

**COPENHAGEN
EDITION**

**PB43 looks
for a new
home where
dreams can
continue to
flourish**

**Self help
books are
making us
self centred
and narcis-
stic**

**Is Pegida's
arrival in
Denmark a
sign the far
right is on
the rise?**



ISSN 2246-6150

Wealth and poverty in Doha

As Qatar positions itself as a global sports hub, migrant labour is paying the price

THE MURMUR

OUR OFFICE is in Vesterbro, a neighbourhood that has changed beyond recognition over the past two decades. Now a desirable place for families and young professionals to live, it used to be home to Copenhagen's least savoury characters.

Gentrification is nothing new. In this issue we visited PB43 in Amager, a creative community of 150 entrepreneurial souls within a dilapidated former paint factory. The land has now been sold and they need to find a new home, but it's unlikely they will find anywhere as flexible and cheap. Which is a pity, for that is precisely why the businesses and organisations were able to thrive.

But there's no point in feeling sorry for them. They were lucky to be provided with the space in the first place, and the majority are educated and highly resourceful individuals who will find new ways to pursue their creative ambitions.

Not everyone is as resourceful, however, and as Copenhagen becomes wealthier, the competition over space will undoubtedly increase. Rents will rise, people will be forced to move from homes they have lived in their entire lives. Without fail, it is those with resources that replace those without.

Should cities only have space for the wealthy? If it were left entirely up to the market, only those with jobs that are rewarded with high wages will be left living in the in-

ner city, while those working important, but poorly paid jobs, will be pushed out. The city will become increasingly segregated, and the weakest end up marginalised in low-income communities.

But markets need not rule, and the City Council can step in and insist on more affordable housing to prevent increased segregation. We are better off when we live in and amongst each other. It is no surprise that the anti-Islam movement Pegida arose in East Germany, which has witnessed very little immigration compared to the rest of the country. The more we are segregated, the more we lose sight of each other's humanity.

Which is certainly the case in some Gulf States, such as Qatar, where foreign labourers are paid squalid wages and prevented from going home until their employer allows them. Bussed to and from work sites, average Qataris hardly ever set eyes on the vast numbers of labourers that toil in blistering heat to prepare the country for sports events, such as the 2022 World Cup. Out of sight, out of mind.

Economic and social segregation needn't be as stark to be problematic. As Copenhagen develops, we need to find ways that ensure the wealth it creates improves everyone's lives, not just those in control of land and resources.

THE MURMUR

"When you inject, you get surrounded with this warm blanket – physically and mentally. You don't need a thing – no family or friends, a roof over your head, or even food."

MADS NORDHEIM,
RECOVERING
HEROIN ADDICT

page 10

CONTRIBUTORS



Elias Thorsson Elias is pursuing his masters degree at the University of Copenhagen, studying American politics. He is the assistant editor at The Murmur and wrote the article about Pegida.



Lesley Price An Australian freelance journalist hailing from Sydney, Lesley recently completed a masters degree focusing on Arctic media at The University of Copenhagen. This issue she reported on the safety of methadone.



Nereya Otieno A writer and creator with a background in cognitive science, musicology and communication, Nereya likes to discuss all three while eating sandwiches. She wrote our research column this month.



Khara Lewin Before moving to Denmark, Khara was a News Assistant at CNN, where she covered regional and breaking news. She is now studying at the IT University of Copenhagen and wrote about using open data to reduce energy use.



Lesley-Ann Brown A Caribbean American freelance writer living in Copenhagen, Lesley-Ann studied writing at The New School, NYC. She wrote about the how knitting helped her integrate into Denmark.



Rasmus Degnbol an award winning documentary photographer and filmmaker, Rasmus is currently a masterclass mentee at the world-renowned VII Photo in New York. This issue he takes us inside labour camps in Doha, Qatar.



Charlotte Kjærholm Pedersen A Masters graduate from the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies at the University of Copenhagen, Charlotte likes stories that show contemporary tendencies. She wrote about anti self help this issue.



Thor Fannal An Icelandic political reporter living in Edinburgh, Thor writes for publications in Europe, North-America and Africa. For this issue, he reported on terrible state of Icelandic journalism.

MASTHEAD

Peter Stanners Editor-In-Chief, peter@murmur.dk

Mark Millen Director, Sales and Marketing, mark@murmur.dk

Mette Salomonsen Art Director, www.salomet.dk

Kevin McGwin Journalist, kevin@murmur.dk

SALES For advertising sales, please contact: advertising@murmur.dk

CONTACT THE MURMUR, Hedebygade 14, st.tv., 1754 Copenhagen V. info@murmur.dk

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MONTH IN REVIEW

Danes for dictators

One in nine Danes is open to the idea of a strong leader ruling the country without interference from parliament or the electorate, according to a poll commissioned for Ugebrevet A4. The poll also showed that women are more open to dictatorships than men. Support for dictators was higher in right wing voters, with one in five voters for the populist Danish People's Party preferring a single autocratic leader, while 17% of ultraliberal Liberal Alliance voters and 16% of centre-right Liberal voters shared the reverence of dictators.



OUTRAGE OVER ARABIC SUPERMARKET SIGN

After the arrival of Syrian refugees in the local community, a South Jutland branch of the supermarket chain Føtex put up a sign in Arabic informing them of a deal on clothing. The idea was to help the refugees find much-needed supplies after travelling thousands of kilometres from the war-torn region. Refugees tend to travel light, and with the winter cold setting in, the supermarket reported a high demand for new clothes.

While many applauded Føtex's gesture, it infuriated immigration spokesperson for the populist Danish People's Party (DF), Martin Henriksen, who told tabloid Ekstra Bladet that the sign demonstrated a "subservience to Islam" and that he would consequently cease shopping at Føtex. Back in 2003, however, DF became one of the first parties in the country to translate their party agenda into other languages, including Arabic, according to national broadcaster DR. This translation has now disappeared from DF's website, with only more acceptable European languages remaining.

ILLEGALLY RECEIVING SU

Over 900 EU students owe the Danish state around 8.2 million kroner for illegally receiving SU student grants, according to the Danish Agency for Higher Education. EU students became eligible for the grants following a 2013 European Court of Justice ruling, which decreed that SU should be made available to all EU citizens studying in Denmark who also worked 10-12 hours a week. The problems arose when the students quit or lost their jobs but continued to accept the grant.

Elias Thorsson

Danes among those suing Facebook

On 9 April, a court in Vienna, Austria will start proceedings in a lawsuit against Facebook. The more than 25,000 plaintiffs, including 358 Danes, are suing the company for various breaches of EU laws that govern the use of personal information. The case started last summer when Austrian law student Max Schrems offered disgruntled Facebook users the opportunity to join the suit, which could determine whether Facebook breached EU laws through their extensive data mining of user information and their cooperation with the NSA. Schrems decided to pursue the lawsuit after obtaining all the information Facebook had collected on him. The 1,200 page PDF file included information he had deleted from his profile but Facebook had kept.



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Dj Hack'em

A Copenhagen-based DJ has been sentenced to four months in prison for hacking the computers of 47 individuals between April 2012 and August 2013. The DJ gained access to their computers after sending them sound and video files infected with a Trojan horse virus that installed on the users' computers when they opened the file. The DJ could then peruse through people's personal files, passwords and pictures.

In court, the DJ said he was driven by curiosity rather than personal gain, and that he had not shared any of the information. No evidence was presented at the trial indicating that he had. The public prosecutor, Sidsel Klixbüll, told national broadcaster DR that she hoped the verdict would deter other curious minds from hacking people's computers.



flickr / James Kendall



Venstres Ungdom

Liberal party wins youth vote

The first comprehensive mock election with school children aged 15 landed a decisive victory for right wing parties, which amassed 57.9% of the vote. The most popular party was the liberal Venstre, which secured 27.4 %, while the ruling Socialdemokraterne only managed 17.6%.



NEW FROM LEGO: BRICKS OF BETRAYAL
Anders Kirk Johansen, a member of the Lego dynasty, was on the verge of launching the toy brick concept Modulex Bricks when his uncle – and Lego's majority share owner – Kjeld Kirk Johansen bought out the company and shut it down. Modulex Bricks was originally launched by Lego in 1966, but has been off the market for many years. Last year, the younger Johansen bought the rights to the concept, which uses smaller sized bricks and is aimed towards more professional users such as architects and engineers. Neither side has spoken out about the sale, but the 100,000 fans following the Modulex Facebook page must surely be disappointed.

flickr / Brick Colorstream

NOTHING BUT A TAX DODGE BABY
Last month, Politiken revealed that Danish phone company 3 had been using its Luxembourg-based parent company to avoid paying taxes in Denmark. The information caused hundreds of customers to take to social media in protest, with many cancelling their subscriptions with the company. 3 countered, admitting that while it had turned a profit in recent years, the company had made multi-billion kroner infrastructure investments over the past decade that could legally be deducted from future tax bills. 3 promised to pay taxes once these investments are recovered.



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NEWSMAKER

HANDBALL, CATCH THE MONEY

Qatar wants to host every major sporting event the world has to offer. But criticising their dodgy labour practices might just get you branded a racist

GIGANTIC empty arenas, supporters bought from Spain, extravagant backstage facilities and a cost of over 1,600 million kroner. No, this isn't Axl Rose's latest tour, but rather the 2015 Men's Handball World Championship held in Qatar last month.

As we go to print, Denmark had beat Slovenia and secured a place in the top four, and with it a ticket to the 2016 Olympics in Rio. Well done lads! While the finals have yet to be played, The Murmur wants to congratulate (insert team name) on its phenomenal success, while offering our condolences to runners up (insert team name), who showed great character in the final game.

If you think sport should be about exuberant spending, oligarch vanity projects and the mistreatment of low wage immigrant workers, then the tournament certainly was a roaring success. It also provides us a glimpse into how Qatar will cope with holding the world's biggest sporting tournament, the FIFA World Cup in 2022.

The decision to allow Qatar to host the football World Cup has come under massive criticism, not only for the allegations of corruption and bribery during the bidding process, but also due to the fact that summer temperatures in the Funen-sized Gulf state can easily reach 50°C. This tiny detail was overlooked before the bid was accepted and now FIFA wants to break with tradition and play the tournament in winter instead.

The headaches keep mounting for Qatar. In December, The Guardian reported that 964 immi-



The Aspire Dome, one of stadiums built in Qatar in recent years in their pursuit of becoming a global sporting hub

grant workers had died during the construction of the immense football stadiums needed for the tournament. In Qatar, guest workers are tied to their employers and are denied the right to organise or own businesses, and must acquire an exit visa in order to leave the country. It is effectively the modern day equivalent of medieval serfdom.

