



Iceland's Place in the World, grein um Ísland by dr. Bjarni Benediktsson, ódagsett.

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ICELAND'S PLACE IN THE WORLD

by Dr. Bjarni Benediktsson
Prime Minister of Iceland

It is only natural that foreigners should ask themselves whether two hundred thousand people, living on 40,000 square miles of land just below the Arctic Circle, surrounded by the ocean on a treeless, sandy, volcanic island which is partly covered by eternal ice, can justifiably be called an independent nation. Nevertheless, no Icelander has the slightest doubt about his nationality, or about the need for his country to have its independence. The first settler to establish a permanent abode in Iceland is said to have arrived there in the year 874, and preparations are already being made to celebrate the eleven-hundredth anniversary of this event. The [early] settlers came mostly from the western districts of Norway, and many of them had spent some time in the north of the British Isles and in Ireland before continuing their journey to Iceland. Anthropologists have now reached the conclusion that the origin of the nation is Nordic-Celtic.

In the first decades of settlement the Icelanders created their own democratic form of government. This event is frequently associated with the establishment in the year 930 of the parliament known as "Althing", which had legislative power over the entire island. The Icelanders maintained their independence until 1262, when they pledged allegiance to the King of Norway. Later the country became successively a part of the Norwegian, the Danish-Norwegian and finally the Danish Kingdoms. In the 19th century Iceland began little by little

to acquire constitutional independence from the Danish Government. This culminated in the re-establishment of the Republic in 1944, as a natural sequence to the provisions of the Union Act of 1918, which stipulated that at any time after 1943 the Icelanders could unilaterally separate themselves from Denmark. [The achievement of independence brought about many favourable developments; greater political freedom, dwindling isolation and rapid progress in the technological field. It is difficult to ascertain which of these factors is primarily responsible for the enormous improvements which have taken place. It is certain, however, that during this period Iceland was transformed into a modern society where living conditions can be favourably compared with those of any other western democracy. One tangible proof of this is the steady growth in population.

Owing to the great economic significance to Iceland of the fishing industry, it is vital for Icelanders that the supplies of fish in their home waters, particularly cod and herring, should not be overexploited. That is why we have fought for the extension and control of fishing rights over the entire Icelandic continental shelf. It is illogical that a coastal state should have the right to control the ocean-bed off its shores but not the fish to be found there. The uncertainties involved in all fishing operations due to the hazards of nature are great enough in themselves without the added injury

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of overexploitation by those who have more than enough other resources at their disposal. [For instance, the Icelandic fish catch in 1967 was 28 per cent smaller than in 1966. On top of this national catastrophe came a sharp fall in export prices and unexpected difficulties in the sale of fish products, with the result that exports for 1967 fell by 30 per cent. Furthermore, it is practically impossible to find a market for some of the dried stockfish intended ^{for} to be sent to Eastern Nigeria, a country now ravaged by civil war. The Icelanders have admittedly grown used to fluctuations in their principal export industry, but this is by far the most serious crisis since the great world depression of the 1930's, and even then the collapse was spread over a longer period of time. This has created serious economic difficulties.

A major task of the future is obviously that of making the nation less dependent upon the export of fish products, even though the fishing industry will for an unforeseeable number of years continue to form the most important part of its export trade. With the growth of electric power in recent decades various types of small manufacturing industries have been developed to an ever increasing extent, but they are producing primarily for domestic consumption. The country possesses an abundance of unharnessed water and steam power. The supply of heat obtained from the hot water sources of Reykjavik alone now equals 130,000 tons

of fuel oil p.a. for a population of 75,000. [The ~~1970~~
potential power of geothermal heat and rivers must
be harnessed for the creation of new export ~~we seized~~
industries. The first example of such a programme
has been carried out in co-operation with "Alusuisse"
for the construction of the Swiss company's aluminium
smelter whose consumption makes it possible to ~~to~~ *faller*
undertake a vast electric power project. Many of us
are convinced that this type of international
co-operation will point the way to greater economic
security, although such progress is bound to take
a good deal of time. *on another occasion* By the same token we believe
that Iceland's affiliation with EFTA is necessary
to ensure more stable markets, as well as some
sort of agreement with the EEC. But all this is
a source of contention. There is also the question
as to whether Iceland should continue to be a member
of NATO, and more particularly whether the Defence
Agreement between Iceland and the United States should
remain in force. *the islands to be placed under*

