

The stranger in our midst

Public discourses, constructions and representations of the ‘others’ in Scandinavia, 1914-1918

This paper explores how the impact of war in 1914 challenged and redefined ideas of insiders and outsiders in Scandinavia, as thousands of migrants – political refugees, transient workers, and others – sought safety on the periphery of Europe. The impact of this human tidal wave on society was reflected in the everyday life of most Scandinavian cities, as the presences of these foreign citizens became a more noticeable feature of society. Their arrival placed an added strain on society’s limited resources and large groups of migrants appeared to bring chaos wherever they settled. Scandinavian officials scrambled to react and introduced new legislation intended to limit and manage the new arrivals. In parliaments across the region, the ‘foreign invasion’ was analyzed and debated, as politicians sought a solution to the problem.¹ Police officials, military personnel, and immigration agencies were instructed to register and regulate, but the foreign population in Scandinavia continued to grow steadily as the war continued. Increasingly, the foreigner was perceived to represent a treacherous element in society, to participate in illegal activities, as spy-mania also engulfed the Scandinavian countries. Shadowy figures with sinister plans appeared in the public narrative and were identified as mysterious foreigners. The discovery and arrest of several German spies in Norway, Denmark, and Sweden added a further danger and realism to the situation.

A heightened awareness of the outsider or stranger emerged, as anxiety, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism became important elements of this public discourse on society’s outsider. The war accelerated and refined a perception of the ‘outsider’ as a threat from within, which amplified the divide between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Existing realities and ideas appeared to be in flux, as the Norwegian journalist and crime author, Sven Elvestad remarked in August 1914:

[...]are not everyone of us taken by surprise and wonder if the world belongs to reality? Our daily circle of beliefs, our whole well known fantasy is being shocked. All that we have associated with names and places [...] have glided to one side, and something else has replaced them, a nightmare, which has overtaken our determined and desperate consciousness – something

¹ *Norges Intelligenssedler*, 7.11.1917.

unrealistic [...] has actually taken place.²

It was this 'unrealistic' context that intensified the public's awareness of the 'others', as thousands of immigrants transformed both the physical and conceptual landscape of Scandinavian society. On a societal level, their presences made notions of neutrality unattainable and were gradually replaced by an increased fixation on defining insiders and outsiders. A perceived threat of the stranger in their midst emerged along side interpretations of what needed to be protected. Public rhetoric became increasingly centred on ethnicity, as was evident in the language used to describe the outsider. Consequently, the public discourse of the foreigner during 1914-1918 foreshadowed developments that were to engulf the debate in Scandinavia and Europe during the post-war period.

The outbreak of war in August 1914 altered the physical landscape of Europe and made travel across the continent almost impossible for non-combatants. Access to established routes, either within or between countries, was disrupted; shipping lanes closed, roads, canals, rivers, ports and railways were overcrowded by soldiers and military equipment. On both land and at sea, substantial obstacles were placed in the way of anyone who travelled, as trenches and defence installations were physically dividing the continent from the English Channel to the Swiss border and naval forces prowled the seas. At the same time the war had triggered a considerable migration across Europe, as expatriates returned to do military service, citizens from neutral countries attempted to return home, and refugees fled the hostilities. In the early months of the war, thousands of people were on the move and attempting to cross through what had become a war zone. As the fighting intensified, the movement of people, information and goods across a divided continent became increasingly difficult and transformed the neutral Scandinavian countries into key transit hubs between East and West.³

The three neutral Scandinavian countries of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway did themselves experience the physical impact of the changes brought on by modern industrial warfare. Defence installations were being hastily assembled and manned, citizens were mobilized and marched to defend neutralities borders, and naval ships patrolled the coastal

² *Aftenposten*, 6.8.1914 (my translation).