All these accusations have been vigorously refuted by the real life Bond villain presiding over FIFA, President Sepp Blatter. Earlier this year, Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Sabah, president of the Olympic Council of Asia, said that criticism of Qatar was all a part of a "racist campaign".

Given Denmark's love of handball, it's unsurprising that a Dane was a key figure in the tournament coming to Qatar. Lars Haue-Ped-

ersen, the administrative director of TSE Consulting, helped the country prepare the winning bid to host the event.

In a recent interview with Politiken newspaper, Haue-Pedersen repeated Al-Sabah's claim that racism lies at the heart of the criticism of Qatar.

"This could be due to the old prejudices that represent, if I can put it mildly, the somewhat arrogant European opinion that handball is for the white man. And if I have to put it more harshly, the European opinion has a hint of racism." Haue-Pedersen also said that handball would "die" as a popular sport if it failed to spread into new countries.

And he is right! After winning the bid to host this year's World Championship, Qatar could sud-

denly boast of having one of the best handball teams in the world – a team that features national heroes Rafael Capote, Danijel Šarić and Žarko Marković. We know what you're thinking, and you're right – those names hardly sound, well, Qatari. It may not come as much of a surprise that they are foreign-born players that brought into the Qatari national side for the sole purpose of creating a fantastic national team for the tournament.

In fact, all the players on the team were brought in from around the world through an aggressive and expensive recruitment programme, which even sought to get Danish handball players to join in the fun. I think we all know what team will be the neutral's favourite in the 2022 World Cup. **M**

Elias Thorsson

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OBSERVED

Naked nuptials

Proponents of traditional marriage believe it is a holy union handed down from God to Adam and Eve while they lived in the Garden of Eden. It is only natural, then, that in the small south Jutland town of Varde, couples can now enter into holy matrimony the way God intended – naked. Letting people start their new lives in the same state they entered their old, is a clever new niche in the wedding industry.

REVENGE IS A DISH BEST SERVED GLAMOROUS

Is your boss giving you a hard time? Does your neighbour keep throwing parties into the morning without inviting you? Or did your ex run away with all your kitchen utensils and the pet corgi you had bought together to prepare for your future as actual parents? Well, now you can get revenge. A website now lets you send envelopes full of glitter to your enemy of choice. Near impossible to clean up, it's sure-fire way to get your own back on your nemesis!

[http:// ShipYourEnemiesGlitter.com](http://ShipYourEnemiesGlitter.com)

Elias Thorsson

COBE and Gottlieb Paludan Architects



NEW NØRREPORT STATION
It's been a bore while it was under construction, but the new Nørreport station opened in January, and what a sight to behold! The beautifully curving concrete slabs hovering in the air, recessed bicycle parking and renovated regional train platforms, were all beautifully executed. Best of all is not having to cross a street between Strøget and the station, though the lights to cross to the Metro station do take *forever*.

iCan be your eyes

Some apps help us find dates, others for sharing photos of our lunch. But not all apps are so crass; some are useful and a rare few are truly life changing. This is certainly the case with Be My Eyes, the brainchild of Danish entrepreneur Hans Jørgen Wiberg. The app allows blind people to connect with sighted people using their phones, providing helpful eyes in everyday situations. One hundred thousand sighted have so far signed up to help the eight thousand blind people with the app. Go humans!

<http://bemeyes.org>



THE MURMUR



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RESEARCH

FORESKIN, FOREBODING?

Early this year, the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine published a research article by Statens Serum Institut that found a correlation between circumcision and autism spectrum disorder (ASD), hyperactivity disorder and asthma.

The research was inspired by studies of other species showing that physical pain in early childhood resulted in negative psychological responses to stress, anxiety and pain perception – all components of ASD. The process of circumcision cannot be entirely without pain and, according to the study, 71 percent of circumcised boys suffer pain for six weeks following the operation.

The researchers Morten Frisch and Jacob Simonsen examined the health records of over 340,000 Danish boys born between 1994 and 2003, the year the government stopped subsidised ritual circumcisions.

The study only included circumcisions performed in hospitals, as those that took place in private (for example during religious ceremonies) were not registered in the health journals. They then controlled for parameters such as cultural background, birth weight, mode of delivery, pregnancy complications and maternal factors (smoking habits, age, etc.) as well as other factors that could impact the probability of the subject developing ASD.

The study concludes that, regardless of cultural background, circumcision increases the risk of boys developing ASD before age 10 by 46-62 percent. The study also found a link between circumcision and hyperactivity disorder in non-Muslim boys, though it found no correlation between circumcision and asthma.

While the researchers found a strong correlation between circumcision and ASD, they have not found an explanation. The researchers postulate that physical trauma in early life – circumcision in this case – may make the children less capable of manag-



Salt evaporation ponds in Peru

flickr / Juan Manuel Garcia

ing stress, anxiety, and pain later in life – typical symptoms of ASD. This would also help to explain why boys are far more likely to develop autism than girls.

But the research has also been strongly criticised, particularly by religious groups. Circumcision is almost exclusively carried out as a religious practice in Denmark, making the results politically and culturally charged. If a causal link is found between circumcision and the development of ASD, then religious groups could face pressure to change their practices to avoid potentially jeopardising the neurological and social development of young boys.

The study's authors do not present any evidence for a causal link, encouraging other researchers to explore this possibility. The study of ASD is still in its infancy; a gen-

eral understanding of the exact nature of the disorder and its causes have yet to be established. The study by Statens Serum Institut thus represents an important step towards gaining insight into ASD.

SUPERCHARGED SALT

A civil-rights catalyst for Gandhi and a flavour maker for our taste buds, lowly salt might be ushering in a new means of energy storage.

A team of researchers from the Technical University of Denmark (DTU) are hard at work perfecting a system in which salt can store solar energy, an extremely sustainable source of energy readily available during the sunny seasons. The problem lies in the abundance of solar power when it is least needed and its scarcity when energy use

The study concludes that, regardless of cultural background, circumcision increases the risk of boys developing ASD before age 10 by 46-62%

peaks – the cold, dark winter.

The ability to collect and store this solar energy and release it when needed could dramatically cut energy consumption during the winter period. Cue the salt. The Solar Heating Group, headed by Simon Furbo at DTU Civil Engineering, has found a way for those grains to work some energetic magic.

Dubbed COMTES (Compact Thermal Energy Storage), the process works as follows: Sodium acetate is heated by solar energy and melts at 58°C. But unlike water, which cools when the heating subsides, the sodium acetate has a special property that stops the liquid from automatically turning back into a solid after it cools below its melting point.

This is because it can only cool into a crystalline structure if there is something to crystallise around. This means you can keep sodium acetate in a liquid form at a temperature below its freezing point. When you need some heat, all you need to do is add a crystal to activate the crystallising process, which releases an enormous amount of heat that can be used for any number of household purposes. The crystalline sodium acetate can then be melted with solar energy and the process repeated.

With partial funding by the EU, COMTES has partner researchers in China (the world's largest solar energy market) and Austria. The project has yet to produce a commercially available storage system, as the group is working out the fine details and determining how much energy can actually be stored using the system. The Solar Heating Group, which anticipates the release of a commercial system soon, is currently building an average single family home to test whether the salty system has the capacity to power it year-round.

Let's hope the cheap power will encourage some of the city's residents to move into their summerhouses year round and ease the pressure on the housing market. **M**

Nereya Otieno



Safeguarding a life-long addiction

The opiate substitute methadone is implicated in 60 percent of drug poisonings. A safer alternative has long been available, so why are eight in ten recovering opiate addicts still using it?

AFTER STEPPING behind a locked security door, I'm told to be as quiet as possible. We walk slowly through the room, passing booths divided by frosted glass and steel tables littered with syringe wrappers and alcohol wipes. Nervous faces look up at me, one after the other as I pass by.

"Noise sensitivity is a strong side effect when you've just injected," whispers Ivan Christensen, head of Mændenes Hjem (The Men's Home). The shelter, one of the largest drug user assistance facilities in Copenhagen, is located in Copenhagen's iconic red-light district on Istedgade.

At the end of the hall is the smoking area, a small room behind a glass wall where about eight people are huddled. Plumes of smoke rise from a group deep in conversation; a few stand with eyes glazed, while others are hunched over fiddling with spoons and lighters. My eyes fall on a man in a red sweater, who puffs

"People generally die from decades of drug use."

IVAN CHRISTENSEN, HEAD OF MÆNDENES HJEM

Lesley Price

on a joint dipped into a piece of foil that he holds cupped in his hands – he looks like he's only in his early twenties.

"These people are the most stigmatised in society and often we're all they have," says Christensen. "This isn't where they start, this is where they end up."

Christensen has been involved with Mændenes Hjem for almost 16 years and has worked in social justice since his teens. The shelter is one of the city's facilities that accommodates people dependent on opiates – both users of substitutes such as methadone and those who continue to use illicit drugs.

The ingestion clinic I just toured is one of only a few in the world. It is open 23 hours a day and can receive up to 700 visitors every day. The shelter also provides food, shelter, medical care, assistance with entering rehab programmes and help with finding employment where possible.

"Given the lives some of these

people have lived, it's almost inevitable that they became involved with drugs," Christensen explains as we walk down the corridor to his office, the smell of a strong sanitizer permeating the air. "And for many, it's a life-long thing."

SUBSTITUTE HIGH

Injection rooms in Odense and Copenhagen are credited with saving 93 lives in the first year they opened, as medical staff were able to step in and reverse potentially fatal overdoses.

Overdosing isn't the only issue that injecting drug users have to contend with, however. Street bought drugs can contain a range of dangerous impurities, needle sharing risks the transmission of diseases such as hepatitis and HIV, while needle use can damage blood vessels and increase the risk of blood clots.

Heroin addicts in treatment are therefore given oral replacement drugs that minimise these risks. The two main opiate substitutes le-

gally prescribed in Denmark are buprenorphine and methadone. But while buprenorphine is considered the safer and less addictive, 80 percent of addicts in treatment use methadone, according to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA). Health professionals have expressed concern that methadone remains the replacement of choice, especially given the government's target to treat half of addicts with buprenorphine.

"Few will admit to discouraging the use of buprenorphine because of the cost," Dr Inger Birkemose from the Odense City Council drug rehabilitation programme told Politiken newspaper recently. "Giving methadone is cheaper and you also get a patient who is happier."

