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The Forgotten Footnote of the Second World War: An Examination of the Historiography of
Scandinavia during World War II

A thesis
presented to
the faculty of the Department of History
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of the requirements for the degree
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by
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ABSTRACT

The Forgotten Footnote of the Second World War: An Examination of the Historiography of Scandinavia during World War II

by

Jason Phillips

The Anglo-American interpretation of the Second World War has continuously overlooked the significance of the Scandinavian region to the outcome of the war. This thesis seeks to address some of the more glaring errors of omission that have dampened the Anglo-American understanding of the war. Attention will first be paid to Finland and how its war against the Soviet Union in 1939-1940, known as the Winter War, influenced Adolf Hitler and his decision to launch Operation 'Barbarossa.' In regards to Sweden, attention will be paid to how critical Swedish iron ore was to the Nazi war economy. Finally, the thesis will examine how the Anglo-American interpretation of the German invasion of Norway is flawed. The thesis seeks to change the way that the role Scandinavia played during the Second World War is understood amongst Anglo-American historians and begin a new conversation on the story of World War II.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

More books have been written about the Second World War than could ever be read in a lifetime, with hundreds of new volumes added every year. Everything from military to economic histories of the war, biographies of participants from Adolf Hitler to Field Marshal Montgomery, general surveys to critical examinations of battles, armies, or the means of production of various belligerents have garnered their own books and articles. Yet, for all that has been written about the Second World War, one key area of the war has continued to be under covered amongst Anglo-American historians: Scandinavia. The general interpretation of how the war affected this geographic area is brief and vague, only rarely do English-speaking historians delve into this region in their works on the Second World War. This thesis seeks to address this critical oversight and show why Scandinavia was more important to the outcome of the Second World War than Anglo-American historians have generally acknowledged it to have been.

In order to illustrate the general interpretation of the role Scandinavia played during World War II, five general surveys of the War will be analyzed to understand how Finland, Sweden, and Norway have fit into the Anglo-American story of the War.¹ Winston Churchill's six volume history, *The Second World War*, represents the first interpretation of the Second World War, and its importance as a major work of World War II continues to this day. B.H. Liddell Hart's *History of the Second World War*, published in 1970, was a major work of the second wave of World War II scholarship, and like Churchill's work it is still held in high regard amongst historians. Military historian John Keegan became a prominent historian with the publication of his groundbreaking work, *The Face of Battle*; however, it is his 1989 work *The*

¹ For the purpose of this study Scandinavia will be defined as Norway, Sweden, and Finland; rather than the traditional definition of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark.

Second World War which is of interest to this thesis. In order to get a modern perspective, two books from 2011, Max Hastings's *Inferno: The World At War, 1939-1945* and Andrew Roberts's *The Storm of War: A New History of the Second World War* will be analyzed. These works were chosen because they have either had a long publishing history and history of academic use or they have been recent revisions by prominent military historians, making them a genuine example of the Anglo-American historiographic tradition. These authors' views of Finland, Sweden, and Norway will be discussed in detail.

War for Finland did not begin in September 1939; rather, it had essentially been going on since 1938 when the Soviet Union began discussions with the Finns for bases in the Gulf of Finland that could be used to protect the Soviet city of Leningrad. The Finns refused to capitulate to the Soviet demands, even after the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact which made allies of Germany and the Soviet Union and ended Finnish hopes for an alliance with Adolf Hitler for the maintenance of Finnish sovereignty. War would breakout between Finland and the Soviet Union on the last day of November 1939 and last until March 1940. After the defeat of Finland, the Finnish government began to drift as close to Germany as they could and joined in Operation 'Barbarossa,' or in Finland what was called the Continuation War against the Soviet Union. The wars themselves will be covered in more detail in the first chapter of this thesis. The Finns were also a main supplier of raw materials to Hitler's Reich, especially Finnish nickel.

It would be unfair to criticize Churchill for not giving events in Scandinavia during the winter of 1939-1940 enough coverage, for he spends a great deal of time in analyzing these events, specifically the Winter War and how it could be used to the benefit of the British war strategy. However, this is all that Churchill actually discusses in any detail. There is no mention

of the nickel trade or how it had influenced German-Soviet relations, nor is there any serious discussion of how the Germans viewed the Winter War. Churchill noted, “There is no doubt that Hitler and all his generals meditated profoundly upon the Finnish exposure, and that it played a potent part in influencing the Fuehrer’s thought.”² This was certainly true, but Churchill’s account lacked any discussion of the larger issue of Finnish-Soviet relations and how this affected Hitler’s thinking.

Liddell Hart had been a British Captain during the First World War and later became a highly influential writer of military theory and history in Great Britain. Liddell Hart’s interpretation of the Winter War was much better than Churchill’s, although he draws the same conclusion. The reason that Liddell Hart’s interpretation is better is that he covered the war in a small chapter, keeping everything together and providing a more detailed analysis of the conflict; whereas, Churchill had parts about the Winter War scattered throughout his six volume set. Liddell Hart argued that the British saw in Finland an opportunity to capture the Swedish iron ore and that the war showed the world the deficiencies of the Red Army, something that would influence Hitler’s decision to launch Operation *Barbarossa*.³ The problem with Liddell Hart’s work, though, is that he did not discuss the impact that the Winter War had on German thinking in more than just one sentence. Liddell Hart simply stated his claims and swept through the Winter War in a matter of pages, leaving little covered of actual importance.

Military historian John Keegan has been regarded as a genius on military theory. His 1989 book, *The Second World War*, has generally been regarded as an authority of World War II. There is one problem with Keegan’s book, though; he only devoted three paragraphs to the Winter War. Keegan did point out that the Winter War allowed the Germans to understand that

² Winston Churchill, *The Gathering Storm* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948), 543.

³ B.H. Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War* (Old Saybrook, Connecticut: Konecky & Konecky, 1970), 44-45.

the Allies had plans on occupying Scandinavia and cutting off the iron-ore shipments the Germans needed, but he did this in a few sentences and moves on.⁴ Keegan did not give much analysis on why the Winter War mattered to World War II or how it influenced Hitler's decision to invade the Soviet Union. Instead, Keegan simply described the War in a few paragraphs in military terms and moved on; in this, he seriously understated the impact that this limited conflict would have upon the later direction of the war.

Max Hastings did a much better job of describing the conflict in detail than the other authors mentioned before, as he devoted more pages and more time in discussing the conflict, how the Winter War was waged, and the key campaigns and battles of the Winter War. Hastings's interpretation is not a fully accurate interpretation of the Winter War and its significance, though. For instance, Hastings argued, "The Finnish campaign was irrelevant to the confrontation between Germany and the Allies, but it importantly influenced the strategy of both. They alike concluded that the Soviet Union was a paper tiger; that Stalin's armies were weak, his commanders bunglers."⁵ Certainly this is an important point and an accurate conclusion of the significance of the Winter War, but it does not tell the full story. Hastings did not expand much upon this one single point, leaving a lot of the importance of the Winter War out of his book.

Andrew Roberts's interpretation, though succinct, contained a great military analysis of the Winter War but offered little more. For instance, Roberts noted that Hitler had learned the lesson from the Winter War that the Soviet Union was weak and could be conquered.⁶ Yet nowhere in Roberts's interpretation of the Second World War is found any mention of Finnish

⁴ John Keegan, *The Second World War* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 49.

⁵ Max Hastings, *Inferno: The World at War, 1939-1945* (New York: Alfred K. Knopf, 2011), 38-39.

⁶ Andrew Roberts, *The Storm of War: A New History of the Second World War* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2011), 29-34.

nickel or the impact of Finnish-Soviet relations on Nazi thinking. So while Roberts might have written a *New History of the Second World War*, some of the interpretations remain from the old interpretations of Churchill, Liddell Hart, and Keegan. One thing that is astounding about Roberts's work, and Hastings's work as well, is that they could continue to point to the Winter War as influencing Hitler's decision to invade the Soviet Union yet never analyze if there was more to the story of Finland or how this small state influenced Hitler. The first chapter of this work will show that there is more to the story than these historians have noted.

Unlike Finland, Sweden was never invaded nor did Sweden ever take up arms against either the Allied or the Axis Powers. How, then, could this nation have made a major impact upon how the Second World War played out? The answer is simple, Sweden possessed the finest iron ore on the planet and Germany was a major trading partner of the Swedes. Indeed, Swedish iron ore would drive Allied plans during the Winter War and play a determining role in Hitler's decision to invade Norway in April 1940. Swedish iron ore was absolutely critical to the German war economy, for without it the Germans could not have fought the Second World War. Amazingly, though, this is something that is also severely under covered amongst Anglo-American historians. The Swedish participation in rescuing Holocaust victims has also been largely ignored by English-speaking historians, even though it is the greatest evidence of the importance of Swedish iron ore to the German war economy. The Germans were so concerned over losing the iron ore that they overlooked the Swedes rescuing Jews; no other country received this free pass from Hitler and the Nazis.

As he did with the Winter War, Churchill spent a lot of time covering the importance of Swedish iron ore to British strategy, specifically how the British could withhold it from Germany. Indeed, compared to the later works, Churchill's account is by far the most thorough.

Yet, Churchill never goes back to the importance of Swedish iron ore after the occupation of Norway. For Churchill, once it could no longer be taken away from the Germans, it lost all importance. Liddell Hart briefly introduced the concept of Swedish iron ore into his discussion of early Allied plans to use the Winter War in order to prevent Germany from attaining any more iron ore from Sweden but never went into any detail of why this would have helped the British win the war or the impact that this would have on the Second World War. Keegan only mentioned Swedish iron ore in his discussion of Allied intentions for Scandinavia and cutting Germany off of this vital resource. Hastings mentioned Swedish iron ore twice in his latest work and Roberts only brings it up three times; both historians brought the issue up only when talking about Allied strategy to cut the iron ore off. The story of the importance of Swedish iron ore for later German actions, especially in Russia, then, has continued to lose out in the newer Anglo-American works on the Second World War, with fewer and fewer pages devoted to this topic. None of these works mentions any of the actions by the Swedish government or its citizenry to rescue the Jews during the Holocaust, it is just not important to the general story that Anglo-American historians have construed.

As stated earlier, the Winter War between Finland and the Soviet Union brought Scandinavia into the spotlight, with the Allies looking for ways to cut off the German supply of Swedish iron ore. The major view of how to do that was to occupy the Norwegian port of Narvik, which was from where the Swedish iron ore was shipped during the winter months when Swedish ports were too frozen to receive ships. This strategy, combined with the *Altmark* Incident, which was a naval engagement between British and German ships in Norwegian waters, would lead to the German invasion of Norway in April 1940. The Anglo-American interpretation of the invasion, though, often seems based more on myth than fact, for the Anglo-

American interpretation places the blame on the actions of Vidkun Quisling. Quisling was a far-right politician in Norway before the war who wanted to institute a *coup* with Nazi support. Because of his visits with Hitler, though, he has become the scapegoat for the German decision to invade Norway, an interpretation that conveniently overlooks British sins of omission.

Churchill's interpretation of the reason the invasion was launched had little to do with the *Altmark* Incident, although Churchill did concede that the event "no doubt gave a spur to action."⁷ Churchill placed the blame upon Quisling and refused to budge from this, inserting a massive quote from the Nuremberg trials in which German General Falkenhorst described how he was selected to lead the German invasion of Norway. Essentially, Falkenhorst stated that the Germans drew plans up for an invasion because of fears that the British were about to take preventative measures in Norway.⁸ The implication behind this is that the Germans were already planning the occupation of this country, and the *Altmark* Incident was just a minor event that led to Hitler launching the invasion a little early. Churchill made it a point, as the third chapter of this thesis will show, to argue that the German decision was made upon Quisling's December visit to Germany in which Quisling stressed that the British were going to take action in Norway to Hitler.

Liddell Hart's interpretation of why the Germans chose to invade Norway is much more reliable and does not make the same mistakes that Churchill's interpretation made. For instance, Liddell Hart correctly pointed out that Hitler's reaction to the Quisling visit was that it was in Germany's interest for Norway to remain a neutral country, not that Quisling's visit had convinced Hitler of the need to invade Norway and institute a puppet government. Liddell Hart argued, "According to the German admirals, the *Altmark* affair was decisive in swinging Hitler

⁷ Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, 564.

⁸ Churchill, 564.

in favour of intervention in Norway. It was the spark that set fire to the powder trail.”⁹ Keegan would continue in his work the correct interpretation of events that Liddell Hart had argued. Keegan noted that the Quisling visit had not resulted in a concrete German decision to invade Norway, but rather it was the *Altmark* Incident that pushed Hitler to the decision that Norway should be occupied before it was too late.¹⁰

Ironically, despite the more accurate interpretations of Liddell Hart and Keegan, both Hastings’s and Roberts’s later accounts of the German decision to invade Norway are both overly vague in their interpretation. Hastings mentioned the *Altmark* Incident but did not put any significance onto it other than noting, “For months, Hitler had been fearful of British intervention in Norway,...[Hitler’s] agitation acquired urgency on 14 February 1940, when Royal Navy destroyers pursued...[the] *Altmark* into a Norwegian fjord to free 299 captive British merchant seamen. Determined to preempt a British initiative...he gave the final order for the invasion fleet to sail.”¹¹ Curiously absent from Hastings work is any reference to the meetings between Hitler and Quisling. Rather than continuing the flawed interpretation of Churchill, then, Hastings can be criticized for refusing to even tackle the question of why Germany invaded Norway. Roberts, on the other hand, fell into the Churchill trap by arguing, “An incident on 16 February, in which the neutral Norwegians seemed to have taken the Royal Navy’s side when HMS *Cossack* daringly rescued 299 British prisoners from a German vessel, the *Altmark*, also persuaded the Führer of Norway’s iniquity.”¹² Roberts did not place any of the blame on Quisling per se; rather, Roberts notes that Admiral Erich Raeder had recommended establishing

⁹ Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, 55-56.

¹⁰ Keegan, *The Second World War*, 49-50.

¹¹ Hastings, *Inferno*, 42.

¹² Roberts, *The Storm of War*, 38.

bases in Norway, which was something Raeder and Quisling had discussed.¹³ Essentially, then, Roberts was arguing that it was not the *Altmark* Incident that urged Hitler to action, the decision goes back to Hitler's conversations with Raeder and Quisling. As Chapter Three will show, the decision to invade Norway was based solely upon the *Altmark* Incident, as everything beforehand had been hypothetical planning.

What should be stressed about these various works and how they interpret Scandinavia during World War II is the fact that none of the Anglo-American authors, with the exception of Churchill, actually devote much space to the analysis of these countries. Churchill, of course, wrote six-volumes on the war, so he had more of an opportunity to discuss this area than the other authors. At the same time, it must be stressed how important it is that the only one of these authors who spent a large amount of time covering Scandinavia during World War II, Churchill, is ultimately flawed in his interpretation. This thesis will show that under covering Scandinavia during the Second World War has been a mistake for several important reasons. The first chapter will argue that Finland was extremely important to how the Germans viewed the Soviet Union. The Winter War showed the Germans the weaknesses of the Soviet Union and Finnish nickel helped push the Germans into launching Operation 'Barbarossa.' The second chapter will examine how vital Swedish iron ore was to the German war economy and look into Swedish actions during the Holocaust, particularly the rescue of the Danish Jews. The importance of Swedish iron ore is illustrated by the fact that the Germans were willing to overlook the Swedes saving Jews during the war because of the fact that they could not risk the Swedes blowing up their mines and losing all of the iron ore that Sweden was providing them. The third chapter will examine how the British can be blamed for both the invasion of Norway and the victory of the Germans in Norway. This chapter will primarily focus upon why the Germans invaded Norway

¹³ Roberts, 38.

and how the British squandered victory in Norway. These arguments will show why Scandinavia is worthy of more than the mere footnote status that Anglo-American historians of the Second World War have typically attached to it.

CHAPTER 2

FINLAND: THE NATION THAT ALTERED THE COURSE OF THE WAR

Our navy was engaged against the Finnish fleet... I remember hearing when I was at Stalin's in Moscow that one of our submarines had been unable to sink a Swedish merchant vessel which it had mistaken for a Finnish ship. The Germans observed this incident and gave us a teasing pinch by offering their assistance: "Are things that bad? You can't even sink an unarmed ship? Maybe you need some help from us?" You can imagine how painful this was to us. Hitler was letting us know that he recognized our helplessness and was gloating over it.—Nikita Khrushchev¹⁴

Many historians have either forgotten the importance of the Soviet-Finnish Winter War or have chosen to overlook its importance, but the pungent comment from Khrushchev's memoirs serves as a reminder of the significance contemporaries assigned the conflict. This passage, so illustrative of German attitude towards the weakness they saw in the Red Army, is also indicative of the impact that Finland had on Hitler's decision for war with the Soviet Union, and thus on the outcome of the Second World War. From the Winter War to the Continuation War Finland never won any major battles nor did they even participate in any major battles; however, Finland's impact on the war should not be just a footnote in the annals of World War II. In summary of the Winter War, Khrushchev wrote, "[The Winter War] also exposed our weaknesses to Hitler. It doesn't take much imagination to guess what Hitler must have concluded... 'The Soviet Union has barely managed to handle a country that we could have disposed of in a few hours. What would be left of the Russians if we attacked them with our best equipment and masses of our best-trained, best-organized troops?'"¹⁵

One of the most influential books written about Adolf Hitler's decision to invade the Soviet Union was Gabriel Gorodetsky's *Grand Delusion*. The book has become a modern classic and a highly influential work for any serious scholar of the Second World War. The main

¹⁴ Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, trans. and ed. Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970), 153.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 156.

idea of *Grand Delusion* was that the German decision for the invasion of Russia was rooted not solely in Nazi ideology but rather stemmed from the realities of the geopolitical scene at the time. Gorodetsky argued,

Hitler's decision to attack Russia is indeed enigmatic. It is hardly possible to detect a direct line leading from his pledge in *Mein Kampf* to 'terminate the endless German drive to the south and west of Europe, and direct our gaze towards the lands in the east; to the actual decision to embark on Operation 'Barbarossa'. The commonly held view bypasses the difficulty by claiming that Hitler had consistently aimed at the destruction of Moscow 'as the headquarters of the "Judaean-Bolshevist world conspiracy"'. The fact that the crusade against Bolshevism and the extermination of the Jews revolutionized the course of the war in 1941 is not sufficient in itself to prove steadfast adherence to a blueprint. The ideological convictions found open expression only once the decision on 'Barbarossa' had been taken, and to a large extent diverted Hitler from a more rational strategic policy which had characterized his military leadership so far.¹⁶

Although plausible, Gorodetsky's analysis slighted one major geopolitical impediment to good German-Soviet relations, Finland. While he went into great detail in describing how the Balkans influenced Hitler's decision to invade the Soviet Union, Gorodetsky completely left Finland out of the discussion. From Gorodetsky's work one would get the impression that not only was Finland not a major factor, but the country was not even a minor factor, in the events leading up to 'Operation Barbarossa.' This failure to recognize the importance of Finland in both German and Soviet calculations has consistently been a major trend in the historiography of 'Operation Barbarossa' in particular and the Second World War in general.¹⁷

Historians and scholars have continued to overlook the influence that Finland had on World War II. From the Winter War of 1939 between Finland and the Soviet Union to the end of the Second World War in 1945, Finland played a crucial role in the diplomatic relationship between Germany and the Soviet Union. Many works on the war have erroneously dismissed the events that transpired in Finland preceding and during the German-Soviet war. Finland was

¹⁶ Gabriel Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion: Stalin and the German Invasion of Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 48.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 49-51.

instrumental not only in contributing to Hitler's decision to go to war against the Soviet Union, but was also one of the major suppliers of raw materials to the Germans during the war. Indeed, without Finnish nickel the Germans could hardly have accomplished what they did militarily. This chapter will examine both primary documents and secondary sources in order to determine why Finland's role in World War II has been relegated to a mere footnote in most histories of the conflict.

