

JULY 2014 VOL. 1 ISSUE 2



COPENHAGEN EDITION

After the COP15, police still illegally arresting protestors

Oil firms have their sights set on the vulnerable Arctic

Who's good and who's bad? In Syria and Iraq it's hard to tell

Idealist, criminal, terrorist

Still wanted by India, gunrunner Niels Holck remains diplomatic minefield

THE MURMUR

YOU'RE READING the second issue of The Murmur. We're not a one hit wonder. You can't imagine how relieved we are.

We started this project because we knew there was a need for in-depth English-language newspaper in Denmark. And after our first issue we believe we have been proven right. We have received phone calls and emails from across the country, wishing us luck, proposing story ideas and asking where they can get a copy. It's enormously gratifying that we are making something that people want, and we want to thank every single one of you for your support.

But while we start to plan out the August and September issues, I am haunted by a question I've been frequently since we launched: what is our angle? I open my mouth to answer, and I pause. Because I'm not entirely sure who are we are yet. I know what we are and where we are – we are The Murmur, we write in English, we are situated in Denmark. But what else?

When I moved to the UK aged 18, I felt like a foreigner. I had a British passport and I spoke English, but I had no idea what people were talking about. Who were the Goonies? What is snakebite and black? Who is Alan Partridge? No I don't speak Dutch. I asked nicely, why does it matter if I don't say please? I know it's only a ten-minute walk to the club, but it's cold outside and I want to wear my coat and I don't care if I have to stand in the queue to the wardrobe.

Sorry, I digressed. My point is that language isn't important, knowledge is. There is a significant community living in Denmark who are totally left out of the debate because they don't speak Danish and don't know where to get started. And if they do read daily news, the stories are too short and out of context for them to build an adequate picture of the country they are living in. We want to paint a picture of Denmark by explaining the issues behind the stories, and talking to Danes whose ideas deserve to be heard outside this small country's borders.

People say home is where the heart is but I disagree. Home is where you live. If you're reading this and you don't feel like Denmark is your home yet, then I hope we can help you on your way to changing your mind.

INSIDE THIS MONTH

Enough preamble, let's talk about what we have in store for you this month. First up is an interview with Niels Holck who dropped four tons of weapons over India in 1995. The weapons were supposed to arm guards protecting a Hindu development organisation that was the target of attacks by the local Marxist militia. To cut a long story short, Holck is now wanted by the Indian government but the Danish courts refuse to extradite him because he risks torture in Indian custody. His story is both an examination of whether it is ever justified to bypass legitimate avenues of power to secure one's own idealistic ambition, as well as an insight into diplomacy as Denmark's struggle to balance its support for human rights with its trade interests in the world's biggest democracy.

We also write about the police's abuse of its power to preventatively detain protesters. They have paid out millions of kroner in compensation over the past few years after the courts repeatedly rule in the protestors favour. Perplexingly, the government has chosen not to revisit the law that entitles them to make the arrests, and instead they argue that the police just need reminding of how the law works. This story raises serious questions about whether the Danish government really cares about safeguarding the right to free assembly.

Read on for Kevin McGwin's article about the perils of oil drilling in the Arctic, Claus Ankersen's cynical take on the annual political festival on Bornholm, Folkemødet, and foreign correspondent Tobias Havmand's discussion of the difficulty of reporting from the war-torn Middle East, where the good and bad guys are getting more and more difficult to tell apart.

We hope you enjoy this issue. We loved making it. **M**

The non-violent Margis were routinely raped and murdered and had their property destroyed by the police. No one was in doubt. Human rights groups and judges all agreed that the murders had to stop.

NIELS HOLCK

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BEHIND THE STORY

COP 15 PREVENTATIVE ARRESTS

In 2009, I was contacted by a group of British activists who were coming to Copenhagen for the COP15 climate conference. I helped them during their stay, sourcing them bicycles and pointing them toward of cheap places to eat and drink.

They were organised and committed to making their voices heard. I got involved, going on stage with them in the city centre in front of 15,000 people in a mock award ceremony that honoured carbon traders for their fine activism during the week.

Many of them were preemptively arrested on their way to the final protests outside the Bella Centre, where the negotiations were taking place. It was chaotic and they were worried for each other's safety. Being detained for doing nothing wrong is itself wrong, and a debate needs to start in Denmark asking whether our rights to free assembly really are being respected.

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MASTHEAD



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MONTH IN REVIEW

HASH DEALER ARRESTED AFTER HIDING IN THAILAND
A 38-year-old man was arrested this month for selling 700kg of hash, TV2 News reports. The man is involved in a larger case involving 80 people who were arrested on suspicion of selling the drug in the freetown, Christia-
nia. The man has been hiding in Thailand but was arrested near the German border.

Foreign fighters get help
Danes who have returned from fighting in Syria alongside rebels are seeking psychological help, according to Politiken. Aarhus Council has set up a special programme to counsel the men upon their return.



Diabetes risk up north
Greenlanders have a much higher risk of type-2 diabetes due to the prevalence of gene variant in their population, according to University of Copenhagen researchers.
The gene variant is only present in the Greenlandic population and is responsible for 15 percent of reported cases of the disease.
The gene variant affects the ability of muscle to absorb sugar.

Peter Stanners

NEW LEAKS REVEAL DANISH LINK TO NSA
Military intelligence agency FE took part in the NSA's secret and widespread surveillance programme, according to new documents released by NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden. The documents reveal that FE helped intercept data sent over a trans-Atlantic fibre-optic cable that come ashore in western Denmark.
Defence Minister Nicolai Wammen declined to comment on the specific activities, but said: "We are a terrorist target [and] it is our

best interests to have our intelligence agencies co-operate with foreign intelligence agencies.
Last year parliament increased FE's powers, but MPs have since voiced concern that they did not realise the law empowered FE to intercept and pass on raw information to third parties.
Earlier this year, Information reported that the NSA monitored negotiations during the COP15 climate conference in Copenhagen in 2009.



