effersøe might have discussed. It is, however, interesting that Oliver Effersøe on the same day in a Danish newspaper was quoted as saying that it probably had become necessary "to ask the Home Rule Party to take a clear stand so it could be stated that this agitation had no basis in the Faroese population" (Sølvará 2014: 275). It is not quite clear to whom or what Oliver Effersøe

might be referring in the words “this agitation”, but Jóannes Patursson cannot be said to have agitated for a Faroese reunion with Norway in his telegram of June 27, 1923. He was only criticizing the politics of Danish authorities in the Faroe Islands and commenting on the comments of Oliver Effersøe in response to Nikolaus Gjelsvik in Norwegian newspaper *Den 17 Mai*. Despite increased Norwegian interest in the former Norwegian (tributary) territories in the North Atlantic, following 1905, apart from Albert Balchen and Nikolaus Gjelsvik, no Norwegians appear to have agitated for a reunion between Norway and the Faroe Islands.

What we know is that Oliver Effersøe and Svenning Rytter in their talks agreed that the Danish Government should not consult Jóannes Patursson (Kaarsted (ed.) 1977: 203). However, in the context of the cited statement of Oliver Effersøe on June 28, 1923, it seems likely that this conclusion was based on the fact that Oliver Effersøe had other intentions. If as cited in the newspaper, he intended to force the Home Rule Party to take a clear stand on the statements of Jóannes Patursson in Norway, then there appears to be an obvious institutional method to use in order to reach the goal. The underlying and unspoken presumption in his statement of June 28, 1923 might well be that he intended to force the Home Rule Party to take a clear stand on these statements in the *Løgting*. This might also have been the reason for Svenning Rytter to conclude that the Danish Government should not contact Jóannes Patursson. The conversation with Oliver Effersøe was about what Svenning Rytter for the time being – “temporarily” as it was formulated in the Danish Governments minutes – had to do, but it did not rule out or might even imply that further actions might be taken elsewhere or later. Anyway, when the *Løgting* was as usual summoned in Tórshavn at the end of July, this was exactly what Oliver Effersøe did. The proposal he wanted the *Løgting* to pass was that “The *Løgting* ... put forward a public announcement because of certain statements from

the member of the *Løgting*, Kings Yeomen Jóannes Patursson, Kirkjubø, in the Norwegian press in relation to the Danish state authorities treatment of the Faroe Island in the present and about a possible constitutional union between the Faroe Islands and Norway and following from this the islands separation from Denmark” (Sølvará 2014: 276). This was not a proposal that Jóannes Patursson had put forward in his telegram, but in the meantime he was quoted for other statements in the Norwegian press – e.g. in *Dagbladet* on June 29 that the Faroe Islands “ought” to come under the Norwegian Crown, which also was “the only natural” thing to do when the Faroese demands had come through (Sølvará 2014: 274). However, it seems difficult to comprehend that Jóannes Patursson could have formulated himself in exactly that way because in another newspaper, *Bergens Tidende*, he stated – according to the newspaper – on July 4, 1923 that he had only said what the Home Rule Party thought and claimed (Sølvará 2013: 200). Anyway, a reunion between the Faroe Islands and Norway was certainly not a part of the Home Rule Party policy (Sølvará 2014: 379-80). Of course, on the rhetorical level Jóannes Patursson only appeared to tease Oliver Effersøe who had actually brought the important question of separation from Denmark and reunion with Norway before the *Løgting* (Sølvará 2014: 276). However, the Home Rule Party members also seemed to know that the implicit political goal of Oliver Effersøe might have been to force the Home Rule Party members of the *Løgting* to take a clear stand with regard to the disputed statements of Jóannes Patursson in Norway. His political intention might very well have been an attempt to overthrow Jóannes Patursson as leader of the Home Rule Party (Sølvará 2014: 287). This was also the clear impression that the *Amtmaður* had got of both the intentions of Oliver Effersøe in bringing the case before the *Løgting* and the interpretation of the Home Rule Party members of the implicit aim of the proposal made by Oliver Effersøe in the *Løgting* (Sølvará 2014: 372).

It is interesting to note that on July 25, 1923, a few days before the *Løgting* was in session, Oliver Effersøe pointed out some errors in the interview in *Nationaltidende* on June 13, 1923 (Sølvará 2014: 397). Among other things, Oliver Effersøe pointed out that he had not connected the question of a Norwegian identity of the population in the Faroe Islands with the question of an association between the Faroe Islands and Norway. More importantly, he claimed that in the interview he had not used the expression “Back to Norway”, but the expression “Closer to Norway” – which, of course, must have given the Danish readers of *Nationaltidende* a different impression of the intention of the meetings in 1911 between Faroese Home Rule supporters and the visiting Norwegians. The expression “Closer to Norway” appears only to imply a close cultural cooperation with Norway, while the expression “Back to Norway” obviously implies something constitutional. The fact that the corrections were made in *Dimmalætting*, not in *Nationaltidende*, one and a half month later and just before the *Løgting* assembled also indicates that, the intention was connected to this particular event. The purpose of the corrections was not an attempt to give the readers of *Nationaltidende* a better perception of the Home Rule Party politics. Of course, it is not evident whether the reaction of Jóannes Patursson to this interview in his telegram of June 27 would have been different or never written – the latter seems unlikely – if Oliver Effersøe had immediately corrected the interview in the right place – *Nationaltidende*. However, what we know is that the telegram of June 27, 1923 sent by Jóannes Patursson was an explicit reaction to the apparently incorrect interview with Oliver Effersøe in *Nationaltidende* on June 13, 1923. In addition, we know that it was exactly this telegram that originally initiated the political turbulence. Furthermore, the correction of the interview in *Dimmalætting* on July 25, 1923 indicates that Oliver Effersøe in the forthcoming session of the *Løgting* intended to use the doubtful and questionable statements in



Elias Olrik was the *Amtmaður* in the Faroe Islands in 1920–29. He was a different type of official than Svenning Rytter. Usually he didn't participate in the ballots in the *Løgting*, but during the Norwegian case, he perceived it to be necessary that he supported the Unionist Party proposal in the *Løgting*.

Norwegian interviews with Jóannes Patursson in Norwegian newspapers as a part of the supposed evidence against his disputed reactions.

In this perspective, it appears not to have been the tangible politics of the Home Rule Party, but rather doubtful political rhetoric, generated in the media, that became the basis for the treatment of the matter in the *Løgting*. This mixture of elusive and constructed 'knowledge', which was produced relatively independently of any original or tangible political context, was dependent on the political discourse that developed in close connection to the general Nordic context of an upcoming international conflict between Denmark and Norway. In this international context of conflict, the accusations of Jóannes Patursson against the Danish authorities of maintaining a "heavy-handed politics" in the Faroe Islands, originally put forward as a comment to comments made by Oliver Effersøe in response to the proposed referendum by Nikolaus Gjelsvik in the Faroe Islands regarding a reunion between the Faroe Islands and Norway, were explicitly connected to the Danish-Norwegian dispute. In this way, Nikolaus Gjelsvik revitalized the political history of the Faroe Islands in a new contemporary context, where Faroese politics became increasingly part of a Scandinavian political discourse relating to the real context of an upcoming international dispute between Denmark and Norway on the former Norwegian territories, notably on Eastern Greenland.

Accordingly, this context meant that the discussion and treatment in the *Løgting* became very harsh and long lasting. It opened on July 31 and the final vote on the issue was on September 15. The entire political history of the Faroe Islands was – in various political interpretations – discussed in the *Løgting*. The official debate in the *Løgting* lasted from 10 to 15 of August followed by discussion in a parliamentary committee, which gave reports on September 14 (*Munnligt orðaskifti* 1923). The Norwegian interest in the subject is evident from the fact that the entire debate and reports

were published in Norway. The Home Rule Party majority report was translated into Norwegian and an introduction to Faroese grammar was printed at the end (*Norgessaken* 1923).

The unionists argued correctly that the laws establishing the status of the Faroese language had been passed in the *Løgting* and that these laws under certain circumstances allowed the use of Faroese language in schools and churches. They also correctly pointed out that the Home Rule Party majority in the *Løgting* was only based on technicalities in the election act. The majority of Faroese voters had voted for the Unionist Party in 1918 (2969 versus 2938) and especially in 1920 (3478 versus 2476). However, in both these elections the Home Rule Party won a majority in the *Løgting*. In 1918, the Home Rule Party got 11 of 20 elected representatives and in 1920, when both parties got 10 representatives each, the Home Rule Party preserved the majority because the *Próstur*, Jákup Dahl was a Home Rule man. The *Amtmaður*, Victor Stahl Schmidt (1918-20) and Elias Olrik (1920-29), who were different types of Danish leading officials than Svenning Rytter, normally did not vote in the *Løgting*. Of course, this was something that Jóannes Patursson had not bothered to mention in Norway.

The Home Rule Party representatives in the *Løgting*, who until 1918 had struggled against the Unionist Party majority in the *Løgting*, comprising the elected unionists as well as the *Próstur* (Friðrikur Petersen – 1917) and the *Amtmaður* (Svenning Rytter – 1918), having been accused of being separatists by them were within their rights to consider this change in their favour as an integral part of the political system. They also correctly argued that some of the proposals on the Faroese language were passed in the *Løgting* with an occasional vote from the Unionist Party and occasionally a unanimous *Løgting*, representing the vast majority of the voters, was in favour of their proposals. However, nothing happened (Sølvará 2014: 252). They were both disappointed

and angry with the changes mentioned by Frederik Borbjerg in the Danish Parliament that Danish authorities had made in the compromise regarding the authority of the *Løgting* – unanimously passed in the *Løgting* in 1922 (Sølvará 2014: 283-84).

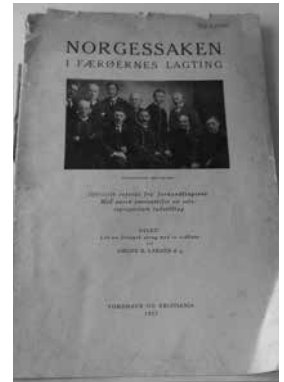
While the Home Rule Party representatives in the *Løgting* agreed with Jóannes Patursson in what he said about Danish rule in the Faroe Islands, they appeared to be very reluctant to accept any union with Norway. However, Símun Pauli úr Konoy said that the Faroe Islands would have been better off if they in 1814 had come under the free Norwegian constitution, but he also said that it was wrong of the Unionist Party to think that the Home Rule Party wanted the Faroe Islands to be nursed by Norway. The Home Rule Party wanted the Faroese people to rule in the Faroe Islands (Sølvará 2013: 179). The other Home Rule Party members said approximately the same and rejected any talk about a union with Norway. In the *Løgting* they argued that they were not going to take a stand in interviews in the newspapers; they were only going to deal with the telegram written by Jóannes Patursson himself, and in that telegram, there was no such claim of a union between the Faroe Islands and Norway put forward. This was a proposal brought before the *Løgting* by Oliver Efferøe.

On the other hand, the Unionist Party wanted the *Løgting* to take a stand on all the views allegedly put forward by Jóannes Patursson in the Norwegian press. In their final minority proposal, it was stated that the *Løgting* should identify all accusations against Danish rule about misrule and suppression of the Faroese people in the present as ungrounded and reject any thought of separating the Faroe Islands from Denmark and therefore also the thought of any constitutional association with any other country (Sølvará 2014: 293). In this way, the *Løgting* was to reject any thoughts put forward in Norway or elsewhere – by Norwegians or Jóannes Patursson – regarding a possible reunion between

the Faroe Islands and Norway and at the same time nullify the accusations put forward by Jóannes Patursson against the Danish rule in the Faroe Islands. This proposal was a package deal to be accepted or rejected. It was not possible to confirm that the islands had been poorly governed and at the same time reject the idea of a possible association between the Faroe Islands and Norway

However, at this time it appeared to be obvious that Jóannes Patursson had become a real separatist. When the unionists in the *Løgting* reminded him of the speech, he had held in honour of the Danish King in 1907, he stated that he had for many years – until 1906 and later – had the greatest confidence in the Danes. He had hoped that they “someday were going to understand us”. It was in this belief that he had held that speech in front of the Danish King, but the Danes had not listened. He also said that the Danes personally had treated him badly and then declared, “I believe I am finished with the Danes now” (Sølvará 2014: 244). It appears to be evident that the Investigative Committee in 1918-19 and the refusal of the Danish Government to accept the proposals passed in the *Løgting* in the years that followed the committee of 1918-19 had destroyed the last vestiges of trust he had in the Danish authorities. Apparently, it was the political discourse of a separatist minded Home Rule Party, which originated in 1906-09, that in part had paved the way for this political development.⁶⁴ However, there was hardly any serious commitment to Norway in his separatism. In fact, he was in line with the Danish official Johan Christian Helms more afraid of the fate of the Faroe Islands under Norway than under Denmark (Sølvará 2014: 282-83). In industry (and in culture) the Norwegians and the Faroese were so alike that he was afraid of competition from stronger and better skilled Norwegians, but he was not afraid of the Danes who were different and unable to compete with the Faroese industry (Sølvará 2014: 276-77).

According to the debate in the *Løgting*, the Home Rule



The interest in Norway for the debate in the *Løgting* about the statements of Jóannes Patursson in Norway was so great that the debate and the reports were published in Norway. The report of the Home Rule Party was translated into Norwegian and a guide to Faroese grammar printed at the end.

Party members would be able to accept the Norwegian part of the minority proposal, but they would not be able to accept the part about Danish rule. In their final majority proposal, it was stated that the Faroe Islands was a nation and the people therefore had the right to decide in Faroese matters. They also stated – without specifying who was to blame – that the islands had been badly governed. However, when the Home Rule Party had the majority in the *Løgting*, it primarily had to be the Danish authorities with the power to prevent their proposals being passed in the *Løgting* as law who were to be blamed – only secondarily, the unionist minority. At last, it was stated that when the Faroese people had not demanded a union with Norway and nothing was mentioned about it in the two parties' programs, the *Løgting* should dissuade anything more being done with this question (Sølvará 2014: 292-93). In the majority report, allegedly written by Jóannes Patursson himself, it was both to the annoyance and pleasure of the *Amtmaður* stated that as far as it was known, this was not a political issue in the Faroe Islands (Sølvará 2014: 289-90).

What annoyed the *Amtmaður* was that the Home Rule Party chose Jóannes Patursson as spokesperson in the matter and that he had told him that he had written the majority report. He was, however, pleased with the fact that the party rejected the idea about any association with Norway. This also indicated that the Home Rule Party representatives in the *Løgting* still had confidence in their party leader and that this was what annoyed the *Amtmaður* as well as the Unionist Party representatives. The *Amtmaður* had not voted in the *Løgting* when the committee was elected. Therefore, the Home Rule Party, supported by the *Próstur*, had the majority in the committee of the *Løgting* dealing with the case. However, the *Amtmaður* did not want the Unionist Party minority proposal to be overthrown in this matter. Even if it appears likely that Svenning Rytter, the Minister of Justice, had contact with the *Amtmaður* during the proceedings in the *Løgting*, I have

not found an instructive letter from him to the *Amtmaður* in the National Archives in Tórshavn.⁶⁵ Furthermore, there is no indication of any such instructions in the letter sent from the *Amtmaður* to the Ministry of Justice after the proceedings in the *Løgting* (Sølvará 2014: 372-73). However, the *Amtmaður* who usually did not vote in the *Løgting* did actually save the Unionist Party minority proposal from being overthrown by the *Løgting*. In a letter to the Danish Ambassador in Christiania, he refers to a conversation he had had with Jákup Dahl, the other government official in the *Løgting*, where he tried to make a deal with him (Sølvará 2014: 373). The proposed deal was that if Jákup Dahl did not vote in the *Løgting* on this matter, the *Amtmaður* would not vote either. The result of this deal would have been that neither the Home Rule Party majority proposal nor the Unionist Party minority proposal would get more than half of the total number of possible votes and according to the voting rules, both would be rejected. However, if the *Amtmaður* decided to vote in favour of the Unionist Party proposal, he would, because of the decisive double vote of the Chairman of the *Løgting* in case of equal numbers of votes on both sides, independent of what Jákup Dahl did, ensure that the minority proposal was passed. Nevertheless, Jákup Dahl in spite of this decided to vote with the Home Rule Party, and the *Amtmaður* therefore decided to vote with the Unionist Party. The result was that the Home Rule Party majority proposal was rejected and the Unionist Party minority proposal was passed in the *Løgting*. Thus, with the help of the *Amtmaður*, the Danish Government's representative in the *Løgting*, the Unionist Party had defeated the Home Rule Party. This was, of course, what the Unionist Party had intended, but the Home Rule Party proposal got all their 11 votes and was only defeated by the decisive 11th vote of the *Amtmaður* against the majority proposal. The Home Rule Party was united and the Unionist Party had

neither succeeded in their attempt to split apart the Home Rule Party nor forced it to oust its leader.