In 1954 Albin Anderson argued that the origin of the Winter War could be explained in the context of Germany's attack upon Poland in September 1939. The Winter War was an expression of the clash over Finland's and Russia's respective borders dating back to the 1920 Treaty of Dorpat that was signed following Finnish independence. The Soviets believed Leningrad to be insecure and the Finns believed they had given up too much to the Soviet Union in the Treaty of Dorpat.¹⁸ It was German actions, though, that provided the impetus for possible border revisions. After the Austro-German *Anschluss* in March 1938, evidently emboldened by Hitler's success, Stalin initiated talks with Finland over the issue of their shared border. Then, likely feeling menaced by the swift German victory over Poland, in a memorandum dated October 14, 1939, Stalin made clear to Finland what the Soviets required for peace: "Securing the safety of Leningrad" and "Becoming satisfied that Finland will have firm, friendly relations with the Soviet Union."¹⁹ Essentially, the talks that followed between the USSR and Finland began and fell apart over the issue of Finland ceding the island of Hanko to the Soviets for use as a naval base. This issue was important to both sides. A naval base at Hanko would have allowed the Soviets to close the Gulf of Finland to an invading force and thus protect the city of

¹⁸ Albin T. Anderson, "Origins of the Winter War: A Study of Russo-Finnish Diplomacy," *World Politics* 6, no. 2 (January 1954): 169.

¹⁹ Soviet Proposals to Finland on Territorial Changes and Defence: Memorandum to the Finnish Minister Paasikivi, October 14, 1939, League of Nations Official Journal, 1939, pg. 518. In *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy vol. 3: 1933-1939* ed. Jane Degras (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 382.

Leningrad, while to the Finns it was important because such a Russian base would only be ten miles from the Finnish capital city of Helsinki, thus a serious threat to Finnish sovereignty. It should be remembered that from 1807 until the Bolshevik Revolution, Finland had been ruled by the Russians. The Russian rule was generally seen as oppressive, something that the Finnish people had no desire to return to.²⁰ Some historians, particularly John Lukacs, have argued that Finland actually gained its independence from Russia in 1809 and it was not until 1900 that Finland lost its freedom. This is based on the fact that the Finns were given political rights by the Russians they had not enjoyed under the Swedes and were in fact the best treated minority in any European empire in the nineteenth century.²¹ While it is true the Finns enjoyed a high degree of freedom under the Russians at this time, they were still part of the Russian Empire, not an autonomous country. Further, most Finns did not look back at the nineteenth century as a period of freedom; rather, they saw it as further subjugation. As a result, most Finns saw the Russians prior to the Winter War as an aggressive, oppressive neighbor. This sentiment was readily apparent when Juho Kusti Paasikivi, an important Finnish politician who represented Finland along with Väinö Tanner during the Soviet-Finnish negotiations, ultimately came to the conclusion that it had been the Hanko issue that led to the collapse of negotiations and essentially war.²²

D.W. Spring argued in a 1986 article that the decision to invade Finland was not a light one and that Stalin had been willing to acquiesce if the Finns would only work with him. Spring argued that Hanko was not overly important, because on November 4, 1939, Stalin had returned to the Soviet-Finnish discussions and shifted the Soviet demand from Hanko to other islands off

²⁰ David Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 150-196.

²¹ John Lukacs, "Finland Vindicated" *Foreign Affairs*, 71, no. 4 (Fall 1992): 51-53.

²² Max Jakobson, *The Diplomacy of the Winter War: An Account of the Russo-Finnish War, 1939-1940* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 138.

the Hanko coast. In Spring's opinion this was a clear indication that the decision for war had not yet been made.²³ Spring also argued that the creation of the Kuusinen government, a Moscow puppet government positioned in Finland, did not represent a final break in relations as well. However, as Timo Vihavainen has argued, Spring's analysis is fundamentally flawed. Vihavainen argued that Spring, and historians who have argued similar points, have misunderstood the seriousness of Soviet ideology. The Soviets were not using the Kuusinen government just as propaganda; rather, the Kuusinen government was a necessity for the Soviets to achieve their territorial desires. Without Kuusinen the Soviets could not claim to be following the people of Finland's wish to be liberated from their capitalist government. The Kuusinen government was the tool by which the Soviets justified conflict with Finland.²⁴ Stalin saw the Finns' tenacity as a hindrance to Soviet security and the only solution was to use the Kuusinen government as a tool to attain the security he felt they needed.

On the morning of November 30, 1939, the collapse of negotiations turned into war as the Soviet Union invaded Finland. The invasion was based upon an earlier incident at Mainila where it was claimed that Finnish troops had fired upon Soviet border guards; contemporary research has proved this incident to be a false *causus belli*.²⁵ For 105 days the two sides would wage war upon one another, with neither side gaining a clear advantage. Olli Vehviläinen wrote the best description of the immediate origin of the war in his book *Finland in the Second World War*, "The Winter War of 1939-40 between Finland and the Soviet Union began with two mistakes. The Finnish government believed that the Soviet Union would not attack, and Stalin

²³ D.W. Spring, "The Soviet Decision for War Against Finland, 30 November, 1939" *Soviet Studies* 38, no. 2 (April, 1986): 215.

²⁴ Timo Vihavainen, "The Soviet Decision for War Against Finland, 30 November, 1939: A Comment" *Soviet Studies* 39, no. 2 (April, 1987): 314-317.

²⁵ Olli Vehviläinen, *Finland in the Second World War: Between Germany and Russia*, trans. Gerard McAlester (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 45.

believed that Finland would not be capable of offering any significant resistance.”²⁶ The beginning of the Winter War cannot be understood in any other context because neither side was prepared for the war that followed. Marshal Mannerheim, head of Finland’s armed forces, had even attempted to resign from his post because of the lack of preparation of Finland’s armed forces leading up to November 1939. “I did not hide from the government that the immediate future filled me with apprehension, and I could not conceal my surprise that government and Parliament had shown themselves so disinclined to pass the appropriations I had suggested...when we seemed to be on the threshold of war...I therefore felt compelled to declare that I could no longer share the responsibility for neglected armaments.”²⁷ Luckily for Finland, Marshal Mannerheim would return to post once the Soviets crossed the border and Finnish forces were able to halt the Soviet advance.

Despite their heroic, months-long resistance, the Finns were forced to surrender after the Red Army, reorganized by General Timoshenko, was able to break through the Mannerheim Line on February 11, 1940.²⁸ This was the beginning of the end, as the Mannerheim Line was the main Finnish protection from the Red Army.²⁹ Once it was apparent that no immediate military assistance would be provided by the Allies or Sweden, the Finnish government accepted its fate and entered peace negotiations. The Treaty of Moscow ended the Winter War on March 12, 1940. The Treaty redrew the border between the Soviet Union and Finland with Finland

²⁶ Ibid., 46.

²⁷ Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshal Mannerheim*, trans. Count Eric Lewenhaupt (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, Inc., 1954), 319.

²⁸ Chris Mann and Christer Jörgensen, *Hitler’s Arctic War: The German Campaigns in Norway, Finland, and the USSR 1940-1945* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2002), 31.

²⁹ William R. Trotter, *Frozen Hell: The Russo-Finnish Winter War of 1939-40* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2000), 225.

losing the city of Viipuri as well as suffering the forced leasing of Hanko to the Soviet Union.³⁰

This would not end hostilities, though, nor would the peace end the importance of Finland towards the development of the Second World War. For as Waldemar Erfurth argued, “As a serious consequence of the sudden outbreak of the Winter War and the lack of assistance from other powers, the Finns were placed in a position of uncertainty. They felt deserted and believed that their mighty eastern neighbor had further evil designs against their country, with the ultimate object of destroying its independence.”³¹

Emphasis must be put on the Winter War and its significance in two important aspects. The first is how the Winter War was viewed by the Allies as a way to cut off Axis iron ore supplies from Sweden and the response in Germany to this idea. The second is how the Winter War convinced Adolf Hitler that Nazi Germany could launch ‘Operation Barbarossa’ while simultaneously waging war in the West. Hitler came to this conclusion because of both the poor showing of the Red Army in Finland and the clash of German and Soviet interests in Scandinavia. As Adam Ulam argued “for the Germans, the Finnish affair was...an embarrassment and a temptation...It interfered with the supply of badly needed minerals from Finland...[but] there was the lesson once again of Russia’s military weakness and the temptation to press harder on her deeply compromised and isolated regime.”³² In these two aspects, the importance of the Winter War has been severely understated by Anglo-American historians. By analyzing secondary accounts of the Winter War and Finland’s role in World War II, along with

³⁰ The Russo-Finnish Treaty of Moscow, 12 March 1939, in Robert Edwards, *The Winter War: Russia’s Invasion of Finland, 1939-1940* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2008), 283-289.

³¹ Waldemar Erfurth, *The Last Finnish War* (Washington D.C.: University Publications of America, Inc., 1979), 3-4.

³² Adam Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-73*, 2nd ed. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), 291.

primary accounts from Finnish, German, and even Allied leaders, a better understanding of those 105 days can be arrived at.

Winston Churchill's *The Second World War*, was one of the few accounts of the Second World War that placed a major emphasis upon the Winter War. Churchill argued, "I sympathised ardently with the Finns and supported all proposals for their aid; and I welcomed this new and favourable breeze as a means of achieving the major strategic advantage of cutting off vital iron-ore supplies of Germany."³³ This statement insinuated that the British were planning to use the Winter War to cut off German supplies of iron-ore from Sweden, without which the Third Reich could hardly have waged war. Therefore, the Winter War was far from a miniscule event that did not affect the outcome of the Second World War. On the contrary, in order to enervate Germany, the Allies nearly turned Scandinavia into a major theater of war. The irony, of course, is that this statement also implies that the Allies would have gone to war with the Soviet Union, which would have made military allies out of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. Essentially, the Allied search for any advantage against Hitler, which had led them to Finland, would have actually gained them another powerful enemy, the Soviet Union. This would have significantly altered the course of the war and twentieth century history. Facing two powerful opponents would have markedly worsened the Allied situation, especially at a time of limited French enthusiasm for war. Despite his insight into Finland's importance, Churchill ended his account of the Winter War episode in cavalier fashion, "On sixty days 'Aid to Finland' had been part of the Cabinet agenda. Nothing had come of it all. Finland had been crushed into submission by Russia."³⁴ While Churchill's analysis of the significance of cutting off Swedish iron ore exports is accurate and shows the potential importance of the Winter War to the Allies,

³³ Winston Churchill, *The Gathering Storm* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948), 543-544.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 580.

his lack of a detailed analysis of the war or its conclusion shows the ambivalence that Churchill felt towards the Winter War, as well as his frustration with the inability of the War Cabinet to take action or come to any decision at all. Churchill's interpretation is also skewed by his Anglo-centric approach; once the British could not send troops through Scandinavia into Finland the Winter War lost its importance in the story of World War II, a mistake that Churchill would not be the only historian to make.

The Allied interest in the Winter War did, of course, stem from the fact that they viewed intervention in the conflict as a way of cutting off Swedish iron ore from Germany. The British Ministry of Economic Warfare in November 1939 told the War Cabinet that without Swedish iron ore, "Germany would be incapable of waging active war longer than twelve months." This effort to deprive Germany of vital raw materials became the primary focus of the Allies during the Winter War.³⁵ This strategy was heightened by the view that the Finnish war would indirectly aggravate the supply of Soviet oil to Germany, as the Soviet Union would run out of its surplus in its war with Finland. Combined with the loss of Swedish iron ore, the Allies believed that the German war machine would be in serious trouble by April 1940.³⁶ Andrew Schwartz has argued that the Allied decision to aid the Finns was also based on the strategic consideration that the aid would keep Russia busy in Finland and incapable of posing a threat to Turkey and Romania, then allies of Great Britain and France. Schwartz also considered drawing Norway and Sweden into the conflict as a vital consideration as well, though.³⁷ On December 19, 1939, the Allied Supreme War Council met in Paris and decided that based on the reality of Finland's ability to defend itself, the Allies should offer all possible assistance to the Finns. This

³⁵ Jakobson, *Diplomacy in the Winter War*, 201.

³⁶ Jukka Nevakivi, *The Appeal that was Never Made: The Allies, Scandinavia and The Finnish Winter War, 1939-1940* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1976), 64.

³⁷ Andrew J. Schwartz, *America and the Russo-Finnish War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1960), 29.

decision was based more upon seizing the Swedish iron ore mines and Norwegian transportation of the ore than on any view of helping the Finns maintain national sovereignty.³⁸ As Paul Doerr has pointed out, by mid-March only one British brigade would actually have crossed the Swedish border and entered into Finland to help fight the Soviets.³⁹ Strategically, this was the logical choice for the Allies to make. The Soviet Union was no ally of Great Britain and France; in reality, the opposite was true, the Soviet Union was allied with Nazi Germany and supplying Germany with the oil it needed to maintain its war machine. In fact, the Allied Powers would play a major role in expelling the Soviet Union from the League of Nations as a result of the Winter War.⁴⁰ The Allies saw an opportunity in Finland to help cut off the oil the Germans needed, as well as the iron ore vital for its steel production.

Great Britain and France were not the only countries that understood the critical impact that Swedish iron ore had on German war production, though. Germany would remain neutral throughout the Winter War but was always keeping an eye on the Allies and the Soviet Union to ensure that German interests were not threatened. For instance, on January 13, 1940, less than one month after the Allied Supreme War Council meeting, Adolf Hitler ordered an investigation to look into a hypothetical occupation of Norway in order to protect Germany's Swedish iron-ore interests. On April 9, 1940, just weeks after the Winter War ended; Germany turned that investigation into reality by invading Norway and Denmark.⁴¹ Observably, the Winter War had a major impact upon German thinking in the early months of 1940, with protecting Swedish iron

³⁸ Vehviläinen, *Finland in the Second World War*, 56.

³⁹ Paul Doerr, "'Frigid but Unprovocative': British Policy Towards the USSR from the Nazi-Soviet Pact to the Winter War, 1939" *The Journal of Contemporary History* 36 no. 3 (July, 2001): 438.

⁴⁰ Peter J. Beck, "The Winter War in the International Context: Britain and the League of Nations' Role in the Russo-Finnish Dispute, 1939-1940" *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 12, no. 1 (1981): 68-70.

⁴¹ Eloise Engle and Lauri Paananen, *The Winter War: The Russo-Finnish Conflict, 1939-40* (New York: Scribner, 1972), 120-121.

ore shipments being the main concern. On July 19, 1940, Hitler gave a speech in which he justified the German invasion of Norway. In the speech he argued,

The conclusion of peace between Russia and Finland caused the contemplated action in the Northern States to be withheld at the last moment; but a few days later these intentions again became more definite and a final decision was reached. Britain and France had agreed to carry out an immediate occupation of a number of the most important points in Norway under the pretext of preventing Germany from benefiting from further war supplies of Swedish ore.⁴²

While this speech came months after the Winter War, it is relevant because Hitler framed Allied intentions as having been formed during the Winter War and the Allied invasion of Sweden would have occurred had the Winter War continued. The implication behind this statement is that Germany's occupation of Norway and Denmark was legitimate because it was a means of protecting the German war economy from the Allies, whose true plans had not been to protect the democracy and sovereignty of Finland, but rather, to cripple the German war economy. This speech is important because it showed that Hitler understood all along what Great Britain and France were really planning. The official German history of World War II, *Germany and the Second World War*, confirms this view. Adolf Hitler had initially viewed the Winter War as an advantage to German policies in the Balkans, as Stalin was tied down with Finland; however, once the Allies began planning an advance into Scandinavia to help Finland and secure Swedish iron ore, Hitler began to worry and ordered the study into an occupation of Norway.⁴³ Hitler understood what the Allies wanted to accomplish during the Winter War; an understanding that would shape the way he handled the rest of the war.

As Hitler became more and more concerned about Soviet interests in Finland, peace between Finland and the Soviet Union became more and more important to Hitler. Wipert von

⁴² Adolf Hitler, *My New Order* ed. Raoul de Roussy de Sales, (New York: Octagon Books, 1973), 817.

⁴³ Horst Rohde, "Development of the Situation in North-Eastern Europe: Effects of the Hitler-Stalin Pact" in *Germany and the Second World War* vol II. *Germany's Initial Conquests in Europe* ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 147-148.

Blücher, the German ambassador in Finland, had pointed out early during the Winter War that Scandinavian neutrality could not be counted on to prevent Swedish iron ore from falling into the wrong hands. Sweden was within the grasp of both the Soviets and the Allies, which was a matter of grave concern for Germany.⁴⁴ Neither the occupation of Finland by the Soviet Union, nor the continuation of the Winter War with the Allied powers now battling the Soviet Union in Scandinavia were viewed as favorable developments. The latter alternative would not only cut off Swedish iron ore shipments, it would also render the Soviet Union a useless ally, as it would no longer have war material surpluses for Germany. The only reasonable course of action, from the German perspective, was for peace. Field Marshal Hermann Goering attempted to persuade the Finns to make peace with the Soviets in order to prevent Soviet occupation of Finland. Goering even promised the Finns in March 1940 they would eventually regain whatever they might lose in the peace to the Soviet Union, as war between the Soviet Union and Germany would very soon break out.⁴⁵ Essentially, Goering was telling the Finns to avoid further trouble now so the Germans could help them in the future.

Although Adolf Hitler had always been driven by a desire to establish *Lebensraum*, living space, in the western portions of the Soviet Union, the fact remains that at the outbreak of World War II these plans had been at least temporarily suspended by the realities of the geopolitical situation of the time.⁴⁶ The Nazi-Soviet Pact had made allies out of the two nations. Hitler recognized he needed Soviet help to defeat the Western powers; the Soviet Union could wait to be conquered. The Winter War, however, forced Hitler to rethink his strategy. If the Soviet Union could not even conquer a small state like Finland, how could it possibly stand up to the

⁴⁴ Robert Edwards, *The Winter War: Russia's Invasion of Finland, 1939-1940* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2008), 279.

⁴⁵ Vehviläinen, *Finland in the Second World War*, 67.

⁴⁶ Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion*, 48-49.

might of the Third Reich? While the Winter War was by no means the only reason Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa, it certainly provided him the opportunity to see Soviet forces in action; Hitler was not impressed.

Joseph Goebbels, Germany's Propaganda Minister, recorded in his diary on November 11, 1939, "Russia's army is not worth much. Badly led and even more poorly armed. We do not need their military aid."⁴⁷ While Goebbels would go on in this entry to express gratitude that Germany did not have to fight a two-front war, he did not express concern for the prospect of a second, Russian front. This entry tells the modern scholar that even before the Winter War some German leaders viewed the Red Army as weak and lacking the strength necessary for a true world power. On January 5, 1940, Goebbels noted, "The Russians are making absolutely no progress in Finland. The Red Army really does seem to be of very little military worth."⁴⁸ It is important to note that at this point the Winter War had been going on for over a month, which implies that Goebbels's view of the Red Army was becoming embedded in his mind: the Red Army was seen as weak and inefficient in conquering even the smallest of states, Finland.