³ Nik. Brandal and Ola Teige, 'The secret battlefield. Intelligence and counter-intelligence in Scandinavia during the First World War', in Claes Ahlund (ed.), *Scandinavia in the First World War*, Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2012.

waters from the North Sea to the Baltic Sea.⁴ The outbreak of war, however, was to impacted on all spheres of neutral society.⁵ There were for example several economic setbacks, as trade, shipping and supplies to and from Scandinavia were severally disrupted. It forced officials to regulate and ration essential resources for the first time since the Napoleonic Wars. In the early days of the war, queues of anxious citizens were found outside shops and banks, as panic simmered beneath the surface. While normality returned within a few weeks, there continued to be occasional shortages of goods and materials throughout the war. It was a situation that was to physically transform society, as ornamental gardens in cities were turned into vegetable patches and streetlights dimmed in order to save gas and oil.⁶ It was, however, not only the scarcity of resources that caused the hard landscape of Scandinavian society. The war also brought with it a novel and notable feature that was to materialize in most Scandinavian cities – large numbers of foreign citizens.⁷ These newly arrived migrants were highly visible in the homogenous Scandinavian societies: they spoke, looked, and behaved differently from their local hosts.

Scandinavian society was at first fascinated by the variety and novelty of the many foreign citizens that passed through or settled in the three countries. Newspapers retold countless of stories in sympathetic articles. They contained captivating scenes that conveyed the efforts of brave individuals who wanted to return to defend their motherland, but also the tense atmosphere on board trains that were filled with passengers who were now enemies because of the war. There were also colourful descriptions of the chaos and confusion that accompanied the many refugees who fled through Scandinavia in those early days of the war, such as the thousands of Russians who converged on Copenhagen during the evening of 3.August.⁸ The majority of them had been expelled from Germany and were now looking for a way to get back to Russia. Newspaper reports told of how they filled the hotels of the Danish capital, having only brought with them what they had managed to bring on short notice. They

⁴ *Aftenposten*, 9.8.1914.

⁵ Wilhelm Keilhau, *Norge og verdenskrigen*, Oslo: Ascheoug, 1927; Per Vogt, *Jerntid og jobbetid: en skildring av Norge under verdenskrigen*, Oslo: Tanum, 1938.

⁶ Claes Ahlund (ed.), *Scandinavia in the First World War*, Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2012.

⁷ Per Kristian Sebak, *A transatlantic migratory bypass: Scandinavian shipping compnaies and transmigration through Scandinavia, 1898-1929*, Ph.d: University of Bergen, 2012.

⁸ *Aftenposten*, 9.8.1914.

were like 'shipwrecked passengers', having managed to salvage some of their belongings, and 'flapping around like crazy', according to report.⁹ While some of them were 'wealthy', the majority of them were poor, and newspapers predicted that it would take a considerable effort and resources to get them all home to Russia.¹⁰ Similar chaotic scenes were played out across the region, as thousands of desperate people attempted to either escape or join the war by travelling through one or more of the three countries.

Scandinavian newspapers' fascination with the pandemonium of war was, however, also tinged with an attention to the problems caused by sudden arrival of thousands of foreign citizens. In August 1914, reports from the chaos caused by the arrival of nearly 1 000 Germans to Haparanda, a town in the north of Sweden close to the border with Finland, underlined the challenges faced by local authorities.¹¹ The German refugees had been expelled from Russia and were seeking transportation back home through Sweden. The situation was further complicated when the waiting Germans were joined by a large contingent of Russians who were travelling in the opposite direction. It quickly became apparent that a small Swedish town like Haparanda was not able to cope with such a large and sudden influx of refugees. Local accommodation, services, resources and authorities were stretched beyond their limits. The situation was resolved after a few days, but it caused both official and public anxiety for the future. As the tumultuous scenes in Haparanda were repeated in other parts of Scandinavia, a public uneasiness with the rapid increase in foreign citizens merged with a burgeoning fear of the mysterious stranger. While initial reports were sketchy due to a lack of available information, newspapers estimated that at least a few thousand foreign citizens had arrived in each Scandinavian country during the first six months of the war.¹² The figures continued to grow and it is estimated that the number of immigrants who settled in Scandinavia doubled as a result of the war, which resulted in at least 100 000 foreigners within in the region at anyone time.¹³ A wave of growing unease and suspicion towards outsiders as representatives of otherness followed in the wake of this large influx, which contributed to make Scandinavian society part of

⁹ *Aftenposten* 9.8.1914 (my translation).