However, after the proposal was passed, with a Danish Minister of Justice who supported them and a Home Rule Party leader who had become unpopular in the Danish Government, the time seemed ripe for the Unionist Party to ask the Danish Government to take a stand regarding the politics of the Home Rule Party. For many years, the Unionist Party policy had been to ask the Danish Government to take a clear stand against the Home Rule Party majority politics in the *Løgting* (Sølvará 2014: 298). The Social Liberal Government of Carl Th. Zahle from 1913-20 had good relations with the Home Rule Party, but never took a clear position on Faroese politics. However, when the Liberal Danish Government of Niels Th. Neergaard replaced the Zahle Government after the Easter Crisis in 1920 in the turmoil of the national defeats during or originating from the First World War, i.e. the sale of the West Indies in 1917, the loss of Iceland in 1918, the Investigative Committee in 1918-19 and the Schleswig question in 1920, the Danish politics toward the Faroese home rule agenda was to be reconsidered. In this historical and contemporary context, where an international dispute between Denmark and Norway about the former territories was also under development, the Unionist Party was probably in the best position ever hitherto to achieve the Danish Governments political support in the struggle against the politics of the Home Rule Party.

In addition, the Home Rule Party – as previously Nikolaus Gjelsvik – in the report to the *Løgting* on September 14, 1923 had mentioned the possibility of having the League of Nations to deal with the subject of Faroese self-determination if it could not be solved in negotiations with the Danish state authorities (Sølvará 2013: 186-87). The unionists were astonished by this proclamation (Sølvará 2014: 299-300); even if it apparently did not imply that the Home Rule Party wanted separation from Denmark. Firstly, the

precedence was obviously set by the League of Nations in 1921, when it after a long process was decided that the Aland Islands, whose inhabitants were Swedish-oriented and until 1809 had been under the sovereignty of Sweden, should remain under the 'present' sovereignty of Finland. This decision was made despite the fact that the inhabitants in the islands at mass meetings in 1917-18 had made it clear that they wanted a reunion with Sweden; and they had with a reference to the principle of self-determination demanded a referendum on the sovereignty-question. The decision of the League of Nations was, however, given under the precondition that Finland e.g. granted the people in the Aland Islands internal home rule and the right to use Swedish language in the schools (Østerud 1984: 115-16). Even if there was no wish from the Faroese inhabitants for a reunion with Norway, there were obvious similarities between the Finnish-Aland-Swedish case and the Danish-Faroese-Norwegian dispute;⁶⁶ and the final decision of the League of Nations was apparently in line with the kind of political and national rights within the Danish state that the Home Rule Party in the Faroe Islands had struggled for. In fact, leading Home Rule Party politicians, e.g. Edward Mortensen (Edward Mitens from 1923), as late as in 1930 explicitly referred to the Aland Islands position in relation to Finland as a model for a local Faroese home rule within Denmark (Sølvará 2014: 390). Secondly, the Home Rule Party statement in the *Løgting* about the League of Nations and the Faroese right to national self-determination was clearly put forward in relation to this kind of local Faroese home rule "within the Danish state" (í hinum danska ríkinum) (Sølvará 2013: 187). Even the view of Jóannes Patursson on this matter of self-determination, which was reproduced in Norwegian newspapers, appeared to relate to the question of Faroese home rule (*selvstyre*) within the Danish state (Sølvará 2014: 299-300). This question was, of course, mainly an internal political disagreement in the Faroe

Islands, but the context following the First World War added a new international dimension to the issue that made it even more politically sensitive in the troubled Danish-Norwegian context. The concept of national self-determination obviously furnished nationalistic representatives for minorities within the established states with new arguments (e.g. Kramer 2011: 158 ff) and a new nationalistic discourse, suitable to challenge the established states.⁶⁷ The fact that the Home Rule Party in 1923 had reached the point where it found it necessary to refer to the League of Nations and the international concept of self-determination indicates a frustration with the Danish authorities in the party, but this also involves a new and more sensitive international context, which must have been noticed by the Danish Government. However, as the Aland case demonstrated in 1921, the right to national self-determination was obviously limited by the territorial interests of the members (i.e. the established states) of the League of Nations.⁶⁸

When Andras Samuelsen raised the Norwegian case in the Danish Parliament in October 1923, it was in the shadow of this historical and international context, where state-politically sensitive issues of self-determination, referendums and protection of minorities were about to gain acceptance in international relations. Thus, with this act, Faroese and Danish politics became intertwined just as in 1918. Of course, the general Danish state context was just as the international context slightly changed in 1923, but exactly as in 1918, the formal political connection was the Faroese political representation in the Danish Parliament. However, the difference was that in 1918 it was Danish politics that was the vehicle that connected Faroese politics to the political context in Denmark, while Faroese politics was the vehicle that connected Danish politics to Faroese politics in 1923. In 1918, it was the Danish Prime Minister C. Th. Zahle who sought support from the Faroese representative in the Danish Parliament, Edward Mortensen, while it was the Faroese

representative in the Danish Parliament, Andras Samuelsen, who in 1923, on behalf of the Unionist Party, sought support from the Danish Government. However, in both cases it was the general political discourse developed around the context of the Danish state interests that established the political conditions suitable for intertwining Faroese and Danish politics. Without the general Danish state context regarding the political struggle for governmental power in Denmark in 1917-18, there would hardly be any Investigative Committee of the *Landsting*. More obviously, without the general context of the developing international conflict between Denmark and Norway there would, despite the accusations of Jóannes Patursson against Danish state authorities, hardly be any case for the Unionist Party to pursue. In spite of the fact that these two cases from a historical and discursive perspective somehow are connected to each other, the comments made by Jóannes Patursson in Norway, especially those regarding Nikolaus Gjelsvik and Oliver Effersøe on a reunion with Norway, which obviously mainly referred to the discursive political level, would scarcely have achieved any real political significance without the context of the upcoming international dispute between Denmark and Norway.

Furthermore, if it was possible to identify a local Faroese core beneath the general discursive construction of the Offer and the Petition, the Norwegian case seemed to be an elusive discursive construction without such an obvious local core in the Faroe Islands. Of course, the comments of Jóannes Patursson in Norway about the “heavy-handed” Danish rule in the Faroe Islands – probably inspired by the development in international politics after the First World War – referred to a Faroese context that related to several tangible issues in Faroese politics in the period 1918-23, but the reference appeared to be more general in character. It appears as if the complicated consequences of the simplified discourse of a separatist versus union political landscape in the Faroe Islands, which originated in 1906, had generated more

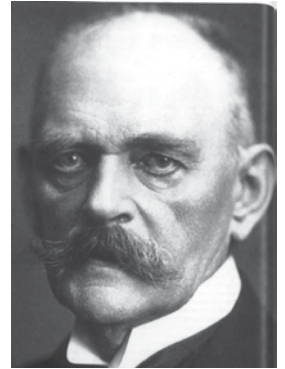
general conflicts in Faroese politics and between Faroese and Danish politics in 1923. The Norwegian case appears to be the temporary endpoint of a discursive political construction of a more general (ideological) conflict in Faroese politics and between Faroese and Danish politics rooted in an ongoing development of political interpretations of history and present in a broader contemporary international context that extended the specific Faroese context.

In addition, the conflict with Norway was important in Danish politics for many years, and the Faroese case for confronting the statements of Jóannes Patursson in Norway that Andras Samuelsen wanted the Danish Government to discuss fitted nicely into this troubled Danish context. Consequently, it was obvious that there had been a change in the Unionist Party intentions from the previous discussions in the *Løgting* to the new line of discussion in the Danish Parliament. Reflecting the goal in the *Løgting*, Andras Samuelsen said in the Danish Parliament that he was disappointed that the Home Rule Party had preserved Jóannes Patursson as leader of the party, but this evidently demonstrated that the Home Rule Party defended the statements made by Jóannes Patursson in Norway (Sølvará 2014: 299). Despite the fact that a united Home Rule Party in the *Løgting* had rejected all thoughts about an association between the Faroe Islands and Norway, the issue was formulated as if the party had defended the alleged statements in Norway by Jóannes Patursson. Andras Samuelsen ended the speech in the Danish Parliament on October 25, 1923 by saying that the work that the Unionist Party had done in the Faroe Islands to protect the position of the Danish language and the constitutional position of the islands ought to be valued by the Danish authorities. He said, “It would in my opinion be desirable that this understanding got support from Government and Parliament” (Sølvará 2014: 300). While the Unionist Party in the *Løgting* only had intended to hit the Home Rule Party charismatic leader,

Jóannes Patursson, it was now obvious that the party wanted to hit the entire Home Rule Party, which according to the unionists had refrained from rejecting Jóannes Patursson's opinions.

This was, of course, political positioning in the parliament because the political decisions were already taken elsewhere. At a meeting of the Danish Government on October 23, 1923, the government decided that the Prime Minister should talk to Oliver Effersøe, the other Faroese member of the Danish Parliament, about a statement to be put forward in the parliament on Faroese relations (Kaarsted (ed.) 1977: 230). Though this was formally the correct procedure by the government, it is worth noting that the Danish authorities only had two members of the Unionist Party in the Danish Parliament to consult on Faroese relations. Moreover, it is interesting that this whole case was established because of elusive statements cited in Norwegian newspapers that a united Home Rule Party subsequently rejected in the *Løgting*. Despite this, the statements (allegedly) made by Jóannes Patursson in Norway in the *Folketing* were inextricably linked to a discourse that clearly related to the upcoming dispute between Denmark and Norway. Of course, we don't know what the Danish Prime Minister and Oliver Effersøe agreed upon, but on October, 26, 1923 Niels Neergaard proclaimed the new guidelines regarding the policy of the Danish Government towards the Faroe Islands in the Danish Parliament. Both Andras Samuelsen and Prime Minister Niels Neergaard claimed that the explicit motivation behind the political proclamation of the guidelines was deemed to be the recent statements of Jóannes Patursson in Norway (Sølvará 2013: 195-98).

In these guidelines, the Danish Prime Minister stated that the Danish Government would work for the preservation of the union, politically and nationally, between the Faroe Islands and the Danish state. The work done in the Faroe Islands in order to preserve the hitherto established constitutional



Niels Thomasius Neergaard was Danish Prime Minister during the Norwegian case. It was during his period in office that the relations between the Home Rule Party and the Danish Government really deteriorated. It was as a consequence of his politics towards the Faroe Island, which was presented in 1923, that the Home Rule Party in 1924 changed its Program in a more 'Danish hostile' direction.

position of the Faroe Island in the state could therefore expect unconditional support from the Danish Government. Moreover, the government was not blind to the necessity of a cooperation in order to preserve and develop the special Faroese idiosyncrasies, especially the language. However, in order to rule out any misunderstanding the Prime Minister stressed that it would always be a fundamental rule that this cooperation was based on a mutual recognition of the fact that the constitution as well as state language, the Danish language, must be preserved as common for the whole state (Sølvará 2013: 198).

This Danish – and in part Faroese – politics of “denial of differences” was apparently a real blow to the Home Rule Party that since 1906 had struggled for extended power to the *Løgting* in domestic Faroese matters – in 1918, a proposal was passed in the *Løgting* about a constitutional change that would have given it legislative power. Furthermore, the *Løgting* had several times passed proposals, which were submitted by the Home Rule Party majority that would have established the Faroese language as the language of education in the school. Now, the Danish Government seemed to have indicated no support for this work from the Danish state authorities. The Unionist Party had on the other hand received unconditional support from the Danish Government in the political efforts to preserve the status quo. This was the political consequence of Faroese political comments on sayings of Nikolaus Gjelsvik.

The Home Rule Party could understand that the Danish Government supported the majority in the *Løgting*, but the party could not accept that the government unconditionally decided to support the Unionist Party. According to the new guidelines, the Home Rule Party could not expect to gain the Danish Governments support even if the party in the future got the support of the majority of the Faroese voters and in the *Løgting*. Furthermore, they could not understand

the statement about the 'national unity' between the Faroe Islands and the state.

Rasmus Rasmussen had already in 1919 with an implicit reference to the unionists stated that it was bad enough that there were persons in the Faroe Islands who were unable to distinguish between 'national feelings' and 'obligations towards the state', but it was worse that they appeared to have achieved support for their views in Denmark (Sølvará 2014: 233). According to Jørgen Frantz-Jacobsen, this was a contradiction that reminded him of the boy who said that he had seen a church with two round towers of which one was rectangular. He characterized these Danish Government guidelines as an obviously self-contradictory theology created to explain away the simple fact that the inhabitants of the Faroe Islands constituted a people with their own nationality, not Danish, but Faroese (Jacobsen 1927: 94).

However, on November 28, 1923 the Danish Government signed a Memorandum on the relationship of Denmark to the Faroe Islands. This Memorandum, sent to the relevant Danish Embassies, stated that the Faroe Islands could almost be equated with a Danish County (*Amt*) and the *Løgting* could almost be equated with a County Council (*Amtsråd*) in Denmark. The *Løgting* had consultative power in legislative matters given the geographical distance, which was unanimously agreed in the *Løgting* in 1922. The educational language was in agreement with a proposal passed in the *Løgting* in 1912 both Danish and Faroese. Service could be held in Danish and Faroese in the Faroese churches. The Memorandum listed a number of Faroese matters supported financially by the Exchequer. Some passages in the document were literally taken from the Unionist Party minority report in the *Løgting* of September 14, 1923. A long passage from the speech held by Andras Samuelson in the Danish Parliament on October 25, 1923 was quoted in the text. The guidelines proclaimed by the Prime Minister in the Danish Parliament on October 26, 1923 were also

reproduced in the text. The two existing political parties in the Faroe Islands were mentioned and characterized. The Memorandum declared that “the Unionist Party program is to maintain the present constitutional connection to Denmark, while the Home Rule Party lists as its goals: greater autonomy, legislative power to the Faroese *Løgting*, the use of Faroese language as church- and educational language”. The characterizing of the Unionist Party program with the objective and directly confirming words “is to” (*gaar ud paa*) and the Home Rule Party program with a more subjective third person view “lists” (*angiver*) seems to indicate the unconditional trust of the Danish Government in the Unionist Party and the seemingly lesser confidence it had in the Home Rule Party (Sølvará 2014: 302-04 and 374-76).

Just as in March 1909, when the Danish Government explicitly withdrew the Offer of 1906, it was in October 1923 a Danish Government led by Niels Neergaard that turned against the politics of the Home Rule Party. It can be disputed whether this congruence is a coincidence or not, but it appears to be evident that the sensitivity in international politics after the First World War, specific Danish political challenges and discourse encouraged the more unionist oriented Danish politics towards the Faroe Islands in 1920; it is also evident that the break between the government and the Home Rule Party in 1923 was more decisive than in 1909.

Nevertheless, the Home Rule Party was very disappointed with the Danish state authorities. In 1924, the party changed its program because of the new Danish politics towards the Faroe Islands. The paragraph that stated that the party would work for as extensive a Faroese home rule as could be achieved in good understanding with the Danish Parliament and Danish Government was deleted. Now it was simply stated that the Faroese people had as a nation the right to decide in the Faroe Islands and should strive for home rule. Furthermore, while the old program stated that the party

would work towards the Faroese language becoming on par with Danish in all Faroese matters, it was now declared that the party worked for the Faroese language to have unlimited rights in all matters. The school system should be improved with Faroese as the educational language – not just with Faroese as the main foundation as stated in the old program. Neither the Danish language nor any reference to Danish authorities found mention in the new program from 1924. In the first Home Rule Party program from 1909, explicit references were made to the Danish language, government, parliament and ministers. However, it was still Faroese home rule, i.e. self-government in internal Faroese matters, not separation from Denmark, that was the goal in the new program, but the tone was no longer friendly towards the Danish state authorities, only implicitly referred to in the paragraph about Faroese home rule (Sølvará 2014: 379-80).

The cooperation between the Faroese home rule movement and the Danish authorities that began in mutual respect in 1906 was some 20 years later definitely broken and mutual respect replaced by distrust. Of course, this indicated that the Danish Government and the Home Rule Party politically had moved away from each other concerning the question about the development of the relations between Denmark and the Faroe Islands. However, the *reason* for this development was not only the fact that the Home Rule Party had become radicalized in relation to the home rule question. It is just as important to consider why the Home Rule Party had become radicalized in the period. In a broader political context, it was the persistent Faroese accusations against the Home Rule Party of separatism, which later were connected to broader political challenges that the Danish state had with e.g. territorial disintegration that in Denmark helped generate a political discourse of a separatist or plain high treason that coloured the Faroese Home Rule Party. In the end, this political discourse was one of the forces that influenced the radicalization of the previously moderate Home Rule Party.

Even if the political struggle for home rule basically was a local Faroese struggle – and never became a disputed political issue between Denmark and the Faroe Islands to be dealt with by the League of Nations – it is not possible to isolate the local Faroese political process of radicalization from the more general Danish state context and discourse in which the radicalization of the political process was discussed. Language is not limited to a tool to describe ‘a language independent reality’, but it is an integral part of the social and political reality itself; or as Jóannes Patursson said about the political accusations against the Home Rule Party that originated in local Faroese politics, but eventually spread to Danish politics and were put forward by the Investigative Committee in 1919: All these accusations of separatism and high treason are sufficient to create Faroese separatists where there are none.

This might in part have been the case in the Faroe Islands in the first quarter of the 20th century. And Jóannes Patursson was not alone in this opinion when the 1920ies approached.