One of the most important explanations of our ~~most~~
success in creating and maintaining a modern ~~red to~~
Icelandic society is the fact that we have never
had to use any of our financial resources for the
defence of our country. As a result, we have been
able to spend our tax revenue on satisfying urgent
social needs. How is it that the Icelanders have ~~rting~~
gained this unique position among the nations of
the world? *ments of these countries were thinking*

Because of the relative shortage of natural ~~heat~~

riches and resources in Iceland there has been little temptation for other countries to rule over it. Great Britain could, on many an occasion, have seized the island and declared it part of her overseas territories, but she never did so despite the offer made by ^a Danish-Norwegian King. [In the same way Bismarck practically ignored the Danish proposal to hand over Iceland to Germany in 1864 so as to obtain more favourable terms in the Schleswig-Holstein issue. It is unlikely that Great Britain would have allowed such a transaction to take place without lifting a finger, for ^{on another occasion} an influential British diplomat happened to be in Kiel in 1814 when the Danish representative there arranged (without any specific instructions from his Government) that Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland should not be placed under Swedish rule at the same time as Norway to which they had belonged for centuries. No doubt the British considered it a highly risky business for these islands to be placed under Carl Johan of Sweden, who was then on the friendliest of terms with the Czar of Russia. They preferred to let them remain a part of the Kingdom of Denmark, which was losing its power and influence. [During the Napoleonic wars Great Britain showed much greater interest in Iceland than before. At the end of the 19th century, frequent visits and charting expeditions, both British and French, proved that the governments of these countries were thinking of establishing naval bases in Iceland. Throughout

fallen

World War I Great Britain kept close maritime control off the shores of Iceland, and along the sea routes between Iceland and Western Europe.

It can be said that the location of the country, the respect which others had for the Danish Crown, and the power of the British Royal Navy had, until 1918, accounted for the fact that it was not considered necessary to take any particular measures for the defence of Iceland. By ^{the} signature of the Act of Union the Danes formally recognized the independence of Iceland, with the King of Denmark as the Head of State of both nations. Simultaneously Iceland declared its neutrality. Although many people today feel that this was dangerous for Iceland's security, it must be remembered that this took place at a time when it was believed that war would be banished forever. Only two years passed, however, before Lenin, in a meeting of the 1920 Soviet Komintern, declared that Iceland would have a strategic role to play in future wars, particularly as regards air and submarine warfare. Later a German strategist said: "Iceland is like a revolver aimed at the British and the Americans." The Icelanders themselves did not realise the military significance of their country until the British occupied it in 1940. The following year a defensive agreement was reached with the United States.

Owing to the dangerous state of affairs in post-war Europe, Iceland became one of the founding members of the Atlantic Alliance in 1949 and signed

a Defence Agreement with the United States within the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1951. At the outset there were no plans to create Icelandic armed forces, despite the country's membership of NATO, and foreign troops were not to be stationed in Iceland in peacetime. The idea was that, in case of war, Iceland would grant NATO similar facilities to those given to Great Britain and the United States from 1940 to 1945. The continuing state of international tension ~~and~~^{and} ~~and~~ hostilities in various parts of the world, however, had led to the stationing of American troops in Iceland since 1951. Nevertheless Icelanders hold firmly to the decision not to create their own defence forces. They have never borne arms against any other country. Military discipline is to them a completely unknown phenomenon. The population is so small that their military strength could never attain a degree of any significance, and the expense of maintaining it would be a crushing burden on the country's economy.

For all these reasons the vast majority of Icelanders consider that the country's defence should be assured through continuing membership of NATO. Those who adhere to the communist ideology, however, are strongly opposed to this policy, but they have obtained barely over 15 per cent of electoral support. There are also those who sincerely believe that Iceland should be entirely neutral and that isolation is the best form of defence.

But most Icelanders consider this theory to be as dangerous for Iceland now as it was in 1940. However, some of those who hold this view are also of the opinion that diminishing tension in the world will soon make it unnecessary to maintain military forces in the country itself and should lead to the abolition of the Defence Agreement with the United States. But they continue to believe that Iceland should stay in NATO so as to have a solid guarantee against a possible attack. Others contend that since distances are now practically non-existent, even Iceland cannot remain without some sort of military defence. Furthermore, they point out that the development of traffic by sea and air has made Iceland just as vulnerable as any country in Central Europe.

These and similar questions will undoubtedly be the subject of heated debates in Iceland during the forthcoming years, and it is of major importance that dependable information be available so that, in the light of the true facts, the people of Iceland may decide what they should contribute to their own security and to that of their allies.

known as "Althing", which BJARNI BENEDIKTSSON,
over the entire 1st Prime Minister of Iceland

sögulega hefð og reynslu ^{alra} germanskra og ^{þar með} þarf af leiðandi skandinavískra og engil-saxneskra þjóða ^{a.} stofna.

