

Summary:

Changes in Icelandic Society in the 20th Century

- Hverfisgata 39, next street north of Laugavegur, bit further up from National Theatre and “Cafe Kultura”
- 20:45-22:30 or so
- Tel: 551 5173
- Mobile: 895 2340



‘Break and Continuity in Icelandic History’

- ‘Do present-day Icelanders in their Japanese cars, with their mobile phones and buying their lottery tickets have anything in common with the first generations of people in Iceland apart from living in the same country? In other words, is there a justification for a single history of Iceland?’

Gunnar Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*, 361

Main issues in the history of Iceland in 19th and 20th centuries

- ‘National awakening’
- ‘Industrial revolution’
- Modern Iceland in the making (early 20th century)
- World War I and esp. World War II
- Cold War
- Cod Wars

Main issues in the history of Iceland in 19th and 20th centuries

- Iceland's (non)-relationship with Europe
- Icelandic nationalism and attitudes to foreigners
- Political party system after WWII
- Conservation or utilization of natural resources
- Feminism and women's rights

‘National Awakening’

- ‘National awakening’, the traditional view
- Iceland in 1800
- 1809 Anglo-Icelandic relations and Jörgensen’s ‘phony revolution’
- Jón Sigurðsson: ‘We all protest!’
- 1874 Constitution
- 1904 and all that: Home Rule
- 1918 Autonomy
- A revisionist view of the 19th century

Revisionist view on 19th century Icelandic nationalism I

- ‘What the nationalist historiography tends to gloss over, however, is the strange fact that the alleged enemy – that is, the Danish government – dictated to a great extent the pace of the gradual transfer of power from Copenhagen to Reykjavík.’ Guðmundur Hálfðanarson, ‘Iceland: A Peaceful Secession,’ p. 95

Revisionist view on 19th century Icelandic nationalism II

- ‘The rural society [of 19th century Iceland] was in many ways a classic case of a conservative society, where change occurred extremely slowly and one generation followed another, as if they were in an endless chain’. Prof. Guðmundur Hálfðanarson (main proponent of the revisionist theory on 19th century Iceland)

Emigration to America

- Began in large numbers around 1870
- Primarily northernmost states in USA and Canada (a few to Brazil in 1865)
- Nýja Ísland (new Iceland) founded on Lake Winnipeg in 1875
- Number of emigrants? Maybe 20-25.000

‘Industrial revolution’ - trawling

- ‘The introduction of trawlers led to an industrial revolution in Iceland’
- 1904-12: 19 trawlers to Iceland, all but one based in Reykjavík and Hafnarfjörður
- Why? Need good service, manpower for the catches

Union Treaty of 1918

Non-negotiable for 25
years:

- King as head of state
- Citizenship
- Denmark handles
Iceland's foreign
affairs

Open to revision:

- Supreme Court for
Iceland
- Coast guard
- Currency

The Birth of the Political Party System

- The Labour Party, 1916
- The Progressive Party, 1916
- The Conservative Party, 1924, leading to the Independence Party, 1929
- The Communist Party, 1930, succeeded by the United Labour Party – the Socialist Party, 1938

Iceland in World Wars I and II

- World War I: Iceland in the British sphere of influence
- German interest in Iceland
- British interest in Iceland
- 10 May, 1940: Iceland occupied
- Ikarus: The planned German invasion of Iceland
- Iceland and the ‘Battle of the Atlantic’
- 1941: US protection of Iceland
- The ‘situation’
- Icelandic losses in WW II
- Icelandic profits in WW II
- The war and the declaration of independence, 1944

Icelandic profits in WW II

- 1936-39: Fish and fish products over 80% of Icelandic exports
- WW II: over 90%, almost all to Britain
- Greatly increased prices
- Much work for the foreign forces
- ‘Bretavinna’, (Brit-work) a derogatory term
- New words and products

Republic, 1944

- Denmark occupied 1940, Iceland takes over foreign affairs
- ‘Legalists’ versus ‘Radicals’
- Danish king unhappy
- The Allies pledge support for 1944



Iceland and the Cold War

- The strategic importance of Iceland during the Cold War
- Iceland's (ab)use of this importance
- Opposition in Iceland to NATO membership and the US presence
- Changes after the end of the Cold War

Main dates

- 1946: US request for permanent facilities
- 1947: Marshall Aid
- 1949: Membership of NATO
- 1951: Defence Agreement and return of US troops
- 1956: Decision to expel US forces – then turnaround
- 1961: Navy takes over from Air Force at Keflavík
- 1971: Renewed decision to expel US forces – again a turnaround
- 1989: New strategic environment with the end of the Cold War

The Cod Wars I

- British trawling begins off Iceland, 1889-91
- Icelandic unhappiness; fears of overfishing
- Britain a great naval and world power
- The Three-Mile Rule
- 1901: Anglo-Danish treaty on three-mile limits of territorial waters off Iceland and the Faroes
- No change until WW II
- Truman Declarations, 1945