¹⁰ *Aftenposten* 6.8.1914; *Eidsvold Blad* 21.8.1914.

¹¹ *Fremtiden*, 15.8.1914.

¹² *Aftenposten* 09.06.1915.

¹³ It must be emphasized that this number is an estimation, as it has not been possible to gather statistical material and figures for all three countries.

a global phenomenon that emerged due to the war.

The outbreak of war in 1914 did not only alter the physical landscape of Europe, as society's inner landscape transformed existing constructs of the outsider or stranger in both belligerent and neutral states. Prejudices and suspicions regarding 'the others' were of course nothing new in 1914, but the consequences of war made them thrive in both governmental policies and public opinion. In most belligerent nations, foreign citizens were forced to register and assigned to official categories as either 'friendly' or 'enemy' aliens. Individuals who were considered to be 'enemy aliens' were deprived of civil and political rights, which included physically restricted, such as the internment of thousands of recent arrived migrants from the Central Powers in Britain, Canada, and Australia.¹⁴ In the first few months of the war, belligerent states also expelled large numbers of what they considered to be undesirable elements from their lands. These official policies were matched by the general public's increased hostility, harassment and physical attacks on individuals and groups considered to be in league with the enemy.¹⁵ This atmosphere of suspicion created a clear line of division between those defined as loyal insiders and the untrustworthy outsider or stranger.¹⁶ Consequently, thousands of unwanted aliens in belligerent states were either forced or decided to uproot themselves from their homes and forced to search for somewhere else to settle. For many of these migrants their next stop became Denmark, Norway, or Sweden.

Faced with this sudden inflow of migrants, Scandinavian officials struggled to find appropriate measures that would both cope with its consequences and limit further arrivals. Existing immigration legislation was evaluated, updated and new laws debated by both parliaments and the public. From a legislative and policing perspective the situation varied

¹⁴ See for example Panikos Panayi, 'An Intolerant Act by an Intolerant Society: The Internment of Germans in Britain during the First World War', in David Cesarani and Tony Kushner (ed.), *The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain*, London: Frank Cass, 1993; Bohdan S. Kordan, *Enemy Aliens, Prisoners of War: Internment in Canada during the Great War*, Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002; Gerhard Fischer, *Enemy aliens: internment and the homefront experience in Australia, 1914-1920*, St. Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1989.

¹⁵ See for example Panikos Panayi, *The Enemy in our Midst: Germans in Britain during the First World War*, New York: Berg, 1990; Bobbie Oliver, *War and peace in Western Australia: the social and political impact of the Great War, 1914-1926*, Nedlands, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 1995; James Bennett, *Rats and revolutionaries: the labour movement in Australia and New Zealand, 1890-1940*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2003.

¹⁶ Eirik Brazier, 'The Scandinavian Diggers. Foreign-born soldiers in the Australian Imperial Force, 1914-1918', in Claes Ahlund (ed.), *Scandinavia in the First World War*, Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2012.

somewhat, as Denmark and Sweden seemed to be better prepared than Norway. Danish authorities relied on the country's strict immigration law of 1875 and Swedish decision makers acted swiftly by introducing laws to regulate migration and espionage in September 1914.¹⁷ Only in Norway were officials slow to react, as the country had no existing espionage legislation and control of foreign citizens remained relaxed through the first year of war. Rigorous legislation and regulations regarding immigration was not in place until 1915, and an espionage law was only introduced in 1917. Norwegian political rhetoric on the subject was, however, filled with passionate statements that largely reflected the suspicions and prejudices found in the general population of all three countries. During a parliamentary debate on a proposed amendment to the migration law, Minister of Justice, Lars K. Abrahamsen, was forthright about the rationale behind the proposal.