EUROVISION SONG CONTEST GOES 70,000,000 KRONER OVER BUDGET
The Eurovision Song Contest in May will end up costing almost 100 million kroner according to the latest accounts seen by MetroXpress.
The show was held this May in the former B&W shipyard on Refshaleøen.
The company responsible for the spectacle, Projektselskabet, repeatedly forgot to budget for a range of costs, including toilets, electricity and cleaning. A lack of interest in special VIP packages resulted in a 1.2 million kroner loss through discarded food provided by Michelin-starred chef Rasmus Bo Bjersen.
The organisers were criticised for not seeking external help when setting their budget.

TABLOID STAFF FIRED FOR ILLEGAL SURVEILLANCE
An investigation of Se og Hør has outlined the extent of the tabloid's illegal surveillance of celebrities and the royal family. The scandal broke in May, when a former reporter published a semi-autobiographical novel outlining how Se og Hør paid a secret source working for a payment card administrator for information.

According to a summary of the report, commissioned by Se og Hør's publisher Aller, the tabloid used the secret source for three years between 2008 and 2011. The-then editor in chief, Henrik Qvortrup, was among several staff members to know about the illegal surveillance, though he failed to put a stop to it.

Qvortrup lost his job as political analyst on TV2 after the story broke. He is among seven people currently facing charges for their involvement.

Publishing director Per Ingdal has resigned from Aller, and the company fired two senior managers and a journalist in late June in connection with the surveillance. Aller has promised to introduce new measures to prevent similar violations.



Snake found in toilet
A man in northern Jutland was shocked to find a 50-centimetre-long royal python in his bathroom after he had taken shower, reported the tabloid BT.
"We have no idea how it got into his bathroom," the police said.
"The snake had crawled behind the toilet where we caught it. If the owner is not found, it will be put down,"

NEWSMAKER

I AM NOT A CANDIDATE

Should the rumours hold true that **HELLE THORNING-SCHMIDT** will be offered the chance to return Brussels, many will encourage her to go. Not least those within her own party.



Admired abroad, the Danish PM's political skills are not so appreciated at home (Photo: Magnus Froderberg)

AS THE NATION'S prime minister, Helle Thorning-Schmidt is, almost by definition, a newsmaker. But, this month, she took the term to a new level. Or, it should be said, she has been taken to a new level. For, though she maintains that she is dead-set on serving out her term as PM, European leaders are reportedly keen for her to assume a position in Brussels in the leadership of the EU.

The rumour began circling after the European Parliament elections. After Thorning-Schmidt met with a triumvirate of European leaders at the end of June, a number of leading European news outlets began suggesting that her appointment as president of the European Council (the position currently held by Herman Van Rompuy) is an unconfirmed fact.

Despite the meetings, including a roof-top tête-à-tête with Merkel that both described as nothing but small talk as they enjoyed the view of Berlin, Thorning-Schmidt insists her priority is to serve out her term and then run for re-election.
In fact, she is so determined to prove to the electorate that she is

not skipping out on Copenhagen, she bet TV talk show host Mads Breinholt 1,800 kroner that she would still be prime minister two months after her appearance on his show.
Her appearance was on April 4. But if her statements about remaining in Denmark are genuine, then she is no doubt influenced by the sinking political fortunes of Lars Løkke Rasmussen, the opposition leader, whose financial dis-

array has cut support for the opposition by half, and again made the PM's Socialdemokraterne the country's largest party.
Danish voters are familiar with the 'I am not a candidate for higher office' spiel. In 2009, then-PM Anders Fogh Rasmussen said all along that he was not interested in becoming Nato secretary-general. He will step down from the position later this year.
Assuming that Thorning-Schmidt is formally being considered, political analysts say that it is a position she would be unwise to turn down, given the prestige it carries for the nation. The conventional wisdom among her party compatriots, too, is that she should return to Brussels, where she served as an MEP between 1999 and 2004.

Long suspected at home for being a closet Europhile, her EU mindset and European-oriented lifestyle have not sat well with the party here at home as it battles an ascendant, and Eurosceptic, Dansk Folkeparti. Best then, they say, to ship her off to Brussels where she can do some good for the country by representing it – not running it. **M**

Kevin McGwin

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Sceptical, but realistic

INTERVIEW Denmark’s shale-gas era could begin in Frederikshavn. The town’s mayor says she’s not opposed to the prospect, but feels that a few things need to be set straight first



Birgit S Hansen, mayor of Frederikshavn

BEFORE **BIRGIT S HANSEN**, mayor of Frederikshavn, starts talking about shale gas, she makes sure the person she’s talking to understands the situation.

“The council hasn’t given permission to drill for shale gas,” she says.

What Frederikshavn did do on June 25, by a vote of 27 votes to four was to approve a change in the council’s planning laws. The change was required if Total, a French oil and gas firm, is to be able to go forward with plans to explore for shale gas.

Large amounts of shale gas are believed to be present in a swathe of the Danish underground stretching from northern Jutland to northern Zealand. This will be the first time shale gas exploration is conducted in Denmark, and environmental groups, as well as property owners, are pushing hard to ensure that drilling does not begin.

They are concerned that if shale gas is found, it will lead to large-scale drilling that would pollute groundwater and lower property values.

Hansen, though, reckoned that had the council not changed its planning law, the state would have overruled their decision and given Total permission to drill anyway.

“I respect the four councillors who voted against and their principles, but I feel we as a council have done our job,” she says. “We gave permission to explore, not extract. That’s something we made perfectly clear.”

In Denmark, underground resources are owned by the state and that’s another thing Hansen wants to make sure that people are aware of: it is the state, not her council, that has asked Total to begin drilling.

“Parliament will have to decide whether they want to have shale gas become a part of our energy supply. And that’s not something I envy them.”

Hansen admits that even though she’s relieved not to have to be saddled with the decision about whether to frack, she said she was being realistic about the impact it could have.

“We didn’t approve it thinking about what sort of economic opportunities it could bring for us, but of course it could create jobs or bring activity to our port.”

Hansen, like others in Frederikshavn, has expressed concern about the possible environmental impacts of fracking, and in connection with the council’s change to the planning law called on the Climate and Energy Ministry to clarify what it intended to do if Total finds shale gas.

So far the ministry has remained silent, indicating only that Frederikshavn had the “right and the responsibility” to decide about whether to permit the drilling to take place.