Conclusion

Jóannes Patursson, who in 1907, had declared that not a single Faroese wanted to depart from the Danish Crown declared in 1923 that he was finished with the Danes. Obviously, there had been a radical change in the attitude of the leader of the Home Rule Party to the Danish authorities – if not in the attitude of the whole party to the Danish authorities later reflected in the new program of 1924. However, this change in attitude was not the sole cause of the troubled relationship between the Home Rule Party and the Danish authorities. On the contrary, this change in attitude and politics towards the Danish authorities was partly the consequence of challenges that are more general, complicated political processes and discursive constructions in the Danish Empire per se. Two main reasons make it very difficult to isolate Faroese politics in this period from the Danish state politics in the period.

Firstly, Faroese and Danish politics, two relatively independent political spheres, were and still are formally connected to each other through the two Faroese representatives in the Danish Parliament. Faroese politics could easily be intertwined in Danish politics through these representatives – especially when Danish Governments have a weak parliamentary basis. The difference from the present plural political system is, however, that in the period 1906-25 there were only two political parties in the Faroe Islands. Furthermore, the elective system of the Danish Parliament in this period determined that the Faroese voters elected the *Løgting* as well as the Faroese representative in the first chamber in the Danish Parliament (*Folketing*), while the

Løgting elected the Faroese representative in the second chamber in the Danish Parliament (*Landstinget*). These two facts in the period – the ‘two party political system’ and ‘the formal elective system’ – favoured a Faroese representation in the Danish Parliament that only represented one side, a small majority side, in Faroese politics. The consequence was that both generally and specifically, when Faroese politics for some specific reason became intertwined in Danish politics, Faroese politics was largely only represented by a majority – leaving the large minority of the population without influence. In the two-party period, the Unionist Party had the majority of the Faroese electorate on its side. It was therefore the Unionist Party politics that largely was argued for and accepted in the Danish Parliament, and just as importantly, it apparently was a Unionist Party picture of a separatist Home Rule Party that apparently dominated the political discourse in Denmark.

Secondly, the *Amtmaður*, Chairman in the *Løgting* in the two-party period was a significant political figure in the Faroese *Løgting*, representing the Danish Government. This political importance of the *Amtmaður* was considerably reduced in 1924, when he was no longer *ex officio* Chairman of the *Løgting* and could participate in the ballots in the *Løgting*. At the same time, the *Próstur* was no longer member of the *Løgting*. This democratization of the *Løgting* reduced the political importance of the *Amtmaður* and increased the political importance of the *Løgting*, but in the two party-period, the *Amtmaður* was of great political importance. This was clearly demonstrated in the period 1911-18 when Svenning Rytter was *Amtmaður* and Chairman in the *Løgting*. Svenning Rytter obviously used this position to support the Unionist Party and to challenge the Home Rule Party demands for greater authority to the *Løgting* and a better position for the Faroese language. He apparently saw himself as the defender of the “Danishness” in the Faroe Islands (Rasmussen 1987: 233). On the discursive level, he also

supported the characterization of the Home Rule Party by the Unionist Party towards the Danish state authorities, or at least their political leader, who despite the official program of the Home Rule Party was often perceived as having a hidden separatist agenda.

From a Home Rule Party view, the party was not only engaged in a political struggle with the Unionist Party in the *Løgting*; the party was also engaged in a political battle against the whole system that represented Faroese politics in Denmark. This, of course, changed a bit in relation to a specific Faroese context in 1918 when Svenning Rytter resigned as *Amtmaður* at the same time as the Home Rule Party partisan Jákup Dahl was employed as *Føroya Próstur* and the Home Rule Party got the majority in the *Løgting* because of technicalities. However, even given this favourable position in the *Løgting*, the Home Rule Party could not gain advantage in relation to Danish authorities. Any attempt by the majority in the *Løgting* to change the Faroese constitutional or cultural status quo in the Danish state was questioned by Faroese representatives – usually both from the Unionist Party – in the Danish Parliament.

This system contributed to the radicalization of the Home Rule Party. It most probably also contributed to the unconditional loyalty of the Unionist Party towards the “Danishness” in the Faroe Islands in the attempt of the party to gain support from the Danish authorities. Occasionally, e.g. in 1925, when Nina Bang tried to gain approval for a compromise between the Unionist Party and the Home Rule Party on the question of the language of education, the Unionist Party even appeared to be more ‘Danish minded’ than the Danish Government.

This conclusion is demonstrated by the analyses of the three cases in my work, the Offer, the Petition and the Norwegian case. In all three cases, the political system connecting Faroese and Danish politics influenced the development. In 1906-09, it seems obvious that it was the Faroese representative in the

Danish Parliament, Oliver Effersøe, who in order to gain political support from the Danish state authorities to fight the home rule supporters and their political ideas, created a completely misleading picture of the home rule supporters as well as of the Offer. Furthermore, he falsely connected the Offer to the treason of Peter Adler Alberti. It is just as obvious, that the Petition became part of Danish state politics because of the attempt of the Danish Prime Minister to gain political support from the Faroese representative in the Danish Parliament, Edward Mortensen, and the subsequent actions of the *Amtmaður*. In an attempt to annoy or eventually bring down the government of C. Th. Zahle, the political opposition in Denmark used the connection between him and alleged treason against the Danish state by the Faroese petitioners. These political accusations were – independent of the local Faroese context – reproduced on what must be highly questionable grounds by the Investigative Committee of 1918-19. In 1923, it also appears to be quite clear that the Unionist Party parliamentarians used the upcoming international conflict between Denmark and Norway in Eastern Greenland to force first the *Løgting* and then the Danish state authorities to make a clear decision on the politics of the Home Rule Party, allegedly reflected in some statements by Jóannes Patursson in the Norwegian press. The political accusations against the Home Rule Party as being in favour of separation between the Faroe Islands and Denmark and a resultant union between the Faroe Islands and Norway, explicitly rejected in the *Løgting* by a united Home Rule Party, became part of Danish state politics because of the Faroese representatives in the Danish Parliament. On this occasion, the Danish Government proclaimed that it unconditionally supported the politics of the Unionist Party based on the recognition of the Danish constitution and the Danish language.

Nevertheless, even if it were the formal political connections between the Faroe Islands and Denmark that made

this intertwining of Faroese and Danish politics possible, this was not the reason for this intertwining. The reasons had more to do with the challenges of territorial disintegration that the Danish state faced during the First World War and in successive years. This was the context for the struggle for political power in which Denmark was a part. This was also the political context in which the upcoming Faroese home rule movement was interpreted in relation to by an increasingly more conservative national political opposition in Denmark. Furthermore, it is important to note that it was not the tangible politics of the Home Rule Party that was represented and painted in Denmark, but it was the discursive construction of a separatist Home Rule Party that had gained ground in Denmark already since 1906. This picture, constructed by the unionists in the Danish Parliament and later by the *Amtmaður* for the Danish Government, served to establish the foundations for Danish accusations against the Home Rule Party of being separatists and traitors when the Danish authorities some years later faced comparable challenges in other parts of the Danish state.

It is important to note that even if it was the context of disintegrating territorial challenges that increasingly attached Faroese politics to Danish state politics, the political discourse in which Faroese politics was discussed in Denmark added new and important elements to the picture, which are not at all or only poorly founded in the relevant sources. Examples are the Alberti scandal, accusations of damaging behaviour and treason and Norwegian tendencies in the Home Rule Party. It is just as important to point out that all these elusive discursive constructions, which originated in a Faroese context in 1906, had concrete consequences for Faroese politics as well as for the political relations between the Faroe Islands and Denmark.

Consequently, as the Danish Prime Minister C. Th. Zahle stated in the press and reproduced in his letter of March 15, 1918 to the *Amtmaður* Svenning Rytter, these accusations

were only suited to create exactly what it was intensely intended to prevent (Sølvará 2014: 395-96). It is, however, important to note that these accusations of separatism did not originate in Danish politics – these accusations against the Home Rule Party originated in Faroese politics and were only subsequently applied to and developed in the political discourse in Denmark. In general, apart from some important issues, the struggle for Faroese home rule was, as the unionists often pointed out (e.g. Sølvará 2014: 300), an internal political struggle between the political parties in the Faroe Islands that Danish authorities did not interfere much in. The consequence of the radical political discourse established on the subject was, anyway, as the Danish Prime Minister alluded to in his statement, that the Home Rule Party apparently became increasingly hostile and radicalized on the whole question of the relations between Denmark and the Faroe Islands. This appears to indicate two general conclusions, which these analyses of three political subjects in the period 1906-25 appear to demonstrate. Firstly, that the philosopher of science Karl Popper might be right when he claimed that the decisive (societal and political) developments that the social sciences (should) deal with are the unintended consequences of intended actions (Popper 1973: 80-92 and 2002: 146).⁶⁹ Secondly, that language and discourse really seem to matter in the development of politics.⁷⁰ The rise of Faroese separatism might well in part have been an unintended consequence of a political discourse originally created with the sole intention of fighting the Home Rule Party policy.

The general implications of this research might be that discourse theory on the analytical level could be slightly modified with a distinction between a local, original and often more tangible political context, and a more general and often more elusive discourse. Meaning can as discourse theory claims only be analysed within a specific context, but it might be helpful to distinguish between different analytical levels of meaning – in this case the original and the more

general and often less original meaning. This distinction might help historians to distinguish between the relevance of different sources on different levels and it might help historians to conceptualize general political developments often only implicit in the sources. However, an analysis of a political development comparable to the one analysed in this research might be limited to semi-independent areas where the cultural identity and the political system are respectively different from and relatively independent of the mother land – similar to the relations between the Faroe Islands and Denmark. It was the formal political connections between the Faroe Islands and Denmark – the Faroese representatives in the *Rigsdagen* and the *Amtmaður* – that actualized the historical, cultural and political differences in a more general contemporary context with reference to Danish politics and state interests in the North Atlantic. This formal political system was simultaneously the formal link that indicated the Danish state political interest in the political development in the Faroe Islands and the formal connection that generated a specific Faroese development. Even if the political discourse added new and decisive elements to the context, it is difficult to see how the discourse could have developed in the way it did independent of this context.

It seems difficult to comprehend how similar political developments could have happened in the relations between other countries where neither important differences in language or culture nor formal political connections exist in the relations between the respective areas. Both conditions – the cultural differences and political dependencies – appear to be essential. However, these two conditions might (in different local constructions) by obvious (logical) reasons constitute general preconditions behind the rise of any independence movement, whether it only remained a potentiality or it (unsuccessfully or successfully) was actualised. Nevertheless, the discourse appears to be significant for the Faroese political development.

The Faroese Flag, which was designed in 1919 by Faroese students in Copenhagen, was recognized by the British in April 1940. Hard disputes preceded in June 1930, when the Danish authorities at the ceremony for the 1000-year anniversary of the *Althing* at *Thingvellir* demanded the Icelandic hosts to take down the Faroese Flag, which did not deserve a place among the Flags of the sovereign Nordic Nations. On Ólavsøka in Tórshavn a month later, home rule minded Faroese got their revenge, when a home rule supporter took down *Dannebrog* from the building of the *Løgting*. The result was an 'offer' from Stauning to Faroese home rule supporters of a referendum on status que or separation.



Epilogue

Despite the unanimous rejection of the Home Rule Party in the *Løgting* of any treatment of a possible union with Norway, the Norwegian case continued to play its part in Faroese and Danish politics in the years after the discussion in the *Løgting* and Danish Parliament in 1923. This was quite obvious in 1924 when the Unionist Party used the Norwegian case to campaign in the general election to the Faroese *Løgting* on January 22. In one of their election posters, the party made it clear that the choice was between “Denmark *or* Norway” (Sølvará 2014: 384). This was, of course, not a tangible political issue at all in Faroese politics in the years following 1923, but in a broader Danish state context, this was a political discourse suited to divide Faroese politics alongside the dichotomy of being on the right or wrong side of the Danish state interests. The trouble Denmark had with nationalistic Norwegians about the former territories developed subsequently into a dispute and a conflict at the state level.

In 1924, the Danish and Norwegian Governments signed an agreement that acknowledged Norwegian hunters limited rights in Eastern Greenland and in 1926 Faroese fishing ships got access to a harbour in Western Greenland. However, the disputed Danish-Norwegian question of the sovereignty over Eastern Greenland remained unsolved. The political relations between the two Nordic countries deteriorated further and reached the preliminary lowest limit in 1930 when some Norwegian hunters actually “occupied” an area in Eastern Greenland. Afterwards, nationalistic forces in

Norway forced the Norwegian Government to acknowledge this “occupation”. The consequence was that Denmark summoned Norway before the international court in Haag, which on April 5, 1933 confirmed the sovereignty of Denmark over Greenland (Cavell 2008: 433-41). This verdict eventually settled the dispute,⁷¹ but apparently, Norwegians continued to show interest in the case (Lidegaard 1999: 181-82).

This was the Danish state context when the Danish Prime Minister Thorvald Stauning, as recently as in 1930, mentioned the Norwegian tendencies in the Home Rule Party and characterized them as “a kind of treason” (Stauning 1999: 146 and 153-54). There were, however, no such tendencies in the Home Rule Party at that time – even Jóannes Patursson who following the committee or during the Norwegian case eventually became a separatist had apparently left them behind (Patursson 1931: 66-68), if he ever had had any serious intentions about a reunion between Norway and the Faroe Islands. In spite of that, the Danish Government in 1934 decided to try to prevent his son, who was thought to be a friend of Norway, from becoming Norwegian Vice Consul in the Faroe Islands (Kaarsted (ed.) 1984: 35). These Danish suspicions against the Norwegians were hardly only baseless paranoia. Anyway, powerful Norwegians such as the exiled Foreign Minister Halvdan Koht worked as recently as during the exile in Great Britain under the Second World War to bring the Faroe Islands and Greenland under Norwegian power after the war (see e.g. Koht 1957: 284 and Thorsteinsson 2014: 260). Furthermore, according to the Norwegian Nils Ihlen, who was in the Faroe Islands during the Second World War, Halvdan Koht and Jóannes Patursson were friends (Ihlen 1956: 212). This political context can explain the sensitivity of the subject in Danish politics in the years following the Norwegian case, but the Norwegian question had hardly any real foundation in Faroese politics in the period. However, the sole accusation of treason might well in itself have proved the catalyst for the Home Rule Party.

Internally, important changes in the political system in the Faroes happened in the period. Firstly, a democratization of the *Løgting* in the inter-war period (1924) removed the major discrepancies in the elective and political system that favoured an unjust and undemocratic political representation in the *Løgting* (Sølvará 2003: 162-63). These formal discrepancies in the system had created a lot of political turbulence in the Faroe Islands. Secondly, new political parties, the Social Democratic Party (1925), the Industry Party (1935), the People's Party (1939) and the Republican Party (1948) eventually undermined the two-party system and made it unlikely that the same Faroese political party could have both representatives in the Danish Parliament. However, the Unionist Party had with exception of the period 1928-32 support from the majority of the Faroese voters until 1936 (Sølvará 2002: 154-55). To put it in another way, since the definite breakdown of the Faroese 'two-party system' following the election to the *Løgting* in 1928, when a third political party, the Social Democratic Party, for the first time achieved (two) representatives, no political party alone has (hitherto), with the exception of the period 1932-36, had support from the majority of the voters. However, from this time on, the parties that wanted better rights to Faroese language had the majority in the *Løgting* and proposals very similar to those the Home Rule Party had passed in the *Løgting* in 1918-23 were passed again. In 1939, the Faroese language achieved equal rights with Danish in school and church and in 1948 – at the same time as the *Løgting* achieved legislative power in Faroese matters – status as main language in the islands. However, hard political struggle had preceded the Danish acceptance of the first Home Rule Party program.

In fact, in 1925, the first Danish female minister Nina Bang had put forward a proposal that would have stated that Faroese with few exceptions was the language of education, but this proposal was defeated by the unionist majority in the *Løgting* following the election in 1924. This proposal



The Faroese separatist agenda was for the first time explicitly formulated by Sverre Patursson in the pamphlet *Móti loysing* from 1925, but the narrative of the existence of Faroese separatism was politically invented and promoted by opponents of home rule 20 years earlier. Interestingly, this political narrative, discourse, might in part have caused the subsequent rise of Faroese separatism.

was presumably put forward because the first Danish Social Democratic Government eventually had recognized that the Danish politics towards the Faroe Islands, which was proclaimed in October 1923, was unsuccessful, but it came too late to prevent the deteriorating relations between the Home Rule Party and the Danish state authorities. The political manifestation in the Faroe Islands on the recognition of national issues and symbols, e.g. the Faroese language and the Faroese flag, in the late 1920ies became so politically hostile due to certain circumstances that Thorvald Stauning in 1930 proposed a referendum – obviously intended as a threat – in the Faroe Islands on status quo or separation from Denmark (Sølvará 2014: 336-42). Despite these intensions, the Danish state authorities with this proposal actually for the first time recognized that the Faroese people had the right to self-determination (Thorsteinsson 1990: 357). However, the referendum, passed in the *Løgting* at the culmination of the international dispute between Denmark and Norway about the territories, was subsequently cancelled, as the Home Rule Party could not accept the terms (Patursson 1931). Two main reasons for this rejection of the proposed referendum appear to be obvious. Firstly, the Home Rule Party had not separation between the Faroe Islands and Denmark on the political agenda even if the leader maybe could see that goal achieved sometime in the future (Sølvará 2014: 337). In a debate with Thorvald Stauning at a meeting in Copenhagen in 1930, Edward Mitens claimed that no parties, only few persons, if any at all, wanted separation from Denmark (Sølvará 2014: 389). Secondly, the financial crises following the Wall Street collapse in 1929 made the timing very inopportune. It was discourse without real content, which characterized national issues in the 1930ies, but despite political intentions, the separatist agenda was proposed and also legalized by the government. However, if the Danish (or Faroese) authorities had intended to give the Faroese voters a real choice between status quo and

separation, it would have been appropriate beforehand to define the terms in an agreement, passed in the *Rigsdag* and the *Løgting*, as it was done before the Icelandic referendum in 1918 (Thorsteinsson 1985: 246).