It will not stand, when the rest of Europe has passed stricter regulations to stop the dregs of society from crossing their borders, that we should turn ourselves into Europe's sewer, and that thieves, bandits, and murderers unhindered shall be able to enter our land.¹⁸

The minister's position was echoed in contemporary Norwegian newspapers, such as *Aftenposten*, which concluded that 'Norwegians should not be naïve and let foreigners misuse our trust and hospitality'.¹⁹ The debate that accompanied these demands for stricter laws and regulations were not unique to the Norwegian context, but reverberated across Scandinavia in conjunction with the growing number arriving foreigners. And with the passage of time, these deliberations increasingly turned to assigning racial and physical connotations to the undesirable 'outsider' in order to limit the arrival of foreign citizens or to 'prevent the immigration of physically and morally weak individuals'.²⁰ The xenophobic language and depiction of the foreigner, which found its way into the immigration debate, was not a new phenomenon in Scandinavia, but it was amplified by societal tensions caused by the rapid influx of immigrants. Partly as a response to this public demand, Scandinavian governments adopted stricter rules for the registration of immigrants, which was to further reinforce and confirm an existing public narrative of the foreigner as threat to society.

¹⁷ Stortingsforhandling, 1915, Ot.prp. nr.9.

¹⁸ Stortingsforhandling 1915, 8. del, O. 64, s.807 (my translation).

¹⁹ Aftenposten 09.06.1915 (my translation).

²⁰ Fremtiden, 25.1.1915.

By the end of 1915, all three Scandinavian countries were utilizing a system of registration for all foreign citizens who entered their countries. The system was not perfect and many foreigners were never registered, but it provided governments with some sense of control and upheld a public image of achievement in the struggle to contain the massive influx of foreigners. Thousands of registration cards, lists and instructions were printed and distributed to immigration officials, local police, and hotels. In Norway, an entirely new immigration office (Fremmedkontoret) was established. Located in the heart of Christiania, the main office was charged with registering and checking all foreign citizens who arrived in the Norwegian capital in addition to collect such information from the regional offices. Similar institutions could be found in both Denmark and Sweden, as any foreign national was obliged to register with the authorities within twenty-four hours after having crossed the border. These immigration offices were chronically underfunded, overworked, and short-staffed. The lengthy and laborious registration of each individual caused comparable scenes in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, as large groups of waiting foreign citizens gathered inside and outside their premises. Accordingly, they became a conspicuous feature of any city which was further nourishment for the construction of an 'outsider' trope among the general public, as lines of foreigners from all levels of society jostled for a place in the queue in order to be controlled and accepted.²¹

The registration process of foreign citizens was in itself to influence the public discourse of the foreigner in Scandinavian society. First of all, it placed an increased strain on resources and was a considerable undertaking for a small state already under the strain of war. In Norway alone it was estimated that 1 200 hotels, 300 boarding houses, and 800 summer cottages would need to file daily reports on their guests, before being checked and catalogued by the authorities.²² Several newspapers reported on the rising costs of this process in all three countries and it strengthened a belief that the foreigner posed a threat to a society's already limited resources, an unwanted burden on the Scandinavian countries in a time of crisis. A second result of the registration process was the mass of statistical material that it created. Scandinavian newspapers seized these official figures enthusiastically and started to publish tables that detailed the number of foreign nationals residing within a city, area or the whole

²¹ Tidens Tegn 29.1.1915.

