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INDEPENDENT FROM WHOM?

BY BORIS BRORMAN JENSEN

When Denmark in 1916 sold the West-Indian Islands to the United States, the Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, also signed a secret and special declaration pronouncing American support for Danish sovereignty over all parts of Greenland. The document is categorized as being of “outstanding national significance” in the Danish national archives. Greenland is on the American continental shelf and the declaration is an exception from the US Monroe Doctrine from 1823 that can be summarized by the phrase “America for the Americans.” It was very generous of the US to guarantee Danish sovereignty over Greenland. The document played an important role in the later battle with Norway over the right to rule over East Greenland. Today the tiny document raises the question from whom is Greenland going to be independent.

DECLARATION.

In proceeding this day to the signature of the Convention respecting the cession of the Danish West-Indian Islands to the United States of America, the undersigned Secretary of State of the United States of America, duly authorized by his Government, has the honor to declare that the Government of the United States of America will not object to the Danish Government extending their political and economic interests to the whole of Greenland.



New York, August 4, 1916.