“We’ve asked them to tell us where they plan to go with this. We don’t even know if there’s gas there. If there is, then parliament needs to tell everyone whether they will go ahead with it. For now, we just have to wait and see.” **M**

Kevin McGwin

RESEARCH

PARENTS DETECT ADHD AND AUTISM SIGNALS EARLY ON

Parents are able to pick up on the first signs of ADHD and autism in their children when they are only infants, according to University of Aarhus study of 76,000 children aged six to 18 months.

“My study shows that there was a common set of characteristics shared by children who were later diagnosed with ADHD or an autism spectrum disorder,” nurse and PhD student Sanne Lemcke said.

Parents were able to detect lacking linguistic and motor skills, over activity, as well as problems with sight and hearing, long before the children were diagnosed

with either disorder. Children are normally diagnosed with autism around the age of six.

Lemcke does not think the research should lead younger children to be given diagnoses, but rather that the medical establishment should place more weight on the concerns and observations of parents.

“The knowledge we now have regarding the early development of children with ADHD and autism ought to be used to develop much earlier interventions. Recent studies show that early interventions have a great influence on how competent and self-sufficient the children are later in life,” Lemcke said.

INSECTS REACTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

A study by the University of Copenhagen has contributed new evidence about climate change’s impact on insects.

The study mapped the distribution of 473 butterfly and dragonfly species according to their colouring. The researchers found that lighter-coloured species were far more prevalent in the warmer southern climate, while darker species were more prevalent in the cooler north.

Insects with darker colours are better able to convert sunlight into energy, which explains their greater prevalence in the north. But professor Carsten Rahbek, from

the Center for Macroecology, Evolution and Climate, was still surprised by the findings.

“For these two large groups of insects, we have shown a direct link between the climate, insects’ colour and where they live,” Rahbek said, adding that the research demonstrates just how important an insect’s thermoregulation is for its survival.

Over the past 20 years, lighter-coloured species from southern Europe having been moving north. The research lends evidence to the theory that Europe’s warming climate is expanding the range in which they can survive. **M**

Peter Stanners

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Niels Holck lives in in a small community to the north of Copenhagen together with his wife and two children. In 1995 he dropped four tons of weapons over India. He has yet to face trial. (Photo: Peter Stanners)

The story of an existential gunrunner

Criminal gunrunner or a pawn in trade relations between India and Denmark? Niels Holck’s idealistic misadventure in the mid-‘90s triggered an unresolvable diplomatic crisis between the two countries. India wants to prosecute the Dane for his role in the 1995 Purulia arms drop. But a new documentary has shed light on the shadowy complicity of the British and Indian intelligence agencies and questions whether his mission was actually just an act of vigilantism

IN 1995, Niels Holck decided to arm guards protecting a Hindu organisation, the Ananda Marga, in the Indian state of West Bengal following years of relentless attacks by the ruling Marxists. He escaped back to Denmark and has been the target of an extradition battle for over a decade. In 2011 the Eastern High Court decided that he couldn’t be delivered to India due to the risk of torture, plunging Denmark into a deep diplomatic crisis with the world’s largest democracy after they imposed trade and visa sanctions on Denmark in retaliation.

Holck is an animated man with a greying goatee and wiry frame who now lives north of Copenhagen in a small community with his

wife and two children. He explains that while he is upset that his case has brought Denmark and India into conflict, he is unrepentant about his decision to fly weapons into India almost two decades ago.

“The arms drop was a last resort after we exhausted all civil society opportunities to stop the violence. The UN Declaration of Human Rights gives people the right of self-defence against repetitive aggression from governments and this is the situation I lived under in India. It was my home at the time and the aggressor was the government. In Denmark we couldn’t imagine a policeman taking off his uniform and killing people around him. From a Danish

perspective it might be difficult to understand, but the world works differently over there,” Holck says.

Holck’s story has been retold in a new documentary by Andreas Kofoed, *The Arms Drop*, which takes viewers through the complicated series of events leading up to and following the arms drop. The documentary threatens to reignite the conflict with India, which wants Holck to face charges of arms smuggling – a view shared by many in the Danish media and political establishment. The visa and trade restrictions may be responsible for the 17.8 per cent decline in Danish exports to India between 2011 and 2012 and India has shown no signs of easing the sanctions until it is

In Denmark we couldn’t imagine a policeman taking off his uniform and killing people around him.

NIELS HOLCK

satisfied that Holck has been held accountable for his actions.

Holck’s guilt has long been established and he has offered to face trial in a neutral setting where he doesn’t risk the mistreatment that likely awaits him in Indian custody. Even if he is tried, however, the jury wouldn’t be given the whole story. Kofoed’s documentary suggests that the British and Indian intelligence agencies helped facilitate the arms drop, as their interests intersected with Holck’s. But the true extent of their involvement remains a mystery as an Interpol report about the incident remains classified.

The conflict is far from resolved and Foreign Minister Martin Lide-

Denmark believes that all countries should ratify the Convention against Torture, including India. As the world’s biggest democracy, we would welcome India’s ratification.

MARTIN LIDEGAARD
FOREIGN MINISTER

The film offers a sentimental and misleading picture of two disreputable weapon smugglers and anti-communists who have swapped out their machine guns with crocodile tears and who now want to appear as victims, parents and human-rights campaigners.

REVIEW OF ‘THE ARMS DROP’ IN INFORMATION NEWSPAPER

the intelligence agency MI5, who shared the information with Indian intelligence.

THE DROP

Holck says he knew all along that the Indian government was aware of his plans, and that they were in fact sanctioned by some MPs in the ruling Congress Party who regarded the Communists in West Bengal as a liability. If a conflict did break out in the region following the arms drop, it would give them an excuse to intervene and remove the Communists once and for all.

“India’s central government agreed that we could defend ourselves. When MI5 informed RAW, the prime minister’s spy unit, they told us to keep them posted so that they could turn off the military radar when we made the drop. You could call my ambitions naïve, but I’m not so naïve that I would try to fly into India without some sort of shield,” Holck says.

Bleach says that while MI5 urged him not to supply the weapons to prevent a paper trail back to the British government, it was important that the weapons made it into India so that Holck could get caught in the act. He bought Holck an Antonov An-26 plane in Latvia for the arms drop and thought his job was done. But when the plane landed in Bulgaria to pick up the weapons, a problem arose with its certification that only Bleach could fix.