Albert Speer, Adolf Hitler's Minister of Armaments and War Production, wrote in his memoirs that Hitler first became aware of Red Army deficiencies when German troops met Soviet troops on the demarcation line in Poland. This had a profound effect upon Hitler, as he often quoted this as proof of a Soviet lack of strength. Speer also noted, "Soon afterward, the failure of the Soviet offensive against Finland confirmed him in this view."⁴⁹ Once again here was a top Nazi official, who was very close to Adolf Hitler, arguing that the Winter War had a major impact on Hitler's view of Red Army strength. The poor appearance of the Red Army in

⁴⁷ Joseph Goebbels, *The Goebbels Diaries, 1939-1941* trans. and ed. Fred Taylor (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1983), 46.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁴⁹ Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich: Memoirs*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 1970), 169.

Poland was enough to initially put into Hitler's mind that the Germans could succeed in an invasion of the Soviet Union, but the Winter War confirmed this idea. Without the Winter War it is possible that Hitler would not have invaded the Soviet Union until a much later time, but the Winter War showed Hitler an invasion could be successful.

In the autumn of 1939, however, Hitler had no immediate plan to invade the Soviet Union. Hitler wanted to keep Germany out of a war with the Soviet Union, even if it meant giving up Finland and the Baltic states, traditional spheres of German influence.⁵⁰ Hitler was content to wage war with Great Britain and France and once they were brought under Nazi control turn to his original goal of *Lebensraum* in the East. However, as Eloise Engle and Lauri Paanenen argued, "For the Germans, had the Soviet Union not appeared so unfavorable, Hitler would hardly have underestimated the war potential of the Russians to the extent he did. Considering the enormous effort put forth by the Soviets in Finland, very little was received in the way of results."⁵¹ Richard J. Evans, famed Third Reich historian, also came to the same conclusion arguing in his book *The Third Reich at War*, "[Finland's] tough and effective resistance had exposed the weakness of the Red Army and convinced Hitler that he had nothing to fear from it."⁵² On the other hand, Jukka Nevakivi has argued that the poor performance of the Red Army was only as important, not more important, than the fact the German campaign against the British was going so poorly. Nevakivi argued, "War against the Soviet Union would have come sooner or later...If Hitler decided to start it in 1941...the reason was as much the lack

⁵⁰ Jakobson, *Diplomacy in the Winter War*, 88.

⁵¹ Engle and Paanenen, *The Winter War*, 144-145.

⁵² Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich at War* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2009), 117.

of progress in his operations against England as the impression of a state of weakness given by the Soviet Union in the Winter War, an advantage which he did not wish to lose.”⁵³

It was not just the weak military showing of the Red Army during the Winter War that persuaded Adolf Hitler to launch ‘Operation Barbarossa,’ it became obvious after the Winter War that German and Soviet interests were eventually going to clash. Indeed, a November 25, 1940, statement made by Molotov illustrated what would become the crux of the deterioration in German-Soviet relations. The statement was made to a German ambassador on the issue of a possible Four-Power Pact, involving Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Soviet Union, and the requirements that needed to be obtained before the Russians would sign it. The first requirement was: “Provided that the German troops are immediately withdrawn from Finland, which, under the agreements of 1939, belongs to the Soviet Union’s sphere of influence. Here the Soviet Union undertakes to ensure peaceful relations with Finland and safeguard German economic interests in Finland (export of lumber and nickel).”⁵⁴ The period between the end of the Winter War and the launching of ‘Operation Barbarossa’ was increasingly defined by the issue of Finnish nickel and who was going to be in charge of that nickel.

H. Peter Krosby’s 1968 book, *Finland, Germany and the Soviet Union: The Petsamo Dispute*, argued that the Petsamo nickel question dominated the political relations between Finland, Germany, and the Soviet Union. The issue came down to who would be in charge of the Finnish nickel mines in Petsamo, Germany or the Soviet Union? Krosby showed this was the dominant issue in the diplomatic correspondence between Germany and Finland following the Winter War. German military leaders had calculated that without Finnish nickel

⁵³ Jukka Nevakivi, “The Great Powers and Finland’s Winter War” in *Revue Internationale D’Histoire Militaire* 62 (1985): 70.

⁵⁴ Statement by Molotov to the German Ambassador on the Proposed Four-Power Pact, November 25, 1940, *Deutschland und die Sowjetunion*, p. 296 in *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy*, 477.

their war economy would collapse, making the Petsamo issue a top priority for the Germans. Petsamo became a major issue when the Soviet Union decided that it was going to be in charge of Petsamo, although giving a guarantee to Germany that it would honor the output of nickel promised to the Germans. The Germans did not trust the Soviet's with such a vital part of their war economy and began planning for their armies in Norway to secure the Petsamo area once 'Operation Barbarossa' was launched.⁵⁵

While Krosby did not argue that the Petsamo question was a factor in the decision to launch 'Operation Barbarossa,' he did argue that by August of 1940 Hitler had decided if the Russians attempted to annex Finland again, the Germans would occupy Petsamo and begin arming the Finns. Krosby argued, "Hitler was not yet ready to take on the Soviet Union in a total conflict of arms, but he was willing to risk a quarrel over Petsamo if necessary."⁵⁶ General Franz Halder's diary concurs with Krosby's interpretation. After the August 26, 1940, conference with the Fuehrer, Halder noted, "Finland would get arms and ammunition from us. In the event of a Russian attack against Finland, we shall occupy Petsamo."⁵⁷ From this one can infer that whether or not Hitler was ready to take on the Soviet Union, occupying Petsamo and arming the Finns would have begun the conflict. This is where Krosby made a mistake in his reasoning, he did not envisage what would occur once the Germans occupied Petsamo, or what that occupation would mean; effectively, that Germany would be at war with the Soviet Union. Obviously, these August decisions by Hitler were of momentous importance, yet they have been left out of many scholarly works on the Second World War, including Gorodetsky's account. This has been an oversight because these decisions show that by August 1940, Hitler was not just planning and

⁵⁵ H. Peter Krosby, *Finland, Germany, and the Soviet Union: The Petsamo Dispute* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1968)

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁵⁷ General Franz Halder, *The Halder War Diary: 1939-1942* ed. Charles Burdick and Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, (Novato, California: Presidio Press, 1988), 251.

scheming, he was ready to take action against the Red Army if his hand was forced. The August decision to occupy Petsamo, if necessary, and the implications it necessitated, effectively, adds validity to Hitler's July 31, 1940, decision to begin planning for an invasion of Russia. Although some historians have considered this not yet a "point of no return;" they have conceded that the interests of Finland and Romania had to be safeguarded as a result of that decision.⁵⁸

Official Finnish documents show that the Soviet Union had begun to insist on control of the Petsamo nickel mines on June 23, 1940, and from that point on it became a constant strain on German, Finnish, and Soviet relations.⁵⁹ By June 27, 1940, the Soviets had informed the Finns that they were not interested in the actual nickel; rather, the Soviet Union was interested in the area itself and controlling the nickel within the area for "all time."⁶⁰ The Germans had been ensured by the Finns that the Petsamo nickel mines would be operated primarily for German usage; after June 27, though, the Germans now had to worry about their nickel supplies. Hitler would begin to plan for an invasion of the Soviet Union in July, and it would be irrational to believe that this event had nothing to do with that decision. This connection was especially relevant considering that Hitler was ready by August to take action if the Soviet Union tried to invade Finland again.

On October 30, 1940, the Soviet Union began threatening Finland in regards to the Petsamo nickel mines. Paasikivi sent a telegram to the Finnish Foreign Ministry on that day that in response to the Finnish claims that they could not give the concession to the Soviet Union because of the concession already made to the British, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vyshinski

⁵⁸ Jürgen Förster, "Hitler's Decision in Favour of War against the Soviet Union," in *Germany and the Second World War* vol. IV: The Attack on the Soviet Union, ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 28-29.

⁵⁹ Hjalmar Johan Frederik Procopé, ed., *Finland Reveals Her Secret Documents on Soviet Policy, March 1940-June 1941. The Attitude of the USSR to Finland after the Peace of Moscow* (New York: W. Funk Inc., 1941), 50-99.

⁶⁰ Paasikivi to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, June 27, 1940, in *Finland Reveals Her Secret Documents on Soviet Policy*, 51.

told Paasikivi, “in that case the USSR would be compelled to take the measures which the situation demanded.”⁶¹ At this point, then, the Petsamo issue had ceased to be unimportant, but rather was a possible *casus belli*. The Germans could not sit back and watch the Russians pressure and threaten Finland, at least not over an issue that directly affected their military abilities. The Germans were still trying to defeat the British and had been planning for the invasion of Russia for months at this point. To lose the nickel from Finland would have been too much for the Germans to accept. The Germans had also, it should be remembered, decided in August that they would take action if Russia took up arms against Finland.

Further, a January 1941 conversation between Hitler and the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini furthers this argument. At the Berghof, Hitler indicated that Germany would have gone further in supporting Finland against Russia. “The Russians, [Hitler] said, had agreed to let Germany have the necessary nickel supplies but would not hold to their agreement any longer than suited them; therefore, he could not permit further Soviet encroachments in Finland.”⁶² What beyond the occupation of Petsamo Hitler would have risked will never be known; but it is obvious that Hitler would have gone to war in August 1940 if the Russians had tried to annex the Finns. Hitler would not have allowed the nickel, so vital to his war machine, to go without a fight, primarily because in his mind Scandinavia was the keystone of his empire.⁶³ It is not much of a jump to conclude that in Hitler’s mind Finland was worth launching a war for, as evidenced by his statements and his actions.

In August 1940, Field Marshal Feodor von Bock wrote in his diary about the state of German foreign relations at that point. Bock stated, “Russia had once shown a tendency to go

⁶¹ Paasikivi to The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 30, 1940, in *Finland Reveals Her Secret Documents on Soviet Policy*, 73.

⁶² Earl F. Ziemke, *The German Northern Operations, 1940-1945* (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1959), 119.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, v.

beyond the agreements with us, however at the moment she is loyal... Should she prepare to crush Finland or attack Romania we would be forced to intervene. Russia must not be allowed to become the sole master of the Eastern Baltic and we need the Romanian oil.”⁶⁴ Here is another example of top German leadership in August 1940 insinuating that Germany would not allow the Soviet Union to interfere in Finland without German intervention. This is another example of how Gorodetsky got the circumstances wrong because it showed it was not just Romania and the Balkans the German leadership were concerned about, but rather they were worried about the Baltic and Finland as well. Bock finished the entry by stating, “But perhaps sending a German General with a “provocative” name to the east would be enough to keep Russia quiet.”⁶⁵ This conclusion showed that Bock was not fully convinced that the Germans needed to go to war at that time, but they needed to start acting to safeguard their interests.

The head of the OKW, Field Marshal Keitel, wrote in his memoirs of Hitler’s decision to go to war with the Soviet Union this way:

His reply, in brief, was that he had never lost sight of the inevitability of a clash between the world’s two most diametrically opposed ideologies, that he did not believe it could be evaded, and that that being the case it was better for him to shoulder this grave burden now, in addition to the others, than for him to bequeath it to his successor. Besides, he believed there were indications that Russia was already girding herself for war with us, and she had certainly far overreached the agreements we had made on the Baltic provinces and Bessarabia while our hands had been tied in the west. In any case, he said, he only wanted to take precautions against being taken by surprise, and he would not reach any decisions until he had recognised how justified his distrust of them was.⁶⁶

This reminiscence from a conversation he had with Hitler illustrated many things about the reasons for going to war with the Soviet Union. First, as Gorodetsky argued, the decision was

⁶⁴ General Feldmarschall Fedor von Bock *The War Diary, 1939-1945* ed. Klaus Gerbet, trans. David Johnston, (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Military History, 1996), 187-188.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁶⁶ Wilhelm Keitel, *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Keitel* ed. Walter Gorlitz, trans. David Irving (New York: Stein and Day, 1966), 122.

not based solely upon Nazi ideology that could be traced back to *Mein Kampf*, rather it was based upon the realities of the geopolitical events of the time. Hitler told Keitel that he did not think he could shoulder the burden of not taking precautions against the Soviet Union because of the Soviet actions in Bessarabia and the Baltic. It is important to remember that in terms of German-Soviet relations Finland was included in the Baltic bloc of nations. Essentially, this conversation indicated that the decision to invade the Soviet Union was based more upon the realities of German-Soviet relations and preventing the Soviets from taking raw materials the Germans needed from Finland and Rumania. The conclusion that Hitler would not take any action until his distrust was justified showed that Hitler needed a little more encouragement to commit to the invasion; that encouragement would come in November, 1940.

In describing the November 1940 Molotov visit to Berlin, Gerhard Weinberg phrased it best in his 1954 book, *Germany and the Soviet Union, 1939-1941*; “ of the thirty-six pages comprising the memoranda on Molotov’s conversations with Hitler... seven are taken up by rather acrimonious debate about the...interests of Russia and Germany in Finland. Before the decision to attack Russia, Germany had been willing to see the Soviets conquer that country; now they meant to protect it as an ally for the coming war.”⁶⁷ The November visit would finalize German plans on what to do about the Soviet Union; if there had been any thought of avoiding a conflict, it ended in November. The main problem that arose during the talks was the issue of Finland and Hitler’s demand that Molotov indicate what the Soviet intentions were for Finland. Molotov requested that Hitler remove German troops that were on their way to Norway from Finland. When Hitler asked him what the Soviet intentions towards Finland were Molotov responded that the Soviets wanted a settlement in the same manner as Bessarabia, which the Soviet’s had annexed months prior to the conference. Hitler responded to this that there must not

⁶⁷ Gerhard Weinberg, *Germany and the Soviet Union, 1939-1941* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1954), 128.

be any war in Finland because it would have severe repercussions on German-Soviet relations.⁶⁸ As Stephen Fritz has pointed out, Molotov even pressed Hitler about German actions in Romania and Finland and how they had violated the 1939 German-Soviet agreement, which led Fritz to the conclusion that Hitler had decided by the second day of the meeting that German and Soviet interests were not compatible.⁶⁹ Essentially, the meeting can be seen as Germany's warning that they would not allow Finland to be annexed by the Soviet Union.

General Heinz Guderian wrote of Molotov's November visit in his memoirs, *Panzer Leader*. Guderian argued that Molotov had demanded that the Germans recognize the Soviet interests in Finland, Romania, Bulgaria, and the Dardanelles, and that an agreement was to be made in regards to the future of Poland. Hitler, according to Guderian, was "highly incensed" by the Russian claims. Guderian wrote, "The conclusion [Hitler] drew from Molotov's visit and its results was a belief that war with the Soviet Union must sooner or later be inevitable. He was to describe to me repeatedly the course that the Berlin conference took; I have given his version here."⁷⁰ The implication from this passage is that Finland and the November negotiations played a role in Hitler's decision to go to war with the Soviet Union. While Gorodetsky and other historians have placed the blame solely on events in the Balkans as the driving force in that decision; Guderian makes it apparent that it was not solely the Balkans, but rather the international situation as a whole that Hitler took into consideration in declaring war.

⁶⁸ Schmidt, "Memorandum of the Conversation Between the Führer and the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars Molotov in the Presence of the Reich Foreign Minister and the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Dekanosov, as well as of Counselor of Embassy Hilger and Herr Pavlov, who acted as Interpreters, in Berlin on November 13, 1940", November 15, 1940, in *Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1941: Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office* (Washington D.C.: Department of State, 1948), 240-241.

⁶⁹ Stephen G. Fritz, *Ostkrieg: Hitler's War of Extermination in the East* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2011), 49-50.

⁷⁰ General Heinz Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, trans. Constantine Fitzgibbon, (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1952), 141.

The November visit had not accomplished the renewal of relations that the Soviet's were hoping for. The initial Finnish view of the meeting was published in the 1941 book, *Finland Reveals Her Secret Documents on Soviet Policy*. This book was a compilation of documents from March 1940 to June 1941 and was prefaced by the Finnish ambassador to the United States, Hjalmar J. Procopé. The book argued, "The aims of the USSR in regard to Finland found a striking expression during the visit of...Molotov to Berlin in November, 1940. In the course of the negotiations...Molotov proposed that the USSR should be allowed to attack Finland a second time, without interference by Germany."⁷¹ While this was clearly propaganda, it is also illustrative of the way the Finnish government, and to an extent the German government, saw the actions and suggestions of the Soviet government. After all, the Soviets just after the November talks in Berlin had lied to the Finns on November 19 and told them that Germany had consented to Russia gaining the concession to the nickel mines in Petsamo and would not stand in the way of a Russian takeover of the mines.⁷² Clearly, Hitler had made no such concession and had only a few months before in August decided the Petsamo nickel mines were worth launching an early invasion of the Soviet Union. It is interesting that this should happen between the Molotov visit and the issuing of Directive No. 21, considering the Finns had informed the Germans of Molotov's lie. In fact, during the post-war interrogations Ribbentrop even suggested that the fallout over Finland during the November meeting had been one of the factors determining the decision to invade the Soviet Union; although Ribbentrop himself stated he was opposed to such an action.⁷³

⁷¹ *Finland Reveals Her Secret Documents On Soviet Policy*, xii.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 24-25.

⁷³ Richard Overy, *Interrogations: The Nazi Elite in Allied Hands, 1945* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 319,

A little over a month after Molotov's visit to Berlin Hitler on December 18, 1940, issued his "Directive No. 21," which called for 'Operation Barbarossa.' The directive opened by stating, "The German Armed Forces must be prepared to *crush Soviet Russia in a quick campaign* (Operation Barbarossa) even before the conclusion of the war against England."⁷⁴ The decision had been made, now all that remained was to implement 'Operation Barbarossa' in the following spring. As far as Finland was concerned, the Directive stated, "On the flanks of our operation we can count on the active participation of *Rumania* and *Finland* in the war against Soviet Russia."⁷⁵ Thus, the Germans were already assured that Finland would play an active role in the invasion of the Soviet Union. Directive No. 21 is important because the timing of its release showed that the invasion of Russia was not merely an ideological event; rather, the invasion was a calculated attempt by Hitler and the German leadership to ensure that their main suppliers of raw materials, Romania and Finland, would remain free to comply with German wishes. Obviously, then, the decision to launch 'Operation Barbarossa' can be seen as being directly affected by the Molotov visit, as well as events in the Balkans; not solely the ideological fantasies of Adolf Hitler.

A distinction should be made between the German desire to include both Romania and Finland into its operational plans for the East. Finnish historian Michael Jonas has argued that Romania was incorporated into the German plans specifically for its oil reserves, which were the second largest in Europe at this time. This is why Hitler's first order in Romania was for the oil fields to be occupied and secured for German use. Militarily, the Romanians had little to offer the Germans; Romanian troops were seen as cowardly, useless, and lacking discipline in the Nazi eyes. Indeed, retreating Romanian troops were regularly abused, along with Italian and

⁷⁴ Adolf Hitler, "Directive No. 21 Operation Barbarossa" in *Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1941*, 260.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 261.

Hungarian troops, by German forces; sometimes with hand grenades thrown at them by the German troops. The Finnish, in comparison, were valued not just for the critical resource of nickel, but for their military strengths. The Winter War had shown the value of Finland as a military ally and Hitler was very fond of Marshal Mannerheim as “the embodiment of the anti-Bolshevist Finnish soldier.” As Jonas argued, “While in the Romanian case war economic considerations dominated military planning, the case of Finland appeared much more complex. A high German opinion of Finnish military capacities and comparatively blunt economic calculations seem to have been kept in a carefully calibrated balance throughout.”⁷⁶ Jonas’s argument furthers the notion that Finland was a special case, in terms of Nazi relations, and should be studied as a separate case.