The Cod Wars II

- 1950-52: From 3 to 4 nautical miles, by using baselines to close bays and fjords
- 1958: 4 miles to 12 miles
- 1972: 12 miles to 50 miles
- 1975: 50 miles to 200 miles
- Always protests abroad, especially in Britain
- Landing ban in 1952, ‘cod wars’ on later occasions

Iceland and Europe I

- 1947: Marshall Aid and OEEC (Organisation for European Economic Co-Operation). Some exceptions for Iceland, one-crop economy
- Early 1960s: Talk of joining the EEC
- 1970: Member of EFTA (European Free Trade Association)
- EFTA founded in 1960 (Austria, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Portugal and Britain)

Iceland and Europe II

- 1992: EEA Treaty (European Economic Area), ratified by Althing in 1994
- EFTA-EU agreement
- The four freedoms: Goods, services, finance, people
- ‘We got all for nothing’, ‘Passport into the 21st century’. Foreign Minister Hannibalsson, 1992
- ‘I bring you some mail from Brussels’. Minister for Social Affairs, 1995

PROS Iceland in EU CONS

- EEA agreement weakening
- A say in EU decision-making
- Need to focus on more than fish
- Fishing rights can be negotiated
- Everyone else doing it
- Too much surrender of sovereignty
- No influence for Iceland in EU
- Will destroy agriculture
- Loss of fishing grounds
- We are doing fine

Icelandic nationalism

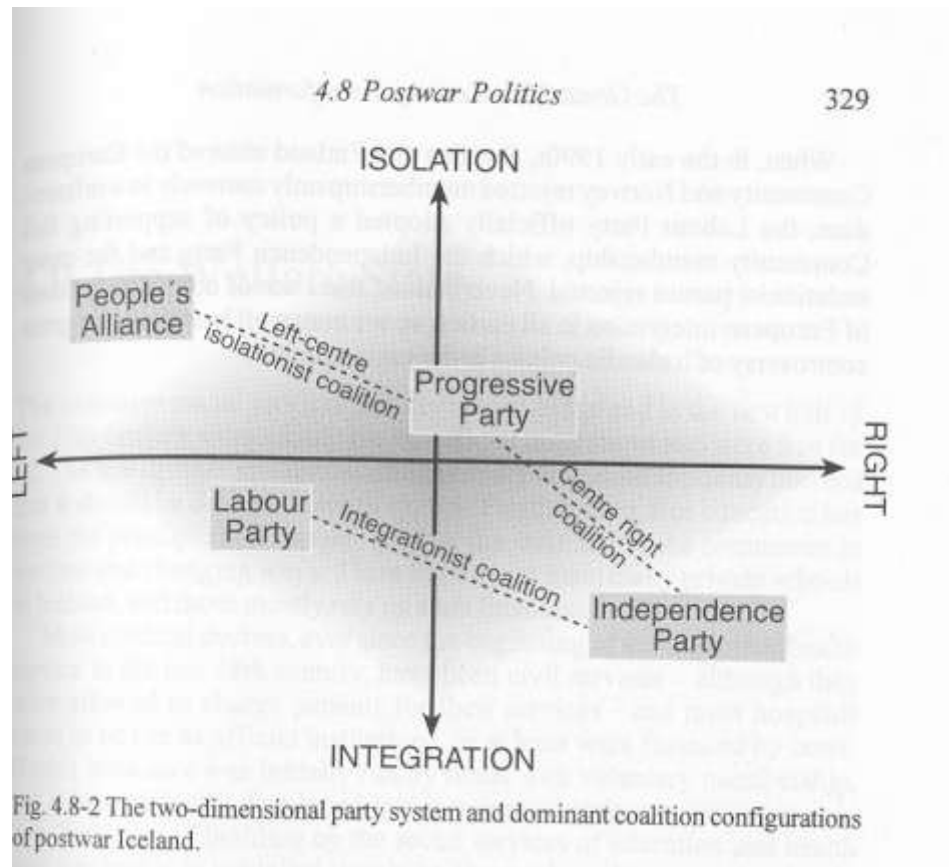


- Definition of nationalism
- Nationalism, positive or negative force?
- Foundations of Icelandic nationalism
- Icelandic nationalism: present expressions and concerns
- Present and past extremes in Icelandic nationalism

The Four-Party System after WWII

- Independence Party (trad. 37-42% of vote)
- Progressive Party (trad. 19-28%)
- Labour (Social Democrats) (11-18%)
- People's Alliance (Socialists) (14-20%)

Two-dimensional party system



2003 Elections

- Independence Party: 34% and 22 seats
- Social Democratic Alliance: 31% and 20 seats
- Progressive Party: 18% and 12 seats
- Left-Green Alliance: 9% and 5 seats
- Liberal Party: 7% and 4 seats

So, to sum up...

- History of Iceland in 19th and 20th centuries a history of change AND continuity...
- We were poor...
- ... Now we are rich
- Changes in Iceland occur because of changes abroad...
- We really aren't that special...
- We could never survive here on our own...