Einanngrun Íslands réði að sjálfstöðu mestu um þá staðreynd, að gömul menning og tunga geymdist þar lengur en með öðrum náskyldum þjóðum. Að því slepptu lék þessi ~~XX~~ einanngrun Íslensku þjóðina illa; lífsskilyrði voru ^{þess vegna} ~~íþulega~~ ákaflega hörð og líftillar hjálpar von ~~þess~~ annars staðar að. Af þessu leiddi, að Íslendingar voru um skeið komnir ^{þess vegna} ~~þess~~ að deyja alveg út. ^{vitum eitthvað} ~~Þess~~ viltum með vissu að lítilu færri, sennilega ^{þess vegna} ~~einum~~ helmingna af fjölda lífðu hér um 1800, ^{þess vegna} ~~sambandið~~ við það sem var ~~XX~~ ^{þess vegna} ~~á~~ eða á hundruð árum áður.

Íslendingar stofnuðu ^{þess vegna} ~~á~~ fyrstu áratugum landnámsins sitt eigið ríki ^{þess vegna} ~~með~~ lýðræðislegum stjórnarháttum. Þessi atburður er ^{þess vegna} ~~venjulega~~ tengdur við stofnun Alþingis á árinu 930, en það hafði m.a. ~~XXXXXX~~ ^{þess vegna} ~~löggjafar~~ á öllu eylandinu um land allt.

Íslendingar héldu sjálfstæði sínu til ársins 1262, þegar þeir gengðu ^{þess vegna} ~~hónd~~ konungi Noregs á hönd, og seinna varð land þeirra í framkvæmd hluti af ~~XXXX~~ ^{þess vegna} ~~norska~~ konungdæminu í byrjun og síðar hins ^{þess vegna} ~~dans-norska~~ og að lokum hins ^{þess vegna} ~~danska~~ konungsríkis. Á 19. öld höfu Íslendingar ^{þess vegna} ~~sjálfstæðis~~baráttu sína fyrir ~~XXXX~~ ^{þess vegna} ~~stjórnskipulegu~~ sjálfstæði, sem þeir tengu smám saman með samþykki réttra danskra yfirvalda. Þessi sjálfstæðishreyfing endaði með endurreisn lýðveldisins á árinu ~~XXXXXX~~ ^{þess vegna} ~~1944~~ og var ~~það~~ ^{þess vegna} ~~eðlileg~~ afleiðing ákvæða sambandslagana frá 1918, sem gerðu ráð fyrir því, að hvernær sem væri eftir árslok 1943 gætu Íslendingar einbliða komið fram fullkomnum aðskilnaði landanna.

Samtímis því, sem menn ^{þess vegna} ~~fengu~~ smám saman sjálfstæði á síðustu áratugum 19. aldar og fram á þennan dag, hafa ^{þess vegna} ~~mörg~~ hagstæð

3. *atkvæði niðurst:*

atvik að borjó: Aukið stjórnarfarslegt frelsi, bætt verður-
skilyrði í heild, minnkandi einagrun og miklar framfarir í
tækni efnum, svo að auðlindir landsins nýttust betur. *Þa þess*
vegna *er* erfitt að *hæta á um* ákveða hver af þessum atvikum hafa átt
mestan þátt í þeim stórkostlegu umbótum, sem hafa átt sér stað.
Gumdeilanlegt er, að á þessum árum hefur Ísland *horft* ~~þeygt~~ úr
þessum 1000 ára kyrrstöðu, eða réttara sagt, afturför, í nútímapjóðfélag,
þar sem lífsskilyrði er til full *þ* sambærilegt við það sem
gerist í öðrum vestrænum lýðræðislöndum. ~~Þitt~~ ~~ZZZZZ~~ þrefan-
legt dæmi þessa er eðlileg fólksfjölgun á síðustu áratugum,
gagnstætt því, sem áður *var* ~~átt~~ sér stað.

Samhliða

Landbúnaður var frá fornu fari aðalatvinnuvegur Íslendinga,
og ~~ZZZZ~~ stunduðu menn þó ~~ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ~~ fiskveiðar, samhliða,
en með misjöfnum árangri að mestu, vegna þess að nauðsynleg
tæki skorti. Engu að síður var landið þekkt *erlendis best* utaniðs ~~á~~ hvað
~~best~~ vegna fiskveiða sinna.