²² Morgenbladet, 21.1.1915.

country.²³ As comparisons were made with previous years, it was disclosed to the public how the ‘flood’ of foreigners continued to rise and certain national groups were singled out as potential threats. The result was to further entrench an image of the foreigner as a danger to Scandinavian society – someone who needed to be checked and monitored and registration cards, lists, and statistics became key touchstones in the public narrative of containing the foreign citizens.

Overall, essential resources in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway were stretched thin and a steady stream of immigrants placed an added tension to the public debate on how rationed goods were to be allocated within society. Frequently, the foreigner was portrayed as the source for many of these shortages, such as foodstuffs, fuel, housing, and unemployment. The foreigner was accused of ‘eating our food and take our houses’, as one Swedish newspaper reported.²⁴ While the immigrants were seen to consume large quantities of resources, they were accused of not contributing to society by paying taxes. This apparent inconsistency led to a flurry of demands, such as the introduction of ‘war tax’ to be imposed on foreign citizens or providing immigrants with their own rationing cards in order to scrutinize their consumption of resources.²⁵ A more radical suggestion being debated in Sweden was the forceful removal of all foreign citizens from the country’s major cities to the countryside to solve the chronic shortage of housing.²⁶ In this debate over dwindling resources and immigration, the foreigner was increasingly depicted as an individual with parasitic qualities who dishonestly appropriated resources that rightfully belonged to a loyal population. Accordingly, arriving immigrants who settled in Scandinavia were described as ‘a flood’, ‘a human wave’, and ‘a torrent’ or as ‘an invasion’.²⁷ This was part of a non-to subtle way of indicating that immigrant was not an individual, but was instead to be considered as part of a larger and ominous whole. To many Scandinavians, they were like a swarm of locusts that threatened to engulf their vulnerable society and pillage its resources if left unchecked. It added another layer to the construct of the immigrant as an outsider, someone who could not be trusted. As time passed, these and other

²³ Norsk Intelligenssedler 26.2.1917; Stockholms Tidning 24.7.1918.

²⁴ Stockholms Tidning 24.7.1918 (my translation).

²⁵ Nordenfjeldske Tidende, 27.10.1916; Trondhjems Adresseavis 31.8.1917.

²⁶ Norges Handels og Sjøfartsdiende, 26.10.1917.

²⁷ Aftenposten, 13.08.1914

forms of narratives morphed the immigrant into a mysterious stranger who operated in the shadows of society and plotting sinister plans to bring suffering to the people of Scandinavia.

An important element in a reconstructed narrative of the foreigner was to emphasize that the immigrants who arrived during the war belonged to a different group than those who had visited Scandinavia as tourists, merchants or travellers prior to the war. These pre-war visitors had arrived in Scandinavia with 'open intentions and a good conscience'. These new 'guests', as one newspaper ironically labelled them, belonged, however, to an untrustworthy category, as they were allegedly hiding 'their shady plans' and concealed 'themselves by using false names and titles' – they became the unwanted detritus of war.²⁸ In the public rhetoric, a foreigner became someone who had multiple and secret reasons for being present in Scandinavia: often operating in 'deep darkness, they move along strange back roads and work with the most incredible of resources'.²⁹ Suspicions were directed towards all foreign citizens, but certain groups were identified as more of a threat than others. Among them were 'private teachers, musicians, and artists', as one contemporary Swedish observer stated, but they also included journalists, wholesalers, and other travelling businessmen.³⁰ Members of these groups were considered to possess certain exceptional abilities that set them apart from the rest of society. It was these skills that allowed them to mix and blend into the larger assembly of foreign citizens, which made it almost impossible to identify them and they were 'masters in destroying evidence that could be used against them'. Consequently, the public image of the mysterious foreigner was further strengthened, as evident from the following newspaper report.

We can only conclude that they are here, we see their mysteries shadows roam around in our peaceful and civic existence, and we only see parts of the results of their mysteries activities among us.³¹

It was only some of the activities these foreigners were involved in that became visible, but 'never the person who is actually behind this except as one individual mass'. Again, immigrants were not defined as individuals, but as one 'international collection' that had 'washed up on our

²⁸ Nordlandsposten, 13.11.1917 (my translation).