Unlike buprenorphine, methadone can be abused to achieve a high. Many heroin users also supplement their addiction with methadone. However, methadone is high-

ly toxic and played a role in 60 percent of the 166 drug poisoning deaths registered by the police in 2012.

"[In 2012 there] was a decline in the number of deaths where heroin/morphine is reported and an increase in the proportion of deaths where methadone is assumed to be the most significant cause of death," according to the EMCDDA's latest report on the situation in Denmark.

Irene Mills, a general practitioner with over 15 years experience working with drug addiction at KABS – a Danish drug user treatment organization – says methadone overdoses normally occur when other drugs or alcohol are also ingested.

"For methadone to cause an overdose alone, it would require a much bigger dose than what is provided," Mills adds.

Christensen says that while users of opiates are dying at least 20 years early, he has not found that substitutes are a major cause of death.

"People generally die from decades of drug use, which burns their body out," he explains. "They also tend to die from other illnesses. Some of our visitors have four to five conditions, both somatic and psychological."

Mills and Christensen acknowledge that dependence on substitutes like methadone are not ideal, but few addicts can cope with transferring to white-knuckle sobriety. Mills says while it may be disheartening to hear, opiate addiction is commonly a life sentence, so providing a legal and safer substance is the best treatment.

"Of course getting off methadone is possible, but your life must be very stable outside of your addiction," she says.

A RARE RECOVERY

Mads Nordheim, a musician and recovered addict, is one of the few who managed to escape the grip of heroin. A long-time drug user, his recovery was only made possible through the Danish rehabilitation system.

At just 13, Nordheim ran away from home in Norway to Christiania. He started smoking marijuana, eventually moving to amphetamines, followed by heroin. He used heroin for around 12 years before entering a treatment programme using methadone and has now been clean for over 10 years. He says the biggest motivator for his recovery wasn't the state of his physical health, but the crushing isolation.

"The first time I injected, I knew my addiction had taken on another form," he explains. "There weren't any injection rooms in those days, it was all out in the open. Society wants nothing to do with you, and slowly you see less and less of those you love."

Nordheim believes his recovery was only possible due to his stable background, including his support network of friends and his passion for music. But he says there is virtually no incentive for most users to get clean.

"Most people who are using have had and still have horrible lives. I would never blame them for wanting to escape, nor for not wanting to return to reality," he says.

"When you inject, you get surrounded with this warm blanket – physically and mentally. You don't need a thing – no family or friends, a roof over your head, or even food. The heroin is your trust and security."

Nordheim did however note that rehab can be problematic in Denmark, as the system allows people to come and go as they please, meaning there is little motivation to stay clean.

"In many other countries, you've only got one shot at a programme," he adds.

REVISING REHAB

Despite being carefully distributed, methadone often finds its way out of the hands out recovering addicts and on to the streets. Near Copenhagen Central Station, at a site known locally as the Pill Centre, dealers sell these prescription drugs.

"Some people enrolled in the programme sell their supply, either because they don't need the entire dosage or because they have tried to save it," Nordheim explains.

"GPs aren't supposed to prescribe it, but some will if they have a history or good rapport with their patients. There are also robberies at pharmacies, all resulting in a steady flow under the table."

Regardless of where drugs are coming from, Nordheim says harsher policies or a crack down on distribution won't curb drug use.

"The simple fact is that people are always going to take drugs. The best a system can do is try to make it as safe as possible," he says.

Christensen agrees, arguing that regardless of whether we approve of drug use, it will remain a part of our society.

"Of course we want people to be 'clean' and we will help them any way we can, but we don't judge people's choice to continue taking drugs, legal or illegal," he says, adding that the same users have been visiting the shelter for decades and he doesn't expect this to change.

"It's hard to say whether the Danish system is successful. But if we can help people avoid getting involved with crime or putting their health at further risk, then it is worth it. We have to try to integrate people back into society. Often it's one step forward, two steps back. But we'll keep trying." **M**



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Kenneth Nguyen

The view from Christiansborg. The city hopes that tracking movements and using live data will help them reduce energy.

A smarter city is digital

By harnessing digital information and new technology in innovative and thought-provoking ways, Copenhagen hopes to become the world's first carbon neutral capital by 2025

"IT'S A JOURNEY and we'll have a lot to learn along the way," explains Jørgen Abildgaard. In a decade, Copenhagen must be carbon neutral, and it's Abildgaard's job to make sure it happens.

Abildgaard is the executive director of the CPH 2025 Climate Plan, adopted by the Copenhagen City Council in 2012 and composed of a range of initiatives to lower carbon emissions through decreased energy consumption and greener energy production and mobility.

Reducing over one million metric tons of carbon emissions to zero is no easy feat, and the city knows they can only realize their ambitions by drawing on the private sector, citizens and knowledge institutions from the outset.

Khara Lewin

This holistic approach to achieving carbon neutrality represents a major shift from the city's more common practice of centralised planning.

"When we look at the investments Copenhagen must make to execute the climate plan, we know that for every kroner we spend, investors and other stakeholders need to spend 100 kroner. We therefore need to have a dialogue with these stakeholders in order to understand their point of view and perspective – and also help them to understand the city's ambitions and vision," says Abildgaard.

TOWARD A SMART CITY

In order to succeed, the CPH 2025 Climate Plan needs to tackle two

major issues. The first is making sure that the city and investors understand each other's goals and ambitions; the second is ensuring that all the different initiatives work together in harmony.

This is where Copenhagen Solutions Lab (CSL) comes in. The organisation, housed within Copenhagen's Technical and Environmental Administration, is tasked with developing how Copenhagen collects and uses data. The lab's goal is to turn Copenhagen into a "Smart City", using this data to drive technological innovation and increasing energy efficiency across the city.

Drivers, for example, can spend up to 20 minutes trying to find a parking spot in the city, adding to the already high lev-

els of congestion as they drive around.

Equipping parking spots with sensors and creating a way for these sensors to communicate with drivers could change this, and potentially eliminate 31 million kilometres of unnecessary driving in the city and 1.5 million driving hours annually.

Congestion is also another potential issue that could be dealt with using data. During rush hour, some streets are at an absolute standstill, while others are nearly deserted. The location of bikes, city transport and other vehicles represents invaluable data for alleviating congestion.

"We can optimise the traffic flow to lower the carbon footprint and allow citizens to move more

freely throughout the city. This is good for the climate agenda because we'll be using less fuel, but it's also great for the citizens because it'll mean fewer accidents," says Søren Kvist, a senior Smart City consultant at CSL.

CREATING DIGITAL STANDARDS

While new technologies offer urban planners endless new possibilities for improving liveability in cities and making them greener in the process. It's CSL's job to ensure solutions can be seamlessly integrated with every other solution citywide to prevent potential redundancies.

But implementing the technologies is difficult, as the infrastructure for connecting them with one another does not yet exist. There are also no internationally recognised standards for handling the data, which is important if the city wants to export the ideas worldwide.

"It's not going to be just one technology we use to gather this data – it's going to be multiple. So we must create standards and infrastructure for these technologies to communicate with each other," says Kvist.

Kvist sees the situation as a case of history repeating itself. In the 1700s, Copenhagen created a canal system that enabled Denmark to become a global leader in maritime trade. During the industrial revolution, Denmark built railways and roads to show it was a business friendly country. In both these cases, the city identified what it needed to remain internationally competitive and built it.

PRIVACY ISSUES

Collecting data always raises issues of privacy, however. Tracking the movement of citizens and their behaviour may be useful for planning the city's energy demands,

for example, but citizens may have reason to be concerned that this data could be used for more nefarious purposes.

This issue has been raised in the media and was even the subject of a Master's thesis at Roskilde University last year, which concluded that the city needs to take privacy issues more seriously.

But Kvist says they do, and that CSL is working closely with privacy experts in Denmark and across Europe to ensure citizen's rights are not obstructed in the name of innovation.

"It's extremely important that we have a clear and open discussion on privacy matters. We have to be open about what we're planning to do, what technologies we're testing, what we are actually doing and what are just ideas," he says, adding that the lab is now focusing primarily on digital solutions that use non-per-

"It's extremely important that we have a clear and open discussion on privacy matters."

**SØREN KVIST,
SENIOR SMART
CITY CONSULTANT
FOR COPENHAGEN
SOLUTIONS LAB**

sonal and non-sensitive data, so-called open data.

"The idea is that we release non-personal, non-sensitive data to the public," Kvist says. "And then researchers and citizens alike can take this data and use it how they see fit. A perfect example of this is Rejseplanen [the public transport route planning service, ed.]."

The city will not make any decisions on generating and assembling data until the standardisation process is complete. And the city is relying heavily on the private sector and knowledge institutions to contribute these solutions.

"We want to make sure Copenhagen is the smartest city out there. Admittedly, when it comes to data solutions and using new technology, we still have a long way to go. But we have outlined and are developing some of the best ideas in the world." **M**

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DEATH of the dream



factory

They turned a delapidated former paint factory into a thriving working community. But now the land has been sold and PB43 must move on. Will the magic move with them to a new home, or has Copenhagen lost a valuable oasis of creativity?

Peter Stanners



Photo courtesy of PB43

Previous page: The public garden Prags Have was a big hit with the local community.

Right: Building 5 is the central feature on the PB43 site, and the location of plenty of raucous late-night parties.



Photos: Peter Stanners, except left, PB43



Per Kæssler makes pipes in a shed on the grounds of PB43.



PER KÆSSLER'S speech is slurred and his body convulses rhythmically. He suffers from cerebral palsy, a brain disorder that affects his ability to control his movements, but it hasn't stopped him becoming a gifted craftsman. He holds up a pipe, lacquered and smooth on the sides, and rough on the top. His hands shake so violently it almost tumbles to the floor.

"I'm scared," he says in his tiny shed. "I've told my girlfriend that I will just set the shed on fire if we can't find a new home for it."

He's joking about the arson, but less so about his fear of the future. His shed sits on the grounds of the disused Sadolin paint factory, located at Prags Boulevard 43 in Amager. Since 2011, around 150 creative entrepreneurs have turned the plot of land with its four buildings and large yard into a thriving and productive community dubbed PB43.

But in March it will come to an end. In 2014, the landowner Akzo Nobel, a Dutch chemicals company, put it on the market. Despite

"People talk and overhear each other's problems and before you know it, someone's knocking on your door."