According to Gorodetsky events in the Balkans, specifically Soviet actions in Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Bessarabia, all precipitated the decision to invade the Soviet Union. However, as can clearly be seen, both the July 1940 decision and Directive No. 21 were issued well before the events in Bulgaria or Yugoslavia, meaning these events had little impact on the initial decision to launch ‘Operation Barbarossa.’ However, Gorodetsky’s argument in favor of the annexation of Bessarabia is still a valid point, but it needs to be put into the proper context that it shared equal importance with Finland in the decision to launch ‘Operation Barbarossa.’ Historians have for far too long understated the importance Finland had upon the German decision to go to war with the Soviet Union. It is clear that Finland was not the sole driving force behind the decision, but Finland did play a critical role in shaping that force. As Anatole Mazour pointed out in his book *Finland: Between East and West*, “The experience of the Winter War taught the Finns one lesson—Sweden would not give the military aid that was required to

⁷⁶ Micheal Jonas, “The Politics of an Alliance: Finland in Nazi Foreign Policy and War Strategy” in *Finland in World War II: History, Memory, Interpretations* ed. Tiina Kinnunen and Ville Kivimäki (London & Boston: Brill, 2012), 104-105.

halt Soviet encroachment. A second lesson...[was that] Soviet demands continued to be pressed in regard to transit privileges in order to link the home base with the recently acquired one at Hanko.”⁷⁷ The Finns realized that if they were to survive another Winter War experience they were going to have to reenter the German sphere of influence. At the same time Germany realized its interests in Finland were continuously threatened by Soviet action against Finland. The Soviet response was, as Mazour put it, “The more Helsinki and Berlin drew together, the greater became the fear in Moscow and eagerness to find additional insurance against a German *place d’armes* in Finland. In June the Soviet government began to insist upon a controlling share in the Petsamo Nickel Company.”⁷⁸

The Finland situation, then, can clearly be shown as one of the major breaking points in German-Soviet relations. As the Finns moved closer to the Germans, the Soviets moved further from both the Germans and the Finns. Desperation on both sides was beginning to show. The German August 1940 decision to occupy Petsamo if the Soviet Union invaded Finland once again showed that the Germans now recognized two things: Finland’s nickel output was absolutely essential, even worth the risk of an early war with the Soviet Union; and the Germans had seen an alliance with the Soviet Union was not good for their interests in Scandinavia. The role the Finns played in the decision to invade the Soviet Union has continued to be one of the most under covered aspects of World War II amongst English-speaking historians, despite the abundance of evidence of the importance Finland played in the years 1939 to 1944.

⁷⁷ Anatole Mazour, *Finland: Between East and West* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1956), 135.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 135.

CHAPTER 3

SWEDEN: THE NATION THAT KEPT ADOLF HITLER AFLOAT

Sweden has, after all, done more for the German war effort than is generally assumed. More particularly, Sweden has given us valuable support in our fight against the Soviet Union. While she insists on remaining neutral, that after all is very much in our favor. There can be no doubt but that she would defend her neutrality by force of arms in case we tried to put her under pressure.⁷⁹ Joseph Goebbels, January 28, 1942

The English intended establishing a connection with the eastern theater of war via Sweden. But the Swedes are determined to oppose by force of arms anybody who attacks their territory. At least that's what they say today. It would have been better if we had also taken Sweden during our campaign in the north. This state has no right to national existence anyway.⁸⁰ Joseph Goebbels, April 15, 1942

These quotations from German Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels's diary illustrate well the ambiguities and tensions in the German-Swedish relationship during World War II. In the first quotation Goebbels praised Sweden for all she had done for the German war effort, primarily in the supply of iron ore and allowing Germany to transfer troops through Sweden. These actions had helped the Germans wage war successfully up to that point. By the middle of April 1942, though, Goebbels had changed his mind. The Swedes had become a problem in Goebbels's mind, primarily because the Germans worried whether Sweden would remain neutral throughout the continuation of the war. These diary entries are symbolic of Sweden's Second World War experience, as Sweden began the war as one of Germany's favorite nations and would end the war as a constant nuisance to the Germans. This chapter will first examine Sweden as a favorite of the Germans, when Sweden was supplying Germany with the necessary iron ore to continue the war. Then the chapter will shift its focus, much as Swedish-German relations did in response to the vagaries of war, and illustrate the tensions in the relationship, especially as the Swedes actively hindered the success of the Final Solution in Scandinavia.

⁷⁹ Joseph Goebbels, *The Goebbels Diaries, 1942-1943* ed and trans. Louis P. Lochner (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1970), 53.

⁸⁰ Goebbels, *The Goebbels Diaries*, 170-171.

Throughout the analysis of these topics, close attention will be placed upon how historians and academics have interpreted these events, specifically how Anglo-American historians have viewed these events.

In 1939, the German economy appeared to be growing. The *Anschluss* with Austria, as well as the incorporation of Czechoslovakia, had increased German industrial strength and agricultural output. As the official German history of World War II argued:

Although the economic domination which Germany had now attained over the countries of south-east Europe had brought the regime a good step nearer to the establishment of its large-scale economic area, [German] economic strength thus acquired was still not sufficient—with any reasonable hope of success—either for a war of revenge against France, with the risk of British involvement, or for a struggle for living-space in the east, i.e. against the Soviet Union, which was itself conducting mutual-aid negotiations with the Western powers.⁸¹

This would become important because Germany realized well before the invasion of Poland that the German economy would require an expansion of raw materials. The ability to wage war had not been increased by the territorial acquisitions thus achieved. Adolf Hitler recognized this and understood that Germany needed to continue focusing on gaining the raw materials that would be essential to fighting the Allied Powers or the Soviet Union. Before the German decision to invade Poland had been finalized there had been concern from many high-level Nazis that Germany could not fight a long war because of its raw material deficiencies, Hitler, though, used these deficiencies as a reason to invade Poland. In Hitler's mind the Germans would benefit from the added Polish raw materials, whereas postponing the invasion would allow Great Britain and other major world powers the opportunity to continue mobilizing at a higher speed than

⁸¹ Hans-Erich Volkmann, "The Third Reich's Economic Readiness for War," in *Germany and the Second World War* vol. 1 *The Build-up of German Aggression*, ed. by the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, trans. by P.S. Falla, Dean S. McMurray, and Edward Osers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 350.

Germany.⁸² Richard Overy has argued that upon the invasion of Poland Hitler did not expect war to break out. Hitler thought the Allied Powers would simply grant him what he wanted and move on. The invasion of Poland was undertaken so that Nazi Germany would have a core base of Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland to draw resources from for a future long-term war against either the Allied Powers or Soviet Russia. A war with Great Britain and France was not supposed to start as a result of the invasion of Poland because the Nazi-Soviet Pact would act as a check on a Western response.⁸³

The main economic policy of Nazi Germany leading up to the Second World War was the Four Year Plan, which called for Germany to become independent of other countries economically. As William Ebenstein argued in 1943, though, “The Four Year Plan was never designed to be a permanent solution for Germany’s problem of raw materials...The sole purpose of the Four Year Plan was to make sure that Germany would win the second World War...after victory all raw materials would be at the disposal of the German master race in an enslaved world.”⁸⁴ Ebenstein’s argument implies that the *Anschluss* with Austria and the occupation of Czechoslovakia were undertaken as a way to increase the material wealth of the German Reich in order to be capable of fighting the long war against Great Britain and France or the Soviet Union. This is an important idea to comprehend because it allows one to fully understand what Nazi intentions were heading into 1939. The goal was not to start a major war, but instead the goal was to gain Polish raw materials that could be used to strengthen Germany for a future war. As Ebenstein pointed out, the theory of the Nazi war economy, *Wehrwirtschaft*, was to obtain the means for total war during peace time. Obtaining the resources under peace would allow the

⁸² Burton H. Klein, *Germany’s Economic Preparations for War* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1959), 62-64.

⁸³ R.J. Overy, “Hitler’s War and the German Economy: A reinterpretation,” *The Economic History Review*, 35, no. 2, (May 1982): 276.

⁸⁴ William Ebenstein, *The Nazi State* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart Incorporated, 1943), 257.

Germans to prepare for the long war, the lack of such preparations was something leading German economists and military leaders believed had cost them victory in the First World War.⁸⁵

Hitler himself shed light on the issue of gaining the independence of raw materials through the acquisition of other territories. In his New Years Proclamation speech to the German population on January 1, 1939, Hitler argued, “The third task we see in the execution of the Four Years Plan, is the solution of the problem of labour shortage, and, above all, in the economic incorporation of the new territories of the Reich.”⁸⁶ The context of this comment was Adolf Hitler telling the German people what the major problems Germany had to solve in 1939. The foreign territories that are mentioned were Austria and the Sudetenland area of Czechoslovakia. What this speech was essentially saying in terms of economics was that Germany was going to incorporate these nations’ raw materials into the German system in order to continue the building up of the *Wehrwirtschaft*. The economic incorporation of these territories was of the utmost importance because Hitler understood that the Reich needed these materials if Germany was to achieve an economy capable of fighting Great Britain and France or the Soviet Union. This was also the stated goal for 1939, the year that the Germans would attempt to incorporate another nation into the Reich, Poland.

The only way that Germany could continue building the *Wehrwirtschaft* was by continuing the expansion of German dominated territory. This, though, does not mean that Germany moved on Poland with the intention of starting a world war. As Gerhard Weinberg argued, “Hitler was preparing for a series of wars each of which Germany would win by launching a quick campaign against an isolated enemy, with victory in each such war helping

⁸⁵ Ebenstein, 237-238.

⁸⁶ Adolf Hitler, “New Year Proclamation to the German People on 1 January 1939” in *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, April 1922-August 1939 Vol. II* trans. and ed. Norman H. Baynes (New York: Howard Fertig, 1969), 1561.

prepare for the next one by increasing Germany's resources and terrifying others into submission or at least abstention from intervention."⁸⁷ A grand war was never the strategy, just a local war with Poland. This would lead to other wars, including against Great Britain and France, but those would be for the future, after Germany had incorporated the resources of Poland into the Reich. Unfortunately for Hitler and Nazi Germany, Great Britain and France would not let Poland be occupied without a fight, and on September 3, 1939, they would declare war on Germany.

As a result of Great Britain and France declaring war, Hitler had to consolidate and protect the areas that were providing the Nazi war machine with raw materials. The incorporation into the Reich of new territories in order to enrich the *Wehrwirtschaft* had been the primary goal of Nazi policy in the late 1930s. With a major war came the realization that the Reich simply did not have enough raw materials to wage a war against the combined might of Great Britain and France. One of the key raw materials to fighting these powers would be iron ore. In this way, Sweden would become one of the most important countries of the Second World War despite being neutral throughout the conflict. Without Swedish iron ore the Nazi's could not have waged war.

Sweden and her iron ore became important to the German economy because of the quality and easy access Germany had to it. By 1939, Sweden accounted for over half of the iron ore imported into Germany; Sweden's importance was also strengthened by the fact that once war began, Great Britain and France could choose to halt their exportation of iron ore to Germany.⁸⁸ The importation of Swedish iron ore would rise from 3.3 million tons in 1935 to

⁸⁷ Gerhard Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany: Starting World War II, 1937-1939* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 657.

⁸⁸ Martin Fritz, *German Steel and Swedish Iron Ore, 1939-1945* trans. by Eva and Allan Green, (Kungsbacka: Elanders Boktryckeri Aktiebolag, 1974), 40.

5.45 million in 1937 and to 6.2 million in 1939.⁸⁹ The importation of Swedish iron ore rose as the *Wehrwirtschaft* continued to grow. It can then be argued that the importation of Swedish iron ore was rising because Hitler was preparing Germany for the long war by greatly increasing German production of armaments and other war goods. In this long war German industrialists would need access to large amounts of the highest grade of iron ore in Europe in order to make the war materials that the German army would need to conquer its foes.

To fully understand how important Swedish iron ore was to Germany, one only needs to look to the year 1940. Germany had traditionally enjoyed good economic relations with Sweden, but Sweden was not Germany's only trading partner in terms of iron ore. Germany also acquired iron ore from France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and even Spain. When the war began, though, Germany found itself with a 40 percent drop in its iron ore importation. As Burton H. Klein has pointed out, "Had the Allies been able to cut off Swedish iron ore supplies, as was feared in Germany, the German steel industry could not have operated at more than 50 per cent of capacity during 1940 without depleting ore and scrap stocks."⁹⁰ In reality, this means that the Swedes kept the German war economy functional during the early stages of the war. 1940 alone represents the impact that Swedish iron ore had on Germany because it was a year in which Sweden was the only major supplier of iron ore to Germany.

Hitler and the Nazi military leaders had never entertained any plans of conquering Sweden or other Scandinavian areas. In the *Militär-geschichtliches Forschungsamt's* history of the war Klaus A. Maier argued that although the German navy had been interested in widening its base of operations into Scandinavia in order to escape the British control of the Atlantic while simultaneously securing iron ore imports from Sweden, there had been no operational plans

⁸⁹ Fritz, *German Steel and Swedish Iron Ore*, 34.

⁹⁰ Klein, *Germany's Economic Preparations For War*, 116.

drawn up before the war.⁹¹ This region was never intended to be a part of German plans of conquest in the way that Czechoslovakia or Poland had been. Gunnar Hägglöf, who served in the Swedish Foreign Ministry during World War II, has pointed out that the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935 had led to the British renouncing any influence in the Baltic and had thus furthered Hitler's belief that this had made Germany into the master of the Baltic; therefore, to the Germans, Sweden was to provide the Reich with all of the iron ore it would need.⁹² On the face of it, there was no reason for Germany to become involved in Scandinavia, since Germany informally controlled the area and it supplied enough iron ore to build its war machine. When the long war broke out early, though, Sweden and the rest of Scandinavia became extremely important to a Reich that had not conquered the necessary territories to defeat Great Britain and France. Indeed, the Wehrmacht High Command had already conducted a study on April 29, 1939, that came to the conclusion that during a war iron ore shipments from Sweden would fall because of the threat of British blockade. Even if imports only fell by 3 million tons, the Wehrmacht High Command concluded that this would not be acceptable for a war that lasted longer than six months.⁹³

Hitler would not be in trouble during the invasion of Poland as long as the Allies continued the policy of appeasement and stayed uninvolved in the conflict. Poland would resist German occupation, but the German military understood this conflict would not last longer than six months. Hitler was confident that the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact with the Soviet Union would prevent Great Britain and France from entering the conflict. When the Allies declared war,

⁹¹ Klaus Maier, "German Strategy" in *Germany and the Second World War Vol. II: Germany's Initial Conquests in Europe* ed. the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt trans. Dean S. McMurry and Ewald Osers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 182.

⁹² M. Gunnar Hägglöf, "A Test of Neutrality: Sweden in the Second World War" *International Affairs* vol. 36, 2 (April, 1960): 155.

⁹³ Maier, 190.

though, the short war that would not exceed six months became the long war that Hitler was not prepared for. The study that the Wehrmacht High Command had conducted would become important as Hitler and other top Nazi officials understood the gravity of the situation they now found themselves in. It was for this reason that the Germans sought to protect Swedish iron ore at all costs.

The importance of Swedish iron ore would manifest itself into the German operation for the invasion of Norway and Denmark, *Weserübung*. German Admiral Erich Raeder had long been campaigning for the invasion of these nations in order to protect the vital raw materials that Scandinavia generated for the German economy, principally Swedish iron ore and Finnish nickel. The Norwegian port of Narvik was one of the few areas that could ship these resources all year round and Raeder believed it was of the utmost importance to protect this shipping lane, especially once war broke out with Great Britain and France. Hitler, though, at an April 1 conference with his military leaders suggested that Operation *Weserübung* was important not just for protecting these raw materials. Hitler attempted to link the invasion of Norway to the bigger picture of the long war by arguing to his generals that the invasion would finally allow Germany access to the open sea. In Hitler's opinion it was intolerable that Germany should have to be confronted, generation after generation, with British pressure in naval matters. Hitler argued that *Weserübung* was part of a larger operation against the British that was an inevitable conflict, especially after the British declaration of war. Indeed, as Maier argued these occupations of Denmark and Norway were intended to become permanent, as these nations would be brought within Greater Germany, and were not just temporary wartime exigency.⁹⁴

Swedish iron ore was so vital to the German war economy because, as Martin Fritz has shown, the high quality of the ore meant less ore had to be shipped. This relieved the German

⁹⁴ Maier, 194.

transportation bottleneck that had long been plaguing German industry.⁹⁵ The idea that Sweden prolonged the war because of her trade with Germany comes from this indisputable fact. However, Germany was not receiving the iron ore for free, as Germany was trading large sums of coal for that ore. As Fritz pointed out, many historians who have argued that Sweden prolonged the war have failed to realize the huge impact this coal trade had on the Wehrmacht and the invasion of the Soviet Union. The Wehrmacht was running low on coal throughout the invasion of the Soviet Union, which hampered success.⁹⁶ Of course, Fritz does not expand on this argument, but it is worth mentioning, especially considering how many Swedish historians have argued the immorality of the Swedish government's actions during the Second World War. Remembering that Sweden was totally isolated from the rest of the world and was receiving large quantities of desperately needed coal from Germany in exchange for iron ore should temper somewhat the critical view of some historians that Sweden provided iron ore to Nazi Germany primarily to enable that country to conduct war. Instead, the reality was more about survival as a sovereign, if not quite fully autonomous, nation.

In his book *The Wages of Destruction*, Adam Tooze argued that Swedish iron ore was vital to the German war economy because if shipments from Sweden had stopped following the invasion of Poland, the German armaments industry would have been “subject to a drastic squeeze” during the autumn of 1940 at the latest.⁹⁷ Tooze also points out that there was no real threat of Germany losing Sweden's support because of the fact that Germany was Sweden's main supplier of coal. Sweden, then, was never in any danger of turning from pro-German neutrality because of the economic reality of Swedish reliance on German coal. Tooze then

⁹⁵ Martin Fritz and Birgit Karlsson, “Dependence and National Supply: Sweden's Economic Relations to Nazi Germany” *Sweden's Relations with Nazism, Nazi Germany and the Holocaust: A Survey of Research* ed. Stig Ekman, Klas Åmark and John Toler (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2003), 118-119.

⁹⁶ Fritz and Karlsson, 117.

⁹⁷ Adam Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 381.

argued that the danger of losing Swedish iron ore lay in a British invasion of Norway and detailed the German invasion and defeat of Britain in Norway.⁹⁸ What is most striking about Tooze's analysis of Sweden's key role is its brevity. Tooze conceded that without Swedish iron ore the Germans could not have made it past the autumn of 1940 but does not spend any time actually analyzing this situation in his book. This is representative of the problem in the English-speaking historiography of the Second World War and Sweden's role in the war. No American or British historian adequately covers this aspect of the war in any detail. It is simply argued that Swedish iron ore was valuable to the German war economy and Norway was invaded to protect this iron ore with little interest in the full implications of this assertion.