Flattur þorskur var merki ~~ZZ~~ Íslands í skjaldarmerki
Danakonungs, *Enda* og *þ* útlendir fiskimenn flyktust *á* ströndum Íslands,
einnig á þeim tímum, þegar Íslendingar sjálfir *áttu* ekki yfir
annat öðru en litlu *þess* opnum fiskbátum *á* smábáta.

Nú á döggum *þess* *er* aðal atvinnuvegir
atvinnuvegir Íslendinga, landbúnaður, fiskveiðar og iðnaður,
auk margháttáðrar þjónustustarfsemi, ~~ZZZZZZ~~ svo sem verzlunar
og annars slíka *þess* sem í þjóðfélögum tíðkast. Landbúnaðurinn er
að mestu bundinn við sauðfjárrækt og mjólkurframleiðslu. *þess*
líkar afurðir eru nægar til innanlandsnotkunar og einnig til
þess nokkurs útflutnings, en fyrir hann fæst *þess* ~~miklu~~ minna verð en
framleiðslukostnaði nemur. Aðrar greinar landbúnaðar hafa
litla þýðingu, *þess* Kornrækt er ekki stunduð svo að nokkru nemi,

til

4.

þess hefur sannað í stað
vegna ~~hinnar stutta sumra~~, ~~EEEEE~~ kartöfluuppskera erð stundum góð og skógrækt er enn á tilraunastigi.

Fiskveiðarnar standa undir 90-~~95~~ af útflutningnum.

En sökum þess, hversu atvinnuvegir eru fábreyttir, þá eru Islendingar flestum öðrum þjóðum fremur háðir vöruinnflutningi og margskonar erlendri þjónustu, ~~sem~~ ^{með} nemur 42,7% af heildarþjóðarframleiðslu 1967. Hin gífurlega þýðing fiskveiðanna skýrir hvílik óhjákvæmileg nauðsyn Islendingum er á því að ekki sé of nærri gengið fiskistofnum í hafinu umhverfis Ísland, sérstaklega að því er varðar þorsk og síld. Þetta er skýringin á baráttunni fyrir viðurkenningu á stækkun íslenzkrar fiskveiðilögsögu, ~~stærri~~ ^{með} friðunarsvæðum, ~~og~~ ^{með} að Islendingar E fái fiskveiðalögsögu yfir öllu hinu íslenska landgrunni. Efitt er að sjá, ~~og~~ ^{enda sannað í lesta} ~~það~~ ^{það} harla órökrétt, af hverju ~~strandríki~~ ^{strandríki} ~~átti~~ ^{líka} að fá umráðarétt fyrir sjávarbotninum, útaf ströndum sínum, en ekki rétt til þess að ráða veiðum á fiski, sem syndir yfir hinum sama sjávarbotni. Einkanlega virðist þetta augljóst, þegar strandríkið er háð fiskveiðum um afkomu sína.

Sannleikurinn er sá, að ^{með vinstri} sú óvissa, sem er samfara fiskveiðum vegna óviðráðanlegr ~~náttúruafla~~, ~~verðist~~ ^{með} í sjálfu sér ~~þó~~ ^{þó} að þar afan á bætist ekki hættan af ofveiði þeirra, sem ráða yfir ~~þessum~~ ^{þessum} öðrum auðlindum. Sveiflurnar í fiskafla ára á milli ~~er~~ ^{með} ~~glögglega~~ ^{glögglega} á því að heildarveiði á árinu 1967 var 28% minni en ~~árið~~ ^{árið} 1966. Til viðbótar þessu kom ~~stór~~ ^{stór} verófall á útflutningsvörum og auknir erfiðleikar á sölu fiskiafurða, með þeim árangri, að verðmæti útflutnings ~~á~~ ^á árinu 1967 um 30% frá árinu áður. Þessu til viðbótar kemur að ~~óþægilegt~~ ^{þægilegt} er að finna ~~útflutningsmarkað~~ ^{útflutningsmarkað} fyrir verulegan hluta af skreið, sem ~~verkuð~~ ^{verkuð} hefur verið til útflutnings, vegna

land heljar

stór

leikurinn

þægilegt

6.

suppskriftin
ni rennandi átt hald, sem aldrei þvær.

75 þúsund. Þetta er mikil auðlind, sem ekki hverfur. Halda
at halda
verður áfram þróun í sömu átt og beizla verður það afl, sem býr
í hverum *á* ám, til þess að skapa nýja útflutningsatvinnuvegi.