²⁹ Nordlandsposten, 13.11.1917 (my translation).

³⁰ Morgenbladet, 17.3.1916.

³¹ Nordlandsposten, 13.11.1917 (my translation).

shores' by the war. These and similar descriptions were becoming an essential part in the public narrative of the foreigner. They were shadowy figures that were allowed to operate undisturbed with their dishonest and sinister plans, as 'these mystery guests are seldom apprehended by the police'. Out of a shadowy and sinister narrative there arose a public perception that linked illegal activities and foreigners, but the criminal foreigner was also exposed as being part of a larger conspiracy.

A coded language with subtle references wound its way into the public discourse, as the foreigners and their illegal undertakings were considered to be part of an 'international' scheme resolved on disrupting Scandinavian society. It was a perspective that did not differentiate between the different types of foreign citizens, as businessmen, travellers, spies, wholesalers, or refugees could all be part of an 'international [group of] criminal confidence tricksters'.³²

[They are] a collection of international people that we see everyday [...] at railway stations and on steam ships, often elegant worldly characters, sometimes even silk rustling women with dazzlingly charm, alluring creatures who with a smile opens a closed door.³³

The implication of using terms like 'international people' and 'worldly characters' was a not to subtle hint to the reader that the ethnicity of the criminal foreigner was Jewish. Thus, these and similar texts were able to trigger existing preconceptions of Jews as belonging to an international conspiracy of sinister forces intent on the direct or indirect control of resources, people, and states. Government officials, who argued that crime in Scandinavia had become more sophisticated and brutal due to the arrival of these individuals, echoed this depiction of the international sophisticated criminal Jew. The head of Norway's counter intelligence service (Opdagelsespolitiet) confirmed how 'international gangs of Jews' had transformed criminal activities along the railways, ports and in hotels, as 'German and Polish gangs of Jews operated almost undisturbed across Scandinavia'.³⁴ While it was not always possible to determine the ethnicity of the criminal foreigner, both official and public discourse presumed that these sinister outsiders were predominately of Jewish origin. There were few, if any, official figures that registered religious affiliation, but among contemporary observers there was no doubt that

³² Bodø Tidende, 2.11.1915.

³³ Ukens Revy, gjengitt i Nordlandsposten (my translation).

³⁴ Fremtiden, 17.december 1915; Morgenbladet, 17.3.1916; Morgenposten 2.7.1917, 11.10.1917

there were 'many Jews' among the immigrants who arrived, as 'one only needed to study an ordinary street scene' and study the growing population of foreign citizens in prison to gain confirmation.³⁵ The parasitic foreigner had become a criminal Jew who operated in the shadows of war to prey on a defenceless society. As a further twist, however, the public image of the sinister stranger was to morph further when spy-mania griped Scandinavia.

Spy-mania became a global phenomenon that swept through both belligerent and neutral societies, as a fear of foreign agents and collaborators equipped with evil plans to cause harm brought the public to mass hysteria.³⁶ Consequently, police and other government officials were inundated with reports from a public who had observed shady foreign-looking individuals, mysterious lights, and strange occurrences that were all considered to part of covert attack on the state. This spy-mania was also to be a decisive influence on reconstituting the public image of the foreign citizens, as it was assumed that a spy would hid among the many immigrants who had arrived due to the war. While much of the public outcry over spy-fever in Scandinavia was based on misunderstandings, unwarranted accusations, and anxiety, foreign states did indeed have spies operating in all three countries. The foremost intelligence services to station and recruit large number of agents and their helpers in the region were the British and German, as the region became an increasingly important transport hub for information, goods, and people. The two services focused their activities on the three capital cities in addition to important port cities, establishing 'spy-centrals' in such cities as Christiania, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Bergen. While Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian counter-intelligence services were reluctant to provoke a direct confrontation with their British and German opponents in this intelligence war, they were able to arrest several foreign operatives. It was these arrests and subsequent public trials that added an element of reality to a public narrative of the dangerous outsider. In trial transcripts and newspaper reports, foreign agents and locally recruited expatriates were sometimes depicted as 'dark, sinister, and to clearly be of Jewish-descent'.³⁷ In some cases, local Swedes, Norwegians and Danes were arrested as accomplices, which taken as evidence of the persuasive abilities of the foreigner and their intentions of