The non-English historiography of the Second World War has long debated if Sweden could have ended the war by cutting off iron ore shipments to the Germans. In 1965 Rolf Karlbom authored an article that argued that if the Swedish mines had ceased working following the German invasion of Poland up to the fall of France, than the German industrial sector would have shut down as well. Essentially, Karlbom argued that the Swedes had allowed World War II to happen by sticking with neutrality and not shutting the Nazi's out of the iron ore trade. This, of course, would incite many academics to argue against Karlbom's thesis, including Alan Milward and Jörg-Johannes Jäger. Milward argued that Karlbom's figures were wrong by pointing out that Germany's consumption of Swedish iron ore dropped from 51 percent in the last three months of 1939 to just over 25 percent in the first three months of 1940, which showed that rather than being the essential factor in Germany's ability to wage war in the early period, Swedish iron ore actually ceased to be as important as in the beginning. In addition, Milward pointed out that German stockpiles were high enough before the invasion of France to survive the lack of imports of iron ore. Jäger also attacked Karlbom's figures, arguing that Karlbom

⁹⁸ Tooze, 381.

based his numbers on pre-1938 German borders and not the actual Germany that included Austria, Czechoslovakia, and parts of Poland.⁹⁹ While the idea that Sweden could have stopped the war before the fall of France has been disproven by historians and academics, the idea that Swedish iron ore allowed the German army to accomplish all that it did is one of the few aspects of World War II that all historians agree on.

Rolf-Dieter Müller has made a different argument than most historians on the question of Swedish iron ore and Germany. Müller asserted that the German economy following the invasion of Poland was faced with a raw material crisis. Up to this point, the Germans had conquered territories that yielded very little in terms of raw materials that could sustain a long war. As a result, Germany found itself in a “Gordian knot,” where arms manufacturers were suffering from a shortage of iron that was caused by the erratic deliveries from Sweden of iron ore. The solution to this Gordian knot was to replace the erratic deliveries from Sweden with the iron-ore producing regions of Belgium and northern France as soon as possible. Müller concludes that this was the fundamental problem with the German war economy, instead of rationalizing the production of war materials and alleviating shortages of materials, the German leadership decided territorial expansion into Belgium and France was the better solution.¹⁰⁰ Müller, then, was arguing that the Germans based their decision to invade the West in part upon the need to solve the iron ore crisis they were facing. This is important because concerns for raw materials have seldom been seen as a driving factor in the decision to invade France. Müller’s theory is also important because it changes the way Sweden is viewed during the early stages of

⁹⁹ These theories are laid out in Christian Leitz, *Sympathy For the Devil: Neutral Europe and Nazi Germany in World War II* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 64-65.

¹⁰⁰ Rolf-Dieter Müller, “The Mobilization of the German Economy for Hitler’s War Aims” in *Germany and the Second World War Vol. VI Organization and Mobilization of the German Sphere of Power* ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt trans. John Brownjohn, Patricia Crampton, Ewald Osers, and Lousie Wilmot (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 510-512.

World War II. If this line of thinking is correct, then Sweden was not as critical to the German ability to wage war as initially thought if Germany was attempting to solve its iron ore crisis with the ore of Belgium and France.

In regards to Müller's theory that the invasion of France was undertaken to shore up the necessary iron ore that Sweden was unable to supply, many things must be stressed. First, the idea of a German-dominated European continent had been floating around in Germany since the 1920s. It was always a part of Nazi strategy to run the continent, not a reaction to the situation in Sweden. Second, Müller's theory is not backed up by the most recent major study of the German economy during the Second World War, Tooze's *The Wages of Destruction*. Tooze argued that the conquest of France had developed many economic possibilities that had not seemed possible before 1939 but never postulates that the invasion was undertaken solely for economic gain. In fact, Tooze points out that the invasion was more ideologically driven and was an attempt to break the alleged International Jewish conspiracy that Hitler saw in the alliance of Great Britain, France, and the United States and personified in 'the chosen one' President Franklin Roosevelt.¹⁰¹ However, as English-speaking authors have failed to adequately study Sweden during the Second World War, it cannot be assumed that Müller's theory is wrong. Müller based his argument on not only the realities of the German economy before the invasion of France but also on evidence from Hermann Göring, particularly a memo from a conversation between Göring and General Georg Thomas, head of the OKW armaments office, that showed Göring telling Thomas to prepare for the invasion with France as soon as possible because of the iron ore problem. The Führer had decided, according to Göring, to make use of the stockpiles of raw materials in order to launch the invasion. This plan was accepted by

¹⁰¹ Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction*, 324.

Thomas and implementation began.¹⁰² The fact that this has not been covered more by historians proves the contention of this thesis that more attention should be paid by English-speaking historians to Scandinavia and its role in World War II.

Swedish historian Gunnar Åselius has argued that the way Sweden is viewed in the Second World War needs to be changed. Instead of focusing on Sweden during the 1930s and 1940s, scholars should push the time frame back to the Franco-Prussian war. According to Åselius, this longer time period allows Sweden to be seen as adapting to the new, developing world power, Germany. After all, from 1870 world history can be viewed as Germany, Italy, and Japan trying to join, emulate, or usurp the old order and assert their power. Åselius has also pointed out that the Swedish orientation towards Germany at this time was not just a political reaction to the growing power in that region, but it was also an economic reaction. Sweden began industrializing after Germany had become the leading industrial nation in Europe. Sweden's industry, then, was modeled on the German system and this created close economic ties between the two countries. These economic ties, according to Åselius, led to closer cultural ties. German became the primary second language Swedish students learned and many Swedish teachers and professors studied abroad in Germany. In fact, most of the Swedish decision makers, military, political, and business, from 1933 to 1945 had studied in Germany and had close cultural ties with Germany.¹⁰³ Still, Nina Witoszek and Lars Trägårdh have shown that while Germany and Sweden might have had close economic and cultural ties and developed a shared ideology of a type of national socialism following the economic crisis of the 1930s, Hitler's Germany and Per Albin Hansson's Sweden developed into two very separate nations,

¹⁰² Müller, *Germany and the Second World War Vol. VI Organization and Mobilization of the German Sphere of Power*, 511.

¹⁰³ Gunnar Åselius, "Sweden and Nazi Germany" *Sweden's Relations with Nazism, Nazi Germany and the Holocaust: A Survey of Research* ed. Stig Ekman, Klas Åmark and John Toler (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2003), 31-37.

“True, even a cursory review of nineteenth-and early twentieth-century developments in Germany or Sweden reveals a number of affinities in the spheres of science, education, art, politics, and myth-making,” they argue. “Yet, for all their mutual cross-fertilization, Sweden and Germany embraced two opposing self-images and followed two different trajectories of modernization.”¹⁰⁴

The most important thing about Åselius’s work is that it has changed the way scholars look at Sweden. Most of the studies of Sweden during the Second World War focus on the morality of neutrality, which Stig Ekman has argued is the dominant trend in the Swedish historiography of the Second World War.¹⁰⁵ Åselius’s work, though, has expanded the time frame in order to fully understand why Sweden was in Germany’s orbit. This has shown that Sweden had a long history of cooperation with the Germans, and the two cultures were tied together. This helps explain why Sweden could justify the continued shipments of iron ore to the Germans or grant them transit rights through Sweden, since they had a historical memory of a benevolent Germany with whom Sweden benefitted from mutual cooperation. In many ways, Åselius’s work has helped to transcend the morality argument by showing that Sweden had enjoyed relations with Germany since 1870, which makes it obvious how they would react in 1939.

Another way of viewing Sweden’s policies during the Second World War is to understand not just Swedish history back to the 1870s, but to understand how Sweden experienced the First World War. The Swedish Government wanted to differentiate its policy of neutrality between the First World War and the Second World War in order to avoid the mistakes

¹⁰⁴ Nina Witoszek and Lars Trägårdh, “Introduction” *Culture and Crisis: The Case of Germany and Sweden* ed. Witoszek and Trägårdh (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2002), 2.

¹⁰⁵ Stig Ekman, “Introduction” *Sweden’s Relations with Nazism, Nazi Germany, and the Holocaust: A Survey of Research*, 12-13.

of the past. These mistakes primarily included shortages of food and supplies as a result of strict neutrality and the questionable legality of the British blockade that had made life hard on the average Swede. As a result, as Alf Johansson has pointed out, Sweden would use neutrality during the Second World War as a means of staying out of the war but would not strictly follow the policy of neutrality when dealing with the belligerents. During this conflict, Sweden would pay close attention to the reality of the war and bend its policy of neutrality towards the stronger side. “In other words, there was no willingness to fight for neutrality law as such in 1939. In that sense, it can be said that the policy of concessions was inherent in the Swedish political attitude from the very outset.”¹⁰⁶ Johansson would also argue that the humanitarian actions of Sweden in terms of the Holocaust cannot wipe away the shame of the concessions that Sweden awarded Nazi Germany during the war.¹⁰⁷

While much work still needs to be done on the scholarship of Swedish iron ore and its contribution to Germany’s war effort, at least it has now become a topic of discussion on the Second World War. Much the same observation could be made about a second area in which Sweden played an outsized role during the war, the Holocaust. Many people know the story of the Swede Raoul Wallenberg and how he saved tens of thousands of Jews from being deported from Hungary. What many people do not know, academics included, is the story of how Sweden saved the Danish Jews. This was a story from the Holocaust that was hardly ever mentioned until the turn of the century. For instance, famed Holocaust historian Yehuda Bauer only devoted one and a half pages to the rescue of the Danish Jews in the revised 2001 version of the

¹⁰⁶ Alf W. Johansson, “Neutrality and Modernity: The Second World War and Sweden’s National Identity” *War Experience, Self Image and National Identity: The Second World War as Myth and History* ed. Stig Ekman and Nils Edling, trans. Thomas Munch-Petersen and The Swedish Trade Council (Södertälje: The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation, 1997), 166.

¹⁰⁷ Johansson, “Neutrality and Modernity,” 166-167.

classic *A History of the Holocaust*.¹⁰⁸ Now, thanks to a new generation of historians, this story is finally being told in full. While saving a few thousand Jews might not seem like a grand accomplishment, these were thousands of Jews more than most countries saved. The future historiography on Sweden during World War II and the historiography of the Holocaust should continue the discussion started by some recent works.

The first Swedish historian who investigated anti-Semitism was Hugo Valentin, whose book *Antisemitism: Historically and Critically Examined* laid the basis for Swedish ethnic and genocidal studies. The book is not so much a work on anti-Semitism in general as it is a book written in 1936 on anti-Semitism, meaning it focuses almost solely on Germany and the rise of the Nazis. In fact, Swedish anti-Semitism is not even mentioned in the book except to point out that Sweden's Jewish population was only 0.1 percent of the total population. Even this is only stated in order to show the reader a comparison of Swedish and Italian Jewish populations, which were equal. In this way Valentin was showing how Italian fascism could differ from German fascism in terms of the Jewish question, since Italy did not have enough Jews to have to worry about a Jewish question.¹⁰⁹ By extension, of course, Valentin's larger unstated message was that since Sweden had a Jewish population proportionally similar to that of Italy, it had little cause to be concerned about a "Jewish problem," despite the troubling rise of various Fascist and Nazi groups in Sweden. While Valentin's work was definitely written with a bias towards Sweden, it can still be inferred that up to the book's publication in 1937 anti-Semitism had not been a major factor in the everyday life of an average Swede. While there had been some emerging anti-Semitic groups in Sweden, Valentin wrote the book so that Swedish readers could understand the

¹⁰⁸ Yehuda Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust*, Rev. ed. (Danbury, Connecticut: Franklin Watts, 2001), 322-323.

¹⁰⁹ Hugo Valentin, *Antisemitism: Historically and Critically Examined* trans. A.G. Chater, (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 105.

foreign concept of anti-Semitism. The only real mention made of Sweden or the other Scandinavian countries is in reference to Nazi racial science and the emphasis they placed upon the Nordic race as carrying the essential characteristics of the Germanic race. Valentin chronicled the racial thought of Hans F. Günther only to come to the conclusion, “Nowhere outside the borders of Germany has the Nazi racial doctrine found acceptance, not even in the countries whose population, in contradistinction to the German, is Nordic with relatively little admixture, Scandinavia, Holland, England, where, according to Güther, “the genuine Teutons” are to be found.”¹¹⁰ Of course, in his bias Valentin forgot to mention that Swedish racial science pre-dated the Nazi racial science. However, Valentin is correct in pointing out that a majority of Swedes, and in reality Scandinavians in general, enjoyed good relations with their Jewish fellow citizens.¹¹¹

Steven Koblik’s *The Stones Cry Out* was the first book written in English that addressed the Holocaust in Sweden. While Koblik analyzed the positive Swedish actions of rescuing the Danish Jews and the actions of Raoul Wallenberg, he also argued that though newspapers and stories were circulating throughout Sweden during the Holocaust, the Swedish government continued to deny and suppress the actual events of the Holocaust from their population. The Swedish government, according to Koblik, suppressed talk of this tragedy because of the damage such public discourse could have on its relationship with Germany. In fact, Koblik argued that the evidence showed the Foreign Office of Sweden actively trying to suppress stories and mention of the Holocaust within Sweden.¹¹² This puts the Swedish response to the Holocaust in perspective: while Sweden might have saved many Jews from extermination from Denmark or

¹¹⁰ Valentin, *Antisemitism*, 160.

¹¹¹ Valentin, 160.

¹¹² Steven Koblik, *The Stones Cry Out: Sweden’s Response to the Persecution of the Jews* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1988), 145-147.

Wallenberg was saving tens of thousands in Hungary, the majority of Swedes were not actively participating in rescuing the Jews. In fact, most of them did not even know what was happening in Germany. As Koblik argued, “The government’s silence cannot in sum be explained because of its desires to be more helpful with regard to the Jews. The real reason was fear of a negative German response if Sweden became a center for anti-German “propaganda.” The government’s policy not only stopped the Swedish public from fully comprehending the plight of the Jews, it also contributed to a general international silence whose effects were probably helpful to the success of the Final Solution.”¹¹³ This would become the standard interpretation of the Swedish press in regards to the Holocaust; it was silent in order to maintain its ties with Germany. Maria-Pia Boëthius would also argue this point in her controversial book, *Heder och Samvete. Sverige Under Andra Världskriget*. However, in *Reporting the Holocaust in the British, Swedish and Finnish Press, 1945-50*, Antero Holmila pointed out that this was not an accurate interpretation of the Swedish press or the knowledge of the Swedish citizenry. Holmila argued that the Swedish press kept the Swedish people well informed on what was happening to the Jews of Europe under Hitler and that the censorship protocols the Swedish government passed were hardly ever enforced. In fact, the Holocaust was covered in more detail in Sweden than in Great Britain or even the United States.¹¹⁴

Koblik came to the conclusion that Sweden contributed to the Holocaust by remaining silent throughout much of the war to the terror being perpetrated by Nazi Germany. Although, Koblik recognized that after the rescue of the Danish Jews and the lack of a German response, Sweden became much more interested in helping the Jews, Koblik maintained that Sweden could have done more. Koblik also correctly pointed out that the initiative for the Danish rescue or

¹¹³ Koblik, *The Stones Cry Out*, 151.

¹¹⁴ Antero Holmila, *Reporting the Holocaust in the British, Swedish and Finnish Press, 1945-50* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 36-55.

Wallenberg's activities in Hungary came from outside of the Swedish government, from the Danes and Americans. Koblik argued that Swedish Prime Minister Hansson and Foreign Minister Günther both wanted to gradually swing towards the Allies in order to avoid an altercation with Germany.¹¹⁵ In this way they only took steps towards saving the Jews when the Allies put pressure on them, so that there would be an excuse if Germany was to bring it up. Koblik rightly argued that "If the Western Powers had placed a higher priority on Sweden helping the Jews, there is much evidence to suggest that Sweden would have acted more vigorously even in 1943...Should Sweden have depended upon their encouragement? When it came to issues related to their Scandinavian brothers, there was little hesitancy to act."¹¹⁶ This would become the primary argument amongst Swedish historians and authors, should Sweden have done more to save the Jews of Europe?

The second, and the only other major Anglo-American work on Sweden during the Holocaust, was Paul A. Levine's *From Indifference to Activism: Swedish Diplomacy and the Holocaust*, which came to some different conclusions than Koblik's work. Levine argued that once the Swedish government learned of the genocide being perpetrated by the Germans against the Jews, the Swedes became more active in rescuing the Jews. The most striking difference between Koblik's and Levine's arguments, though, centered on the question of if *more* could have been done to save the Jews. Levine argued,

But for historians the question of *more* remains, however compelling, the wrong one. On the contrary, what required asking is *what* was done, *why*, and by *whom*? This study shows that when men working for Sweden's government were confronted by certain choices, certain decisions were made. Representatives of Sweden's government, for a variety of reasons, decided it was worth their time and effort to try to save Jews during the war. That was their intent, and the available documentation leaves no question that

¹¹⁵ Koblik, 163-165.

¹¹⁶ Koblik, 164.

they worked energetically to achieve this goal. Even a methodologically sound historian can appraise that as a good thing to have happened.¹¹⁷

This refuted Koblik's claim that the Swedes only helped the Jews at the insistence of the Allies. In fact, when explaining why Sweden chose to help the Jews Levine pointed out that Swedish government officials faced the same pressure from its population as the Allied countries faced, yet only the Swedes chose to act to save as many Jews as they could.¹¹⁸ This is a point of view that is missing from most of the academic works on Sweden during the Holocaust that are available in English, the uniqueness of Sweden actually acting in order to save the Jews. As Levine argued, "When Swedish diplomats understood the choices which lay before them, they made the right choice. During the war, Swedish moral indifference evolved into a committed, humanistic activism, and with this change lives were saved."¹¹⁹ There are very few countries that the same could be written for in regards to the Holocaust.

Emmy E. Werner has correctly pointed out in her 2002 book, *A Conspiracy of Decency*, that the decision undertaken by the Swedish Government to bring in Jewish refugees from Denmark signified a complete break from Sweden's earlier policy of maintaining neutrality no matter what the cost. For instance, on October 2, 1943, the Swedish Government offered asylum to all Danish Jews and on October 3, 1943, the Swedish Government ordered that the Swedish Navy was to keep all German ships out of Swedish waters. Had the German Navy pressed the matter, the Swedes might very well have entered into the war against Hitler. Along with the orders to keep out the German ships, the Swedish Government also ordered fuel to be made available to all Swedish fishermen so that they could aid in the rescue of the Danish Jews. These orders came just a few weeks after the Swedes had ordered a complete halt to German military

¹¹⁷ Paul A. Levine, *From Indifference to Activism: Swedish Diplomacy and the Holocaust; 1938-1944* (Uppsala: Department of History, Uppsala University, 1996), 280.

¹¹⁸ Levine, *From Indifference to Activism*, 282.

¹¹⁹ Levine, 284.

transit through Sweden. The Swedish actions were in part a response to what the Swedes had witnessed in the fall of 1942 in Norway, where the Nazis had implemented oppressive measures against the Norwegian Jews.¹²⁰ Werner's book is the first to critically examine the actual people involved in this story, both Jewish escapees and non-Jews who helped in the escape. This approach makes sense, as Werner is a developmental psychologist and research professor at the University of California. The book is an important contribution because it focuses on the people and what drove them to the decision to help the Danish Jews.