MARIA TEIL-GÅRD, MEMBER OF FUKK

raising over ten million kroner in funding, PB43 was outbid by the storage company Pelican. The deserted space they brought to life will now make way for people's dead belongings.

PB43 is one of Copenhagen's most successful creative and user-driven environments, housing ski manufacturers, circuses designers, artists, records companies, event makers and architects. Unlike other user-driven spaces in the city, their shared vision isn't political but entrepreneurial and social, and despite whatever differences they have, they share a passion to create and collaborate.

Their creative potential was only realised thanks to the land and four empty buildings, which users rented very cheaply compared to the open market. But flexible and cheap post-industrial spaces are getting harder and harder to find. As *The Murmur* goes to print, the users were negotiating a contract for a facility in Nordhavn, but it wasn't large enough to house everyone, and some users have moved

into another facility in Sydhavn.

As their era under one roof comes to an end, they talked about what made PB43 a special place to work, and why Copenhagen would be a poorer place without them.

A LUCKY START

PB43 would never have existed if it weren't for the generosity of Akzo Nobel, who agreed to rent the space for free after being approached by the organisation GivRum.nu in 2010. The factory ceased production in 2006 and the plot of land stood empty, frequented only by graffiti artists and adventurous youths.

GivRum.nu, which means Give Space in Danish, seeks out these sorts of abandoned spaces to turn them into creative hubs. After agreeing on a two-year contract, they quickly found a number of small groups and businesses eager to move in.

The users then set up the co-operative society Arbejdsfælleskabet PB43, which is run by two part-time paid coordinators and

a ten-person board that makes most major decisions, including which creative entrepreneurs to give space to. They charge users a nominal rent, normally about 300 kroner per square meter of space per year, which is reinvested in the facilities and new projects, for example covering travel expenses for artists and supporting different PB43 festivals.

Far below market rate, the rent is just one of the reasons that makes PB43 such an attractive place to work.

"We have collected loads of creative entrepreneurs who wouldn't ordinarily have the conditions to live out their dreams and ideas if it weren't for the cheap rent," explains board chairman Pil Rix Rosel, who works as a producer for the new circus Tin Can Company.

"These companies are often in the start-up phase and have amazing ideas, but if they had to spend all their money on rent, they would have no money to develop anything interesting and creative. That's PB43 – it's a dream factory. Some-



Architect Petter Brandberg runs the firm WoodCouture from his workshop extension in building 2. The company has developed a reputation for their custom skis.



Kathrine Kjeld Hansen (left) runs a part time ceramics company in the villa, while Maria Teilgård (right), from the independent art school FUKK, works on the upper level of building 5.



where you can go and try out your dreams."

This is certainly true for Petter Brandberg, an architect and craftsman specialising in site-specific urban architecture, ranging from public furniture to scale wooden models of elephants. Together with business partner Sigurd Elling, he runs the company WoodCouture in an ad-hoc extension between Building 2 and a container. The roof of corrugated plastic thrives plenty of light into their thriving workshop.

"I've always found it difficult to find skis that fit me," Brandberg says in the container next door. "I have drawn and designed skis for many years, but when I moved in here I suddenly had the time and the means. I didn't mean to start selling them, I just wanted to make a pair for myself. It ended up being expensive and I spent 1,000 hours on building the machinery and trying out strategies."

What started out as a hobby quickly became a business and he sells his custom skis for almost

10,000 kroner a pair to mostly-Scandinavian buyers.

"PB43 has an atmosphere where anything is possible. Just being in this atmosphere makes it easier to make skis. I needed those 1,000 hours to try it out, but I also needed all the people out here to encourage me and say they thought it was a good idea. This is a free-spirited community of yes men – it makes making things easier."

MENTAL SPACE

Besides the cheap rent and DIY atmosphere, Brandberg and Elling also found all the open space really useful. When commissioned by the Danish Cycling Federation to build a bicycle obstacle course ahead of the 2011 UCI Road World Championships, they used the yard between the buildings and invited local children to test it out.

The large hall inside Building 5, normally rented out for parties and concerts, also came in handy designer when Henrik Vibskov commissioned them to build props. In both cases, not having to

pay through the nose for space enabled them to stay within budget, while also thinking big.

Cheap space was also important for the independent art school FUKK, whose members lease a large room on the second floor of Building 5.

"A lot of us have had workspaces before and had to pay twice what we do now to share a small shitty room with twice as many people. None of us are professionals, and we have work and other stuff on the side," explains FUKK member Maria Teilgård.

With the help of other PB43 users, they redesigned the space, lowered the floor to give them a higher ceiling and installed a wood stove to keep them warm. This flexibility was important to Teilgård and others at FUKK, who are trying to forge a new type of art education free from old artistic dogmas.

"We are incredibly in love with this room and we've been very lucky to have it," says Teilgård, reminiscing about summer days

"That's PB43 – it's a dream factory. Somewhere you can go and try out your dreams."

**PIL RIX ROSSEL,
PRODUCER FOR
TIN CAN COMPANY
AND CHAIRMAN OF
THE PB43 BOARD**

when they would take to the roof to watch the circuses practice in the yard and the late evenings when concerts in the hall below kept them company.

"It has meant so much to us mentally to have free space. When you're trying to experiment, it's important to have a room where you're not worried. We've found it difficult to exhibit at normal galleries, as our methodology didn't fit because they had too many rules. But we can invite people to shows in here and not have to worry at all."

Teilgård then makes an oft-repeated point: PB43 is not like the other user-driven communities around the city.

"People out here don't necessarily agree on anything – the only foundation was free buildings with low rent. It shows that when people have good ideas and are given space to live out their ambitions, things will happen. We never planned to help each other out, it just happens naturally. People talk and overhear each



Photos: PB43, except below, Peter Stanners



"We are not going to be able to recreate it in Copenhagen. It's simply impossible to find a space like this, where we can do what we want."

MADS ELLEBÆK PETERSEN

Locals visited the gardens Prags Have, left, while the circus practiced out in the yard, above left. The landowner Akzo Nobel let the users modify the buildings to their liking, which they took full advantage of.



other's problems and before you know it, someone's knocking on your door."

POLITICALLY NEUTRAL

Copenhagen has a long history of autonomous and user-driven communities. Most famous are the squatted naval barracks that became Christiania in the 1970s and the anarchist Youth House (Ungdomshuset) in Nørrebro, which was demolished in 2007, sparking violent demonstrations across the city. The Youth House now lives on in a new facility on Dorteavej in Copenhagen's Nordvest district, a brisk walk from the non-commercial cultural centre "The Candy Factory" (Bolsjefabrikken).

PB43 users repeatedly distance themselves from aspects of these spaces. Almost everyone makes the point that there is nothing inherently political about PB43's users except their desire to work in a community where they have the economic and spatial freedom to explore their ideas.

They are also relatively unsentimental about the land and buildings they have inhabited for the past four years. Above all, it suited their needs – they could tear down or build walls, install windows and build extensions at will.

"We were lucky the owner didn't care," says Steen Anders-

en, one of the two PB43 coordinators. "At first we ran ideas past them, but it quickly became clear that they didn't care so long as no one got hurt."

Like other user-driven centres, PB43 is run democratically through an elected board. However, the board is more powerful than in many other communities, having the final say on the allocation of money raised through rent. The board's control is much stronger than most user-driven spaces, but Andersen argues that this is one of PB43's key strengths.

"Working at PB43 means much more to users than simply having a space. You are guaranteed solidarity, inspiration, quick decisions and quick money. People feel like they are kicking ass because even though you're working around a lot of people, it's not bureaucratic – you can go to a board meeting and they can make a decision immediately."

FEWER OPTIONS

The new facility in Nordhavn that PB43 hopes to move into will unlikely be as flexible and cheap as their old home in Amager. At one point, finding a disused building would have been easy, but as the city redeveloped following its near-bankruptcy in the 1980s, few if any such buildings remain.

"It would have been awesome to start ten years ago when Copenhagen was full of empty spaces," laments Mads Ellebæk Petersen in his office in Building 2. Self-employed and working mainly in the events industry, Petersen manages the hall in Building 5 rented out for events and parties.

"This place is so unique in Denmark. Most people think the council is running it, but we receive no support at all and we have to pay two people to run it. We are not going to be able to recreate it in Copenhagen. It's simply impossible to find a space like this, where we can do what we want."

The Nordhavn location is likely to be a temporary stop before they find a permanent facility. For that, they will need to raise the money privately, for while the City Council and philanthropic investors Realdania have expressed interest in helping buy a site for PB43, both acknowledged that if the community accepted the money PB43 would lose their autonomy and their energy by having to live up to new bureaucratic user agreements and pay far higher rent.

Nothing is set in stone, but the idea is to transfer ownership to a fund run by an elected board of PB43 users, private partners and the city, where each individual can wield one vote. One idea

is to start new users on very low rent and gradually increase it over the years. Andersen says this will hopefully encourage users to professionalise and encourage well-established businesses to move on once they've reached market price. This is important, he argues, because everyone benefits from working in a diverse and dynamic space.

"There's a cross-pollination out here. I used to work in an environment that was highly specialised and I needed knowledge and input from the outside. It's much more fun to be around people like a guy who has travelled the world because he builds canoes. He could inspire architects to build a structure differently," says Andersen, adding that these types of communities provide value to urban landscapes that are being increasingly zoned and sterilised.

"I have two kids and sometimes I think about what sort of city should they live in. I grew up in the aftermath of the industrial era with all these abandoned places that gave me so many possibilities to do my own projects. Will my kids have the same chance? Will office space be the new temporary spaces in the future? How will they be able to shape the city when it is designed with just one purpose in mind?" **M**



Finding autonomous voices in vague spaces

Cities need to be constantly updated with new ideas and culture, which can often only arise in autonomous communities. But finding space for them to thrive is getting harder and harder

A CITY'S most valuable commodity is space. Copenhagen is no exception, especially given that 100,000 new residents are expected to arrive over the coming decade. Their search for opportunity and experiences will increase the competition for limited space, pushing prices ever upward.

This process of gentrification, seen in cities around the world, presents urban planners with a challenge: how can they keep cities attractive to investors yet affordable for the residents that ensure the city remains an interesting place to live?

Communities like PB43 are important in keeping Copenhagen dynamic, says Jan Lilliendahl Larsen, ph.d. and co-founder of the group of urbanists, Supertanker. Lilliendahl Larsen's research focuses on the development of new cultures and political voices in cities, and has found that they tend to arise in so-called 'vague spaces'

PB43's location in an derelict paint factory is a classic example – creative forces occupying a space after it was abandoned and before it is fully redeveloped. While these places are almost always temporary, Lilliendahl Larsen argues they are vital for renewing the city's identity and supplying fresh ideas.