The separatist agenda in the Faroe Islands was for the first time explicitly formulated by Sverre Patursson in the aftermath of the Norwegian case (Patursson 1925). Subsequently, he and Andreas Ziska, previously mentioned in relation to the Petition, established a socialist separatist party *Móti loysing* (Towards separation) (Jóansson 2012: 213-14), but it was only the Second World War that provided the separatist movement with any real political and economic potential for achieving the ideological goal. Thus, in the Faroe Islands, it was only in the years following 1925 that real nationalism, defined by modern research as a political movement that intends to realize their perception of the unity of the people, the national identity, in a state,⁷² challenged ethnic identity, which usually refers to groups that only want some kind of cultural, social and economic autonomy (Østergård 2007: 547),⁷³ i.e. some kind of home rule system within the already established state. Separated from German occupied Denmark, which in the inter-war period in reality had opposed the recognition of the Faroese Flag or any constitutional change in the relations between Denmark and the Faroe Islands, the British occupied Faroe Islands were apparently in a favourable position to gain independence. Furthermore, the Faroe Islands achieved access to the lucrative British fresh fish market during the Second World War, which – apparently because of the Danish politics towards the Faroes (Mohr 2012: 24)⁷⁴ – had been largely closed to Faroese export in the pre-war time (Steining 1948: 88-90; Kampp 1950: 50).⁷⁵ The Faroese fishing fleet earned millions on these dangerous routes to the British fresh fish market. Economically speaking, the Faroe Islands recovered from the pre-war crisis during the war. The separatist-minded People's Party, established in

1939 with Jóannes Patursson – who eventually broke with the Home Rule Party – as leader, doubled the representation in the *Løgting* at the election in 1943 – from six to 12. The People’s Party, which argued that the Danish state because of the German occupation had ceased to exist and that the sovereignty over the Faroe Islands therefore was with the Faroese People, lacked one representative to enjoy absolute majority in the *Løgting*. The *Amtmaður*, separated from the Danish authorities in Copenhagen, was under pressure.

However, the general policy of the British state authorities, who had the military power in the Faroe Islands during the war, was that the Faroe Islands should be delivered back to a liberated Denmark after the war (e.g. Arge 1986: 33 and Thorsteinsson 2002: 99).⁷⁶ The British Government had decided to participate in the war exactly because they did not – as the People’s Party did – recognize that e.g. Denmark had ceased to exist. Even if the British occupying power for obvious political reasons never officially promised the *Amtmaður* that they, if necessary, would protect his decisions with military power (Sølvará 2002: 248-49), internal British documents appear to imply that they, if necessary, actually were prepared to use military power to prevent the strong Faroese separatists, e.g. Thorstein Petersen and the People’s Party, from unilaterally declaring an independent Faroese state (Mohr 2012: 124-25). This general British policy, which explicitly contradicted the intentions of the Faroese independence movement (Sørensen 1998), can explain why the Norwegian Foreign Minister Halvdan Koht who was in the Faroe Islands for three days in June 1940 on his way to England, where he lived in exile during the war, got the impression from some talks with prominent Faroese in June 1940 that they wanted Norwegian forces to replace the British forces in the Faroes (Riste 1987: 8-11; also Andreassen 1983: 4). Leading separatist-minded Faroese politicians – Olav Riste mentions that Halvdan Koth e.g. had met Jóannes Patursson – might well have reasoned that

it would be politically easier to gain independence from Denmark if Norwegian forces replaced the British forces, but nothing indicates that any of them wanted the Faroe Islands to become a part of Norway. However, the secret political intention of Halvdan Koht, who had such plans, was to pave the way for a Norwegian take-over of the Faroes after the war (Riste 1973: 33). Trygve Lie, the Foreign Minister of Norway (following Koht) in 1941-46 and Secretary-General of the United Nations in 1946-52, had apparently similar political plans (Lidegaard 1999: 181-82).⁷⁷ The British Government was disappointed by the passive attitude that Denmark had to the German occupation, and they intended to use the situation in the war propaganda. Interestingly, the British authorities intended to – and apparently did – use e.g. the Norwegian interest for the Faroe Islands to put pressure on Denmark in order to motivate the Danish Government to make a more convincing effort in the struggle against the German occupation (Jensen 1972: 41-44). In January 1942 (when the Danish Government on November 25, 1941 had found it necessary to sign the Anti-Comintern Pact between Nazi Germany and Japan and later some fascist regimes, which e.g. was oriented against the British allied in the war against Germany, the Soviet Union), British officials even seem to have considered the possibility that the British Government could give the Danish Government the impression that the British intended to “encourage” the Faroese independence movement because of the missing Danish resistance against the Germans (Riste 1987: 15). This was, however, never intended to be anything but an empty threat (discourse) that might be used to motivate the Danish authorities to increase the resistance against the Germans. The British Government did not accept the plans of Halvdan Koht and Trygve Lie and the threat was never made public. The *Amtmaður* had in the British authorities a powerful ally against the strong Faroese independence movement, which on the other hand during the war never achieved the political majority in the *Løgting*.

The previously so powerful Home Rule Party was not represented in the *Løgting* in 1943-46. The reasons behind the decline of the Home Rule Party were twofold. Firstly, the Social Democratic Party, which was established in 1925, put pressure on the Home Rule Party's social profile, which also had become a bit muddled because of the connection to the Kings yeomans, personified in Jóannes Patursson. Secondly, the worldwide economic crisis in the 1930ies motivated the majority in the *Løgting* to reorganize the Faroese agriculture in a way that e.g. made it possible for unemployed or poor fishermen to achieve a piece of land (*Trøð*) from the Kings yeomans. This proposal, which was passed in the *Løgting* in 1934 with a huge majority that included some of the representatives of the Home Rule Party, was made law in 1938 (Sølvará 2002: 212-15). This vote was what eventually motivated Jóannes Patursson and others too to leave the Home Rule Party; and together with the persons behind the Industry Party, e.g. Thorstein Petersen, they instead established the separatist-minded People's Party, which had huge political success among the Faroese voters during the Second World War.

The fact that the Faroe Islands in reality were governed independently of Danish authorities in Copenhagen resulted in the independence movement achieving many of their political goals – apart from independence: The Faroese Flag was recognized to be used at sea, the *Løgting* achieved preliminary legislative power in internal Faroese affairs together with the *Amtmaður*,⁷⁸ a Faroese appeals court was established and Faroese language was recognized as the judicial language. Furthermore, the *Amtmaður*, who was under political pressure from increasingly stronger home rule and separatist-minded political powers in the *Løgting* and – after November 25, 1941 when the Danish Government had signed the Anti-Comintern Pact – from the British occupying power (Thorsteinsson 2002: 81 ff), had on December 1, 1942 declared in the *Løgting* that his position and conviction was that a liberated Denmark after

the war would take full account of the wishes of the Faroese people in the negotiations, which had to come after the war, about a new arrangement of the interrelationship (Mitens 1969: 275-76). Therefore, after the war, the Danish state authorities recognized that change had come to stay,⁷⁹ but from the perspective of the Faroese independence movement, real change was only about to come. A general election to the *Løgting* in November 6, 1945 did not change the balance of political power in the *Løgting*; the People's Party got 11 representatives and the Social Democratic Party and the Unionist Party got 6 representatives each in the *Løgting*. Negotiations in 1945-46, where the Faroese political parties were unable to agree on a united Faroese proposal, resulted in a referendum on September 14, 1946 on an ultimatum from the Danish Government, which none of the political parties in the Faroe Islands were pleased with, or separation from Denmark (Harder 1979; Skála 1992; Sølvará 2002: 221-89; Wang 2010; Thorsteinsson 2014: 286-373). The similarities in relation to the proposed referendum in 1930 appear obvious. However, even if no one within the political system really had expected or prepared anything at all in case of a majority for separation, a word, which apparently was put there as a threat by the unionist majority in the *Løgting*,⁸⁰ the result turned out to be a small majority for separation (Spiermann 2008: 7). It is tempting to interpret this result as a Faroese reaction to what Uffe Østergård has characterized as a “denial of differences” within the political system in Denmark (Østergård 2012: 38), which here can be observed in the ultimatum from the Danish Government that only a minority was pleased with. Additionally, the majority in the *Løgting* had tipped to the separatists, because an elected member of the Social Democratic Party, Jákup í Jákupsstovu, declared that he could not accept the Danish Government's proposal, but now was a separatist. The unexpected – and unintended – outcome was in part the result of work that was done by the *Føroyingafelag*, some

young independent-minded Faroese, who in August had published a pamphlet (*Føroyar* 1946) with a proposal to a Faroese constitution and a finance bill, which they sent to every household in the Faroe Islands. Those persons tried to give a vote for separation a real positive content, which no one in the Danish or the Faroese political system really appeared to do; they travelled around the Faroe Islands and argued for independence.

The politics of “denial of differences” appeared to have failed and the situation seemed to be clear, because the Danish Prime Minister Knud Kristensen, who before the referendum had declared that in case of a separatist majority the consequence had to be separation, declared also the day after the referendum that separation had to be the consequence (Jensen 2004: 27). It has to be interpreted in this context, when the separatist-minded majority in the *Løgting* following the referendum undertook to prepare a take-over of the governmental power in the Faroe Islands; and that Thorstein Petersen, the Chairman in the *Løgting*, on September 18 declared that the Faroese people at the referendum had told the *Løgting* that the sovereignty over the Faroe Islands was with the Faroese people; and that it was the duty of the *Løgting* to execute the will of the people. However, the Danish Government, who had played a risky game with the presentation of the very unpopular ultimatum, apparently had reached second thoughts, when Knud Kristensen declared himself “diplomatic sick”, and Thorkild Kristensen, the Minister of Finance, took over as Prime Minister for more than a week following September 17 (Christiansen 1998: 138-39). In this period, the discursive level of the Danish ultimatum to the Faroese separatists was revealed when the government prepared and implemented other plans than a separation between the Faroe Islands and Denmark. Subsequently, on September 21, the unionist Andras Samuelsen requested the *Løgting* to vote on the previous statement of the Chairman in the *Løgting*, whereby

it could become a passed proposal. Because of this vote in the *Løgting*, which was passed by the separatist-minded majority, the Danish Government through the *Amtmaður* on September 23 declared that the *Løgting* had passed an illegal proposal, which contradicted the constitution (see Skála 1992). The argument was that according to § 18 in the constitution only the Danish Parliament had the authority to separate any part of Denmark from the constitutional realm, while the Faroese referendum, which only was passed in the *Løgting* and accepted by the Danish Government through the *Amtmaður*, therefore only was consultative. Consequently, the *Amtmaður* used his authority to postpone the September 21 decision of the *Løgting*, and the government (formally the King) on September 25 used its rights to dissolve the *Løgting*.

However, the following general election to the *Løgting* on November 8, 1946, could not demonstrate a majority for the implementation of the result of the referendum. While the People's Party together with Jákup í Jákupsstovu before the election had the majority in the *Løgting* (12-11), the People's Party after the election had only 8 out of 20 representatives in the *Løgting*, – Jákup í Jákupsstovu who was excluded from the Social Democratic Party on September 22, was not re-elected – while the Home Rule Party (2), the Social Democratic Party (4) and the Unionist Party had 12 representatives. Therefore, after further negotiations, Faroese and Danish negotiators agreed on the Home Rule Law from 1948, where the Danish authorities for the first time acknowledged the *Løgting* legislative power in Faroese matters. This, of course, considerably reduced the political importance of the Faroese members of the Danish Parliament in relation to legislation in the Faroe Islands, which was now mainly the political responsibility of the *Løgting*, but their importance in relation to Danish politics was unchanged. Furthermore, a Faroese Government, *Landsstýri*, was established and led by a Prime Minister with the ancient



title *Løgmaður*, which had not existed since the *Løgting* and the *Løgmaður* were abolished in 1816. At the same time, the *Løgting*, which in 1934 had been authorized to collect some taxes in the Faroe Islands, eventually received full authorization to collect all the taxes in the Faroe Islands. Foreign policy including defence policy and international agreements remained under the Danish state authorities. Thus, the Faroese referendum on September 14, 1946 forced the Danish authorities to give the Faroese people a more extensive home rule than they originally intended, but they managed to avoid that the Faroe Islands gained independence from Denmark. Matt Qvortrup claims that the Faroese referendum in 1946 together with the similar referendum in Western Australia on April 8, 1933 is the only example of a successful referendum that has not led to independence (Qvortrup 2014: 29 and 51 ff). However, the negotiations about the Home Rule Act were interpreted by Faroese separatists as treason against the decision at the referendum and thus led to the Republican Party (1948), which was founded by the members of the *Føroyingafelag*.

From a Danish point of view, the preservation of the constitutional relations between the Faroe Islands, whose geopolitical importance in the North Atlantic became very

The Doctor-conflict developed in 1955 into an armed combat between separatist minded citizens in Klaksvík and 132 Danish marines and 32 Danish police officers, which the Danish Government at the request by the *Landsstýrið* had sent to Klaksvík with the warship Rolf Krake. A bomb exploded at the police station in Klaksvík on November 21, 1955. Three out of four police officers at the station were hospitalized, but no one was seriously hurt. This was neither the first nor the strongest bomb that exploded in Klaksvík in November 1955. Furthermore, three days later, on November 24, a bomb, which had been ignited, but for some reason never exploded, was discovered in a house in Klaksvík.

important during the Cold War, and Denmark increased in importance after the Second World War. The Home Rule Act, which placed the authority over the Faroese foreign and defence policy in Copenhagen, harmonized nicely with the new Cold War order, where Denmark could become an important player in a western defence alliance against the USSR. Further, the USA preferred that the Faroe Islands remained under Danish sovereignty and that the islands in that way became an integral part of the western military defence system (Johansen 1999: 20). It has recently been argued that the Danish authorities already during the negotiations about the Home Rule Act were aware of this growing strategic importance of the Faroe Islands and that they deliberately kept the topic in secret from the Faroese negotiators who were ignorant of and therefore unable to utilize the topic in the negotiations (Thorsteinsson 1999: 40-41). However, the assertion that the Danish state authorities already in 1947-48 – i.e. before Denmark in 1949 signed the NATO treaty – were aware of the post-war strategic importance of the Faroe Islands during the Cold War has been disputed (Jensen 2004: 28), but it is on the other hand a fact that independent of a subsequent Cold War context it was already in 1941 generally recognized, by the British as well as by the Norwegians, that the Faroe Islands already were strategically very important in modern warfare (Jensen 1972: 41-42). The result was, anyway, that Denmark had the sovereignty over the Faroe Islands and thus preserved the authority over the islands foreign and defence policy. Consequently, several passed proposals in the *Løgting*, e.g. in 1940 and in 1970, which demanded that the Faroe Islands should be neutral in relation to all military alliances, were not taken seriously by the Danish Government who according to the Home Rule Act had preserved the sovereignty over the Faroe Islands. Nor were the Faroese authorities asked, when the NATO treaty was implemented in the Faroe Islands in 1952 (Sølvará 2002: 321-23).

This international development subsequently paved the way for a strong case for a Faroese separatist critique of Denmark and the Home Rule Act. The Republican Party, whose leader was Erlendur Patursson, the son of the late Jóannes Patursson, who died on August 2, 80 years old, only some few weeks before the 1946 referendum, challenged the Home Rule System on many issues. The left wing Republican Party achieved growing acceptance in the economically turbulent 1950ies because of its strong opposition to the Danish authorities' implementation of the NATO treaty in the Faroes and its strong support for the demands from the Fishermen's Association, whose leader also was Erlendur Patursson (Sølvará 2002: 321-23). Furthermore, the republican left wing party also opposed the right wing politics of the Faroese Government, which during most of the 1950ies was led by Kristian Djurhuus from the Unionist Party. Particularly in the northern islands, where a convincing majority on September 14, 1946 had voted for separation (Sølvará 2013a: 16) and the fishing industry was particularly strong, the left wing policy of the new Republican Party evoked a response.