Upphaf þeirrar viðleitni birtist í samvinnu við ~~ZZZZZ~~
~~ZZZ~~ svissneskt *al* alumíníumfélag, Alu-Swiss, þar sem *þetta* ~~félagið~~ byggir
álbræðslu og kaupir rafmagn af Íslendingum og gerir okkur
þar með þannig mörgulegt að ráðast í miklu stærri rafmangsvirkjun, en
annars hefði verið framkvæmanleg.

Margir okkar eru samfærðir um, að *slik* þvilik alþjóðasamvinna
vísir veginn fram á við til aukins efnahagsöryggis, þó að *þvílík* ~~slik~~
þróun hljóti að taka langan tíma. Með sama hætti er það skoðun
okkar, að Íslands ~~ZZZZZZ~~ verði að fá aðild að EFTA, til þess
að tryggja öruggari markaði og *á* ~~á~~ einhverjungsamningum verði að
ná við EEC, Efnahagsbandalag Evrópu *í* sama skyni. *En* ~~En~~ um allt
þetta er deilt á Íslandi með sama hætti og *deilt* ~~er~~ er um það,
hvort Ísland eigi að halda áfram aðild sinni að NATO, þó *og*
einkanlega um framhald varnarsamningsins milli Íslands og
Bandaríkjanna. *]* Ein af ástæðunum, og ekki hin þýðingarminnsta,
til þess að Íslendingum hefur tekizt að skapa og halda uppi
núttímapjóðfélagi í landi sínu, er sú staðreynd, að þeir hafa
aldrei þurft að eyða neinu fé til varnar landinu. Þar af leiðir,
að þeir hafa getað notað álagða skatta, sem *legu* ~~á~~ hlutfalli eru
sambærilegir við það, sem tíðkast í nágrannalönunum, til annarra
þjóðfélagsþarfa. Hvernig stendur á því að Ísland hefur að *2*
þessu leyti getað orðið algjör undantekning á meðal þjóða heimsins

Vegna takmarkaðra náttúrugæða hefur landið sjálft vakið
lita *lita* löngun hjá öðrum þjóðum til að ná yferráðum þess. Stóra-
Bretlandi hefði öldum saman ~~þ~~ auðveldlega geta tekið landið og

degið á þæt eign sinnu

hinni skokk-ensku
konungu

Lýst það ^{áskilast} í sínu yfirráðasvaði, en það sýndu aldrei neinu áhuga fyrir því, jafnvel þó að hin dansk-norski kongur létu landið falt. Á sama veg hirti Bismarck ekki um það, þegar danska stjórnin þreifaði fyrir sér það, hvort Danmörk gæti fengið betri samninga 22 1864 um Slesvik Holstein, en Island væri ^{afskilast} undir þýzka ^{um yfirráðum} stjórn Raunar 22 er ekki líklegt að Bretland mundi hafa látið þvílíka afhendingu afskiptalaus, því að það er naumast tilviljun, að áhrifamikill brezkur stjórnar-erindreki, sem áður hafi tekið þátt í friðarsamningum milli Stóra-Bretlands og Svíþjóðar var staddur í Kiel árið 1814, þegar dæski fulltrúinn þar kom því fram, ^{um} án nokkrar fyrirsmála frá dönsku stjórninni, að Island, Færeyjar og Grænland skyldu ekki lenda undir samski stjórn með Noregi, sem þessi lönd höfðu þó öldum saman fylgt. Enginn efi er á því að Bretar hafa litið á það sem ærið hæpna ráðstöfun, ef 22 þessi eylönd hefði verið sett undir stjórn ~~Karls Jóhanns~~ Karls Jóhanns, sem þá var mjög vinveittur rússneskra barnum, ^{þy} ^{og hett að} án þess að létta þau vera áfram hluta af hinu danska konungsríki, sem þegar hafði mjög ^{innmitt um þessum munn} hnignað valdi og áhrifum. Víst er, að Napoleonstyrjöldunum sýndi Stóra-Bretlandi miklu meiri áhuga fyrir Islandi en áður, og tíðar heimsóknir og sjómælingar, bæði af hálfu Breta og Frakka á síðari hluta 19.aldar, ^{sönnuð} sýndu áhuga stjórna þessara landa fyrir ^{á milli} flotastöðvum á Islandi. Í seinni heimstyrjöldinni hélt Stóra ^{si viðhelli} Bretland uppi ^{á milli} gæzlu á hafinu umhverfis Island og á siglingaleiðunum milli Íslands og Vestur-Evrópu.

og þar með
bætt undir
Dona-
konung