"When you get your own space, you create new forms of autonomy. This can be political autonomy, where people develop new goals and ambitions and demand a stake in society, or cultural, where people develop new forms of language, symbols and gestures," Lilliendahl Larsen says.

Copenhagen has a wide variety of autonomous communities occu-

pying vague spaces. While PB43 is entrepreneurial, others, such as the Candy Factory in outer Østerbro are non-commercial and cultural. Regardless of the specific type, Lilliendahl Larsen thinks that a new autonomous community needs to arise every five years.

"We need these spaces that enable culture to develop because they allow us to look in the mirror and reflect. This doesn't happen in mainstream spaces, which is why these vague spaces are important."

The problem is that Copenhagen is running out of space for them. After its near bankruptcy in the 1980s, the government forced the local authority to sell vast tracts of land in exchange for a bailout. This marked the start of Copenhagen's about-face and rapid development in the 1990s. The inner Vesterbro district was gentrified and the Ørestad district in Amager was built from scratch, while toxic industries were shuttered in the harbour and replaced with exclusive luxury apartments.

Lecturer Henrik Gutzon Larsen from the Department of Human and Economic Geography at Lund University explains that Copenhagen's redevelopment was guided by the ambition to make the city more competitive and attractive to businesses. And while it has largely succeeded, Copenhagen's wealth has created tension between its residents.

"We are witnessing increased segregation, while the lives of the poor get worse as they find it harder to find somewhere to live and become increasingly marginalised. We are even seeing rich ghettos within the city, such as the Kartoffelrækkerne district, where only the super rich can afford to live," Larsen says.

As the city's development was driven by a focus on economic interests, the value of urban space shifted, Larsen argues, from its use value to its exchange value. Instead of land planning according to how it could best be used by residents, the focus shifted to maximising its economic value.

Spaces like PB43 are squeezed by this transition, as their value to the city is not properly reflected by their economic power. The city does recognise that these places are valuable, however, particularly in fostering creative industries and marketing Copenhagen as an interesting place to live.

"The council does use some policy instruments to protect vague spaces, such as setting up creative zones where property owners are prevented from tearing down old buildings and constructing new ones. They don't, however, support the general culture of re-appropriating vague spaces, as they're very conservative and don't know how to assign them broader value. The Candy Factory doesn't make any money, so what's its value? They don't have a formula to find out," Lilliendahl Larsen says.

PB43, Lilliendahl Larsen argues, is actually a double-edged sword. On the one hand it is a shining example of the necessity of vague spaces in developing new creative and autonomous communities. But its mainstream success is due to its focus on work and commercial entrepreneurialism, which not all vague spaces are interested in. Indeed, many vague spaces, such as the Youth House in Nordvest, can seem incredibly hostile from the outside.

"PB43 makes it harder for oth-

"We need these spaces that enable culture to develop because they allow us to look in the mirror and reflect. This doesn't happen in mainstream spaces."

JAN LILLIENDAHL LARSEN, CO-FOUNDER OF SUPERTANKER

er vague spaces, because they are so nice and comforting. It puts pressure on other, more political spaces, to be more acceptable for the general public too. But that's hard when you take a new autonomous approach, which, in its alternative and experimenting nature, can seem exclusive. The thing is that while we need both creative spaces and political spaces, PB43 would never have existed without the Christianias and the Candy Factories, because it is in wholesale experimenting spaces like those that the culture of reappropriation as such was born and is reborn in the future."

Not only creative and alternative communities are marginalised, according to Larsen. As the poor find it harder and harder to live in the city, conflict can arise on the street level, as the different residents and their interests rub against each other. The city has been slow to address the need to build affordable housing, and these conflicts look set to increase.

But despite the disappearance of post-industrial areas, new vague spaces may arise in unexpected places as the city changes. Larsen points to the new campus for Aalborg University in Copenhagen, which took over the Nokia headquarters in Sydhavn when the company fell on hard times.

"If the welfare state continues to be attacked, public libraries might close down and stand empty, ready to be occupied. So while we currently see vague spaces in the post industrial districts, in the future we may be talking about the leftover spaces of the knowledge economy or the welfare state," concludes Gutzon Larsen. **M**

Peter Stanners



Sheikhs, forced labour and the beautiful game



Photojournalist **RASMUS DEGNBOL** travels to Doha to witness the disparity between rich and poor in the wealthiest country in the world, Qatar

The labour camps usually have one kitchen where workers are paid to cook for the rest of the team. The food is basic – normally Indian daal, rice and chapati – and provides just enough sustenance to get by. The workers toil for up to 12 hours at a time, even during the summer and blistering 50 degree heat. Around 150 workers die every month during the hottest time of year.



I've been in Qatar two month – I'm very happy to be here, sir," says 28-year-old Raman from Nepal. He is one of around 1.5 million migrant labourers who service the 278,000 Qatari people. Like most of the new arrivals I spoke to, he is still full of spirit and joy.

I am walking along a dirt road in outer Doha City in Qatar, the richest country in the world. The sign says I am in Al-Attiya - The Industrial Area, but I'm surrounded by poorly built residential blocks, each filled with hundreds of workers. There are smashed up cars everywhere, the noise is deafening and the air is filled with dust. It stands in stark contrast to the glittery and shiny Doha City with its money, lights and shopping malls a mere 30-minute drive away. I might as well be in another country.

"Namaste, sir." A young Indian man walks up to me while I am taking cover in the shade. "I've been here seven months now, sir. The first three months was good, 1400 Riyal a month (2500 kroner). Now the company hasn't paid us for two months and our salary has dropped to 800 Riyal (1400 kroner)." He shakes his head and walks away before he gets into trouble for talking to me. It's a story I've heard several times already during my stay in Doha. Migrant workers are brought over by companies that sponsor their stay. But they are left with no choice but to keep working, even when they do not get paid. If they quit, the exit-permit they need to leave the country is withheld, leaving the workers in almost slave-like conditions.

Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamin Bin Hamad Al Thani recently announced that he would change the strict sponsorship laws, but the workers I talked to doubt that it will ever change. "Qatar is the country of dreams, but not a worker's dream," says 48-year-old Ishmael from a small village in Peshawar, Pakistan, with sadness in his voice. "My whole family and village depend on me. How can I support them when big companies give so little salary?" he adds before driving away in his truck to deliver yet another truckload of tiles for 1.6 kroner.

Most of the workers I met during my walk in the area came from India, Sri Lanka and Nepal and live in country-segregated camps. Most were fenced off, making them hard to enter for people like me. The camps are controlled by the sponsors and every morning at 5.30, the streets swarm with busses taking the workers straight from their door to the worksite, and back again in the afternoon. One camp I visited housed labourers who worked at a site that operated 24 hours







a day. The men were sleeping, resting after a 12-hour shift.

Approximately 400 workers inhabited the two blocks, with five men occupying each ten square meter room. Three men worked as cooks, serving all 400 men in the camp. The place was dirty and worn down. When I asked them what they felt about living there, they silently turned their eyes away.

It is hard to comprehend Doha's contrasts. You are left amazed and dazzled by the city's sheer wealth. A young Sheikh from Saudi Arabia invited me to visit his home and hunt with eagles; we could leave in the evening on his private jet. It was a kind offer, but I chose not to go and instead I found myself wandering Doha's deserted evening streets. The buildings towered above me, lights ablaze, as though I were in a mirage of a modern fairy tale.

Before the 2022 World Cup arrives in the Gulf state, 17 other sports tournaments will be held in Qatar. According to a recent investigation by ESPN, preparations for the 2022 event are expected to cost the lives of around 4,000 workers. By comparison, 60 people died in preparations for the Winter Olympics in Sochi. This is the grim reality faced by workers who toil in insufferable heat as they build the infrastructure for a tournament that is expected to cost Qatar 1.2 trillion kroner. If this is not modern day slavery, then what is? **M**

Like most of his male family members, Ishmael (below), 48, works as a truck driver. They come from Peshawar, Pakistan, but work eight months of the year in Doha. They earn 1 Riyal (1.6 DKK) for each truckload they deliver, about a third of what they earned when they first arrived in Doha in 1996.

Husam from Saudi Arabia (right, top) is visiting Doha with three friends from Yemen, UAE and Qatar. They were wandering around The Pearl, a homemade residential island with 15,000 residents, which cost almost 100 billion kroner to construct. They had just landed in Husam's private jet, and were returning in the evening.







Photos: Rasmus Nicolo

"No to fundamentalist Islam" declared this man's sign on the Pegida march in mid-January.

The immigration of Pegida

The German anti-Islam movement Pegida arrived in Denmark in January, signalling a revival and rebranding of the populist far right

"A **TERRORIST ATTACK** will happen in Denmark, it's just a question of when," says a man holding a torch. His name is Christian and he's in his 30s, but he, like most of the people I've spoken to, don't want to give me their last name. Their reasons for wanting to remain anonymous are vague, but common to them all is that they are here to support Pegida Denmark, albeit solely on a first name basis only.

Just after sunset on a cold and dark evening, the demonstrators gather outside the National Gallery. Some hold signs and others, like Christian, hold torches that flicker light in their faces.

There seem to be more media and police than demonstrators, and the average age of the demonstrators is positively over forty.

"I was inspired by the people that are standing up," says Ulrich, a well-dressed man in his fifties. "When I hear about things like what happened in Paris, I don't become afraid, I get angry."

He is standing in the crowd with Signe, a woman his age wearing a fur coat and hat. They, like

the other people present, are worried about terrorism and radical Islam.

"Here in Denmark, we have fought for a long time for the right to be free, and that is not going to stop just because somebody feels offended," Ulrich continues. "We want to be allowed to be Europeans."

The common thread uniting the demonstrators appears to be a fear of terrorism and of losing one's culture and value system to radical foreign elements. In the days before the march, on the Facebook page for the event, people expressed fears over bringing their children along for the demonstration, due to violent reprisals from the far left and pro-Islam groups.

THE PEGIDA PHENOMENON

Founded last October in the east German town of Dresden, Pegida is a German acronym for Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the West. The organisation has since held a weekly demonstration each Monday, in reference to the Montagsdemonstrationen that were held during

"When I hear about things like what happened in Paris, I don't become afraid, I get angry."