John Gilmour's 2010 book, *Sweden, The Swastika, and Stalin*, examined Sweden during the Second World War. In the book, Gilmour wrote about Sweden during the Holocaust and made the point that in February 1943, only eight months before the Swedish decision to save the Danish Jews, the Swedes had rejected but then accepted a plan that would have sent 20,000 Jewish children to live in Sweden on the condition the Americans and British paid for their food. Gilmour argued that this was not because the Swedes did not care about the fate of the Jews, rather, the Swedes wanted to make the plan palatable to the Germans. The Swedes also were undergoing talks at this time about taking in undernourished Norwegian children and repatriating them into Swedish society.¹²¹ It becomes obvious that the Swedes were dismissing the plan because they were realistic and did not want to take on too many refugees or open themselves up to an invasion. The Nazis were still seen as the likely victor in the war at this point and it would have been disastrous for the Swedes to adopt this policy. The Swedes took action once it became possible for them to do so, October 1943.

¹²⁰ Emmy E. Werner, *A Conspiracy of Decency: The Rescue of the Danish Jews During World War II*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2002), 83-84.

¹²¹ John Gilmour, *Sweden, the Swastika, and Stalin: The Swedish Experience in the Second World War*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 196.

Baltic and Polish refugees were also a major issue for the Swedish government during the Second World War. While there had been a steady stream of refugees from Norway, Finland, and Germany throughout the war, towards the end of the war there was a surge in refugees from the Baltic states and Poland. Included in these refugees were liberated concentration camp survivors. There has been little written in English about these refugees, Lars Olsson's *On the Threshold of the People's Home of Sweden* being the only major work in English to focus on these refugees. Olsson's book, though, primarily deals with the assimilation of these refugees into Swedish society and how the Swedes viewed the refugees stay in Sweden as temporary.¹²² While Olsson's book is biased towards a labor point of view, it still raises a critical question, why did the Swedes take these refugees on? Olsson answered that they were brought in for two reasons, to improve Sweden's image with the Allies who were emerging victorious and because Sweden needed labor for its capitalist society.¹²³ While the argument that Sweden granted these refugees temporary asylum in order to reap economic benefits from them could be argued against, the reality is that the Swedes did take these refugees on in order to repair their tarnished reputation amongst the Allied states.

An example of how the rescue of the Danish Jews has not been fairly represented in the historiography of the Holocaust is Alex Kershaw's 2010 book, *The Envoy: The Epic Rescue of the Last Jews of Europe*. In the book, Kershaw examines the Holocaust and how it ended. Kershaw goes into great detail about Raoul Wallenberg, which is deserved, but fails to acknowledge the rescue of the Danish Jews. Kershaw noted, "Although most well-informed people have heard of Wallenberg today, many, including Jews, know less about him than about

¹²² Lars Olsson, *On the Threshold of the People's Home of Sweden: a Labor Perspective of Baltic refugees and relieved Polish concentration camp prisoners in Sweden at the end of World War II* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1997).

¹²³ Olsson, *On the Threshold of the People's Home of Sweden*, vii.

Oscar Schindler, who saved far fewer people and in any case profited from their forced labor.”¹²⁴ This is not meant to suggest that Wallenberg is not deserving of the credit he has been given. If anything there needs to be more research done into his life and the effects he had on the Holocaust. What is apparent, though, is that many academics have become bogged down when looking into Sweden and focus only on Wallenberg and fail to fairly assess the rescue of the Danish Jews. The rescue was not important just because it saved thousands of lives, it was important because it was Sweden’s break from neutrality. In the span of a month the Swedes had gone from accommodating Hitler to ordering its Navy to keep German ships out of its water.

One other aspect of the Holocaust that Sweden played a role in that has not received enough attention amongst English-speaking historians is the role of racial science. Jonas Hansson, a Swedish historian, has pointed out how race biology and science took a dominant role in the early twentieth century. Swedish legislative action attempted to halt immigration and introduced sterilization into Swedish society. Hansson discussed the various Swedish historians who have tackled this problem but pointed out that much research needs to be done to adequately assess how close the Swedish and German racial sciences were to one another.¹²⁵ Another historian, Piero Cola, has analyzed how Swedish racial science and the overall concept of the Swedish community were directly responsible for the halt to immigration. Cola pointed out that when the Swedish State Administration for Health allowed ten Jewish students expelled from schools in Germany to come to Sweden and take up residency, it led to the largest xenophobic backlash in Sweden’s history. Student societies and universities all came out in favor of banning and blocking this type of behavior from the government because Swedish society viewed Jewish

¹²⁴ Alex Kershaw, *The Envoy: The Epic Rescue of the Last Jews of Europe in the Desperate Closing Months of World War II*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 2010), 228.

¹²⁵ Jonas Hansson, “Sweden and Nazism” *Sweden’s Relations with Nazism, Nazi Germany, and the Holocaust: A Survey of Research*, 159-161.

immigration as a threat to the racial community of Sweden. Cola argued that this backlash and these feelings, while lacking the anti-Semitism of Nazi Germany, represented how the majority of the population felt. Simply put, Sweden had adopted the idea of protecting its racial purity despite the fact that Swedish racial science started out as hardly anti-Semitic, but by the 1930s, there had been an adoption of anti-Semitic ideas that resulted in Sweden denying immigration to German Jews.¹²⁶ This, of course, is in stark contrast to Valentin's assertion that anti-Semitism was a foreign concept to the Swedes. This contradiction is further proof that there is more work to be done on Sweden in regards to the Holocaust as, ironically, Swedish eugenics policies would remain in effect, and Sweden continued to sterilize "unfit" women, until 1975.

The Swedes were allowed to get away with their involvement in hindering the Holocaust because the iron ore trade was so vital to the German war economy that Hitler had to turn a blind eye towards these events. It is not a coincidence that the Swedes began to save Jews after the Germans lost at Stalingrad and were unable to regain the initiative in the east, the Swedes understood not just that the Jews were being killed, as Levine has pointed out, the Swedes also understood that they could get away with helping the Jews. A comparison between how the Nazis treated Sweden and Hungary in regards to the Holocaust shows the importance of Swedish iron ore to the Nazis. In March 1944, the Nazis invaded Hungary in part because the Hungarian government would neither implement, nor deport, its Jewish citizens for the Final Solution.¹²⁷ All the Hungarians had to offer the Germans, the last oil fields Germany could attain as well as a buffer between the Soviet Union and Germany, could be taken relatively easy by force. Sweden was able to escape the demands of the Final Solution because the Nazis could not, under any circumstances, lose the iron ore that Sweden provided. This is how the two topics of this

¹²⁶ Piero Cola, "Race, Nation, and Folk" *Culture and Crisis: The Case of Germany and Sweden*, 140-143.

¹²⁷ Robert S. Wistrich, *Hitler and the Holocaust* (New York: A Modern Library Chronicles Book, 2003), 159-161.

chapter, iron ore and the Holocaust, overlap. The importance of Sweden's iron ore allowed Sweden the opportunity to act with autonomy in regards to the Holocaust.

In conclusion, the Swedes followed policies that were designed to protect its neutrality and save its population from the horrors they saw around them. The Nazis had invaded their Western neighbor, Norway, and the Soviets were waging war with their Eastern neighbor, Finland. It is understandable that Sweden would want to remain outside of this conflict. Anglo-American Historians and academics have long admitted the importance of Swedish iron ore to the German war effort, but as this chapter has shown, they have also largely failed to analyze the problem. Anglo-American historians have been the worst offenders, as only a handful of books and articles have actually addressed Sweden's dilemma and the tangible effect Swedish iron ore had on the German economy. Recently, there have been some attempts by English-speaking historians at answering these questions in depth, Gilmour's and Werner's recent works being the prime examples, but the dearth of material is still overwhelming. Further, Sweden's role in the Holocaust continues to be overshadowed by the actions of an individual Swede, Wallenberg, and not the actions of the state. Sweden played a much larger role in the Second World War than they have been given credit for, both in terms of supplying the Germans and saving thousands of Jews.

CHAPTER 4

NORWAY: INVADED AND OVERLOOKED

The Norwegian campaign of 1940 was the first occasion on which all three elements of modern war—sea, land and air—were fully involved. This frequently quoted truism makes its history basic reading for the study of the functions and organization of defence; perhaps the most urgent problem which faces the strategist of today. For this reason alone, the campaign has a more lasting importance than that of a small unsuccessful episode of a war fought under conditions unlikely to be repeated.¹²⁸

J.L. Moulton was quite correct in his analysis of the German invasion of Norway, as it was the first time in military history that sea, land, and air were fully involved and fully coordinated. This campaign was instructive to both the German Military and the Allied Military; yet, the importance that Moulton attached to this campaign has been lost to modern scholars. Rarely has an academic work focused on this campaign, especially amongst English-speaking academics. Once again, the overwhelming majority of scholars have focused on the Eastern Front or Anglo-American actions that proved more successful. While these topics are important to the scholarship of the war, they alone do not represent the whole story of World War II. Though the Norwegian campaign has garnered more attention than the Finnish or Swedish stories from World War II amongst English-speaking historians and academics, it is still severely under covered. While Moulton might have been right in his analysis of the invasion, his analysis on its lasting importance has proven false.

Halvdan Koht was the Foreign Minister for the Norwegian Government leading up to the German invasion of Norway. After the invasion Koht immediately wrote a book on the invasion of Norway, 1941's *Norway: Neutral and Invaded*, which sought to make the struggle Norway was facing more known to the rest of the world. In the book, Koht argued that Norway had the

¹²⁸ J.L. Moulton, *The Norwegian Campaign of 1940: A Study of Warfare in Three Dimensions* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1966), 11.

unique position of having known nearly continuous peace since 1720; with the exception of the Napoleonic Wars and a brief three-week war in 1788. Koht summarized this phenomenon: “Thus the peace traditions of the Norwegian people were extraordinarily deep-rooted. They thought of peace as the natural condition of nations, and they had no longing for military honours. People who imagine that warfare is needed to keep a nation brave and proud and prevent it from degeneration, may take the Norwegian example as a refutation of such theories.”¹²⁹ This was the state of Norway leading up to German invasion, a nation that not only had known peace for over two centuries but had come to believe that peace was the natural order of things for the nation.

Indeed, following the First World War there developed in Norway a discomfort with the League of Nations and the idea of collective security. Norway became disillusioned with the League of Nations as an entity that could actually pacify a conflict and chose to focus on national or regional (Scandinavian) defense. This was in large part due to the other demands on the national economy that were primarily a consequence of the growing social welfare state. Many Norwegians found it easy to compromise on defense spending because they believed neutrality would work again and they saw the money could be used better elsewhere.¹³⁰ Koht pointed out that it had been the League’s failure in dealing with the Italian invasion of Ethiopia that had moved the Norwegians to join their Scandinavian brethren, Spain, the Netherlands, and Switzerland in telling the League on July 1, 1936, that they would no longer be moved to follow collective security and would begin acting on an individual basis because of the League’s inconsistencies and failures.¹³¹ As Hitler began moving pieces on the European checkerboard,

¹²⁹ Halvdan Koht, *Norway: Neutral and Invaded* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), 6.

¹³⁰ O. Riste, “War Comes to Norway” *Norway and the Second World War* ed. Johs. Andenæs, O. Riste, and M. Skodvin (Oslo: Johan Grundt Tanum Forlag, 1966), 9-11.

¹³¹ Koht, *Norway: Neutral and Invaded*, 4-5.

the Norwegians continued to pursue neutrality and the autonomy of choice towards military action. As the rest of Europe began silently preparing for war, Norway was attempting to escape that conflict by cutting its ties to collective security and Europe.

Henrik O. Lunde has pointed out that in September 1939, as the war began, neither the Allies nor Germany planned for the conflict to entangle Norway or the rest of Scandinavia. In fact, Germany wanted Norway to remain neutral and met Norway's September 2, 1939, declaration of neutrality with immediate satisfaction.¹³² Earl Ziemke noted that during the first week of the war, German Ambassador Ulrich von Hassell was sent to all of the Scandinavian capitals in order to give reassurances that Germany would respect their independence while warning these governments not to restrict their trade with Germany.¹³³ Von Hassell's trip is symbolic of Norway's involvement with the Second World War because the issue of trade would dominate Norway's wartime experience. It was vital to the Germans, as this work's second chapter showed, for Germany to maintain its iron ore trade with Sweden and Norway was a major shipping route for that iron ore during the winter months when iron ore could not be shipped through Sweden. While Lunde might have been quite correct in arguing that in September 1939 neither belligerent was interested in Scandinavia, it would not take either belligerent long to become interested in Norway and the rest of Scandinavia.

As early as September 19, 1939, only sixteen days after the Allies declared war on Germany, the British began discussing what to do about Germany receiving Swedish iron ore shipped from the Norwegian port of Narvik during the winter months. Winston Churchill noted in his six-volume history of the war that on September 19th he had brought up to the British War

¹³² Henrik O. Lunde, *Hitler's Pre-Emptive War: The Battle for Norway, 1940* (Philadelphia & Newbury: Casemate, 2010), 2-3.

¹³³ Earl F. Ziemke, *The German Northern Theater of Operations, 1940-1945* (Washington D.C.: Department of the Army Pamphlet 20-271, 1959), 2-3.

Cabinet the idea of mining the Norwegian waters before the winter iron ore trade began. This would have forced any ship that was trading iron ore to the Germans to have to leave Norwegian territorial waters and enter the open sea where the Royal Navy could confiscate the iron ore. Churchill noted that the Cabinet was open to the idea but no decision was reached on that day. In fact, on September 29, 1939, Churchill would again bring up the issue of Narvik, only to have the British War Cabinet ignore it once again. As Churchill wrote, “The Foreign Office arguments about neutrality were weighty, and I could not prevail. I continued, as will be seen, to press my point by every means and on all occasions. It was not, however, until April, 1940, that the decision that I asked for in September, 1939, was taken. By that time it was too late.”¹³⁴ The British, particularly Churchill, were interested in cutting off the German access to Swedish iron ore, if not permanently then at least for the winter months. In the early stage of the war, though, the British could not even agree if mining the Norwegian waters should even be attempted. The end result of the British deliberations was a growing suspicion amongst German military leaders about the role the British wanted to play in Scandinavia.

To the Allied powers, the Winter War provided a unique opportunity to help out the democratic Finland while also occupying the iron ore fields of Sweden and shutting down trade through Narvik. Churchill noted, “If Narvik was to become a kind of Allied base to supply the Finns, it would certainly be easy to prevent the German ships loading ore at the port and sailing safely down the Leads to Germany.”¹³⁵ To the British, then, the importance of both Norway and Finland was tied directly to the ability to halt the German acquisition of Swedish iron ore. The Allied plan to mine the territorial waters of Norway was not being discussed as a way to protect the sovereignty and neutrality of Norway; it was being discussed because it presented the

¹³⁴ Winston Churchill, *The Gathering Storm* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948), 533-536.

¹³⁵ Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, 543-544.

opportunity to help the British war effort. The same can be said for Finland, although there was much outcry against the Soviet invasion of the small, democratic state. The Allies looked to Scandinavia not as a neutral area, but rather as an area that could be used to the advantage of the Allied cause by cutting off German access to Swedish iron ore through the occupation of Narvik and the Swedish fields themselves. British historian Sir Llewellyn Woodward argued that the Winter War provided the Allies the opportunity to enter Scandinavia under the pretext of helping the Finns, which had been authorized by the League of Nations, thus making the action not a violation of Norwegian or Swedish neutrality. In fact, it was not until the Winter War that landing troops in Scandinavia had even been contemplated.¹³⁶

The British Foreign Office had come to agree with Churchill's December 16, 1939, argument that the British could not fight the war while allowing the Germans to break international law while the British followed international law, though how the Germans were breaking international law was never made clear. The Foreign Office decided that if the British actions were not inhumane, the British could begin considering a policy in regards to the Narvik ore traffic. The British, though, did not see much point in halting the Narvik traffic because the infringement of Norwegian territorial waters would not involve any major achievement for the British, since the Germans would just regain the iron ore once the Baltic was free of ice. To achieve any real success, the Baltic traffic would have to be cut as well, which meant seizing the Swedish iron ore mines themselves.¹³⁷ The opportunity to leave troops in Sweden while sending help to Finland during the Winter War provided the Allied Cause the incentive to begin planning for the occupation of the Swedish iron ore mines.

¹³⁶ Sir Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War Volume I* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1970), 31-32.

¹³⁷ Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, 48-49.

From the German perspective, Scandinavia was quickly becoming an area that would not be able to maintain its neutrality. In his memoirs, Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel wrote,

Discussions had been taking place since October 1939 with the Navy on the vital importance of Norway as a naval and air base for the further conduct of the war, should the British manage to get a foot-hold there: they would be in a position to dominate the Bay of Heligoland and the exit channels for our fleet and submarine forces as well as confronting our naval ports and the passage from the Baltic out into the Atlantic with a serious threat from their Air Force.¹³⁸

German planning, then, pre-dated the start of the Winter War between Finland and the Soviet Union. In fact, the German Navy had been arguing the importance of the Norwegian coast as a naval base as far back as Vice-Admiral Wolfgang Wegener's 1926 treatise *The Naval Strategy of the World War*. Wegener's thesis was that during the First World War the German navy should not have been content to wage a defensive war from the protection of the North Sea, but rather, should have expanded to the Skagerrak. This would have allowed the Germans to control the shipping routes of Norway, which would have benefited Germany and harmed the British. Controlling a naval line further from the coast of Germany would have helped the German war effort because controlling shipping routes is the real strength of a navy.¹³⁹ Wegener's ideas would form the crux of German naval strategy during the 1930s, especially influencing Admiral Raeder, who would become the next champion of the Norwegian strategy.

Admiral Raeder's biographer has pointed out that during October 1939 Raeder himself was taking a prominent role in the discussion of German action in Norway. On October 10, 1939, Raeder suggested to Hitler that bases along the Norwegian coast would be a value to the U-boat war and more importantly in protecting German shipments of Swedish iron ore. His biographer, Keith Bird, argued that Admiral Raeder was primarily motivated by the desire to

¹³⁸ Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Wilhelm Keitel* ed. Walter Gorlitz, trans. David Irving, (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000), 104.

¹³⁹ Wolfgang Wegener, *The Naval Strategy of the World War* trans. Holger H. Herwig, (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1989), 7-130.

ensure that the German Navy's share of economic resources did not diminish during the war.¹⁴⁰ Either way, though, the real importance of Raeder's conversation with Hitler is not whether it was done in order to protect the German Navy or in order to attain these valuable bases; rather, the importance is the German Navy was discussing occupying Norway with Hitler almost two months before Stalin launched the Winter War against Finland. So while it has been argued by both Ziemke and Lunde that neither the Germans nor the Allies had plans for Scandinavia when the war began, it did not take either side very long to come up with plans for the involvement of Scandinavia. Churchill had begun planning for the elimination of Swedish iron ore by September 19, 1939, and Erich Raeder had begun planning for the occupation of Norway by October 10, 1939; the war had only begun on September 1, 1939.

The German planning for an invasion of Norway is not mentioned in Army Chief of Staff Halder's wartime diary until December 14, 1939, nearly two months after Raeder's conversation with Hitler. More important, though, December 14 was only a few weeks after the Winter War had begun. Halder's diary, written in shorthand, only mentions that the issue of a preventative war was discussed, without providing much detail except that the operation would be a combined operation between the Navy and the Army and that it would be undertaken simultaneously with an invasion of Denmark.¹⁴¹ Churchill argued that this signified the German decision to invade Norway, claiming that "Quisling and his assistant, Hagelin, came to Berlin on December 14, and were taken by Raeder to Hitler, to discuss a political stroke in Norway. Quisling arrived with a detailed plan. Hitler, careful of secrecy, affected reluctance to increase his commitments, and said he would prefer a neutral Scandinavia. Nevertheless, according to Raeder, it was on this

¹⁴⁰ Keith Bird, *Erich Raeder: Admiral of the Third Reich* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2006), 145.