Bleach flew to Bulgaria to sort out the issue and there Holck persuaded him to join the flight. Remembering his instructions to ensure the plane entered India airspace, and not wanting to appear suspicious, he acquiesced. The plane made stops in Iran and Pakistan before the final stop in Varanasi, northern India, ahead of the final leg over Purulia in West Bengal where they were to make the drop.

Bleach was convinced that the Indian government would choose to apprehend them in Varanasi, but there was no one there to greet them. He worried that the government would instead choose to shoot down the plane as it flew over Purulia, but they dropped the

weapons and flew on to Phuket, Thailand, without incident.

The weapons missed their intended target and their discovery was breaking news on the BBC when they awoke the next day. Holck wanted to fly on to Bali and return to Europe, but Bleach argued it would look more suspicious if they deviated from their flight plan that took them back through India. Bleach actually wanted to give the Indian government another opportunity to apprehend Holck and, after convincing the crew, they set off.

Holck relaxed when there was no one waiting for them at their first stop in Madras, but when air traffic control ordered them to land in Bombay he started to worry. The forced landing was actually ordered because of a mix-up in the flight plans, and had nothing to do with the arms drop. But Holck decided not to take any chances and absconded from the airport. He says an Indian MP and connections in the Indian intelligence agency, CBI, helped ferry him north to Nepal where he returned to Denmark.

But Holck’s disappearance had devastating consequences for Bleach and the five Latvian crew members. Noticing Holck’s disappearance, the airport authorities arrested Bleach and the crew on immigration offences. While in custody, Bleach informed the Indian police of the weapons drop, thinking he would be protected once his connection to the MI5 was revealed. But instead, he and the crew were flown to Kolkata in West Bengal, where they were put on trial for their role in the arms drop and given life sentences.

EXTRADITION

While Bleach and the five Latvian crew members were locked up in Kolkata, Holck lived underground in Denmark. He slowly became reintegrated, needing only register with Danish police a few times a week, before he was eventually encouraged to apply for a social-security number and start paying tax. Holck believes that he was given

the green light to resume a normal life in 2002 when the then-foreign minister Lene Espersen gave her guarantee that Holck would not be extradited. The statement arrived as Denmark was passing new laws that for the first time ever would allow Danish citizens to be extradited beyond the EU. Holck saw Espersen’s timing as an indication that the government had no intention of applying the rules to him. He decided it was safe to start a family, and shortly after his first child was born.

But in 2010, the government finally gave in to India’s extradition demand.

“If an Indian flew over Denmark and dropped weapons for terrorists we would also expect India to extradite that person for prosecution,” then-justice minister Lars Barfoed told DR at the time.

The extradition failed, however, after Holck won his appeal in both the Hillerød City Court and the Eastern High Court. Despite diplomatic guarantees that Holck wouldn’t face the death sentence or torture, the courts found they were insufficient to ensure his safety.

Both Amnesty International and the former UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Manfred Nowak, have argued that diplomatic guarantees offer little real security in countries such as India, where the use of torture is widespread.

Meanwhile, Bleach was released in 2004 following pressure from the British government. His testimony at the High Court was central to the High Court’s decision not to extradite Holck. He gave a first-hand account of eight years in an Indian prison, where he contracted tuberculosis, and argued that without his military training he would not have survived. Holck would definitely have suffered, he argued.

India, infuriated by the state prosecutor’s decision not to appeal to the Supreme Court, responded with sanctions. But the case appeared closed and Holck again thought he could move on. ►

A complacent government and overzealous police threaten the right to protest

Danish courts have repeatedly found that the police’s use of preventative detention to be illegal. But even though millions of kroner have been paid out in compensation, the government refuses to limit police power. Two years after the first ruling, some protestors remain connected to the traumatic experience of being held for hours without charge, as they continue to chase up the police for their compensation

ON A COLD December morning in 2009 a dozen British climate activists set off toward the Bella Centre on the outskirts of Copenhagen. They planned to participate in the last day of protests during the COP15 climate conference, but they never made it.

As they cycled past a golf course, they were confronted by a number of police vans.

“The police asked us where we were going, but we chose not to answer,” says one of the protestors, Sarah (not her real name). “They then told us that they were going to detain us and that they didn’t have to have any reason. They said they had the power to pre-emptively detain anyone they wanted.”

Sarah describes the following 10 hours of detention as an ordeal. The police tied the protestors’ hands behind their backs using plastic cables and sat them in rows in the snow for an hour. They were then ferried to a detention centre that was created specifically for detaining protestors during the conference.

More hours of sitting in lines without food or drink ensued while about them the police employed restraint tactics and pepper spray to keep the protestors from singing and standing. She was eventually registered, but the makeshift detention cages were all full, so she and few others were taken to a nearby police station and kept in a cell.

They were released late in the evening and dropped off at a train station.

“I had no idea where I was, and felt exhausted and totally disorientated by the whole experience. I remember thinking that aside from a piece of paper with my photograph on it which was used to identify my belongings, I had absolutely no paperwork to prove that this experience had ever happened to me.”

ILLEGAL ARRESTS
Sarah is one of 1,915 protestors to

[The police] said they had the power to pre-emptively detain anyone they wanted.

‘SARAH’, ONE OF 1,915 PROTESTORS TO BE ARRESTED DURING COP15



“I had no idea where I was, and felt exhausted and totally disorientated by the whole experience” – ‘Sarah’

be arrested during the climate conference, the majority of whom were preventatively detained. The largest single action took place on December 12, when the police arrested 905 protestors on Amagerbrogade. Of those arrested that day, 178 joined 72 other protestors arrested at other points during the week to collectively sue the police for unlawful arrest.

The protestors won in both the Copenhagen City Court in 2010 and, after the police appealed, the Eastern High Court in 2012. The courts found that all the arrests, bar a few, were unreasonable and violated several articles in the European Convention on human rights. The ruling covered several incidents of preventative arrest, including Sarah’s, and granted compensation of up to 5,500 kroner to all those involved.

The police justified the preventative arrests as necessary to maintain law and order and detain violent protestors. But following the 2012 ruling, Copenhagen Police commissioner Johan Reimann apologised. “We could have done it different or better. We will learn from this,” he told Information.

But they haven’t, and since the ruling the police have lost a number of other cases where they employed preventative arrests, resulting in millions of kroner in compensation claims.