PEGIDA DEMONSTRATOR, ULRICH

the final years of the GDR. Last month, the Dresden demonstration had grown from 350 to over 25,000 participants, fuelled by anger following the terrorist attack on the French satirical magazine, Charlie Hebdo. The size and scope of the demonstrations drew threats of violence, leading organisers to cancel the demonstration planned for 19 January due to security concerns.

The group in Germany has well-documented ties to extremist right-wing and racist elements. Last month, German newspaper Morgenpost revealed that Pegida's founder, Lutz Bachmann, a convicted criminal, had posted racist slander on his private Facebook page, including a picture of a KKK gathering with the caption "Three Ks a day, keep the immigrants away". He later stepped down after a photograph of him dressed up as Adolf Hitler surfaced.

The 19 January demonstration was the first in Denmark for the Pegida movement. Hoping to avoid association with unfavourable figures, Danish organiser Nicolai Sennels publicly demanded that racist and fascist elements stay away from the event, which was billed as a peaceful gathering for civil rights and freedom of speech. Thus it was a touch ironic that only pre-approved slogans and signs were allowed.

The day after the demonstration, however left-wing research centre Redox posted an article on its website reporting that many prominent members of the Danish Defence League, Denmark's National Front and other known far-right groups had been among the participants.

Standing in the crowd listening to the speeches there are clues, hoodies and shaved heads that contrast with the well-dressed people like Ulrich and Signe.

As the demonstration makes its way from the National Gallery towards the Little Mermaid, I catch first sight of counter demonstrators. A group of young people have positioned themselves across the street shouting "No racists in our streets". A bald demonstrator shouts back "Denmark for the Danes". Immediately, two policewomen walk up to him and order him to be quiet, and as they leave I catch up with him.



Pegida Denmark organiser Nicolai Sennels address the march.

Elias Thorsson



Police keep counter protesters separated.



"I think the politicians are afraid of Islam."

PEGIDA DEMONSTRATOR, HEIDI SANCHEZ



The march started quietly, before some started chants of hants of "Fuck Islam" and "Denmark for the Danes".

I ask him why he shouted "Denmark for the Danes", but a friend of his, who is wearing the Danish flag as a cape, cuts in saying "It was just a misunderstanding". But the man is not discouraged by his friend, and instead tells me "We shouldn't let these people slip into our country, they should just get out."

The hostility to Islam and immigration at the demonstration aligns with statements by Sennels in the public sphere in recent years.

"I don't like Islam and anyone who thinks that Islam should have a place in the world," Sennels once wrote as a comment to an article on the Jyllands-Posten website. "I also don't like the negative consequences that Muslim immigration has brought with it. But I don't hate all Muslims. Obama is one of those that I don't like, and I think he is among the many that should go back home to where he came from."

Sennels now distances himself from these types of comments, taking a more diplomatic stance in a telephone interview. He says he doesn't exactly know what concrete actions can be taken to counter fundamentalist Islam, arguing that he is not "an expert on legal issues". And regarding demonstrators like those who shouted "Denmark for the Danes", he says, "These people are a bunch of clowns – clowns that in no way support our cause."

DISFRANCHISED AND DISTANT

Sennels says the demonstrations are not directed at all Muslims, but about the fight against fundamentalist Islam, which he wants to "make mainstream". The efforts of Sennels and many like-minded activists seem to be bearing fruit. Anti-immigrant sentiment in Europe has been on the rise over the past decade, with parties such as Golden Dawn in Greece,

Jobbik in Hungary and Front National in France reaching voter numbers that would have been unimaginable just ten years ago.

According to Dr Susi Meret, a scholar on populism and radical right wing parties at Aalborg University, Pegida should not solely be viewed as the reflection of a fear of Islam, but rather as a collection of broader social issues.

"I recently spent a couple of months in Jena in Eastern Germany. When talking to people, I encountered great dissatisfaction with politics and with deindustrialisation, as industries previously prominent in the area had relocated," Meret says. "There is high unemployment and a lot of young people are moving to the west. In addition to Islam, Pegida is also about globalisation and disillusion with established politics."

Rising antipathy towards the established political parties and a sense that politicians are out of touch with the common people has sparked protest groups across the world aimed at upsetting politics as usual, such as the Tea Party in the US, which claims to champion anti-elitist, anti-establishment views on how to run society.

Meret says that similar developments are taking place in Denmark.

"Denmark has long been a country with one of the highest levels of trust in its government," she says. "But this seems to be changing. Danish voters have been characterised by trust, but now many of them don't feel represented in politics."

WHY WE FIGHT

The distrust towards traditional parties is also evident in polls. Twenty years after it its founding, the populist Danish People's Party is set to be one of the largest parties in the next parliament. And at the Pegida rally, disaffection with mainstream politics was easy to find.

"I think the politicians are afraid of Islam," Heidi Sanchez tells me as she proudly holds up a sign bearing one of Charlie Hebdo's Muhammad drawings. "They are afraid of doing anything. They do not realise the battle that is happening. In Europe we are free."

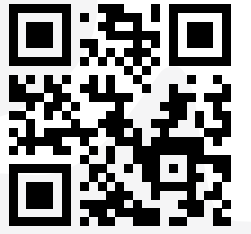
As the march snakes down towards the Little Mermaid, a group of counter demonstrators manages to get close enough to shout the now familiar "No racists in our streets". A grey haired man shouts back angrily "Fuck Islam", while another giddily says "These are not your streets".

Amid shouts of "Fuck Islam" and more cries of "Denmark for the Danes", the march reaches the Little Mermaid, where a man poses proudly, holding the Danish flag and a sign that reads "No to fundamentalist Islam". He is wearing sneakers, white washed jeans and an anorak that covers his entire face, save the eyes. The irony seems to escape him.

WHAT NEXT?

Meret says it's impossible to know how the Pegida movement will develop, but argues that the decision by German Chancellor Angela Merkel to discuss it in her New Year's speech demonstrates that it has rattled her:

"Now we have to ask ourselves, how do we respond? Do we enter into a dialog with these groups, and can that even be done? We have had groups like the Defence Leagues and anti-Islamist movements for a long time, but what is happening with groups like Pegida is a rebranding campaign. In the past, these groups have had reputation problems that have cost them support. Now they are taking the dissatisfied and marginalised to the streets and it is working. The question is, how long can you keep them there?" **M**



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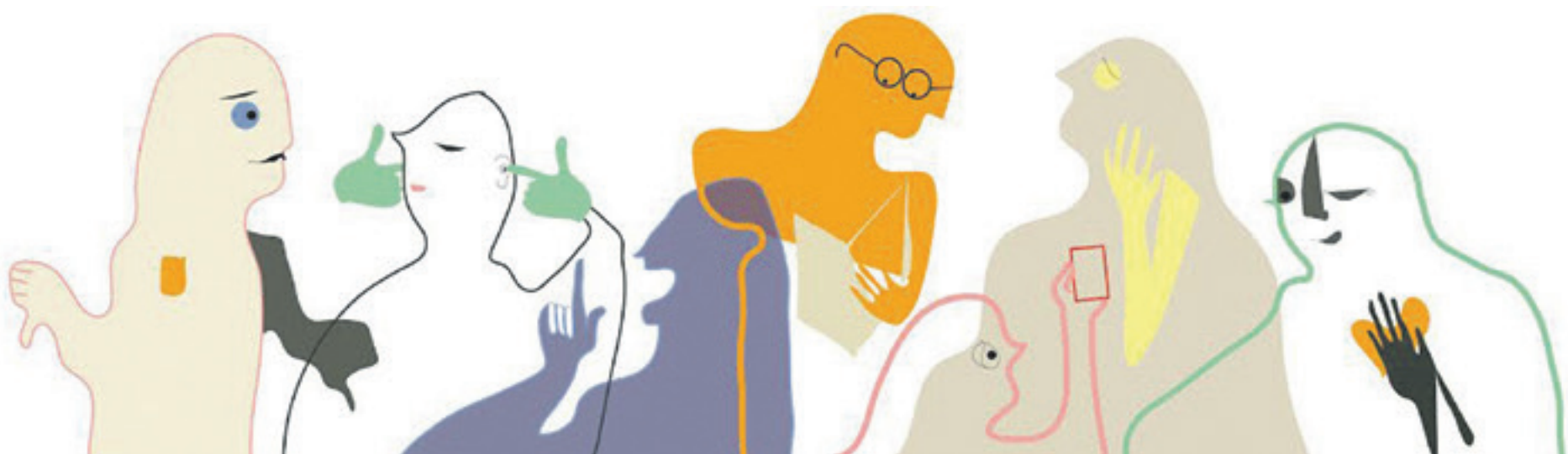


Illustration: Cæcilie Parfelt Vengberg

ANTI SELF HELP

Instead of getting in touch with your inner self, SVEND BRINKMANN thinks we'd be better off learning how to coexist with others.

Self-help books are one of the best-selling genres around the world, peddling the promise of a better life in just a few simple steps.

Svend Brinkmann, professor of psychology at The University of Aalborg, doesn't think our problems stem from being out of touch with ourselves – quite the opposite. His anti-self-help book, published last autumn, offers seven rather different steps for improving our lives. Instead of suggesting that we "listen to our inner self", Brinkmann thinks we should do the opposite and listen more to the world around us. His book is a cultural critique, not only of the type of advice found in self-help books, but also of a modern society that created the problems self-help books address.

Despite many positive reviews, Brinkmann's book has also faced criticism from practicing psychologists who argue the book needlessly dismisses the benefits of self-help. In our interview, Svend Brinkmann defends his book and takes us through his seven pieces of vital advice for dealing with modern society.

1.

STOP FEELING

Brinkmann's first step is to stop feeling. He has a problem with the industry of books advising people to take a look inside themselves as a way to find their true feelings.

"I'm worried about this kind of literature," Brinkmann explains on the phone from Aalborg.

"These kinds of books want you to take a look inside yourself as a way to find your true inner self. They argue that this will help you realise your dreams and ambitions. But it's too self-centred."

Brinkmann argues that there are some things we should do in life even if our inner self disagrees, because it's the only way to peacefully coexist with others.

"In life we have certain obligations. I believe that the most important things in life are those that are related to others. Life only becomes meaningful through relationships and having responsibility to other human beings."

Brinkmann worries that by focusing too much on accomplishing our own dreams, we create a society devoid of compassion and empathy.

"My concern is that self-help books create self-centred and narcissistic human beings. This might not be the intention of the books – it might be even the opposite. The idea is to create joyful and peaceful people. But their way of getting there is by encouraging readers to think about nothing else but themselves."