¹⁴¹ Franz Halder, *The Halder Diaries: The Private War Journals of Colonel General Franz Halder* ed. Arnold Lissance (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1976), 157.

very day that he gave the order to the Supreme Command to prepare for a Norwegian operation.”¹⁴² Henrik Lunde has correctly pointed out, though, that this is entirely misleading. Lunde argued, “Hitler only directed OKW to *investigate* how to take control of the country. Churchill’s statement makes it appear that the Germans decided to invade Norway before they actually did.”¹⁴³

Vidkun Quisling, who Hitler met with on December 14, 1939, was a Norwegian politician of little notoriety at the time. Quisling had served as Defense Minister during Peder Kolstad’s and Jens Hundseid’s governments from 1931 to 1933 after which time Quisling began forming his own National Socialist Party modeled on the Nazi example. Quisling would spend the rest of the 1930s leading the far-right in Norway, albeit to limited success. When the war broke out, Quisling decided to take advantage of the situation and sought Nazi Germany’s help in taking control in Norway, hence the December 14 meeting. As Quisling’s biographer, Ralph Hewins, pointed out, “During the last quarter of a century a network of Norwegian, British, German and Russian vested interests has blackened Quisling’s name with almost every imaginable crime from murder and theft to high treason, until his character and career have become completely distorted in history and in the popular imagination at home and abroad.”¹⁴⁴ Hewins made that argument in 1966; the forty-five plus years that have passed since then have only further muddled the debate about what role Quisling played and how he should be viewed.

Hewins eventually arrived at the conclusion that Quisling was not the treasonous usurper that most historians have made him out to be. In fact, Hewins believed that had Quisling not fallen in league with Rosenberg, one of the chief Nazi racial theorists, Quisling would have escaped the war without much damage to his character. The Quisling that Hewins presented was

¹⁴² Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, 537-538.

¹⁴³ Lunde, *Hitler’s Preventative War*, 54.

¹⁴⁴ Ralph Hewins, *Quisling: Prophet Without Honour* (New York: The John Day Company, 1966), 10.

a Quisling who wanted to protect Norway from becoming a Protectorate, the fate of Poland, Bohemia, and Holland, and the only way this could be prevented would be if Quisling led the country.¹⁴⁵ This view of Quisling, a flawed man trying to save his country, definitely stands out amongst the various works that have been written about Quisling, but that does not make it correct. Another of Quisling's biographers, Paul Hayes, argued,

Being this kind of person, an intelligent dreamer, devoid of political qualities such as perception and the ability to compromise, how did Quisling become famous as a man of action? The fact is that the world made its judgement on him in April 1940, and has not changed that judgement since. Major Quisling, like Judge Lynch and Captain Boycott, has been immortalised by giving his name to a word in the English language. Yet how strange is the decree of history! Whatever Quisling may have been, he was certainly not the most obvious candidate for that dubious honour. He was muddled rather than thoroughly corrupted. He loved Norway but he disagreed with the majority of his fellow countrymen on how best to protect his native land from dangers threatening it in the 1930s...How ironical that it is Quisling who is remembered above all as the archetypal traitor!¹⁴⁶

Hayes reiterated the idea that Quisling was not a traitor, instead he was just a man who has been unfairly judged by history. These two revisionist biographies were attempting to change the way that Quisling was viewed amongst historians by insinuating that he was not a traitor but he simply backed the wrong horse in his attempt to protect Norway from complete occupation by the Nazis.

The principal reason that Quisling is important for this thesis is the fact that his very name has created an atmosphere around the Norwegian campaign that suggests Norway was lost only because of his treachery. This has allowed the Norwegians, British, and French an easy explanation for two difficult questions, first why Norway was lost to the Germans and second why Germany was even interested in Norway. As the rest of this thesis will show, Norway was not invaded, nor did it fall, because of the actions of Vidkun Quisling. Norway was invaded

¹⁴⁵ Hewins, *Quisling: Prophet Without Honour*, 154-155.

¹⁴⁶ Paul M. Hayes, *Quisling: The Career and Political Ideas of Vidkun Quisling, 1887-1945* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1971), 317.

because of Allied actions, particularly the plans for the occupation of the Swedish iron ore fields and the port of Narvik, as well as the *Altmark* incident. These were the real reasons that Germany invaded Norway, and their fault lies in the Allied hands. Norway did not fall because Quisling gave intelligence to the Nazis or how he maneuvered himself into power; rather, it fell because the Allies pulled out of Norway in order to halt the German advance through France. This inconvenient truth has led English speaking authors, particularly the British, to overstate the importance of Vidkun Quisling. Hewins and Hayes, then, were actually right in their analysis of Quisling.

Lunde pointed out some of the major reasons why Quisling had no direct impact upon the German planning of the invasion of Norway. Lunde first noted that, “There is no evidence to suggest that the information received from Quisling had any major effect on German preparations, or that Quisling had any knowledge about German plans. Claims by some British authors...that Quisling provided the Germans with detailed information...are not supported by the subsequent developments or by information in German sources.”¹⁴⁷ How, then, was Quisling a traitor who caused the invasion of Norway? The reality is that there is no documentation to support the thesis that Quisling helped plan the invasion. Lunde further shattered this long-standing notion by pointing out “The fact that German intelligence was wrong on several issues well known to Quisling and his followers suggests that they provided little or no information of military value.”¹⁴⁸ One of the examples that Lunde cites to show this was General von Falkenhorst’s directive for the attack on Narvik. The directive for the attack called on the 139th Mountain Regiment to capture Narvik, the army depot at Elvegårdsmoen, and the fortifications that were believed to exist on both sides of Ofortfjord near Ramsund, but in reality did not.

¹⁴⁷ Lunde, 56.

¹⁴⁸ Lunde, 56.

Some historians have argued that Quisling gave the Germans the information on these shore batteries. However, as Lunde pointed out, Quisling would have known that there were not any shore batteries here and would not have informed the Germans that there were.¹⁴⁹

The major reason Hitler and the Nazis became involved in Norway was the iron ore traffic. As Churchill pointed out, the Winter War brought an Allied strategy to both help the Finns and cut off a vital resource the Germans needed for their war economy, iron ore. As Geirr Haarr has noted, the Germans were not interested in promoting Quisling to power; for instance, Foreign Minister Ribbentrop was disturbed that Hitler had even met with Quisling and the German minister in Oslo Curt Bräuer made it immediately known to top level Nazis that Quisling held no significant leverage in Norway. ‘Studie Nord,’ the initial plan for the invasion of Norway, was strictly hypothetical when it was commissioned in the second week of January 1940. ‘Studie Nord’ came to the conclusion that a neutral Norway without a major British influence was to the German advantage but also recommended that pre-emptive plans for an invasion of Norway should be drawn up. It was not until January 27, 1940, that Hitler instructed the OKW to develop these plans under the special *Sonderstab Weserübung*.¹⁵⁰ Halder even wrote on January 1, 1940, that Quisling had no followers and “It is in our interest to keep Norway neutral. In case England threatened Norway’s neutrality, our policy will change.”¹⁵¹ Halder’s contemporary observation hit at the key point, that it was not Quisling, but rather British actions, which drove German decision-making in regards to Norway. Even after the meetings between Hitler and Quisling, Hitler continued to hold to the idea that a neutral Norway would be the most beneficial to Germany. Once it became obvious during the Winter War that

¹⁴⁹ Lunde, 153-154.

¹⁵⁰ Geirr H. Haarr, *The German Invasion of Norway* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2009), 5-6.

¹⁵¹ Halder, *The Halder Diaries*, 167.

the Allies were developing plans to send troops into Scandinavia the Germans began drawing up plans, not as a result of Quisling's visit. In fact, once Hitler had approved of the plans for the invasion of Norway on February 29, 1940, Hitler stressed to Rosenberg that there was to be no attempt to attain Quisling's support in any way.¹⁵²

Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz also argued that the planning for action in Norway was not a result of Quisling's visit. In his memoirs, Doenitz wrote, "There were indications that the enemy also was planning military operations against Norway. It was these indications which finally led to the decision to forestall [the enemy] by means of a counter-stroke...It was in the light of this situation and within the framework of the general plan that we at U-boat Command were to take action. All preparations were to be completed by March 10..."¹⁵³ This passage was in reference to the March 5, 1940, decision to invade Norway and Denmark but is relevant to this discussion because it shows how the Allied actions were driving German strategy. Doenitz did not write that operations had been ordered because Hitler believed the Norwegian and Danes would rally around Quisling and the Nazi cause, he wrote that the operations were being planned as a response to what German intelligence knew about French and British operational plans. The Allied plans were for the occupation of the Swedish iron ore fields and the port of Narvik, this is what pushed the Germans into action.

What, though, pushed the Germans from the findings of 'Studie Nord,' that a neutral Norway was best for Germany to the March 5 decision to invade? The answer to that question is the *Altmark* incident. The *Altmark* was a German tanker that had been acting as a supply vessel to the pocket-battleship *Admiral Graf Spee*. *The Graf Spee* had sunk at least nine British merchant ships, though the men aboard the ships had been taken prisoner before the British ships

¹⁵² Lunde, *Hitler's Pre-emptive War*, 65.

¹⁵³ Karl Doenitz, *Memoirs: Ten Years and Twenty Days* trans. R.H. Stevens (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1990), 76.

had been sunk. Of these prisoners, 299 would end up on the *Altmark*. The British eventually drove the *Graf Spee* into Montevideo where the British prisoners were released and rescued. The British, then, knew that the *Altmark* contained prisoners when it was stopped in Norwegian territorial waters near Trondheim on February 14, 1940, by a Norwegian torpedo boat. The Norwegians let the boat continue until it was stopped a second and a third time by Norwegian torpedo boats. Eventually, the Royal Navy's 4th Destroyer Flotilla caught wind of the *Altmark*'s position and moved in. After finding the ship the British surrounded it but the *Altmark* was able to evade the British ships, thanks to some help from the Norwegian Navy's attempts to preserve neutrality.¹⁵⁴ On the evening of February 16, 1940, the *Altmark* was forced into Joessing Fjord by the *Cossack*, a British destroyer, and the prisoners were freed. Controversy arose immediately because the British actions were in clear violation of the laws of neutrality, since they had initiated combat in territorial waters without any regard for Norway's neutrality. Edwin Borchard, an American legal scholar, had even argued in April 1940 that the Germans had not violated Norway's neutrality by sailing through the waters, but the British had violated Norwegian neutrality by forcing the issue.¹⁵⁵ The historical significance of this event, though, has often been neglected by English-speaking historians. Many still try to regard this incident as secondary to Quisling's meetings with Hitler as the major driving force in the decision to invade Norway.

As one British historian has argued, "On the whole, it appears that Hitler himself regarded the occupation of Norway primarily as a preventative measure and that, although instructions to make a plan date from Hitler's first meeting with Quisling on 14th December, the

¹⁵⁴ Martin A. Doherty, "The Attack on the *Altmark*: A Case Study in Wartime Propaganda" *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 2 (April, 2003): 188-189.

¹⁵⁵ Edwin Borchard, "Was Norway Delinquent in the Case of the *Altmark*?" *The American Journal of International Law* 34, no. 2 (April, 1940): 289-294.

effective decision to implement it resulted from the *Altmark* episode of 16th February, which showed that...Britain was ready to infringe Norwegian neutrality.”¹⁵⁶ Derry, then, was one of the few British historians to correctly point out why the Germans chose to invade Norway. Derry’s interpretation, of course, suffers from the same mistake as Churchill’s overall interpretation of the Norwegian Campaign, that the December 14th meeting with Quisling had made the invasion of Norway inevitable. Derry, at least, understood the significance of the *Altmark* Incident for the actual invasion of Norway. For instance, Churchill’s opinion of the significance of the *Altmark* appears to be the prestige the rescue of the British prisoners gave him and the Navy.¹⁵⁷ Churchill actually argued, “Hitler’s decision to invade Norway had, as we have seen, been taken on December 14, and the staff work was proceeding under Keitel. The incident of the *Altmark* no doubt gave a spur to action.”¹⁵⁸ In this way Churchill was continuing the trend he had established previously in *The Gathering Storm* of shifting the blame for the decision to invade Norway onto Quisling and Hitler. Churchill reiterates that the decision to invade had been made following the December 14 meeting between Quisling and Hitler and then glosses over the *Altmark* Incident as if the only significance of that episode was that he had rescued a few hundred British soldiers held on board that ship. Churchill fails to mention that it was the British decision to overlook Norwegian neutrality by boarding a German boat in Norwegian territory that made the Germans decide to launch the invasion.

William Shirer, the American journalist who lived through the Nazi years in Germany, argued that January 27, 1940, marked the end of Hitler’s hesitations about an invasion of Norway. On this day, Hitler had Keitel issue a directive that shifted all work on ‘*Studie Nord*’ to be continued under the direct supervision of Hitler. Hitler also ordered Keitel to take charge of

¹⁵⁶ T.K. Derry, *The Campaign in Norway* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1952), 17-18.

¹⁵⁷ Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, 562-564.

¹⁵⁸ Churchill, 564.

the operation that would now be known as *Weserübung*. However, Keitel also argued that the *Altmark* Incident was “For Hitler...the last straw. It convinced him that the Norwegians would not seriously oppose a British display of force in their own territorial waters.”¹⁵⁹ Once again, there is an attempt to downplay the significance of the *Altmark*, as Shirer attempts to argue that January 27 was the real day that the decision had been made that an invasion was going to occur and the *Altmark* was just the event that was the last straw. Shirer, though, does not base the argument that January 27th was a remarkable day upon any tangible proof. He offered no explanation why that decision, to shift to *Weserübung* represented a concrete shift in Hitler’s mind that it was no longer in Germany’s interest for Norway to remain neutral. As Haarr argued, *Weserübung* was just a preventative strategy, and it was the *Altmark* Incident that turned these plans from hypothetical to imminent.

The German invasion of Norway and Denmark depended upon surprise, as the German navy could not hope to achieve success against the superior Allied naval forces any other way. Seven divisions were set aside for the invasion, six for Norway and one for Denmark. Three divisions would attack and four would be used in the follow-up to the invasion. Around eight hundred operational aircraft and between two and three hundred transport planes were to be used in the seaborne landings as well. The German plan was to surprise both the Allies and Norwegians with their landing in order to prepare for defense against the Allied naval forces. It was believed that the Germans could defend their position against the Allies by capturing Norwegian airports and using the Luftwaffe as a tool against the Allied navy. To German military leaders the greatest danger lay in bringing home the ships after dropping off the

¹⁵⁹ William Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany* (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1962), 896-897.

troops.¹⁶⁰ General von Falkenhorst was a surprise choice to lead the invasion due to his aristocratic origins. Indeed, on February 20, 1940, von Falkenhorst had been summoned to a meeting with Hitler to go over von Falkenhorst's experience in landing German troops in Finland during Finland's Civil War in 1918, not to name him commander of *Weserübung*. As François Kersaudy has argued, though, "perhaps because he got carried away by his diatribe, and more likely because he 'sensed' that he had found the right man, Hitler entrusted von Falkenhorst on the spot with the command of Operation *Weserübung*."¹⁶¹

In 1943 the Royal Norwegian Government Information Office published a short book about the German invasion of Norway. According to the document, within twelve hours the Germans had taken Oslo, Kristiansand, Arendal, Egersund, Stavanger, Bergen, Trondheim, Narvik, and all of the airfields. In the next few days all of the railway connections with Sweden were taken.¹⁶² The British response to the German invasion was quite astounding. The British Royal Navy battered the German Navy off of the coast of Narvik on April 13 so badly it led historian Tom Shachtman to quip "...after the battle nothing German moved in Narvik waters."¹⁶³ The success of the battle was not the most surprising, what stands out about April 13, 1940, is that the British did not follow up this victory with an attack on the German troops stationed along the coast. General Eduard Dietl, who was in command of the troops in Narvik, believed the British could have finished his forces off that afternoon and could not believe when the British ships left the Narvik waters. Indeed, Hitler himself believed the campaign was over and drafted up an order that would have forced General Deitl to move his troops from Narvik

¹⁶⁰ *Naval Operations of the Campaign in Norway: April-June 1940* ed. David Brown (London & Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass, 2000), 5.

¹⁶¹ François Kersaudy, *Norway 1940* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 46.

¹⁶² Herman K. Lehmkühl, *Hitler Attacks Norway* (London: The Royal Norwegian Government Information Office, 1943), 19.

¹⁶³ Tom Shachtman, *The Phoney War: 1939-1940* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1982), 175.

and fight their way down to Trondheim, thus forsaking Narvik, the main objective point of the Norwegian invasion. If not for Hitler's staff purposefully holding the order up so that Hitler's mind could be changed, the order would have been given.¹⁶⁴ April 13, 1940, could have been a transformative day in the history of Europe, it could have become the day Norway was saved and Germany lost her iron ore supplies and the ability to wage war. However, the thirteenth of April ended like so many other days in Norway would end, with the British refusing to snatch victory from Germany.

As for the British strategy for landing operation in Norway, Churchill argued in *The Gathering Storm*:

Trondheim, if it were within our strength, was of course the key to any considerable operations in Central Norway. To gain it meant a safe harbor with quays and docks upon which an army of fifty thousand men or more could be built up and based. Near-by was an airfield from which several fighter squadrons could work. The possession of Trondheim would open direct railway contact with Sweden, and greatly improve the chances of Swedish intervention or the degree of mutual aid possible if Sweden herself attacked. From Trondheim alone the northward advance of the German invasion from Oslo could be securely barred...Narvik, far away to the north, could be stormed or reduced at leisure and would all the while be protected.¹⁶⁵

Involving Sweden into the conflict would greatly improve the strategic aim of the British, since it would have given them a second chance at cutting off iron ore from the Germans. Indeed, cutting off the German ability to advance north would allow the British to continue holding them at bay off the coast of Narvik; which would cut off iron ore traffic from that area. On April 14, 1940, the British landed 350 seamen and marines from the cruisers *Glasgow* and *Sheffield* onto the shores of Namsos a city to the north of Trondheim. These landings were undertaken in order to forestall a German landing at Namsos, but the news from the landed troops was far from encouraging. Poor weather and facilities dominated the reporting from this landing, with the

¹⁶⁴ Shachtman, *The Phoney War: 1939-1940*, 175-176.

¹⁶⁵ Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, 619.

main idea stressed being that a large battalion would have difficulty advancing anywhere from Namsos. The British had also devised for a landing in Åndalsnes, a city to the south of Trondheim. While many in the British Cabinet showed hesitations about landing troops in the Trondheim Fjord, Churchill continued to stress that an attack on Trondheim would be the best strategy. Churchill considered the Namsos and Åndalsnes landings merely a diversion to confuse the Germans, while the main thrust would be against Trondheim itself. Indeed, April 22 or 23 was seen as the probable timetable for the invasion of Trondheim, but at noon on April 20, the British Chiefs of Staff cancelled the attack that Churchill had planned in favor of reinforcing the British troops in Namsos and Åndalsnes and enveloping Trondheim in a pincer movement. Trondheim, then, remained the strategic aim of the attack, but the British Chiefs of Staff saw no reason to risk the Home Fleet against the German Luftwaffe, which was achieving some success against British ships docked near the Trondheim Fjord.¹⁶⁶

General Sir Edmund Ironside wrote on April 20, 1940, of the decision to avoid a direct landing at Trondheim in favor of a pincer movement, “The new situation brought about by the giving up of the main attack on Trondheim means a great deal more weight upon the two little ports of Namsos and Andalsnes. Weight which we never expected would come there. Now we must mount all the paraphernalia of a Base port to see that it [the force] doesn’t fall down in front...I believe as a basis of thought that we ought to be able to take the place inside a month.”¹⁶⁷ This statement can be taken as both optimistic, that Ironside believed that the pincer movement would eventually be successful against the Germans in Trondheim, and pessimistic, since he also believed the forces in Namsos and Åndalsnes were not adequately equipped. Either

¹⁶⁶ Graham Rhys-Jones, *Churchill and the Norway Campaign 1940* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Military, 2008), 83-88.