It was in this context that a Danish Doctor (Olaf Halvorsen) with a disputed Nazi past in Denmark during the Second World War was denied permanent occupation at the hospital in Klaksvík, the leading industrial city in the northern islands. The overwhelming majority of the citizens in the northern islands demonstrated in 1952-53 in favour of the very popular Danish doctor and against the central (hospital) authorities in Tórshavn who had employed a Faroese Doctor (Eivind Rubek Nielsen) who was related to the leading industrial family in Klaksvík (Sølvará 2013a: 10-52 and Sølvará 2014a: 10-44). Subsequently, this Faroese conflict, which originated in disputes between the leading city of the fishing industry in the north and the administrative capital in the south,⁸¹ on the discursive level was utilized by e.g. the Republican Party leader to construct a political conflict between Faroese

freedom fighters and oppressive Danish authorities.⁸² In fact, the Faroese authorities were reluctant to ask for help from the likewise reluctant Danish state authorities who would not interfere without an explicit request from the Faroese authorities.⁸³ Even at this late point in the mid 1950ies, when the strategic importance of the Faroe Islands for the western defence alliance had become obvious to everybody, the Danish authorities were so reluctant to interfere in the conflict that the political development, especially the agitation of the Faroese independence movement, was skeptically noted by the Americans, who would have preferred an earlier Danish political intervention – but they also noted that something ought be done to solve the deep economic crises in the Faroe Islands (Johansen 1999: 20-23). According to a subsequent Danish Court judgment in March 1956, this Danish reluctance to interfere against obvious lawlessness since March 1953 might also have weakened the perception among citizens in Klaksvík of what was acceptable (Sølvará 2013: 270). Thus, when the Danish state authorities responding to the Faroese Government request in late April 1955 and subsequently also in late September eventually did interfere with armed forces, warships with large numbers of police officers and dogs in Klaksvík, the way was paved to a construction of the conflict in relation to a national-political discourse, alien to the local Faroese origin, which made it escalate into an armed battle between citizens in Klaksvík and the Danish police force. This discursive national turn, which e.g. was made possible because of the context relating to the Danish police intervention, was even acknowledged in unionist circles in the Faroe Islands.

The local newspaper in Klaksvík, whose editor was a unionist, claimed in November 1955 that the Danish attempt to use Danish police officers in order to establish law and order in the city had mainly failed because of the existing “national opposition” in the Faroe Islands (*Norðlýsið*, November 25, 1955). The conclusion drawn by the editor

was that the only possible way to overcome the national opposition was to establish a Faroese police force to take care of the situation. However, at that time, bombs were already exploding in Klaksvík.

This Doctor-conflict basically originated in local Faroese disputes,⁸⁴ but cleverly utilized and contextualized in the backdrop of the independent minded majority in the north served in part to help the Republican Party gain acceptance in the Faroe Islands. In 1958, only 10 years after the foundation in the aftermath of the referendum in 1946, which nearly has gained a mythical political status among separatists in the Faroe Islands, the party became the largest in the north, and it has since been one of the four major political parties in the Faroe Islands.

This 'four big political party structure' still dominates the political landscape in the islands. The question of separation from Denmark has since been an important part of the political discourse in the Faroe Islands, but only occasionally has it played a tangible political role.⁸⁵

Interestingly, separatism still appears to be a mainly discursive subject in Faroese politics, but a main change is that separatism *also* has become a *positive* part of the political discourse.

Notes

- 1 Traditionally, it has been argued on the basis of preserved written sources originating from the 9th and 13th Century that the Faroe Islands were populated by Irish monks in the 8th Century and then by Norwegian Vikings in the 9th Century. However, recent archaeological excavations prove that the first (for now) known settlement in the Faroe Islands, whether it was of Irish, unknown to us or as later of Norwegian origin, must be regarded to have been in the 3-4th Century (Church and others 2013: 1-5).
- 2 V. U. Hammershaimb's and Jón Sigurðsson's etymological Faroese orthography of 1846, originally proposed by Professor Niels M. Petersen (Rasmussen 1997: 72), finally triumphed, but *Føringatíðindi*, which in the middle of the 1890ies had about 400 regular subscribers, was (only) occasionally spelled in accordance with Jakob Jakobsen's subsequent phonetic Faroese orthography. Texts in Faroese were published before the existence or establishment of any real Faroese orthography, e.g. the Gospel of Matthew in Jóhan Hendrik Schrøter's translation of 1823, which was distributed in 1200 copies to every household in the Faroe Islands (Matras (ed.) 1973: 12), but the Faroese rejected the translation (Debes 1969) since they were reluctant to accept a colloquial Faroese vernacular as the sacred biblical language (Matras (ed.) 1973: 12-16), probably because they were not accustomed with reading or even seeing printed Faroese language (Marnersdóttir and Sigurðardóttir 2011: 241). The first book in Faroese, H. C. Lyngbye's *Færøiske Qvæder*, Faroese ballads, which the Faroese - through oral traditions - already then were accustomed with in the Faroese vernacular, was only published in 1822. A more positive evaluation of the Faroese reception of the translation of Matthew is given in (Funding 2007: 53). *Føringatíðindi* was, on the other hand, first printed monthly and then twice a month for 12 years.
- 3 Tórður Jóansson appears to postpone the period in the history of printed Faroese language, where texts reached a broader audience (what Benedict Anderson calls print-language) into the 20th century, but in his argumentation he does not appear to draw attention to *Føringatíðindi* (Jóansson 2012: 203).
- 4 Hans Jensen claims in his study of the Danish Assemblies of the Estates of the Realm (*Donsku Stættatingunum*) in 1830-48, i.e. in the period preceding the constitution of 1849 that a Faroese demand for "home rule" (*selvstyre*) in the Danish Realm was put forward already in 1846 (Jensen, 1934: 607).

- 5 In the still unpublished protocols from the first sittings in the *Løgting*, which are preserved at the Faroese National Archives, it is stated that this proposal was passed with the votes 10-1 (*Forhandlings Protokol for Færøernes Løgting* 1874: 69), but the proposal was never accepted by the Danish authorities.
- 6 In some articles, I have compared ideological and religious impacts on the Faroe Islands and Iceland from abroad in the period 1850-1914/50 and there are significant differences, which in part can explain the various political and constitutional development of the countries (Sølvará 2005a, 2012b and 2015a).
- 7 As Michel Foucault stated: “People know what they do; frequently they know why they do what they do; but what they don’t know is what what they do does.” (In Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 187).
- 8 In a study of the Biblical birth stories of Jesus in Matthew and Luke, I have used a similar approach. This approach involves that the birth stories originated in a Hebrew-Judaic context, while they were written and interpreted in a different and later Greek-Roman linguistic and cultural context where Greek-Roman characteristics were added to the birth-story (Sølvará 2012a: e.g. 22, 139-41 and 150-52).
- 9 This traditional study of three political issues treated in the *Løgting* and *Rigsdag* that are connected to the political radicalization of the home rule dispute implies that broader social and economic issues regarding e.g. the social profile of the supporters of the political parties in the Faroe Islands and the development of the economic relations between Denmark and Faroe Islands, e.g. Danish subsidies, which are treated elsewhere (Steining 1953: 148-49; Skála 1992: 12; Wylie 1987: 158-61; Sølvará 2002: 135-47 and 187-91; Sølvará 2009: 200-19), are not dealt with in this traditional historical-political study.
- 10 Even the editor’s foreword to a publication of the minutes from Niels Neergaard’s first ministry of 1908-09 states that: “As far as the National Archives and the Prime Minister’s Office have been able to inform there doesn’t exist any ministerial protocol – either official or private – before 1908.” (Kaarsted 1975: 7). Hans Jacob Debes is also decided in his similar later verdicts (Debes 1982: 379-80; 1991: 154).
- 11 I owe Hermann Oskarsson my gratitude for making me aware of these important political diaries. These extensive diaries have not been included in my research on the Petition previous to this study.
- 12 Peter Adler Alberti, the official minister of the Faroe Islands, is, of course, mentioned in the Faroese newspapers in 1906, especially in relation to his speech in the Danish Parliament on March 23, 1906, where he, in office as minister of the Faroe Islands on behalf of the government, officially mentioned the Offer from the government (e.g. Sølvará 2013: 81-82), but in decisive sources he does not appear to have had any decisive role in the negotiations leading to the Offer of 1906 (e.g. Sølvará 2013: 47-48).
- 13 Quoted sources in this text are translated from the original language – see references – into English.
- 14 Anfinnur í Skála, unlike the other mentioned historians, does not refer to “the Government” in definite singular, but he refers to “Danish Ministers” in indefinite plural (Skála 1992: 12). It is a better

- interpretation of the word “man” in Steining (1953: 143), which is the indefinite plural, see note 15-17.
- 15 The unspecified Danish word “man”, which can refer to anyone, in the singular or plural, does not have a counterpart in English, but it is here for illustrative reasons translated with “they”. In the context it appears to be obvious that the reference is general or to a group of persons. The quote goes like this in Danish: “Efter Albertis fald understregede man stærkt dennes ansvar for regeringstilbudet”. A plain English translation of the Danish sentence would probably be worded like this: ”After the fall of Alberti, his responsibility for the government’s offer was strongly emphasized”.
 - 16 Nor in his lengthy (nearly 500 pages) diaries from the years 1900-09 is there any clue of a connection between the Alberti-scandal and the Offer, which is not even mentioned in the diaries (Andersen and Duedahl (ed.) 2006). It appears to be remarkable that there is no reference to the government meetings on March 6, 1906 and May 31, 1906, the only meetings, where the Offer is mentioned, when J. C. Christensen usually refers to government meetings in his diaries. On the other hand, J. C. Christensen did not write in the diary every day and the election to the Danish Parliament on May 29, 1906 might have caught his attention. However, there are comments in the diaries on March 5 and May 28, 1906.
 - 17 In 1958, Jørgen Steining used the more specifying expression, “they ... in Denmark” – i.e. “when Alberti had fallen in 1908, in Denmark they could easily lay the whole responsibility of the government’s offer on him”. The quote goes like this in Danish: “da Alberti var faldet I 1908, kunne man roligt i Danmark lægge hele skylden for regeringstilbudet på ham” (Steining 1958: 238). This specification in 1958 can explain why later Faroese historians may have thought with good reason that Jørgen Steining was referring to the Danish Government. A discussion of how this very improbable story of the Danish Government’s accusations against Alberti became part of Faroese historiography is in (Sølvará 2011). However, in 1953 Jørgen Steining later in the text explicitly referred to Oliver Effersøe’s accusations in 1909 and to Svend Høgsbro’s defence of Alberti (Steining 1953: 146-148), which is overlooked in my article from 2011. In this context, Jørgen Steining also mentioned that Oliver Effersøe in his critique of “Alberti’s Offer” already in 1906 got support from the “Danish Press” and “in the *Folketing*”, but he only mentions the subject of Alberti’s responsibility for the Offer in context with Oliver Effersøe’s attack in March 1909. This appears to imply that Jørgen Steining in 1953 with the Danish word “man” did refer to Oliver Effersøe, but it would have been a strange and misleading expression if he *only* intended to refer to Oliver Effersøe. However, if Jørgen Steining gives his readers the impression that members of “the *Folketing*”, i.e. Svend Høgsbro and J. C. Christensen, in 1909, apart from having doubted and finally withdrawing the Offer from the Danish Government of 1906 rejected by the Faroese voters, also subsequently gave Alberti the responsibility for the origin and content of the offer, which I believe is conceivable to extract from his text (1953: 146),

- he appears to have supported the creation of the myth. On the other hand, he might with the word “man” only have referred to the attacks of Oliver Effersøe and the supporting Danish Press, but when he in the same context mentions “the *Folketing*”, and only reports from the discussion in the *Folketing* in March 1909, where two ministers of the former government, Svend Høgsbro and J. C. Christensen, apart from Oliver Effersøe were the only participants, it is obvious to conclude that he also refers to them; but, they didn’t accuse Peter Alberti of anything; if anything, they defended him.
- 18 With an explicit reference (in the committee of 1918) to a speech of Jóannes Patursson from 1906, where he only had referred to “the Government”, Oliver Effersøe even presented the false argument that Jóannes Patursson in relation to the Offer in 1906 had contacted “the Minister of Justice” and that they agreed on the Offer. Curiously, Oliver Effersøe in the report on the Offer to the *Løgting* in 1906 referred to the same speech of Jóannes Patursson from 1906, but this time he only referred to Jóannes Patursson’s negotiations with “the Government” (Sølvará 2011: 27-28 and note 33 in the same article).
- 19 The complete text is reprinted in (Sølvará 2013: 47-48). The word “legislation” is only used once in the letter – actually the last word in the letter – and not as a part of the Offer. The word is only mentioned at the end of the letter in relation to the forthcoming election as a request to those who run for the *Løgting* to express their opinions before the voters on “the influence that the members of the *Løgting* think that the *Løgting* should have on the country’s legislation.” This is not presented as a promise from the government and neither does the wording imply legislative power to the *Løgting*. It is only presented as a request to the forthcoming parliamentarians to express their views on the issue of the “influence” that the *Løgting* in their opinion should have on the country’s specific legislation.
- 20 It appears to be symptomatic that the word “legislation”, when it is used by Jóannes Patursson in this context, does not refer to a qualitatively new ability of the *Løgting*, but only to a quantitative ‘extension’ of something that the *Løgting* previously had. In light of the fact that it only had consultative power it appears to be obvious that this only means ‘an extension of the *Løgting*’s consultative power’. Otherwise it is difficult to see precisely what powers of the *Løgting* were to be “extended” (In 1906, the *Løgting* had the mandate to consider proposals on laws on Faroese matters that the government *chose* to put before the *Løgting*, but home rule supporters wanted the government to be *obliged* to request the *Løgting* to consider *every* proposal on laws on Faroese matters before they were made law; a proposal that the Home Rule Party accepted in the *Løgting* in 1922). This even appears to be the case in an anonymous article in *Tingakrossur* on April 11, 1906, which might have been written by Jóannes Patursson, where it is stated that it was up to “us” to decide “how large” – “*stor*” is the quantitative Danish word – “legislative authority”, the *Løgting* should have (Sølvará 2013: 81). Even if in this article – as it does in other articles – there does not appear to be any limitation of how large a legislative authority

the *Løgting* could achieve, a quantitative interpretation of the article appears to be supported by the fact that previously in the article, a new qualitative distinction between local Faroese and Danish state matters had already been made. However, even if this anonymous article might have been written by Jóannes Patursson, it can't be taken that seriously on the source level and in the tangible context, but it might have had an influence on the discursive level.

- 21 The point is that Oliver Effersøe claimed that Jóannes Patursson's perception of the Offer changed during the electoral campaign. Further, the references are all from the period before the government's letter with the official Offer of June 1, 1906, which allegedly comprised a quite different Offer than Jóannes Patursson's, was made known in the Faroe Islands on June 13, 1906 (Sølvará 2013: 52-53).
- 22 Jørgen Steining is not explicitly referring to Alberti's speech in the Danish Parliament on October 25, 1906, but the whole context implies without any doubt that it is to this speech that he is referring.
- 23 The relevant passage of the speech on May 5, 1906 is published in (Sølvará 2013: 65-66).
- 24 Jørgen Steining states: "Alberti had surely claimed that Patursson's interpretation did not correspond to the offer given by him" and then without any pause he refers correctly to the rest of the speech of October 25, 1906 (Steining 1953: 146). As far as I know, Alberti has only commented on the Offer three times in his role as the minister of the Faroe Islands: in speeches in *Folketinget* on March 23 and October 25, 1906 and in the letter from the government of June 1, 1906 (Sølvará 2013: 52-53, 63-64 and 79-80). In this context, only the remarks of June 1 and October 25, 1906, which were given after Jóannes Patursson's vital letter to the *Løgting* of May 12, 1906, are relevant. In *Folketinget* on October 25, 1906, Alberti explicitly defended Jóannes Patursson and *never* mentioned any discrepancy between the government's Offer and the Offer presented to the *Løgting* by Jóannes Patursson. Nor did Alberti, as Hans Jacob Debes correctly comments, in the letter from the government to the *Løgting* of June 1, 1906 correct any passage in Jóannes Patursson's description of the Offer (Debes 1982: 298). It is difficult to verify Jørgen Steining's information of Alberti's corrections to Jóannes Patursson's Offer.
- 25 The idea of an annual Danish state subsidy could have come from the annual Danish state subsidy, which Iceland got from the state in the period 1871-1918, but Jóannes Patursson does not appear to make that connection. However, in a speech in Tórshavn on April 22, 1906 he mentioned that Iceland was granted subsidies on the Danish state budget, but the context seems to be that the Faroese annual state subsidy would not exclude other occasional grants on the Danish state budget (Sølvará 2013: 86).
- 26 This, of course, does not mean that home rule supporters never interpreted the Offer in a brighter perspective than it was originally intended (Sølvará 2013: 69 and 81-82), but as Hans Jacob Debes points out, it was especially the opponents who exaggerated the content of the Offer (Debes 1982: 299)