2.

FOCUS ON THE NEGATIVE THINGS IN LIFE

When Barabara Ehrenreich was diagnosed with breast cancer, she was told by the hospital to think positively about her disease. After her hospitalisation she wrote the book "Welcome to Cancerland", chronicling how she used the disease to grow by learning about herself.

Svend Brinkmann argues this is an excellent example of a common message to stay positive in a difficult situation. But his advice, rather, is to be negative.

"If you can't live up to expectation of being mindful and present at all times, I'm sure you'll be OK. For example, with the breast cancer sufferer who is urged by the hospital to maintain a positive mindset. This is problematic because we can then blame the victim if their condition worsens, and they will end up blaming

My concern is that self-help books create self-centred and narcissistic human beings.

themselves too. But cancer is a physical disease and it has nothing to do with how you feel or think."

Feeling negative is a normal part of life and Brinkmann thinks that doesn't need to change.

3.

LEARN HOW TO COMPLAIN

It is important to discuss and complain about aspects of our lives that aren't working out. The problem is that our positive-thinking society doesn't allow negativity.

"We live in a culture that reveres the positive, but my book is a defence of the lives of regular people and the human condition – we just can't be positive all the time," Brinkmann explains.

"There is nothing wrong with not being positive and future-oriented, but we don't need to celebrate and praise these conditions as the only way in life. What we need to do is respond to them smartly and with an appeal to stability. We are badly in need of that today. There is a pressure to constantly be dynamic, flexible and willing to adapt. But that's just one side of life. The other side is about stability rather than flexibility," he says.

4.

OPPRESS YOUR FEELINGS

We are too concerned with our own feelings, Brinkmann argues, which isn't the best way to navigate life. Judging our lives based on our feelings ignores the fact that most of our meaning in life is derived through coexistence.

"We need to focus more on other people

Charlotte Kjærholm Pedersen

and our obligations to them – on things other than ourselves. My concern is that we become blind if our lives are too focused on constantly chasing our own inner happiness," he says.

"I believe the right answers to life's important questions are found in relation to culture and perhaps nature – through our relationship to other people and our obligations. The answers aren't found inside ourselves," Brinkmann says.

5.

FIRE YOUR COACH

A coach is an indicator that you want to find potential and development in your every step. Leadership and management use a great deal of money on coaching, but Brinkmann thinks it's entirely unnecessary. He calls it forced development and thinks you should fire your coach as soon as possible.

"It's misguided to believe that you can find answers inside yourself or be trained by a coach to help you reflect on your inner self and gain that information. But what is worse is

that we believe this illusion, which I call forced growth," Brinkmann says.

The problem is that this need to constantly develop disrupts our ability to establish engaging communities that rely on stable individuals gathered around shared values.

6.

READ A NOVEL

Instead of constantly working on self-improvement, we should sit down and read a novel and focus our attention on something other than how we feel.

"We are both created by, and dependent on, our heritage – where do we come from and what do we feel is valuable? Who we are isn't simply looking toward the future. Of course growth is desirable and necessary, but so is stability, and self-help books are not helping us be stable. Sure, it's good that they help us develop, which is important, but we have to recognise that the opposite is needed too. That's why we need to slow down and stabilise our life a bit."

7.

DWELL ON THE PAST

The culture of self-improvement is failing miserably, but Brinkmann isn't worried. In fact, he thinks it's great that people focus on the past rather than on their future better selves.

"We cannot ignore how history affects us. On Sundays this autumn, we've been sitting around the TV and watching 1864, which suddenly raised a lot of debate about our national identity and our personal histories. It's normal to look back, and families keep photo albums that keep our history, regardless of how normal our families are," Brinkmann says.

For herein lies a major struggle that society and self help books present: we are told to be and do things that we cannot relate to.

"I take issue with self-help books and management books that are completely disconnected from reality. There is a huge difference between how we behave and what the books tell us is the right thing to do. I would like to make a defence for the things we actually do. There is nothing wrong with dwelling on the past." **M**



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A weekend in Paris

Nobody wanted to be interviewed. Recorder in hand, I circled the monument on Place de La Republique where, following the Charlie Hebdo massacre, Parisians had gathered in solidarity. The celebration of the Third Republic was strewn with flowers and wreaths and covered in graffiti. People milled about quietly reading the messages – and ignoring me.

Peter Stanners



Which was fine, because I wasn't sure that I wanted to interview anyone. I was on a romantic weekend away with my girlfriend, a trip we had booked months before the tragic attack. Two weeks later, we had landed and checked into our hotel room in the 5th.

Our plan was to eat and drink our way through Paris. But I knew I had to write a story: I'm a journalist who happened to be in a city that had just witnessed a terrifying terrorist attack. So I packed the recorder in my bag and we set out to walk the streets.

We ate butter-fried Dover sole in Aux Deux Freres, deep fried cuttlefish in Le Verre Vole and brunch at Breakfast in America. We were served exquisite coffee by a rude and tattooed waitress in Holbelly and sipped extraordinary wine served by a gracious sommelier in Septime Cave.

Charlie Hebdo followed us everywhere we went. Enormous banners hung from buildings declaring that we are all Charlie, a message echoed in stencils and graffiti on sidewalks and post boxes. The prophet Mohammed cried on newspaper kiosks that all declared in unison, "No Charlie Hebdo".

We walked the hill into Belleville, through North African and Chinese neighbourhoods only to find that Ô Divin was closed on Sundays. Turning the corner, marines stood guard outside a Jewish school. Their weapons were directed at the floor but their eyes bored holes through our heads. Not hanging around, we descended the hill back to Holbelly, where the rude waitress was clearly annoyed we'd showed up five minutes before the kitchen closed. The slow cooked pork was incredible.

I spent the weeks after the Charlie Hebdo attack reading as many opinion pieces as I could find. I thought I would analyse them all in a meta analysis, piecing together all the different ways the tragedy had been used to justify different agendas and exploring whether anything could be learned.

It was exhausting reading, full of reactions and counter reactions: I am Charlie, I am not Charlie, we are ALL Charlie, are the 2,000 Nigerians dead at the hands of Boko Haram Charlie?

It was an attack on free speech, Charlie Hebdo are racists, Charlie Hebdo satirises everyone equally, free speech must have limits, no one deserves to die for a cartoon.

The columnists opined on who was to blame and what was to be done.

Some speculated that the right wing would use it as a pretext for cracking down on immigration, followed by reports of hundreds of Islamophobic attacks across France. As the bodies of the dead from the supermarket siege were flown to be buried in Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu urged the Jewish community to abandon Europe.

I idiotically watched the video of the brothers running through the streets and assassinating Muslim policeman Ahmed Merabet as he cowered on the ground. And my stomach turned in a knot as I thought of having to face death suddenly, on an otherwise normal day.

I think of the drones flying over Afghanistan and ISIS fighters throwing homosexuals to their death from buildings, CIA sponsored coups in Latin America and the persecution of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan through blasphemy laws.

Can we say the Charlie Hebdo massacre was an attack on free speech when French comedian Dieudonne was detained for sympathising with one of the attackers? If Muslims have to condemn the attack, do I have to condemn everything carried out in the name of democracy? Has a Western democracy reached its pinnacle when, in the name of absolute free speech, its citizens can call for genocide without facing charges?

I read and read and read. But who is right? Who has the most compelling argument? I worry about deciding, in case an article or piece comes along exposing why I was wrong, why we can/cannot be Charlie, why we can/cannot limit free speech, why Western imperialism is/is not responsible for the attack.

We got drunk at an awful bar, ate kebab in bed and woke up hung-over. We stagger out of bed and make our way to Place de la Republique where I circle, unsuccessful in attempts at getting people to talk to me. Maybe they sense my resignation, my feeling that regardless what they said, it would only serve to confuse me even more.

"I am optimistic about France," says Air Force engineer Hubert. "It is a melting pot, Muslim people, Chinese people. It's good because France could come together to fight terrorism in the future."

Perhaps he's right. If we want to have a better future, we need to start expecting the best of each other. In the meantime, we know that a couple of idiots with bad ideas and automatic weapons can ruin it for the rest of us. And I'm not really sure whether we can ever expect to protect ourselves from that. **M**



ESSAY

Right. Wrong. Right. Wrong. Right. Wrong.

Two knitting needles and a ball of yarn – that's what I used to integrate into the Danish society. Sitting together but separately, I wove myself into the fabric of this culture, though it was my fingers that did all the work

NO, I AM NOT being indecisive.

Right. Wrong. Right. Wrong. Right. Wrong. That's me learning how to knit as, hunched over two knitting needles, I struggle to "capture" the "free" yarn into the stitches already cast onto my needles.

Although the rest of the English speaking world learns to *knit purl knit purl knit purl*, my teacher Anni, is Danish. She teaches me to '*ret og vrang*' instead, but all I hear is 'right and wrong, right and wrong'.

After all, I don't speak a word of Danish and her English isn't fluent, but together we are moving into uncharted territory. While I patiently learn to knit, I start my timid journey of learning Danish. And through me, Anni gets to practice her English. It is no wonder that I could read Danish knitting patterns years before I could actually speak the language.

At the time, I am four months pregnant and a new arrival in Denmark. Anni is my mother in law, and I spend hours with her while my then-husband busily prepares for the arrival of our child. During this time together, Anni and I manage to cultivate our own authentic relationship, based on love – a relationship solidified through knitting.

There is perhaps no greater show of love than teaching someone to knit. It requires patience and presence – virtues held by my Danish mother-in-law. Although I am no longer married to her son, she will always hold a special place in my heart. Her teaching me to knit plays no small part in this.

It was through Anni that I was introduced to a tolerant Denmark. An open Denmark. Through Anni I met her Tante Liv, Anni's fiercely independent aunt. We got along famously. She introduced me to the

herbal flowers in her garden and taught me how to make natural teas. Once she leaned in and whispered, "*There is something about a young woman moving 6000 miles away from her place of home.*"

Tante Liv's husband, Onkel Per, was a character. He took my pregnant South African friend and me to his boat club in northern Denmark. You could tell he got a kick from all the stares he received, an elderly Danish man with two young, pregnant and very foreign women. I still laugh when I think about that day, the way his big blue eyes twinkled as we sat in his boat, out at sea, and the other boats passed us by.

Tante Liv, as well as the rest of her family, treated me with nothing but love, respect and openness. It was a family of women who read and think. I was in my element. We were of the same tribe, brought together through the craft of knitting.