THREAT TO DEMOCRACY

The police had their right to preventatively detain people extended from six to 12 hours in a law that was passed in November 2009 – weeks before COP15. The law was widely criticised at the time, including by the current justice minister, Karen Hækkerup, when she sat in the opposition. Following the 2012 ruling, the current government agreed to meet with parties opposed to the law to see what changes could be made. They finally met this June, but little was achieved. Hækkerup argued that the police simply needed new written guidelines for

when the law should be employed. Enhedslisten MP Pernille Skipper was not impressed.

“The police still have to use guesswork, and a letter explaining the judge’s ruling doesn’t make their guesses more qualified. I don’t think it’s very useful,” Skipper told Information.

Law firm Foldschack and Forehammer represented almost 200 of the protestors. They have since won a number of other cases against the police for illegal preventative arrests, ranging from the arrest of football fans in Aarhus to left-wing protestors in central Copenhagen. With two more cases coming up, assistant attorney Marc Jørgensen argues that the police will soon have to change their approach, though really it’s the law that needs changing.

“With so many cases going through the system, it’s clear that there is something wrong with the law rather than its application.

There is a risk that we will continue to see preventive action with ensuing compensation which brings up a cost-benefit issue.

JONAS CHRISTOFFERSEN, DIRECTOR, DANISH INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

If they lose these new cases, they will have to stop using the law,” Jørgensen argues, adding that the government’s refusal to change it is problematic.

“It’s not just that people can be detained without first having done something criminal. Normal citizens who haven’t broken the law shouldn’t be detained – it’s a basic rule. Demonstrations are important for democracy and peaceful protestors shouldn’t worry about being locked up. That’s very important to us. After COP15 people became afraid of going to rallies, and that’s really dangerous. We should expect to be safe and not have to fear the police if we behave peacefully and lawfully.”

MAKING DISSENT INVISIBLE

Jonas Christoffersen, the director of the Danish Institute for Human Rights, agrees that the law challenges both the Danish constitution and the European Convention on

Human Rights, which guarantee the freedom of assembly.

“I would prefer a stepladder model, forcing the police to consider whether or not they can defend keeping people in custody. Such a model would oblige the police to have ‘special reasons’ for maintaining a detention for more than three hours, and ‘exceptional reasons’ for more than six hours,” Christoffersen says, before adding that he was disappointed that the government chose not to critically review the law.

“There is a risk that we will continue to see preventive action with ensuing compensation, which brings up a cost-benefit issue. The police had to pay around 1.8 million kroner after COP15 and around one million this year for mass arrests before a football match between Brøndby and FC Copenhagen last year.”

Sarah was helped by free legal aid charity Rusk, which in March

2013 informed her that she had been awarded 3,300 kroner in compensation. Finally in June, after over a year of correspondence with the police, they informed her that the money was on its way. But the long wait has kept her connected to an experience that continued to haunt her long after her release.

“I certainly felt it as a kind of ‘trauma’, to face such indiscriminate, pre-meditated and well-organised police violence. To be confronted directly with the fact that if the state did not want our protest to take place, it would simply physically remove us from the situation and detain us until the protest time was over. To me, this is the essence of state repression – making dissent invisible whilst demonstrating its totalising control over peoples’ freedom of movement, expression, and association.” **M**

Text + photo Peter Stanners

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CAPTURED ABROAD

Photo: Peter Stanners

In Cape Town, South Africa, four young boys serenade commuters, singing 'You Are My Sunshine' in exchange for spare change. Their instruments include a three-stringed guitar, a bucket drum and a percussive soda can.



Arctic oil, still over the horizon (Photo: Statoil)

There’s no time like the future

Everyone is talking about Arctic oil drilling, but few are actually doing it. That may not change for a number of years, but environmentalists are still keeping watch on Greenland and other Arctic countries that have lured oil firms with the possibility of striking it rich beneath the ice

ARCTIC OIL DRILLING is by all accounts a risky proposition. Whether talking about the risk of an environmental disaster or the risk of a disastrous investment, many on both sides of the debate have urged extreme caution before setting the wells in motion. Some, including environmental group Greenpeace go so far as to urge total abstinence.

Clashes between Greenpeace and oil firms, most recently Statoil, Norway’s state-owned oil firm, in the Barents Sea, have generated headlines, but less discussed is the fact that at present, offshore Arctic oil production is limited to Norway’s Barents operations and a single Russian rig.

There has been no shortage of interest in other areas. According to the most widely cited study about the region’s potential, a 2008 US Geological Survey report, the region sits on 13 percent of the world’s undiscovered oil reserves. Finding it, and then getting it to the surface and on to consumers

will require money, and lots of it. Over the next decade, \$100 billion will be spent on Arctic oil exploration, predicts Lloyd’s of London, an insurer.

Interest in Arctic oil is not new. But when the first efforts to extract it were made 30 years ago, the world was a somewhat different place. Climate change – and retreating Arctic ice – had yet to grab headlines. Oil prices were far lower and the technology to safely extract oil from extreme depths and in the unforgiving Arctic environment had yet to be developed.

SHALE SHATTERS OIL PRICES
But even as the situation is moving towards easier access, and companies continue to invest heavily in the region – including a \$3.9 million investment last month by Statoil and other firms to develop extreme weather technology in Newfoundland and Labrador – there are also a number of factors that may keep Arctic oil over the horizon for years to come.

Much of the reason is a glut of easily accessible oil and gas other places. The abundance of shale gas in America, and possibly soon in Europe, was an unforeseen development that has diverted some attention from the race for Arctic oil. In December, for example, ExxonMobil, the world’s largest oil firm, dropped out of the bidding for licensing to explore off Greenland’s far north-eastern coast in order to concentrate on its shale gas exploration.

The explanation is one that has become familiar to officials, not least in Greenland. Just a few years ago, the country was looking to become the next big thing in the oil industry. Enthusiasm, though, seems to have petered out, as other oil fields with more easily accessible oil have turned up.

Earlier this year, Cairn Energy, an Edinburgh-based firm that has been one of the most active companies in the search for oil in Greenlandic waters, said it was taking a break this year in order to spend

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time concentrating on other projects.