- 27 The home rule question was obviously a part of the Faroese political context of 1906, but *Færøsk Politik* was apparently also part of a political discourse that extended the empirical political history of the Faroe Islands. Jákup Thorsteinsson has pointed out that on some points the pamphlet is on the edge of establishing political myths (Thorsteinsson 2014: 431) and Hans Jensen points out that Jóannes Patursson gives a misleading historical impression of the position of Danish authorities to Faroese home rule (Jensen 1934, 607 note 1). Her I am only referring to the sole question of extended Faroese home rule, which was an established part of the Faroese political context of the Offer in 1906.
- 28 Jóannes Patursson claimed that in 1903 he had sent a copy of *Færøsk Politik* to the members of the Folketing (Sølvará 2013: 71), which would have included Alberti, who was elected already in 1892.
- 29 According to the diaries of J. C. Christensen who was with the Danish King on this trip to the Faroe Islands and Iceland, Jóannes Patursson after the dinner on board the ship on July 25, 1907 beforehand had shown him the speech and had asked for comments. J. C. Christensen writes in his diary that the speech was diffuse, but contained some good parts. Jóannes Patursson avoided the words "Denmark" and "Native Land" and instead used e.g. the expression "the Kingdom of Denmark". J. C. Christensen advised Jóannes Patursson to preserve the speech just as it was, but only add a new sentence at the end of the speech that stated that "the Faroese were Danish and would remain to be Danish, then the speech would be good". Jóannes Patursson promised to do so and according to J. C. Christensen's comments in his diary on July 26, 1907, Jóannes Patursson did add a sentence to the speech in the way he had advised him to do and everything went very well (Andersen and Duedahl (ed.) 2006: 342-43). This sentence is apparently not added to the printed version of the speech (e.g. Sølvará 2013: 218-20). However, in the official greeting from the *Løgting* to the new Danish King, Frederik VIII, dated May 19, 1906, which also Jóannes Patursson had signed, the expression "strengthen the love to ... the Common Native Land" (det Fælles Fædreland) is used about Denmark in the text (Sølvará 2014: 243).
- 30 Among Niels Th. Neergaard's documents at the National Archive in Copenhagen (Sølvará 2014: 466), there are also extensive source material and documents on the Icelandic question in 1908-09, e.g. the above mentioned document written by Knud Berlin, where the Faroe Islands also are mentioned.
- 31 The unionists wanted to preserve the status quo, but Jóannes Patursson alluded on April 22, 1906 that if the Faroese voters rejected the Offer then there was no need for the *Løgting*, which would be abolished and the Faroe Islands would be an integrated part of Denmark (Sølvará 2013: 69). This was, of course, incorrect, which also was pointed out by the Minister of Justice (Sølvará 2013: 80), but just as the unionists warned against the Offer, the home rule supporter warned against rejecting the Offer.
- 32 Interestingly, they – or at least Rasmus Rasmussen – appear to have agreed with the request on February 14, 1917, but when Jóannes

Patursson on behalf of the 8 – number 9, Edward Mortensen, was in Copenhagen – elected members of the Home Rule Party in a letter to the *Løgting* on March 20, 1917, put forward the same request, they apparently had both changed their minds (Sølvará 2013: 104). Apparently, Jóannes Patursson wrote letters to the *Løgting* on behalf of all the Home Rule Party members of the *Løgting* without consulting them. However, he might have had reasons to think that they still supported the request. In the diary of Rasmus Rasmussen it is stated that he supported the request to have the *Løgting* summoned to deal with the question of having ships sailing between the Faroe Islands and America (Rasmussen, Diary, March, 6, 1917), but unfortunately he was not at the meeting on March 18, 1917, when the *Framburðsfelag* unanimously agreed to support Home Rule Party members of the *Løgting* in their claim to summon the *Løgting*. The situation was, of course, changed on March 20, 1917, but Jóannes Patursson might have had good reasons to think that Rasmus Rasmussen still supported the previous claim to have the *Løgting* summoned to deal with the subject.

33 According to the diary of Rasmus Rasmussen, Andreas Ziska at the tumultuous meeting in *Havnar Framburðsfelag* on March 22, 1917, had compared the two Petitions of March 6 and 18 and had emphasized the similarities between them: “The *Framburðsfelag* sent the [first (ed.)] Petition to the Consul. Exactly the same was the case now.” This is confirmed in the minutes from the meeting in the *Framburðsfelag* on March 17, 1917, where it is mentioned that Andreas Ziska had brought a proposal before the *Framburðsfelag* about “collecting signatures throughout the Faroe Islands to send to the British Consul regarding free sailing passage for the Faroese from Iceland” (*Gerðabók fyri Havnar Framburðsfelag 1905-1919*, March 17, 1917). Rasmus Rasmussen, who interestingly does not mention the meeting in the *Havnar Framburðsfelag* on March 17, 1917 in his diary, comments on the other hand in his diary on March 22, 1917 on this subsequent comparison of Andreas Ziska of the two Petitions: “The Consul would, of course, first ask the County”, he writes about the first Petition and then adds self confidently: “I knew that.” Then he writes about the second Petition: “This times something quite different is the case. A Petition to the British Government, which nobody can interfere in.” (Rasmussen, Diary, March 22, 1917). However, Rasmus Rasmussen’s description of the words of Andreas Ziska at the meeting in the *Havnar Framburðsfelag* on March 22, 1917 appears to imply that the petitioners – just as with the first Petition – already on March 22, 1917 also intended to seek the help of the Consul in Tórshavn in relation to the second Petition. This is also verified in the minutes from the previous meeting in the *Havnar Framburðsfelag* on March 17, 1917, which Rasmus Rasmussen for some reason does not mention in his diary. Furthermore, the subsequent development proved – in explicit contradiction to the suspicion of Rasmus Rasmussen – that they also did so. I.e., that the petitioners neither intended nor later attempted to send the second Petition *directly* to the British Government, as Rasmus Rasmussen had suspected according to his diary of March 22, 1917, but that they

- intended and used exactly the same procedures – accepted by Rasmus Rasmussen at the meeting in *Havnar Framburðsfelag* on March 6, 1917 – as the ones used in relation to the first Petition. In this context, it is difficult to see why Rasmus Rasmussen took an opposite position to the second Petition.
- 34 Rasmus Rasmussen often comments on the Petition in his diary, but interestingly he does not comment anything from the important meeting in the *Havnar Framburðsfelag* on March 17, 1917, when he argued against the Petition. He does not either comment on the meeting on March 18, 1917, when he did not participate, or explains why he had not participated. On the other hand, there are extensive comments from the meeting on March 6, 1917 and a tumultuous meeting on March 22, 1917 – note 37.
- 35 Of course, the committee who had a typed transcript from 1919 of e.g. the essential passage in the minutes from the meeting on March 18, 1917 had to accept this as a fact, but the committee majority accused the petitioners for originally of having intended to force the *Løgting* to accept the Petition – only for political separatist reasons (*Beretning* 1919: 21). However, it is interesting that the original handwritten minutes at the National Archives in Tórshavn, which the committee had not gained access to, appear to have an original wording where it is not explicitly mentioned that the Petition should be sent through the *Løgting*, but only an addition, “through the *Løgting*”, inserted between the original lines explicitly states that. However, at the same meeting in the *Havnar Framburðsfelag* it was unanimously accepted to support Home Rule Party members of the *Løgting* in their efforts to have the *Løgting* summoned to deal with the issue. In this context, there can be no doubt about the intention of the petitioners. The original minutes can be seen and are discussed in (Sølvará 2014: 142 and 425-26).
- 36 See note 32.
- 37 In his diaries Rasmus Rasmussen writes from a tumultuous meeting in *Havnar Framburðsfelag* on March 22, 1917, which was about his support to the the poster from the *Vorunenvod* of March 21, 1917, that he (i.e. “Rasmus”) “doubted, but did not take distance.” According to Rasmus Rasmussen, Jóannes Patursson was “sad” (*forharmaður*) about his support to the poster and had accused him of “illoyal” and “subversive” (*landsskaðiligt*) activities (Rasmussen, Diary, March 22, 1917). In the minutes from this meeting in *Havnar Framburðsfelag*, it is only stated that Rasmus Rasmussen had “signed” the poster, but even if the text in the diary does not explicitly states what he had “doubted” about, the context appears to indicate that what he was doubtful about was his support to the poster.
- 38 This appears to be misunderstood by Danish historians who have dealt with the subject recently. In an interpretation of the correspondence between the petitioners and Island, they claim that the advice “Ask in London ... from Iceland was repeated so often and so clearly that the impression was that it was added with invisible ink: if you, the Faroese, apply on your own in London and in your own name – i.e. that you, like us, bypass Denmark – then the British will look more mildly at

your situation and applications, because a separation from Denmark of strategic important islands in the North Atlantic will on several fields be in Great Britain's interest, and thereby a continual strong blockade of Denmark is legalised" (Wählin and others 1994: 77-78). No quotes or references supporting this view are in the text, but it is quite interesting that the President of the *Althing* on March 26, 1917 in explicit contradiction with this advised Jóannes Patursson to solve the problem with support from the *Danish Ambassador* in London. The President of the *Althing* advised petitioners to use the Danish authorities.

- 39 The Petition of March 18, 1917 refers to the year 1809, but the year is 1808 (Jakobsen 1966: 154-57).
- 40 The Danish Ambassador in London is not explicitly mentioned in these texts, but it is obvious that both texts refer to Jakop Jakobsen's book on Nólsoyar Páll from 1912, where it explicitly is referred to this matter and the important help from Wolff, the Danish Consul in London (Jakobsen: 1966: 156-58). Jóannes Patursson is actually quoting Jakob Jakobsen's (in 1918) recent book on this specific matter in his first interrogation before the Investigative Committee on December 13, 1918 (*Bilag V* 1919: 176-77).
- 41 He also mentions Kristin í Geil, the editor of *Tingakrossur*, but even if he occasionally participated in the meetings of the *Havnar Framburðsfelag* in March-April 1917, he does not appear to have played any significant role regarding the Petition. Rasmus Rasmussen claims in his diary that neither separatism nor plain ignorance – the two possibilities mentioned in the Danish newspapers – were the motives behind the Petition, but the second possibility was more accurate. The true story was, he argues, that the Petition was an attempt from Kristin í Geil and Andreas Ziska to hit him, i.e. Rasmus Rasmussen, and Simun Pauli úr Konoy, respectively Secretary and Chair of the Faroese Fishermen's Association, because they had been against their proposal to use money from the Fishermen's Association to finance a newspaper supporting the local Labour Union in Tórshavn (Rasmussen, Diaries, June 10, 1917). It is very difficult to believe that the motives behind the Petition could have been that dubious and personal, but that is what Rasmus Rasmussen claims in a subsequent comment in his diary. Later on he comments from a conversation with Jóannes Patursson regarding the Investigative Committee that he perceived the Petition to be a naive attempt from home rule politicians to gain acceptance from the Faroese people for the politics of the Home Rule Party (Rasmussen, Diaries, January 8, 1919).
- 42 See note 41.
- 43 The committee said that the *Amtmaður* on March 23, 1917 received a telegram from the Icelandic Government to a previous request on the possibility of getting supplies from Iceland (*Beretning* 1919: 37-38). The poster from the *Voruneyvndin* of March 21, 1917 may have referred to ongoing telegraphic correspondence between the *Amtmaður* and the Icelandic Government. However, even if the above-mentioned telegram from the Icelandic Government explicitly mentioned that the precondition was that the British Government allowed Iceland to

re-export supplies from America to the Faroe Islands, nothing appears to have been done with that question – probably, because Iceland had no supplies at that time. Therefore, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs informed, negotiations between the Danish and British Governments on this subject only began after and because of the Petition of April 17, 1917.

44 See note 33.

45 Interestingly, the *Amtmaður* acknowledged to the Investigative Committee of 1918-19, that in the report to the Ministry of Justice of April 18, 1917 “I explicitly say ... that it does not matter if they try the Consul, he is afraid now, and he does not dare to do anything” (Jeg siger udtrykkelig ... at det gør intet, hvis man forsøger Konsulen, han er bange nu, og han tør ikke gøre noget (*Bilag V* 1919: 358). The latter part seems to be a subsequent view that is not mentioned in the report. Neither does it correspond with the recommendations that the *Amtmaður* gave the Consul in February-March 1917.

46 In Andreas Ziska’s letter of April 13, 1917 the role of Edward Mortensen is intended to be central in the negotiations with the authorities – whether Danish or British is not specified (Sølvará 2013: 151). The committee suspected that Jóannes Patursson in a telegram to Edward Mortensen on March 27, 1917 had tried to convince the latter to go to London with the Petition as a kind of Faroese Ambassador (*Beretning* 1919: 18), but the context clearly suggests that Mortensen had intended to travel to London with acceptance from and on behalf of the Danish Government (Sølvará 2014: 153 ff).

47 The Danish parliamentarian Vanggaard from the opposition (*Vestre*) mentioned the Petition and the *Amtmaður*’s questions to C. Th. Zahle in the *Folketing* on October 27, 1917. Interestingly, he does not appear to have got the impression from the *Amtmaður*’s letter and questions that the petitioners “tried” to send the Petition directly to British authorities. Vanggaard only stated, that the petitioners had “intended to send [the Petition] directly to the British Government or in any case it was addressed directly to the British Government” (*Rigsdagstidende* 1917: 1202-03). Even their alleged “intention” to send the Petition directly to the British Government is only mentioned as a possibility.

48 In a short introduction to the (four) questions, the *Amtmaður* claimed that the Petition, which was addressed to the British Government, according to the political agitation in the Faroes was important, supported by the Danish Government and either sent directly from the Faroes or through the Danish Government. Without explicitly taking a stand as to the validity of the two mentioned possibilities, C. Th. Zahle answered that it was “objectionable and useless” of Danish citizens in relation to the relevant purpose to try to send a request to a foreign state’s government bypassing the right Danish state authorities. However, C. Th. Zahle also stated that it was “not correct to talk about a Petition to the British Government, when such a Petition never came to exist”. Further, he said that when the request was presented to the government, it was supported by the government. (*Bilag A* 1919: 33-36).

49 The *Amtmaður* in *Dimmalætting* is quoted as saying “that there were

made attempts to send the Petition in two ways before it eventually was sent to our government.” (*Dimmalætting*, September 5, 1917). There were no official minutes taken of the debate in the *Løgting*, but it is worth noting that this unofficial rendering of Rytter’s words in the newspaper that supported the Unionist Party does not even imply that the petitioners had tried to send the Petition ‘directly’ to the British Government. The very odd and elusive wording might on the other hand be constructed to allude to that they had tried.

- 50 The subject came up in the Danish Parliament on October 29, 1917. The occasion appeared to be that the *Amtmaður*, according to Edward Mortensen in the debate in the *Løgting* on September 1, 1917 with reference to his confidential report to the Ministry of Justice of April 18, 1917 had stated that the petitioners had tried to send the Petition “directly to British authorities” (*Rigsdagstidende* 1917: 1339). However, even the Investigative Committee acknowledged that the *Amtmaður* at this late point in the *Løgting* had not mentioned the British Consul (*Beretning* 1919: 53). No official minutes of the discussion in the *Løgting* had been taken. However, according to some unofficial minutes printed in the Faroese newspapers (*Dimmalætting* September 5, 1917) it appears only to have been by coincidence that the *Amtmaður* had mentioned this. This appears to imply that the statement was only intended to be used in a later occasional political discussion in the *Løgting* – it was obviously not an official complaint to the Danish Government or at all intended to anyone in the political system in Denmark. The context was that the *Amtmaður* had used the above-mentioned questions from the *Amtmaður* to the Ministry of Justice on July 23, 1917 and the answer from the Ministry of Justice of August 18, 1917, which were presented in the *Løgting* on September 3, 1917, in an obviously unplanned discussion in the *Løgting* on September 1, 1917. Edward Mortensen who was in the *Løgting* at that time had requested the *Amtmaður* to give him a transcript of his confidential report to the Ministry of Justice of April 18, 1917, but the *Amtmaður* had refused. However, Edward Mortensen challenged the *Amtmaður*’s allegations two months later in the Folketing (October 29, 1917). He also claimed that in the Faroe Islands he had positive evidence that the petitioners had never intended or tried to bypass the Danish authorities (It was only at this occasion that the *Amtmaður* on November 3, 1917 wrote a report to C. Th. Zahle and told him about the above-mentioned conversation he had with the British Consul on June 24, 1917). The occasion was that a parliamentarian from the Danish opposition, Vanggaard, in *Folketinget* had mentioned the Petition that the petitioners had “intended to send directly to the British Government or in any case it was addressed directly to the British Government”. Vanggaard used the occasion to thank the Danish Government for the clear answer to the *Amtmaður* (*Rigsdagstidende* 1917: 1202-03). This whole debate was based on the positive comment to the Prime Minister from the member of the Danish parliamentarian opposition. However, when Andras Samuelsen, the other Faroese member of the Danish Parliament, on December 17, 1917 in the *Landsting* also referred to the *Amtmaður*’s