³⁵ Norsk Intelligenssedler, 30.9.1916; Fremtiden, 4.8.1916.

³⁶ See for example Joshua Sandborn, *Imperial Apocalypse: The Great War and the Destruction of the Russian Empire*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014; Brandal and Teige: 2012.

³⁷ Nik. Brandal, Ola Teige, and Eirik Brazier, *Den mislykkede spion*, Oslo: Humanist, 2010.

corrupting the local population. In the newspaper coverage of these spy-trials, a decisive narrative of the region being invaded by a host of mysterious agents was added to the trope of the foreigner in Scandinavia society. Spy-mania and the trials against foreign operatives established a firm connection in the public discourse between the foreigner and immoral behaviour.

The First World War caused a massive influx of migrants to the three Scandinavian countries, as the periphery of Europe became the continent's primary transit area of people, goods, and information. The thousands of foreign citizens who arrived in ever increasing numbers overwhelmed local officials. Moreover, in a neutral society already reeling from the impact of total war, the mass migration placed an unwanted and added strain on limited resources. In this situation, new constructions and perceptions of the foreigner or outsider emerged in all three countries. It was the product of the peculiar permutation of war and scarcity that resonated with existing narratives of society's outsider. Firstly, the migrant, as represented in this narrative, was not an individual, but dehumanized and depicted as indistinguishable from the horde, which the war had unleashed on an unsuspecting and peaceful society. In countless newspaper articles, general characterizations of foreigners did not make a distinction between refugees, spies, criminals, or businessmen – all were deemed to represent a suspicious unity. An interpretation of the foreigner as part of a larger unidentifiable multitude made it acceptable to associate the foreigner with sinister and illegal activities. They were also ascribed abilities that allowed them to escape detection, which caused suspicion to be cast on all who were deemed to be foreigners. Hence, the indistinguishable foreigners became a byword for crime, and they were also considered to represent a distinctive non-Scandinavian form of criminal activity – an otherness. The endeavours of British and German intelligence in Scandinavia were to contribute and compound the view of the foreigner as an immoral individual seeking profit or to further the causes of foreign interests. In the wake of spy-mania, ethnicity emerged as the final layer of otherness in this reconstructed representation of the foreigner, as the Jew was amalgamated into the definition. The Jews, as represented in Scandinavian society, epitomized the characteristics assigned to the stranger, as mysterious and covert foreigners with 'internationally' organized plans to bring harm and destruction to a

peaceful society. Hence, the foreigner became a criminal, the criminal became a spy, and the foreign criminal spy became a Jew.

The war altered the physical and inner landscape of Scandinavian society. While the state remained neutral, the consequences of war, such as influx of migrants, caused a radical process of alienation emerged, which cast the thousands of foreign citizens in the role of 'the others', as social neutrality no longer was an option.

It is only one way to save us [...] and that is to keep our mouths shut [...] with regards to anything that can give indications to anything, when we talk to strangers whom we do not know and that we can not confirm as trustworthy.³⁸

The reconstructed depiction of the foreigner that emerged in Scandinavia during the First World War proffered an equation that was to become increasingly recognizable, although clad in an even harsher language, during the post-war era. It energized a narrative in which the foreigners were dehumanized as outsiders, portraying them as a danger to society, and morally and ethnically different to Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians.

³⁸ Ukens Revy, gjengitt i Nordlandsposten (my translation).