Statoil, Cairn’s partner in Greenland, had the same message, announcing that it was “too busy” in the Barents to explore its licence blocks off Greenland’s western coast. Statoil reiterated that message to the Danish media in June, adding that it might not even return next year, or any time soon for that matter.

“I don’t dare venture a guess when drilling can start,” said Runí M Hansen, who heads Statoil exploration operations in Greenland and the Faroes. “If we find something, it’ll need to be really big, given the cost of producing oil in [our Greenlandic field. It’s not enough just to find oil. It needs to be a big find.”

Greenland hasn’t seen any drilling since 2011, when Cairn drilled several test wells. They all came up dry. The company has repeatedly underscored that it has no plans to give up its search for oil there – or the \$1.9 billion it has sunk into

the campaign. And even though it has not carried out any new drills in recent years, it has been carrying out seismic surveys and other activities in the hopes of identifying promising drill sites.

As part of Cairn’s declining involvement in Greenland, the company closed its office in Nuuk, the capital, last month, the capital. The office was staffed only by two administrative employees, but its closure cast something of a dark shadow on Greenland’s oil prospects.

Oil industry insiders say that if anyone was going to find oil in Greenland, it was likely to be Cairn. Active in Greenland since 2007, it has 11 licences and has drilled eight test wells. Despite finding indications that hydrocarbons exist in the underground, it has yet to make a commercial strike.

LONG TERM AMBITIONS

In 2012, with its luck still failing, Cairn enlisted the help of Statoil. Part of the reason for doing so was because of the company’s deep pockets, but equally important was its experience finding and extracting oil in the Arctic.

In announcing it was closing its Greenland office, Cairn indicated that even though neither it nor Statoil were active in Greenlandic waters, it fully expected to make a return.

“It’s a matter of timing,” Mike Watts, Cairn’s vice-present, told Sermitsiaq, a Greenlandic weekly. “We’ve put our activities on hold, but we’ve got billions of dollars tied up in this, and we’re going to resume operations at some point.”

It is precisely that long-term approach that has environment groups refusing to ease off their efforts to rein in Arctic drilling.

An increasing number of such organisations – most recently the influential Iceland Nature Conservation Association – have called for total or partial bans on Arctic drilling. They worry that given the level of investment and the race to snap up exploration licences, the industry will soon be moving in,

and when they do, it will be with a vengeance.

“Currently, no offshore oil and gas drilling is taking place in the Canadian Arctic – but that soon may change,” reckons Martin von Mirbach, the director of the World Wildlife Foundation’s Canadian Arctic Programme.

GOVERNMENTS GIVE GO AHEAD

Rather than opposing drilling outright, the WWF has sought to engage oil firms in an effort to influence how they conduct their operations. In some instances, though, it has sought to block drilling entirely. Such is the case in the Beaufort Sea, where Canada’s National Energy Board says drilling would present an “unacceptable risk” to the environment.

Government agencies in other countries have issued similar warnings. Their concern is that should a spill happen (environment groups would argue when one happens) there is little public infrastructure in place to stop it, and they caution against letting firms themselves be responsible for cleaning spills.

A recent Canadian report described the situation as a “significant challenge”, particularly in light of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon incident.

Yet even with the concern, drillers seem to have had regulators on their side. In Norway, for example, that country’s government earlier this year brushed aside an advisory panel’s recommendation that new Arctic licences not be issued. And while its Environment Ministry did force Statoil to temporarily halt a recent drill, based on a Greenpeace complaint, it was eventually permitted to begin operations.

Add to that the on-going retreat of Arctic ice, opening up areas at higher latitudes for drilling, and putting lower latitudes less at risk, and it would appear that oil companies also have not just the tide of government regulation on their side, but also time. **M**

Kevin Mcwin



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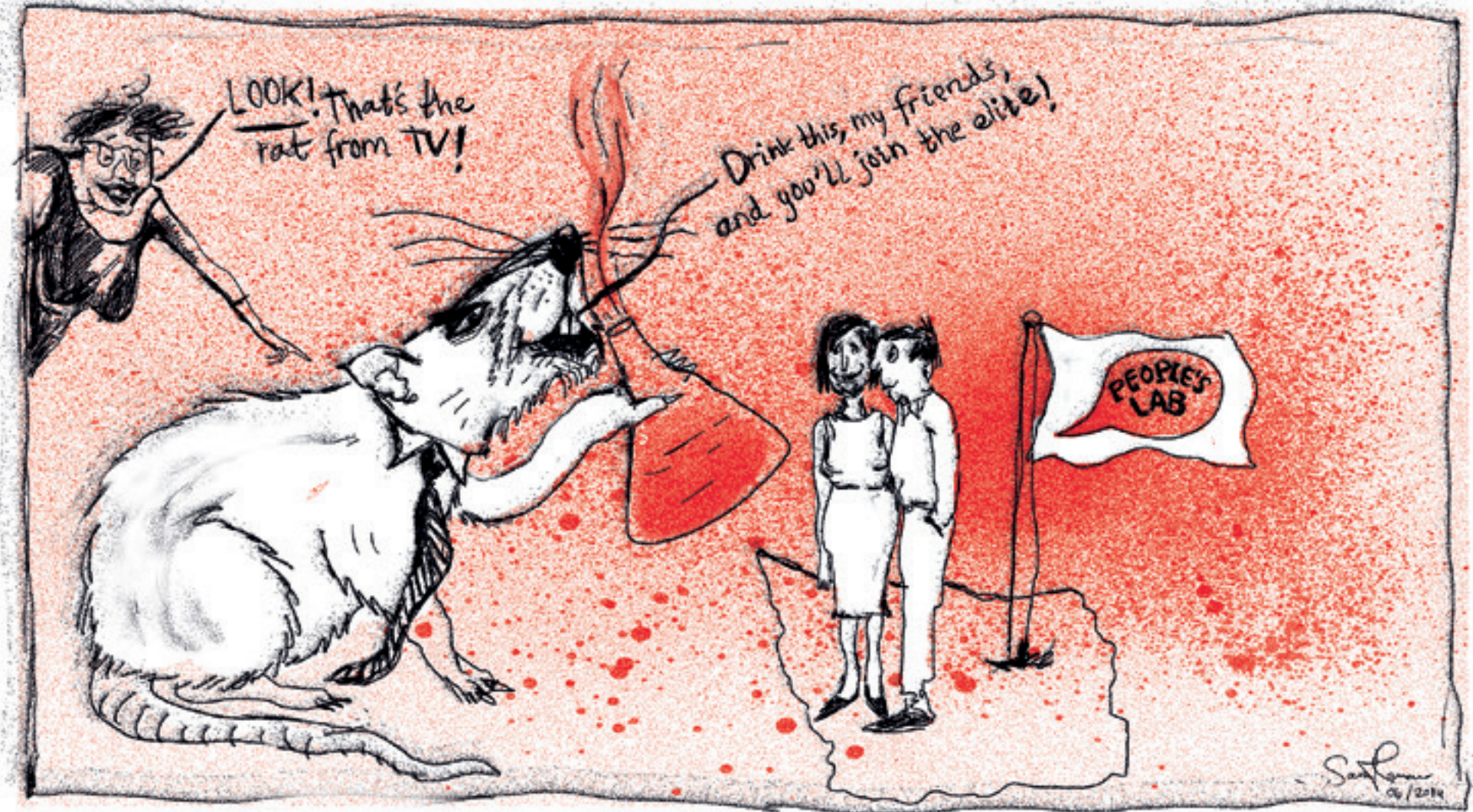