accusations in the *Løgting*, Edward Mortensen in the *Folketing* on December 19, 1917 repeated his unconditional defence of the Petition (*Rigsdagstidende* 1917: 2173). The petitioners reprinted Edward Mortensen's answer in their newspaper, *Tingakrossur* on February 6, 1918. This motivated the *Amtmaður* for the first time in writing to declare in *Dimmalætting* on February 8, 1918 that he in the *Løgting* on September 1, 1917 "had said" that the petitioners "had tried to bypass the Danish authorities, and that attempts had been made to send the mentioned Petition on two [different] routes, before they contacted the Danish Government in Copenhagen". It is interesting that the *Amtmaður* still does not mention anything specific about the two routes. However, even if the first sentence in this elusive quote does not refer to the Danish "Government", it might imply that either of the two routes referred to the British Consul. In the original context of September 1, 1917 – note 49 – the "two routes" that are not specified by the *Amtmaður* might as well have referred to 1) the indirect way through the *Løgting* (which actually appears to have been the context in the *Løgting* – *Dimmalætting* September 5, 1917 – and the perception of Edward Mortensen in the *Folketing* on December 19, 1917 – *Rigsdagstidende* 1917: 2173) and 2) the likewise indirect way through the Danish Ambassador in London, which also appears to be in accord with the *Amtmaður's* later wording. That the *Amtmaður* with either of the "two routes" could have referred to the British Consul actually appears to be questioned by the fact that the British Consul is not mentioned at all by Vanggaard who started the debate on the Petition in the *Folketing* on October 27, 1917 (*Rigsdagstidende* 1917: 1202). Or for that matter in this whole debate in the *Folketing* in relation to the Petition of March 18, 1917. This is strange in light of the fact that in the debate in the *Folketing* on October 27 and 29, 1917 the accusations of the *Amtmaður* in the *Løgting* on September 1, 1917 were explicitly referred to. In fact, the *Amtmaður's* "two routes" accusation of September 1, 1917, which later Danish historians explicitly have connected to the debate in the Danish Parliament in October–December 1917 (Wählin and others 1994: 115–116), is never mentioned at all in the whole debate. Further, even the *Amtmaður's* wording of February 8, 1918, i.e. that the petitioners tried to send the Petition on two routes "before" they contacted the Danish Government in Copenhagen, appears to exclude the British Consul, because he was contacted *after* the Petition was telegraphed to the Danish Ambassador in London and to Edward Mortensen in Copenhagen who even beforehand had informed leading members of the Danish Government. The rest is as argued above only formalities. Anyway, it is evident that no one in the political system appears to have connected the apparently well-known accusations of the *Amtmaður* in the *Løgting* on September 1, 1917 to the British Consul. Not even Andras Samuelsen, the Unionist Party member of the Danish Parliament and hard opponent of the Petition, who was present in the *Løgting* on September 1, 1917 and participated in the debate, made this connection when he explicitly referred to these accusations of the *Amtmaður* in an official speech in the Danish

Parliament on December 17, 1917 (*Rigsdagstidende* 1918: 627). The only reasonable explanation appears to be that the *Amtmaður* in the *Løgting* on September 1, 1917 never explicitly accused the petitioners of having tried to send the Petition to the British Government through the British Consul, which appears to be the most likely explanation. Alternatively, if he had accused them of it, which appears less likely, that none of the opponents of the Petition paid any attention to it. However, regardless of which possibility we prefer, it follows that the relevant Danish state authorities (the Danish Parliament or the Danish Government) did not at that time act upon the accusations – whether general or specific – against the petitioners of having tried to bypass Danish authorities. This was of course understandable when the only information about the *Amtmaður*'s rather unspecified and elusive accusations against the petitioners came from unofficial minutes and channels from an occasional debate in the *Løgting* on September 1, 1917. Further, the government as well as the opposition then appeared to regard the Petition to be a closed case (*Rigsdagstidende* 1917: 1202-1204). Even if the *Amtmaður* was right in his subsequent accusations regarding intentions and acts of the petitioners, the Petition was in the meantime transmitted through the Danish Government. Therefore, when a challenged and provoked *Amtmaður* eventually in a letter to C. Th. Zahle for the first time in writing on November 3, 1917 informed him about his conversation with the British Consul on June 24, 1917, this did not cause the Danish Government to act against the petitioners. However, according to the *Amtmaður*, who in talks with C. Th. Zahle in autumn 1917 apparently had not even mentioned the Petition (*Bilag V* 1919: 45-49), it was only C. Th. Zahle's reluctance to support him officially and in the *Folketing* to correct Edward Mortensen that brought matters to a head (*Bilag V* 1919: 49 ff). In other words, it was not the Petition of April 17, 1917, which according to the *Amtmaður* by then was "out of the world", that was the *Amtmaður*'s subsequent problem, but his problem was C. Th. Zahle's alleged lack of political support to him in November 1917. It was this that eventually brought matters to a head. Consequently, as 1918 approached, his focus narrowed and simultaneously changed from the petitioners to C. Th. Zahle and his lack of support. In the Faroese public, the accusations of the "two routes" appears to have been so elusive that the petitioners as late as March 20, 1918 found it necessary in *Tingakrossur* to ask the *Amtmaður*: "Which were those ways?" (*Sølvará* 2013: 141). This question eventually challenged and motivated the *Amtmaður* to ask the British Consul to explain the content of the conversation of the previous year, which he did, but – see later in main text – without explicitly confirming the accusations of the *Amtmaður*. However, by then the political context (of the Petition) was about to change from local Faroese to Danish state politics and the Faroese Petition accordingly had achieved increased importance in relation to Danish politics.

51 This also appears to follow from the fact that the *Amtmaður* in this letter to C. Th. Zahle of November 3, 1917 only "assumed" that the reason for the Consul's rejection of the Petition was that "he had become

afraid of interfering in Faroese politics” (*Bilag A* 1919: 39). Further, the *Amtmaður* already *knew* from a letter from the Consul of March 23, 1917 on the previous Petition that he would not “interfere except perhaps in compliance with your clearly expressed wish.” (*Bilag A* 1919: 28). The *Amtmaður* apparently needed an explanation of the fact that the Consul did not transmit a Petition, which only was “delivered” to him, to the British Government. However, the accusation against the petitioners would have been even weaker if he had told C. Th. Zahle that it was commonly known that the Consul would not transmit any request to the British Government without the *Amtmaður*’s clear recommendation, which the Consul in an official letter of March 23, 1917 had written to him.

52 Jóannes Patursson voluntarily stated to the committee that “I owe to add that the sentence: “We expect your ... “, was added by me” (*Bilag V* 1919: 242). Interestingly, the committee in the majority report referred to this information from Jóannes Patursson by concluding that Jóannes Patursson had “confessed” that he had added this sentence, which “once and for all has impaled him tight to this attempt to have the Petition despatched bypassing the Danish authorities” (*Beretning* 1919: 33 and 91). It is difficult to comprehend that Jóannes Patursson would have voluntarily given the committee information that could finally implicate him in such irregularities as the committee tries to prove by giving the impression that Jóannes Patursson only reluctantly gave the committee this information.

53 See note 50.

54 *Ibid.*

55 The petitioners’ subsequent claims in public political debates in the Faroe Islands of the decisive importance of the Petition were obviously questioned by and also annoyed the *Amtmaður*, but they were in 1919 confirmed towards the committee by the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Sølvará 2014: 353).

56 Interestingly, the historians previously in the text appear to have accepted the authenticity of this letter (Wählin and others 1994: 103), which was never disputed by the majority of the committee, but the committee expressed the suspicion that Edward Mortensen might have given Jóannes Patursson or the petitioners misleading information from the Danish Government (*Beretning* 1919: 29-30). The committee’s copy of the original letter was as mentioned above officially verified by the relevant Danish authorities in Tórshavn on December 31, 1918 (Sølvará 2013: 146, n 40). Andreas Ziska also referred to the content of the letter in an article dated April 6, 1918, printed in *Tingakrossur* April 10, 1918, i.e. before the committee of July 5, 1918 (*Tingakrossur* April 10, 1918; see also *Beretning* 1919: 28).

57 For a discussion of the authenticity of the letter from Mortensen to Patursson, see (Sølvará 2014: 430-32).

58 In spite of the comment in the corner of the letter of March 26, 1917 from Andreas Ziska to Edward Mortensen, which stated that Edward Mortensen had telegraphed to Jóannes Patursson (Sølvará 2014: 167), the committee suspected this telegram of April 5, 1917 to be a solely

informative telegram, which answered a different letter from Jóannes Patursson. According to the committee's hypothesis, this telegram was only an answer to a simple question from Jóannes Patursson on the address of the Danish Ambassador in London, while Edward Mortensen never answered the letter from Andreas Ziska on the question of the possibility to send the Petition directly to the Danish Ambassador in London: "To the committee, which does not have any authentic knowledge of Mr. Patursson's letter, it had to be striking that Mr. Mortensen no direct answer has given to *Ziska's* clear and straight question, if there was anything wrong in sending the Petition to the Danish Ambassador, but that he instead simply sent the Ambassador's address and sent it to *Mr. Patursson*." (*Beretning* 1919: 23-24). The telegram of April 5, 1917 was not a positive response to the explicit question of the possibility to send the Petition to the Danish Ambassador in London, referred to in the letter from Andreas Ziska to Edward Mortensen of March 26, 1917, but only neutral information on the address of the Danish Ambassador in London (*Beretning* 1919: 23-25). Therefore, the committee argued, when Jóannes Patursson on April 17, 1917 sent the Petition to the Ambassador in London, he had not received any kind of confirmation from the Danish Government. The committee's majority reached this conclusion without even mentioning the comment in the upper left corner of the letter of March 26, 1917, which was in the committee's archive. Of course, we can't prove that the comment means that Edward Mortensen explicitly answered Jóannes Patursson on the exact question in the letter from Andreas Ziska, but we may conclude that the telegram to Jóannes Patursson at least related to a similar content as the one in the letter from Andreas Ziska. Otherwise, the comment on the letter from him would be difficult to explain. In addition, the fact that Edward Mortensen in the telegram of April 5, 1917 also asked Jóannes Patursson to telegraph to him when the Petition was sent to the Danish Ambassador in London explicitly appears to contradict the committee's majority hypothesis of a solely informative telegram, but the committee's majority report elegantly chose to refrain from commenting on this decisive latter part of the telegram. It is difficult to explain this latter part of the telegram as anything else than a confirmation of a question similar to the one put forward in the letter of March 26, 1917 from Andreas Ziska. Anyway, it could not be expected that an extensive answer from Edward Mortensen could have been given in a short telegram as the committee's majority report apparently expected. Furthermore, the extensive letter from Edward Mortensen to Andreas Ziska of April 8, 1917 in which an indirect authorization from the Danish Government to send the Petition to the Danish Ambassador in London was given directly appears to falsify the speculative hypothesis in the committee's majority report. This letter, which apparently in terms of the majority's report was 'non-existent', was mentioned later in the committee's report, but in another context (*Beretning* 1919: 29). The committee's previous speculations of the peculiarity in the fact that Edward Mortensen answered *Jóannes Patursson* without even requesting him to inform

Andreas Ziska could also easily have been explained by this letter. In the letter of April 8, 1917 Edward Mortensen actually gave a “direct answer” to Andreas Ziska’s “clear and straight question” in the letter of March 26, 1917 and wrote on the upper left corner of letter from Andreas Ziska that he had already (April 5, 1917) telegraphed to Jóannes Patursson. Moreover, the letter from Jóannes Patursson to Edward Mortensen that allegedly only contained a simple question of the Danish Ambassador’s address in London, on whose existence the committee’s majority hypothesis was logically dependent upon, was never more than just a hypothetical letter. Neither would the existence of such letter explain the important latter part of the telegram from Edward Mortensen to Jóannes Patursson of April 5, 1917. This tendency to develop different and dubious hypothesis based on isolated material, independent of later acquired material, appears to have been part of the strategy of the committee. The letters from Edward Mortensen to Jóannes Patursson of April 2 and 5, 1917, which the committee never received, would (if the copies are reliable) directly falsify the hypothesis of the committee (Sølvará 2013: 146-48). The *existence* of the letter from Edward Mortensen to Jóannes Patursson of April 2, 1917, where he first (according to the copy) promised to telegraph the address of the Danish Ambassador to the latter and gave him permission to send the Petition to the Ambassador in London and also promised to contact Erik Scavenius on the petitioners’ request, is verified in a letter from Edward Mortensen to Andreas Ziska on April 2, 1917, which is in the committee’s archive. Furthermore, the *content* of the copy of the letter from Edward Mortensen to Jóannes Patursson of April 5, 1917, where he declares that he got the impression from these conversations with Erik Scavenius that he had nothing against a Petition being sent to the Danish Ambassador, corresponds completely with the content of the letter from Edward Mortensen to Andreas Ziska on April 8, 1917, also available in the same archive (*Bilag A* 1919: 108-09).

- 59 Among the important counter evidence against the thesis in the majority report, which is available in the vast materials of the committee, but apparently concealed in the majority report can be mentioned: the information about briefing of the *Amtmaður* to the *Løgting* on March 31, 1917 of the 700 tons of merchandise on the way to the Faroe Islands; the Foreign Ministry’s information of the decisive importance of the Petition in relation to the Danish-British negotiations between authorities on a free passage over Iceland (the document is not even published in “*Aktstykker*” in the committee’s report); the Prime Minister’s and in part, the Foreign Minister’s confirmation of talks with Edward Mortensen on the Petition in early April 1917; their perception of the purely formal character of the error that the petitioners’ made when they sent the Petition to the Danish Ambassador in London; the Prime Minister’s defence of the importance of the Petition, which had the Prime Minister’s support and was sent to the British Government through the Danish Government; the Foreign Minister’s pointing out of the obvious discrepancy between the *Amtmaður*’s contemporary support to and subsequent accusations against the petitioners’ same acts; the

Amtmaður's information about the complete indifference of the fact that the Petition was sent to the British Consul; the obvious discrepancy between the *Amtmaður's* contemporary and subsequent perception of the content and importance of his talks of June 24, 1917 with the British Consul; the discrepancy between the *Amtmaður's* subsequent perception of this conversation and the Consul's confirmation of the content of the same conversation; and not to forget the ungrounded and unlikely suspicion of the committee's majority of a negative content in Edward Mortensen's letters to Jóannes Patursson. Furthermore, the committee occasionally 'invented' letters with specific contents and at the same time 'overlooked' existing evidence in order to reach an apparently prejudiced conclusion, see e.g. note 58. The committee's majority report also accused Jóannes Patursson of having tried to convince Edward Mortensen to "travel with the Petition as a kind of Faroese Ambassador to London" (*Beretning* 1919: 18), but very conveniently the committee forgot to mention that the whole context clearly implies that this should be done with acceptance and on behalf of the Danish Government (Sølvará 2014: 153 ff).

- 60 This clear distinction between the intentions of Jóannes Patursson and the other petitioners is explicitly stated in relation to the intentions in delivering the Petition to the British Consul on April 19, 1917, but even if Jóannes Patursson throughout the majority report is the major suspect, the committee is not always that clear. Interestingly, in the last paragraph of the same page (*Beretning* 1919: 33) where the above-mentioned explicit distinction (actually a contradiction) between that of the Petition of Jóannes Patursson and the intentions of the others is formulated, but in a different context, the accusations of having tried to bypass the Danish authorities in Copenhagen on different routes are explicitly connected to "the Petition movement" as such. The reason appears to be that the latter context connects the actions of the petitioners to C. Th. Zahle who, according to the committee, was informed about every step the petitioners took in relation to the Petition of 1917, while the former relates to the missing evidence on the intention of the petitioners to bypass Danish authorities, with the exception of Jóannes Patursson who only on the basis of dubious documentation, unknown to C. Th. Zahle, might be suspected to have intended to bypass Danish authorities. In other words, the committee could only on the basis of dubious evidence, which was unknown to C. Th. Zahle in 1917, question Jóannes Patursson's intentions regarding the Petition, but the committee needed to question the general actions of the whole Petition movement in 1917, actions known to C. Th. Zahle already during the process in 1917, if C. Th. Zahle was to be an accessory to any of their dubious intentions. This kind of inconsistency in the argumentation of the committee appears to be a part of the strategy.
- 61 Interestingly, already in the summer 1919 strong forces in Danish politics tried to overthrow the Ministry of Zahle because of disagreements about the Schleswig question (Noack 1989: 52-53 and 62).
- 62 The personal characteristics of Svenning Rytter have also been emphasized here, but it is important to emphasize that from a historical perspective, problems between the *Amtmaður* and the elected members

of the *Løgting* appear to be as old as the reconstituted *Løgting* from 1852. In the unpublished protocol from the first sittings in the *Løgting*, these disagreements are very visible. Already in the 1850ies, elected members left the *Løgting* in protest because of problems with the *Amtmaður*, Carl Emil Dahlerup, and in 1860, 12 out of 18 members left the *Løgting* and did not meet again until the Ministry of Justice in 1961 had replaced the *Amtmaður* (*Forhandlings Protokoll for Færoernes Lagting* 1852-61). The latter incident is extensively described in the diaries of one of the members of the *Løgting* who left the *Løgting* in 1860, Hans Dávid Matras (Matras, Diaries, 1855-75 – unpublished, see also Sølvará 2002: 117-125). Parts of the diaries of Hans Dávid Matras are published (Matras 1951). These incidents indicate that the personality of the *Amtmaður* was indeed relevant, but the number and character of these conflicts also appear to indicate a problem with the structure of the *Løgting*, especially with the position of the *Amtmaður* – interestingly, the latter point also appears to have been the opinion of the replaced *Amtmaður* (Steining 1958: 224). The problem was most likely that the reconstituted *Løgting* was intended to be like a Danish *Amtsråd*, mainly an administrative body, but due to the distance to Denmark, the *Løgting* achieved greater, almost political, power than a Danish *Amtsråd*, e.g. it had the power to take initiative towards the Danish state authorities. This meant that the *Amtmaður*, chair in the *Løgting*, also achieved real political power, which did not really corresponded with the mainly administrative functions of a Danish *Amtsråd*, where the position was intended to fit in. This problem, i.e. the integration of the administrative functions of an ordinary Danish *Amtsråd* and the political functions of the Faroese *Løgting*, in the same institution, the *Løgting*, also appears to have been an argument behind the continuing efforts to change the position of the *Amtmaður* and *Próstur* in the *Løgting* – discussions that started as soon as the *Løgting* was reconstituted in 1852 and continued for the rest of the 19th century (see e.g. *Lagtingstidende* 1884: 75-76 and *Lagtingstidende* 1890: 104-105). In addition, as Faroese politics developed, the problem with the position of the *Amtmaður* became more controversial, especially when he linked to Danish politics, which was the case with the Petition. It was the political aspect of the position, and not only the person, which apparently created problems.