¹⁶⁷ Sir Edmund Ironside, *Time Unguarded: The Ironside Diaries, 1937-1940* ed. Roderick Macleod and Denis Kelly (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1974), 271.

way, Ironside's musings left out one crucial element of the British plan for Trondheim, no one had told the men in Namsos or Åndalsnes that the direct naval landings in Trondheim had been cancelled. Further complicating matters was the German advance north towards Trondheim from Oslo, which was increasingly becoming more and more successful.¹⁶⁸ The situation, then, was that a last minute change of plans had been made that the landed British troops were not even made aware of, while the Germans steadily increased their position in the southern-center sections of Norway. It would appear that General Ironside was being too optimistic in his prediction of taking Trondheim within a month.

Lunde argued that the abandonment of a direct operation against Trondheim doomed the Allied effort in central and southern Norway to failure because the rationale of having troops move in from Namsos and Åndalsnes was to draw German troops out of Trondheim, thereby making it easier for an Allied landing to take the city. Further, the snowy conditions made it unlikely that a pincer movement would succeed because it was virtually impossible to cover the long trek to Trondheim.¹⁶⁹ Indeed, Derry noted that Lieutenant-General H.R.S. Massy was appointed to command all Allied troops in Norway except those in Narvik, but the new General and his headquarters never left London due to the speed that things turned badly for the Allies in central and southern Norway. By the end of April, the decision had been made to withdraw troops from central Norway due to the reality that the Germans had fortified their position in Trondheim.¹⁷⁰

As May 12 passed into May 13, the British, under General Mackesy, landed their first troops into the Narvik area. General Auchinleck took control of the troops in northern Norway with instructions to cut off the iron ore supplies and hold Narvik for the Norwegian King and his

¹⁶⁸ Kersaudy, *Norway* 1940, 140-141.

¹⁶⁹ Lunde, *The Pre-emptive War*, 318-319.

¹⁷⁰ Derry, *The Campaign in Norway*, 78-82.

government. The assault on Narvik would not begin until May 27, 1940, though, well after Hitler's invasion of the west had begun. In fact, according to Churchill the decision to concentrate all Allied strength in France had been made on May 24, 1940. The British had taken Narvik by May 28, 1940, along with four hundred German prisoners. Churchill lamented this fact in his memoirs, arguing, "We now had to relinquish all that we had won after such painful exertions."¹⁷¹ It is ironic that the very same moment the British were struggling to get as many men off the shores of Dunkirk as they could; they had finally achieved their goals in Norway, the occupation of Narvik.

A military withdrawal from Narvik by the British, in all reality, made sense. France was likely to fall and it did not take too long to figure out that Hitler would next turn his attention to crushing the British. From a strategic standpoint, then, withdrawing troops in order to have them available for the defense of Great Britain was more than justifiable. What was unjustifiable, though, is how the British handled the decision to evacuate Narvik. The British, according to Derry, worked out the evacuation in total secret from the Norwegians. "Our naval resources being stretched to the uttermost, the paramount need was to exploit the capture of Narvik in such a way that the Germans might have no inkling of our intentions to withdraw until the main convoys were well on their way home."¹⁷² The Norwegians, then, genuinely believed that Narvik was to be held as a last vestige of free Norway, and they had no idea that the Allies were using the victory in order to pull out of the country. Derry justified this behavior by noting that there had been some leaked information, including information that had postponed the final assault on Norway, and the fear of what the Norwegians would think led to the decision to keep the Norwegians in the dark about the decision. It was not until June 1, 1940, only a week before

¹⁷¹ Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, 652.

¹⁷² Derry, *The Campaign in Norway*, 218.

the withdrawal that the Norwegians were informed of the Allied decision.¹⁷³ After the Allied withdrawal, Narvik was retaken by the Germans and an armistice was signed between Norway and Germany.

Churchill, of course, painted the picture so that the failure of the Norwegian campaign had been due to the realities of the German advance west. However, Lunde has pointed out that part of the problem in Norway was the way in which the Allies acted towards their Norwegian partners. The British commanders, Mackesy and Auchinleck, never felt it important to visit and discuss plans with the Norwegian military commanders, General Fleischer and General Ruge. Further, as Lunde argued, by not letting the Norwegian commanders know of the planned withdrawals from central and southern Norway, the Norwegians lost many men who were taken prisoner, because they had no idea they were being left to fend for themselves. The Norwegian advocacy for the strike on Trondheim and the use of the British navy, which was just sitting in the bay of Narvik, went unheeded. Lunde noted, “The campaign in Norway is a textbook example of what to avoid when multi-national forces are involved in joint operations...The Allies were involved in the beginnings of a giant struggle that had worldwide implications while the Norwegian leadership was more concerned about what happened in Norway.”¹⁷⁴ The result of the failure of the Norwegian campaign, then, can be argued to have been the Allied dismissal of the Norwegians and their ideas. While this was not the sole reason for the Allied defeat, the German advance into France was indeed unstoppable, an assault on Trondheim would have at least been the correct strategy.

How should the campaign in Norway be viewed? Both the German and British initiatives into the country had started out so well for both countries, yet the Germans won out in the end

¹⁷³ Derry, 218-219.

¹⁷⁴ Lunde, *Hitler's Pre-emptive War*, 477-481.

despite being defeated in the pivotal battle. Churchill chose to look at the bright side of the failures of Norway, ending his analysis by arguing that the Norwegian campaign had effectively eliminated the threat of the German navy in the coming Battle of Britain.¹⁷⁵ This was indeed an important accomplishment, but does it vindicate the British for the ineptitude of the campaign as a whole? Did the Norwegian people fight and die for their freedom so that the British could have an easier time in defending London? The real significance of the Norwegian campaign is the fact that the Germans now had control of Scandinavia and all of the Swedish iron ore and Finnish nickel it needed to build new ships, airplanes, rifles, and ammunition. Anglo-American historians have always looked to the Scandinavian theater as of secondary importance, but the reality is that this area could have been denied to the German war machine. The British had captured Narvik, which had been the goal of the entire Allied plans for Scandinavia since Churchill had first argued for involvement in Scandinavia on September 19, 1939. To achieve that goal and just a little over a week later withdraw from that port was nearly unfathomable.

Further, one question that remains to be answered is, how could defending Narvik have harmed the British defense during the Battle of Britain? The Battle of Britain was an aerial battle that required very little in terms of ground troops, so the troops stationed in Narvik would not have been a huge loss to the British defense. Yet, no English-speaking historian has asked why Narvik had to be evacuated to protect Great Britain. Further, continued operations in Narvik would have tied up several Luftwaffe squadrons that were actually used during the blitz, which would at least have mitigated the damage from leaving troops in Narvik. It appears that most English-speaking historians are eager to push the blame for the failures in Norway off onto Quisling and the fall of France without ever questioning if operations in Norway needed to have even failed. Moulton's quote from the beginning of this chapter argued that the German invasion

¹⁷⁵ Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, 657.

was the first to fully use planes, ships, and ground troops in an invasion, yet by the end of May 1940 the Allies had taken Narvik and destroyed the German navy. How truly effective were the Germans in Norway, then? The war would have turned out very differently if the Germans had lost Scandinavia, as the Allies would have been able to keep the Nazis on the defensive in Sweden and Operation 'Barbarossa' would likely have been postponed. For these reasons, more investigation into the Norwegian theater is more than worthy of Anglo-American historians attention.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The Second World War is one of the most discussed events in human history amongst Anglo-American historians, yet as this thesis has shown there are still gaps in the historical literature, at least by Anglo-American historians. Our understanding of the war can only advance as our knowledge and understanding of the interaction of the various fronts advance. It is not just enough to know that Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, since the context of that invasion must be understood in order for historians to fully comprehend why Hitler made that decision. Nor is it enough to know that Norway was invaded in April 1940; again, understanding needs to be reached of why Hitler felt it was vital to use troops in this area so close to the start of the Western offensive. Anglo-American historians cannot continue to gloss over Scandinavia if the war is to ever be fully understood amongst English-speaking scholars. This region deserves more attention than the few pages that scholars have been willing to devote towards it, because as this thesis has shown when Anglo-American authors or non-English speaking historians have written extensively about Scandinavia during the Second World War, a plethora of information that is usually omitted becomes apparent.

In the first chapter of this thesis, the importance of Finland was analyzed, specifically how Finland contributed to the German decision to invade the Soviet Union. During the Winter War, the Allies became obsessed with using this conflict as an excuse to send Allied troops into Scandinavia to achieve the goal of cutting off the German supply of Swedish iron ore. Troops would disembark in Narvik and then occupy the northern parts of Sweden where the iron ore was mined; the remaining troops would enter Finland in order to help protect Finnish national sovereignty. Churchill had championed this strategy because it was believed that cutting off

access to Swedish iron ore would result in an inability of the Germans to manufacture the war material they needed to achieve victory. Hitler understood what the Allies were planning and the disastrous effect it would have on German means of production, which is why after the Winter War he became ardent in his opinion that the Soviet Union must not bring more war into Finland. Indeed, the desired course of action for Nazi Germany was for Scandinavia to be in a state of peace, as this would rob the Allies of an excuse to invade Scandinavia and cut off the German supply of Swedish iron ore.

The Winter War also resulted in a German reassessment of Soviet strength and capabilities. As Chapter One showed, German military leaders, especially Hitler, were not at all impressed with the Soviet Army during the Winter War. The Soviet Union had one of the largest armies in the world in 1939, yet they could not quickly defeat the small nation of Finland in combat. The lesson that Hitler learned from the Winter War was not that a large army will struggle under poor leadership and hostile terrain; rather, Hitler learned that the Soviet Union posed no threat to Germany or its desire to achieve *Lebensraum* in the east. The war in the East had initially been viewed as a war that would have to wait, but the Winter War changed this perception amongst German military leaders. Hitler drew from the Winter War the perception that he did not have to wait to conquer France and England to take up arms against the Soviets; instead he could do it whenever he felt it was necessary. Some Anglo-American historians have furthered this argument, albeit it is usually only covered in detail in works that specialize on the Winter War. As the first chapter showed, even the standard work on the lead up to the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Gorodetsky's *Grand Delusion*, does not even discuss Finland.

The importance of Finland is not only that it showed the Germans the weaknesses of the Soviet Union or that the Allies wanted to turn Scandinavia into a war zone. One of the key

reasons why Finland is more important to the story of World War II than Anglo-American historians have been willing to grant is how the Winter War and its aftermath showed that German and Soviet interests in Scandinavia were not compatible. As Krosby showed, the issue of who would be in charge of the Petsamo nickel mines dominated the political relationship between Germany, the Soviet Union, and Finland. This was an issue that the Nazis could not back down from, as they desperately needed Finnish nickel to continue its war machine. Yet, the Soviet Union felt that it needed to be in control of the nickel mines, regardless of what the Germans thought. This would lead Hitler in August 1940 to make the decision that if the Soviets pushed the issue in Petsamo, the Germans would occupy Petsamo and risk an early war with the Soviets. As Chapter One showed, the Soviets were not interested in acquiring nickel, the Soviets wanted to control the nickel output and incorporate Petsamo into the Soviet Union. This would have allowed the Soviets to control the vital resource and have leverage in their dealings with Hitler and Germany. This action, though, was a power grab by the Soviets that Hitler would not allow, even if it meant war with the Soviets nearly a year earlier than the Nazis were planning. This would climax in November 1940 when Hitler and Molotov met to discuss the future relations between the Soviet Union and Germany. Hitler began screaming at Molotov that no war should come to Finland, which Molotov had insinuated the Soviets wanted. The November meeting between the two showed Hitler that war with the Soviets was going to come sooner or later, and Finland was the main topic of discussion at that meeting. In December 1940, Directive No. 21 was issued, which began the planning for Operation 'Barbarossa,' the November meeting was a major part in leading to this decision.

In the second chapter the issue of how Sweden contributed to the Nazi war machine by supplying Nazi Germany with the vital stocks of iron ore it needed to continue manufacturing its

war materials was investigated. The Nazi economy was analyzed and it was established that Hitler did not think that the invasion of Poland would result in a larger war with Great Britain and France. When this occurred, though, it eliminated imports of French and Benelux iron ore into the Reich. Germany, then, had to consolidate its remaining source of iron ore, Sweden. It was not only that Sweden was the last country still contributing significant supplies of iron ore to Germany, but rather it was the fact that Swedish iron ore was the highest quality of iron ore on earth. Indeed, by 1939 Sweden accounted for half of the iron ore imported into Germany, which combined with its high quality made it of the utmost importance for the Reich. As Chapter Two argued, the year 1940 alone represents how important Swedish iron ore was to Germany because in that year Germany lost 40 percent of its iron ore imports. Without Swedish iron ore coming into Germany, the Reich would not have survived into 1941. This was why Churchill and the Allies put so much effort into planning how to cut off the German supply of Swedish iron ore during the Winter War and after, it truly would have crushed the German war economy. Indeed, as Martin Fritz argued, the high quality of Swedish iron ore helped to ease the bottleneck on German shipping because it was of such a high quality, less had to be shipped.

In Chapter Two it was also argued that Anglo-American historians have typically missed the significance of Swedish action during the Holocaust. For instance, rarely have English-speaking historians discussed the rescue of the Danish Jews, which was undertaken by the Swedes. Steven Koblik and Paul Levine deserve much credit for writing about these undertakings and bringing them to light for Anglo-American audiences. The story of how the Swedes rescued the Danish Jews is not so much important for the triumph it represented in standing up to the Reich, as much as how it showed the importance of Swedish iron ore to the Nazis. It was not as if the Nazis had no clue where the Danish Jews ended up, they fully

understood that the Swedes had rescued them. The Nazis, though, understood that they could not take action against Sweden for rescuing these Jews because of what it might mean towards the iron ore trade. The example of Hungary was used in Chapter Two to compare how the fate of these two nations and their refusal to cooperate with the Final Solution ended in two completely different fates based upon what they could offer to the Reich. Sweden, because of its iron ore, and location, was able to escape occupation or any real reprisals from the Nazis because of the fact that an invasion would lead to the iron ore mines being destroyed before the Nazis could occupy them. The Hungarians, though, only had oil and a vital buffer zone to offer the Nazis. Oil fields could be easily repaired in comparison to iron ore mines and it mattered little if the Hungarians or the Nazis were running the country in terms of it being a buffer zone. This example is the best evidence for the importance of Swedish iron ore to the Nazi war machine, they had to turn a blind eye towards the Swedish interruption of the Final Solution in order to continue the war.

In Chapter Three the Nazi invasion of Norway was examined in order to determine how accurate the Anglo-American interpretation of that event was. It was established in this chapter that at the outbreak of war the Nazis wanted Norway to remain neutral, a feeling that the Nazis held until the *Altmark* Incident proved Norwegian neutrality was not enforceable against the British. While Anglo-American authors have continued to pass the blame for the invasion upon the alleged instigating actions of Vidkun Quisling, Chapter Three showed that up until February 1940 there was no serious planning for any German action in Norway. Certainly, there were operational plans drawn up and investigated, but those were strictly hypothetical. It was not until the Germans were convinced that the Allies would not respect the neutrality of Norway that these plans shifted from the hypothetical to reality. The catalyst for this was not Quisling's visit,

as Churchill and so many other Anglo-American historians have argued; rather, it was the British boarding of the *Altmark*. This was not the sole event that spurred Hitler to immediate action, but it was the event that created the desire for action. By not understating this event, Anglo-American historians have continued to misconstrue the invasion of Norway.

It was also argued in Chapter Three that the Allies could have defeated the Germans in Norway in April 1940 if they would only have seized the initiative. It was shown that the British had completely obliterated the German naval forces in the harbor of Narvik on April 13, 1940, leaving no German ships still afloat. Yet, the British did not take the initiative and land its troops in Narvik to fight the few hundred Germans stationed there. German General Dietl, who was in charge of the German troops stationed in Narvik, could not believe his eyes when the British chose to head home instead of land and fight the Germans. Hitler himself was so sure that Narvik was lost after the British wiped out the German ships stationed at Narvik that he ordered General Dietl to evacuate Narvik and retreat to meet the other German forces stationed in Trondheim. If not for Hitler's staff interfering in delivering the order, the Germans would have given up Narvik. Remarkably, though, this failure is rarely mentioned in the Anglo-American histories of the Second World War. For historians this episode should be more widely understood because it was a true chance to turn the tide of the war in April 1940. If the British had taken Narvik, which had been their goal since September 19, 1939, then they could have effectively cut the Germans off from the Swedish iron ore they believed the Germans to so desperately need. Would this not have been worth fighting a battle over?

Chapter Three also analyzed another failure of the Allies in Norway during April 1940, the decision to avoid a direct landing in Trondheim. The British had successfully landed troops in Namsos and Åndalsnes, two Norwegian ports that surrounded the major Norwegian port of

Trondheim. The British wanted to run the Germans out of Trondheim, so it was planned to use the troops in Namsos and Åndalsnes to distract the Germans while the British landed troops into Trondheim itself. The idea was for a direct assault upon the city. When the time came for the landings, though, the British changed plans at the last minute in the hopes that a pincer movement coordinated between the troops in Namsos and Åndalsnes could achieve victory against the Germans. Even this attack, though, was reconsidered and the Allies decided to withdraw all troops from central Norway in late-April. Once again, here was a chance for the Allies to achieve victory against the Nazis squandered. The Final Allied mistake came in May 1940 after the Allies finally took the city of Narvik. The Allies quickly decided to evacuate from this city, though, because of the German victories in France. The entire goal of having Allied troops in Norway had finally been achieved, yet the Allies decided to forsake this victory. As Chapter Three pointed out, though, the saddest part of all of this was that the Allies did not even let the Norwegians know that the decision had been made to withdraw until well after the decision had been made. The significance of Norway to the Second World War, as the Third Chapter pointed out, was that because of Allied mistakes the Germans now had secured the Swedish iron ore and Finnish nickel that they needed to continue the war. The Allies would never again be in a position to break this supply until 1945, when the war was ending.

It is a shame that Anglo-American historians have not looked into this region more in the study of the Second World War. A lot of the answers to questions of why certain things happened in World War II come from events that transpired in Scandinavia. While there are seldom definitive answers to any questions in regards to the Second World War, the overall importance of Scandinavia must be better understood amongst Anglo-American historians. Every work by historians who have investigated Scandinavia in further detail, H. Peter Krosby,

John Gilmour, Martin Fritz, or Henrik Lunde for example, has yielded evidence of the importance of this region that has seldom, if ever, been discussed amongst Anglo-American historians. The events in Scandinavia that this thesis has investigated are open to interpretation. What is not open for interpretation, though, is that these events deserve more than the few paragraphs or few pages that are generally assigned to them by Anglo-American historians.

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