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From one rat to another, a report from Bilderberg Bornholm

I WAS AT BILDERBERG recently. Not the one at Hotel Mariott that was attended by billionaires, executives and global leaders, but the one hidden in plain sight on the sunshine island of Bornholm. Danes are good at that: hiding the obvious. Which leads me to suggest that the Queendom of Denmark actually is a full-scale laboratory – a confined testing ground with a small homogenous population, well developed of infrastructure and a pretense of political representation. And if Denmark is a testing ground, we are the lab rats.

This is no news to tech-geeks as various electronics are habitually pre-launched and tested on the Danish market. Ditlev Engel, former CEO of wind energy producer Vestas, spelled it out a few years back when he called Denmark a full-scale lab for implementing renewable energy.

This raises an obvious question: If Denmark is a testing ground for various electronics and terra-forming companies, is there any reason to believe that we are NOT a testing ground for a range of other large-scale population experiments carried out in more or less plain sight?

The answer is no. This nation is the global spearhead of a horizon-

tal limbo, which asks “How far can you go?” in the on-going gradual conditioning of the world population by corporate interests.

A decade ago, former liberal prime minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen openly declared war on so-called ‘social-democratic values’. He orchestrated a massive shift in our common attitudes and effectively dismantled our famous Danish solidarity. He was awarded the prestigious position as head of Nato.

Current PM Helle Thorning-Smith is working on the next stage of this experiment by pushing an ‘*arbeit macht frei*’ set of values and showing us that there really is no difference between the red and the blue pill – between the left and right wing. For this service, she will probably be awarded a prestigious post in the EU. So far, so good. Or evil.

NO EMPATHY, LOTS OF GREED

Anyway, back to Bornholm’s Bilderberg, commonly known as ‘Folkemødet’ – the People’s Meeting. After its fourth incarnation this July, the annual meeting differs from the other Bilderburg by being held in plain sight. It has quickly become THE PLACE TO

Free beer on the Conservative’s boat. Free steak at Confederation of Danish Industry. So far, so evil. Soon, these white clad monstrosities will be among the lab’s ruling class.



Claus Ankersen is an internationaly acclaimed writer, artist and performance poet.

BE for all the nation’s somebodies. It’s like Roskilde Festival’s media centre, times a zillion.

Setting off in a bus from Copenhagen, I can sense it right away. Groups of young academics from the central administration mix with political organisations and NGOs. One of them, on the seat behind me, is in conversation with an elderly lady from Jutland. He is elite. She is a commoner. One of the people. He is going to talk about banking. She is going to spot celebrities.

“You know,” she confides, “it’s amazing. All the people you know from TV. You can see them walking by on the street.”

We get on the ferry in the Swedish port of Ystad and are confronted by more weirdness. Everybody’s got a company tab. People buy dozens of ridiculously expensive open-faced sandwiches, and top them off with loads of expensive sweets. This is clearly the lower end of the higher echelons.

Upon arrival in Bornholm we mount a bus, this one heading towards the northern town of Allinge. I sit across from a group of young executives from the youth wing of the liberal party, Venstre. They are all around

20. All clad in white. Besides their youth and limited horizons, their main feature is a lack of empathy and a lot of greed. I eavesdrop while they agree that the worst people they can meet are animal-welfare activists, or people who want them to stop eating meat. Or raise their taxes. The trip is their reward for services rendered. They are going to Folkemødet to get everything for free and make out with the kids from the other political parties. Free beer on the Conservative’s boat. Free steak at Confederation of Danish Industry. So far, so evil. Soon, these white clad monstrosities will be among the lab’s ruling class.

As I walk through Allinge, the picture solidifies. I witness an exercise in systemic reproduction and control. The elites from the creative, political and civil society identify and negotiate the agenda, while the wannabe youngsters are indoctrinated into the game’s rules. They have a meeting and the people pay the bill. But as opposed to Kissinger’s Bilderberg, this 2.0 version purports the illusion of inclusion. We get to watch in awe.

But the secret is that the elite are lab rats too. They are just fed a bit more grain and occasionally get to wear a white lab coat. **M**

Illustration: Sara Houmann Mortensen

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FOREIGN

Syria – difficult, dangerous and complex

The civil war in Syria has become old news. For those still reporting it, it has become difficult and dangerous to recognise who the good and the bad guys are. Being aware of the details of the conflict is important, and the only way to do that is to be there

I REMEMBER the day Daniel Rye Ottesen disappeared. I was on my way home from a trip to Spain and North Africa and during a layover I turned on my phone for a quick check of my text messages. There were three messages that had voicemail, you know, those ones you never bother to listen to anymore. One of them was from a high-level diplomat, one from an employee with a security firm and another from a co-worker. All of them asked me to call them back as soon as possible. I did, mostly so I could tell them where I was and what I was up to.

The reason for their calls was, of course, that they'd heard that a 25-year-old photographer had been kidnapped by the Islamist Jihadi group ISIS, or Da'ash, as it was referred to in the activist and journalist circles I have been running in the past few years while I've been covering Syria. The news had started to make it out and people wanted to know what was up.