- 63 In the text that is published of the Danish Parliament from the negotiations in the parliament there are no comments to the question of why the proposal was not dealt with in the parliament and according to professor Tage Kaarsted there does not exist any Danish ministerial protocol from the in this case relevant last two year period of the C. Th. Zahle Government, i.e. from the period 1918-20 (Kaarsted 1975: 7). Regretfully, also the diary of C. Th. Zahle closes in December 1917 (Zahle 1974: XI-XII). If true, it is difficult to answer this question. However, what we do know is that the unionist minority in the *Løgting* asked the government to take a stand against the proposal (Sølvará 2014: 255).
- 64 The Danish historians Vagn Wählin and others claim without any reference or any argument that Jóannes Patursson was "... perhaps

earlier, but from 1915 a real *separatist*,” but they appear to involve themselves in an explicit contradiction when the sentence immediately continues, “the Faroe-case only reinforced a tendency.” (Wählin and others 1994: 32). If Jóannes Patursson had become a real separatist already in 1915, we may ask what tendency was reinforced by the Faroe-case of 1918-19. They may, of course, have referred to the Home Rule Party as such, but the context does not suggest that. Many historians argue in the opposite direction, where the Investigative Committee caused the decisive break (Jacobsen 1927: 91; Steining 1953: 156; Steining 1958: 242; West 1972: 148). Jørgen Steining states that the committee’s accusations against Jóannes Patursson for treason “made him Danish-hostile in perpetuity”, but Petur Martin Rasmussen who traces the roots to the development of Jóannes Patursson’s Danish hostility back to Oliver Effersøe’s attacks against the home rule agenda in 1906-09 is certainly also demonstrating a point (Rasmussen 1987: 235). However, I will modify this otherwise plausible view and claim that it was not Oliver Effersøe’s accusations in themselves that helped to generate Jóannes Patursson’s Danish hostility, but (logically) only the subsequent reactions and affect these accusations had on the political discourse in Denmark prior to the committee of 1918.

- 65 It appears unlikely that there was an official letter from the Minister of Justice in which he intended to influence the democratic behaviour of a member in the *Løgting*. However, Svenning Rytter accused C. Th. Zahle, the Danish Minister of Justice, in a conversation between them in 1917 of having tried to influence his voting in the *Løgting* (*Bilag V* 1919: 47). Regardless of the validity of this accusation against Zahle, it seems unlikely that Svenning Rytter as Minister of Justice in 1923 in written form would have tried something similar, but he could have tried to influence Elias Olrik in a conversation.
- 66 For a discription of the history and content of the home rule of Åland as well as a description and comparison with the later Faroese and Greenlandic home rules, see (Åkermark and Herolf (ed.) 2015).
- 67 National and ethnic minorities in Nordic countries in the 19th and 20th century (Karlsson (ed.) 1987).
- 68 It has been pointed out in research that nationalism or the doctrine of national self-determination is an ambiguous doctrine. This is already evident in the League of Nations, whose members in spite of the name are states that claim to be nations – nation states. It has also been pointed out that national minorities are the direct consequences of these nation states and nationalism (Hettne and others 2006: 101 f). If this is true, it may be argued that Faroese nationalism in part appears to be a consequence of Danish nationalism, which in part originated in the defeat in the Danish-Prussian War of 1864. Uffe Østergård has pointed out that a consequence of the Danish nation state that resulted from the defeat in the war with Prussia was denial of differences within the Danish nation state. (Østergård 2012: 38).
- 69 Karl Popper is referring to the theoretical social sciences, but his examples are simple and general. In one example, he mentions that a person who wants to buy a house intends to buy it as cheap as possible,

but when he starts to bid for it the unintended consequence is that the price goes up (Popper 1973: 87). In our context, where the principle is extended to the more complicated field of political discourse, it is difficult to construct such simple and general examples. However, if Oliver Effersøe with his rhetoric in *Folketinget* about the Home Rule Party only intended to achieve Danish support to the Unionist Party, then an unintended consequence was that the relations between the Unionist Party and the Home Rule Party deteriorated considerably in the years to come. Moreover, if the intention of the *Landsting* through the Investigative Committee was to annoy the Danish Government, then an unintended consequence appears to be that the Faroese Home Rule Party became radicalized.

- 70 The argument that discourse really affects the practical politics is in relation to religious violence developed by Michael Gaddis in a study of violence in the Christian Roman Empire (Gaddis 2015: 3). The Danish historian Uffe Østergård also points out that for most professional researchers ethnic or national identity is fundamentally a constructed “discursive phenomenon” that does not refer to any verifiable essences, but they are constructed at a certain time with a certain purpose and are only real in the sense that people perceive them as being real and act in accordance to them (Østergård 2007: 563).
- 71 The verdict was compelling and indisputable. Twelve of the fourteen international judges at the International Court in Haag passed the verdict (*Permanent Court of International Justice* 1933: 75/57).
- 72 This political definition of nationalism appears to be accepted in the research (Hobsbawm 1992: 9).
- 73 Tórður Jóansson appears to argue for this view with regard to the Faroe Islands (Jóansson 2012: 34).
- 74 It is evident from a pamphlet, which the Faroese Shipmaster and Navigator Association published in 1939, that they had the impression that the Danish authorities in many ways (e.g. quota and loans) obstructed a modernisation of the Faroese fishing industry (*Danmark, Færoerne, Grønland* 1939: 25). The same appears indirectly to be concluded in the report from a Danish Government Committee on the Faroese industry in 1939, which concluded that the Faroese fishing grounds could not be utilized in large scale, when Faroese fisheries did not have access to a fresh fish market (*Betænkning* 1939: 77).
- 75 The Faroese quota of fresh fish to England formed before the British occupation a part of the total Danish quota of 20.000 tons annually. The Faroese allotted share, which was determined by the Danish Government in Copenhagen, was 450 tons annually, but it was shortly before the occupation raised to 700 tons. The British Consul in Tórshavn, Fredrick Mason, wrote on January 31, 1941 a letter to Laurence Collier, the Minister of Scandinavian Department in Foreign Office, in which he informed that this Danish policy had caused great grievance to the Faroese, who saw this as another way of ‘oppressing’ them. Fredrick Mason wrote that the Danes appeared to have been moved by the desire to protect their own fishery and to maintain the wet-salt and dried fish industries in the Faroes, which gave a great

- deal of employment to the poorer people. At the same time, the Danes marketed the Faroese dried fish largely through their clearing accounts with Italy and Greece and a barter arrangement with Spain. According to Mason, it was this policy, which led the Danish Government to oppose by financial means the purchase of up-to-date fishing vessels by the Faroese – i.e. the Danes appear to have refused the foreign exchange necessary for buying trawlers after 1938 (Mohr 2012: 24).
- 76 Of course, when Denmark was occupied on April 9, 1940, the German Government gave Denmark approximately the same kind of promise (i.e. that they were – now and in the future – going to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of Denmark), which Winston Churchill in a speech in the British Parliament on April 11, 1940 gave to the Faroe Islands (Denmark), when they were about to occupy the Faroe Islands (Parliamentary Debates 1940: 746-47). However, while the British during the war continuously referred to and acted in accordance with the promise in the speech of Churchill (Sørensen 1998), the German memorandum to Denmark appeared to be pure propaganda, which they according to the internal correspondence never intended to respect (Poulsen 2005: 18-19).
- 77 The Norwegian historian Olav Riste (Riste 1973: 33-34, 73), the local Faroese Eiden Müller in his memoirs (Müller 1981: 95) and the Faroese historian, Jákup Thorsteinsson (Thorsteinsson 2014: 261 f) all agree with Bo Lidegaard. However, the Faroese historian Høgni Mohr who also has made research on the subject finds it difficult to believe that Trygve Lie had such intentions, even if he admits that Trygve Lie intended to establish a North Atlantic defence alliance after the war (Mohr 2012: 61). It is, on the other hand, interesting that Trygve Lie according to Bo Lidegaard only appears to mention an alliance between Norway, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland in cooperation with USA and England, while he does not mention Denmark as an allied (Lidegaard 1999: 181-82). However, in relation to this information, Bo Lidegaard e.g. refers to a book by Trygve Lie himself (Lie 1956: 168 ff), where Trygve Lie in the context never refers to the Faroe Islands. Trygve Lie mainly refers to an alliance with the independent Iceland. It might not be surprising that Trygve Lie did not refer to dubious intentions regarding the Faroe Islands in his book, but the decisive point appears to be that a British report from April 5, 1941 informs: “Dr. Lie added ... Iceland would want its independence. Norway would like to have the Faroe Islands”. However, the British Foreign Ministry had doubts about Trygve Lie’s intentions: “The Foreign Ministry, at the same time, pointed out that in relation to our promises before the occupation of the Faroe Islands it would be difficult for us to give them to the Norwegians, unless the Faroe Islands requested a union with Norway – a development, which appeared very unlikely” (Jensen 1972: 41). The British had no doubts about Trygve Lie’s intentions.
- 78 It was, however, only a preliminary wartime system, which was accepted by the vast majority in the *Løgting* (18-6) and the *Amtmaður* on May 9, 1940. Further, the text instead of legislative power, which according to the constitution exclusively was with the Danish Parliament, used

- the expression “law regulations” (*lovforskrifter*), and the *Amtmaður* had the power to veto any decision of the *Løgting*.
- 79 It is evident that during major wars between European super powers, which created uncertainty in the North Atlantic, it has been very difficult for Denmark to protect its interests in the North Atlantic. Denmark had to give away Norway to the Swedish King in 1814, i.e. during the Napoleonic Wars; in 1918, i.e. during the First World War, the Danish state authorities had to recognize the sovereignty of Iceland – with dominion status in the Danish Kingdom; and in 1944, i.e. during the Second World War, Iceland became fully independent. The Faroese development is obvious and it has been pointed out that the Second World War also caused a similar development in Greenland that paved the way for a change of the islands status as a colony (see *Afvikling af Grønlands Kolonistatus 1945-54 2007*: 371).
- 80 The exception was Jákup í Jákupsstovu from the Social Democratic Party who was a separatist – see later. However, even if the unionist majority accepted to ask the voters in the way they were asked – i.e. ultimately to choose between the government proposal and a word, separation – the vast majority in the *Løgting*, the Social Democratic Party (6) and the People’s Party (11) were not at all pleased with the government proposal. The People’s Party was so frightened about the possibility that the ultimate choice at the referendum could force the majority of the voters to vote for the government proposal, that Thorstein Petersen even asked voters only to vote “no” to the government proposal, which was not a legal possibility – the only valid choice was an “x” for either the government proposal or separation. It was the government’s view of the proposal as an ultimatum that eventually convinced the Social Democratic Party to accept the Danish politics of “denial of differences”, while the Unionist Party said that the government with this proposal had yielded more than enough (Skála 1992: 96-99).
- 81 It is obvious from an analysis of documents in the archive of the Head of Police and the Hospital Board at the National Archiver in Tórshavn on the subject that the popular Danish Doctor had a decisive influence on the citizens in Klaksvík. This is also evident from the content of a lot of letters, which are preserved in the private archive of Jacob Højgaard (Leader of the Faroese Doctor Union) that the Faroese Doctor Union got from citizens in Klaksvík. However, it is also evident from e.g. the subsequent inquiries made by the Head of Police in the subject that the fundamental societal origin to the conflict was the generally held view outside Tórshavn, especially in Klaksvík, that the power, decisions and even institutions were increasingly centralized in Tórshavn, the administrative capital.
- 82 The source material to use in analysing the conflict is extensive – see references. It is obvious from the private collections of Jacob Højgaard (Leader of the Faroese Doctor Union) and Hanus Debes Joensen *Landslækni* (Chief Medical Officer in the Faroes) that the conflict between the authorities in Tórshavn and Halvorsen/the majority in Klaksvík was deep. However, especially papers and private letters in the private collection of the republican Hanus Debes Joensen make

it obvious that he as well as other leading academic republicans in Tórshavn were furious with Erlendur Patursson, whom they accused of utilizing and escalating the conflict for sole political reasons. This is also evident from papers in the private collection of the republican Karsten Hoydal who had lived in Klaksvík in 1946-50 and based on this experience also pointed out the socio-economical core in Klaksvík behind the Doctor-conflict. Contemporary sources from 1955 documents (e.g. the diary of Hartz-Laursen, a danish police officer in Tórshavn, from April 25, 1955, preserved in the archive of the Head of Police – Hartz-Laursen 1955: 4) that stories, which are retold in the subsequent popular and professional historiography (see e.g. Hammerich 1983: 193-94; Asgaard 1990: 43-44; Elkjær-Hansen 1996: 152; Jensen 2006: 227 and Bø 2015: 201, 235 and 248), about heavily armed local citizens in Klaksvík and (advanced) bomb barriers at the entrance to the port in Klaksvík, constructed to defend Klaksvík against a repressive Danish army, were taken very seriously by the governments in Copenhagen and Tórshavn (e.g. Folketingstidende 1955: 4308), but according to the diary of the eyewitness Josias Matras, these stories were concocted (Matras, Diary, April 27, 1955), i.e. that they were discursive constructions without any tangible content. The clockmaker in Klaksvík who was supposed to have constructed the advanced bomb (the so-called “Hell Machine”) claimed on June 3, 1955: “the whole story is pure fantasy” (Police Report, June 3, 1955: 4 - Archive of the Head of Police, *Læknastríðið í Klaksvík. Akter í lægesagen i Klaksvík. Nr. 3. Rigsadvokaten 849/55 (7) 1955*). However, these stories affected the actions of the Danish authorities and escalated the whole conflict.

83 This is obvious from an analysis of the documents in the archive of the Faroese Government (*Føroya Landsstýri*) at the National Archives in Tórshavn on the subject. This important archive also comprises correspondence between the Faroese Government and the Danish Government. This is also evident in the memoirs of Niels Elkjær-Hansen who was the High Commissioner (The Representative of the Danish Government in the Faroes) in the Faroes in the 1950-ties (Elkjær-Hansen 1996: 125 and 127).

84 It is therefore, in my view, incorrect, when Liggjas í Bø in his recent book on the Doctor-conflict stresses the importance of oppressive Danish authorities, the Danish Government and the Danish Doctor Union (Bø 2015: 27 and 40-41). Originally, the Halvorsen supporters in Klaksvík struggled for a *Danish* Doctor against a *Faroese* Doctor; the majority in the Hospital Board, which led the Faroese Hospitals (e.g. employed the Hospital Doctors) was *Faroese*; it was the *Faroese* Doctors in the *Faroese* Doctor Union (a subsection of the Danish Doctor Union) who demanded that Halvorsen resigned from the position as Hospital Doctor in Klaksvík; and it was the *Faroese* Doctor Union, which in reality decided to block the employment of the Hospital Doctor in Klaksvík and threatened that all Doctors in the Faroe Islands would resign if the *Dane* Halvorsen didn't leave the Hospital in Klaksvík.

85 In an article about the home rule question from 2011, I have argued that apart from the period 1998-2002, the question of separatism has never played any tangible role in Faroese politics (Sølvará 2011a).

References

Only published works explicitly referred to in the text are listed here. For a more complete list of the published material, which the pivotal research is based on (e.g. Sølvará 2014: 459-66). However, the most important unpublished archival material, which my research on the political history of the Faroe Islands, presented in different works, is based on, is listed her.

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Union in the 1950-ties) – property of the late Hjördis Weihe
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The private archive of Robert Joensen (Town Clerk in Klaksvík and
member of the Hospital Board in the 1950-ties) – property of
Magna Thomassen (Klaksvík)

The privat diary of Josias Matras (Burgomaster in Klaksvík in 1954) –
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