At that time ISIS already had a reputation as a group to be feared among those who – either because they had to or because they felt compelled to – travelled in and out of Syria. A number of activists and journalists had already been kidnapped by ISIS and similar groups, who recognise that

such hostages are a valuable commodity – if they didn't see them as just plain adversaries. Their presence has made reporting from Syria difficult and dangerous.

Two journalists from The Times recently reported that they had been kidnapped by a trusted colleague and friend in Syria who previously had worked for them as an interpreter and local guide. The two had been visiting their friend in Syria in order to celebrate the birth of his child when they found out that he had been involved in a kidnapping attempt. One of the journalists managed to get away, but the other was beaten with a rifle butt by a man who he had considered his friend. The explanation was, as it always is, that the two were spies.

Most of those I know that work in Syria will tell you that it has become more dangerous, and that it's harder to know who you can trust. The war has been going for more than three years and people don't have anything left to give. The idealists have become cynics. Some of those who fought against the human rights abuses carried out by the government are now mistreating people themselves. International news outlets have also become more cynical, and they no longer send reporters there. Part of the reason is the danger, but another reason is that, as a news item, Syria is stale. The story has stalled, it's not going anywhere, it's hopeless, and writing about such a conflict – that doesn't have any good guys, and that has wiped out any trace of black and white – is all but impossible. Sometimes we shake our head when we see people doing it anyway. Most of them are alone, they haven't taken appropriate security measures, and they are generally inexperienced.



Tobias Havmand covers the Middle East and other conflict areas for Information newspaper. He is also an editor of Atlas Magazine. www.atlasmag.dk



A widely distributed photograph of an Islamist fighter in Iraq

The problem is that the issue is a complicated one, and that if you're not aware of the nuances of the conflict then you're doing a service both to a regime that is engaged in a systematic massacre of its own people, and to a group of extremists who thrive on darkness and chaos.

I experienced the nuances of the conflict when I was there in September. I was visiting the same refugee camp that Daniel had been kidnapped from in May. Through my interpreter I was able to speak to the refugees living there. My interpreter was a young Syrian guy (whose name it's best if I keep secret) who had studied English literature in Aleppo before the war and was fond of quoting Byron, listening to American soft-rock love songs on his mobile and talking about how much he hated war, how much he hated the insurgents and how he would continue to avoid becoming a combatant.

We drove home through Bab al-Hawa, the chaotic border town covered in insurgents and ISIS fighters wearing ski masks, carrying rifles and lazily watching the cars as they continuously passed.

Here, we parted ways with our armed, broad-shouldered and extremely well-connected bodyguards. They departed leaving me with the young interpreter and an elderly taxi driver in a subcompact car. Five minutes later, a car and a group of motorcycles cut us off, forced us to stop, surrounded the car and then pointed their weapons at us. One of them caught eye of my camera and said it proved that I was a government spy and that they should take me into custody until their leader decided what to do with me. He finally arrived and without so much as a thought declared me a spy. It was then I knew I was in trouble.

The easiest thing for my interpreter and the driver to do would have been to push me out and drive off. Instead though, he declared – sounding just as nervous as I felt – that he was a member of one of the biggest and most feared Islamic insurgent groups in the area. His bluff worked. They let us pass and just for a moment we caught a glimpse of the humanity and sense of responsibility that saves people's lives every day in Syria.

Seeing that happen, though, requires that you are there. ■

COLUMN

Protest is scary, but it should still be safe

OPINION We need to trust the state and the police, and often that means compromising our interests. But when we do choose to protest in the streets we need to feel safe. Right now, I don't

I WAS IN A BAR in the meatpacking district on August 19, 2009, when my friends around me started to receive a chain text message. The police had arrived to deport the Iraqi asylum seekers that had sought refuge in Brorsons Kirke in Nørrebro after their claims were rejected.

Many of my friends belonged to the left-wing community that had supported the Iraqis since they moved into the church in May. Tonight was the final showdown, and we got on our bikes and made our way to the church, which had been cordoned off by police.

Several hundred sympathisers showed up over the ensuing hours, sitting themselves in rows across Rantzausgade to prevent the police busses from departing. The police lost patience and pulled out their batons, pummelling through lines and lines of protestors.

By the time it was my turn, they were clearly tired and instead resorted to pepper spray. I remember it coating my face, my eyes seizing up, snot flowing out my nose. I was incapacitated and slumped against a wall for a few hours, waiting to regain my vision. The police succeeded in removing the Iraqis and I cycled home and slept with a fan directed at my face to cool the burning sensation.

I'm not an activist, and I doubt I would have been outside the church unless I was with my friends that night. But in that moment, sitting on the tarmac in the late summer, while above me towered the state's enforcers of power, I had no doubt that it was the right thing to do.

What happened on Rantzausgade takes place across the world, when the state and the people cannot reach a compromise on the right course of action. During the 2009 climate conference, activists staged daring and high-profile demonstrations to encourage world leaders to take action. The police responded by locking down the city and detaining almost 2,000 people in preventative arrests that were later deemed illegal.

When police and protesters clash, an existential conflict emerges. Both sides must do what they are there to do. The protesters know they must make visible their discontent with leaders, while the police's role is to subdue violence and maintain the peace.

Finding a balance between our right to protest and the police's duty to maintain order isn't easy. But as it stands in Denmark now, the state clearly has the upper hand. The police have repeatedly been found to have exceeded their powers through the use of preventative

arrest, paying out millions in compensation, but the government refuses to do anything about it. The compensation is simply another cost the police have to shoulder.

I knew what was in for that night outside Bronsons Kirke but I don't hold a grudge against the police. We put ourselves in their way, and they reacted in the only way they knew how. Some officers crossed the line, battering people with their backs turned as they stood up to leave. For the most part, though, I just think they were doing their job.

But rounding up thousands of peaceful climate protestors, or swathes of football fans, simply because a tiny minority have misbehaved, is wrong. It's shameful that the government refuses to change the police law and restrict when preventative arrests can be used.

No-one should be afraid of getting locked up for peacefully protesting. Until the government changes the preventative arrest law, it's a risk we face. ■

Peter Stanners

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