I had always wanted to learn how to knit. Whenever my grandmother from Trinidad visited us on Ocean Avenue in Brooklyn, smelling like peppermint and airplane, she would always have a few knitting and craft magazines with her.

They were full of knitwear masterpieces and patterns I had not yet learned to decipher. Despite being a renaissance woman of sorts, my grandmother did not know how to knit. She offered other lessons, including her deep, unwavering commitment to me. "*You are here for a reason,*" she'd whisper in my ear. Her words would soothe my unsettled soul like a cool Caribbean breeze.

My great grandmother Beryl Nunez died from "the draught," a reference that could just as much allude to the cold as to racism,



One Lesley-Ann's former students, knitting.

I suppose, in Canada. She made lace. My other great grandmother, Frances Lopez, also made exquisite handkerchiefs, delicate lace curtains and tablecloths. But despite my burning desire, there was no YouTube back then and no one to teach me. Don't feel sorry for me; the 80s furnished me with plastic bubble jackets and roller skates. We played 'run, catch, kiss' and I mastered Double Dutch. I was happily distracted from myself.

Fast forward. I meet my Dane. We court. I meet his mother. It was love at first sight. My ex-husband and his mother ushered me into Danish culture with love and patience. And I know it was love, because she took the time to teach me to knit.

I have now gone on to teach three grade five classes how to knit and I stood back in wonder as I watched the children teach each

other. I saw how boys want to learn how to knit as much as girls. I simmered with joy as the students worked together but separately, sitting quietly and knitting.

When I hold the yarn in my hand, I feel as though it connects me to my great-grandmothers. But it was Anni who brought out that creative energy. Knitting is magic, knitting is healing. Knitting is immeasurable. When you knit, your brain produces beta waves. No matter what troubles me, if I catch a whiff of wool, spy a ball of yarn, or hold a pair of knitting needles (bamboo preferably), I'm in bliss.

My time here has been sustained by the energy knitting has given me. When I returned from my last trip to the States in the autumn, I knew that I wanted to incorporate knitting more into my life. When I was in Rhode Island at the Rhode Island Writers Colony, I went to see the writer Anne Hood read from her latest book, "An Italian Wife". She saw me in the audience with my knitting needles and yarn, stopped what she was saying and called out to ask me what I was knitting. A baby blanket for my friend's newborn baby, I replied.

That's what I love about knitting: it brings people together. So when I returned to Denmark, my intention was to start a knitting group. I shyly put out a call of interest on Facebook and, to my delight, the Geeky Knitter's Club was borne. Every week, a group of other expat women and myself gather to knit, talk, and offer support. It is one of the best ventures I have embarked on.

And the kids? Although I am no longer teaching, I still knit with them. All of this I owe to Anni Bomholtz – the most loving of ex-mother-in-laws. **M**

It is no wonder that I could read Danish knitting patterns years before I could actually speak the language.

Lesley-Ann Brown

FOREIGN

It's a brave new world folks!

In Iceland, media isn't censored by force, but by incompetence, crony capitalism and a hefty splash of self-censorship, making our journalism as barren as the island we inhabit

JOURNALISTS IN ICELAND are afraid – constantly afraid. We are cowed to follow the market and give people what they want. It's a journalistic dystopia, but unlike George Orwell's *1984*, it wasn't brought about through violence or brute force. More like Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, we have been trained into banal conformity by our employers, who reward obedience and banish free thinkers.

According to Reporters Without Borders, freedom of information in Iceland has declined over the past two years. The reason? The crony capitalistic Independence Party and its disturbingly authoritarian little sister, The Progressive Party, are back in power, armed with "new" leaders stemming from the same old political DNA.

This new government and their parliamentary minions have made it a priority to undermine anyone who dares to express even the slightest hint of disapproval. The situation perfectly mirrors the reaction to warnings from Denmark prior to the collapse of our banking system.

In Iceland, you are not either with us or against us – you are either with us or too jealous to accept our greatness.

TIGHTER AND TIGHTER

When they're not busy bleeding state broadcaster RUV dry with constant budget cuts, MPs call for advertisers to pull ads from private media such as Kvinnablaðið (The Female Post) and Reykjavík Weekly, both small and independent outlets.

The government argues that the media is permeated by a

leftist bias. But their narrative is ridiculous; most, if not all, of Icelandic media is privately operated. Even RUV survives through advertising sales, unlike its Nordic counterparts. So the notion that right-wingers have a harder time getting airtime than the left, is simply ludicrous.

The media in Iceland is ultimately censored through the soothing hymn of capitalism. The decision to publish an article is taken on its "clickability". So what if state assets are being sold behind closed doors to the family members of finance minister Bjarni Benediktsson? Johnny Depp is trending!

PROFITS OVER INTEGRITY

The dire state of Icelandic journalism is the result of collusion between politicians and the private sector, who would rather see the media serve their interests than the public's. For example, 365 is a near monopoly that controls newspapers, radio, TV, web media and telecoms.

It is well known that before 2013, journalists at all 365 outlets were urged to prioritise profitability when considering which stories to pursue – hardly an honourable journalistic ethos.

For example, journalist Maria Lilja Prastardóttir, recently revealed that she was not allowed to publish a piece on junk mail while working at Fréttablaðið, a free newspaper that is distributed to almost every home in Iceland. Perhaps not a strange turn of events, given that Fréttablaðið is also classified as junk.

After buying up banks, media and retailers all over the country, businessman Jón Ásgeir Jóhan-

nesson sold 365 to his wife following the economic collapse in which he lost most of his other assets. His influence in the corporation is still evident, however, as 365 media relentlessly attacks those who discuss Jóhannesson and his involvement in bringing down Iceland's economy.

EXCEPTION TO THE RULE

Iceland's only investigative newspaper, DV, is also in trouble. An odd mix of low and high brow content, DV is a tabloid and broadsheet rolled into one and had an incredible ability to go against the grain while keeping true to its proletarian roots.

In 2014, individuals closely tied to the government acquired DV and cleansed it of dissident journalists.

The new owner, Bjorn Ingi Hrafnsson, is a former city councillor for the Progressives who was forced to step down after mixing his shady business dealings with his shady political dealings.

Hrafnsson's hypocrisy is evident, pretending to be a watchdog for big business on the one hand while also accepting their "loans". Amazingly, all this information is public, as are his bankruptcies.

He also owns media outlets Pressan and Eyjan and, due to his ties with Jóhannesson, has a weekly show on politics on 365 media outlets. Publicly, Hrafnsson claims to have no links to the government whatsoever.

To run DV, Hrafnsson employed a hired gun of corrupted politicians and gambling footballers, Eggert Skulason. Your

The dire state of Icelandic journalism is the result of collusion between politicians and the private sector, who would rather see the media serve their interests than the public's.

money is where his mouth is.

Within hours of taking charge, Skulason announced to DV journalists that quality reporting – like that which led to the recent resignation of the Minister of the Interior – would not be tolerated.

He then proudly announced to the public that he had struggled to understand why the scandal was such a big deal and why DV covered it with such furor.

THE BACKLASH

Despite the dire outlook, all is not lost for Icelandic journalism. Kjarninn is a local independent media startup that doesn't shy away from the challenge. Without it, there would have been almost no coverage of finance minister Bjarnason's family buying state assets.

Stundin, another startup driven by the forces cast out of the new DV, has seen unprecedented and record-breaking crowdfunding success, suggesting that readers might have had enough with the status quo.

Kjarninn and Stundin are significant because they challenge the Icelandic orthodoxy that readers should pay no role in financing news.

Ultimately that is the big story here – bankers and elites love "free-to-reader media" as they are cheap to own, can be used to stifle competition and are totally reliant on ads.

A morbid irony of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* is that non-conformists were sent to live in Iceland, leaving me to wonder what horrid crimes I must have committed to live on the island where journalism came to die. **M**

Thor Fanndal

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Over the past nine issues, The Murmur has worked with more than 40 writers, photographers, editors and columnists. We love collaborations and fresh points of view, no matter how obscure or niche.

If you want to work together with us, or just have some tips for how we could do things better, please get in touch by emailing **PETER@MURMUR.DK**.

We look forward to hearing from you!

COLUMN

These people should just leave Denmark

IN DENMARK there exists a cultural diaspora that numbers in the thousands. These people often come here to take advantage of the generous welfare system, free schooling, educational grants and childcare, all of which are more generous than where they came from. This group has its own networks separate from general society, its own bars and culture houses and it takes great pride the heritage of its native country.

On their members-only Facebook pages, this group discusses how to get benefits from the Danish state. Despite living in the country for years, many don't even speak Danish. They speak their native tongue to their children and teach them to be patriotic towards their homeland.

Ingrained into them is a historic suspicion towards Denmark and the Danes – a suspicion that usually manifests itself during overheated sporting events. Last April, three residents from this group were handed lengthy prison sentences for smuggling large amounts of drugs into Denmark.

I know this because I am one of these people: the Icelanders.

Now I'm certain most of you thought I was talking about Muslims, Eastern Europeans or other groups often discussed in the media as "undesirables" for committing crimes and assault-

ing people in the streets. You know, people with radically different cultures and ideas about the world. The others.

But after almost seven years in Denmark, I know of only one person to be brutally assaulted in the streets of Copenhagen. The perpetrator was Icelandic. The incident didn't incite an eruption of vile hatred and calls for the construction of an Atlantic Wall to keep these dangerous foreign elements out. To the best of my knowledge there are no Facebook groups called "Stop the Icelandisation of Denmark", or "Fuck your dried fish, I want flæskesvær."

Hardly. Rather, me and my fellow Icelanders with our blonde hair and blue eyes manage to blend in pretty well. When someone from this group commits a horrible crime, it's excused as merely a bad apple, rather than proof that these uncivilised barbarians streaming in from the north have no place in the country.

Once, in the aftermath of the financial crisis, a very nice girl I met asked me why we "fucking Icelanders don't just go back home". Other than that, my stay here has been without incident. But I don't feel Danish, I hate stægt flæsk med persillesovs, I have never read a book by Karen Blixen, I dislike all forms of monarchy and I would hardly be

It is very hard to change the identity that has shaped you from childhood.

Elias Thorsson

considered a good Christian. Also, what is with all the terrible reality TV shows?

But I love it here, as do most of the Icelanders I've met. Many of them look fondly to the incredibly stable social structure that so often seems lacking back in Iceland. They love that people are never completely left out in the cold by the state and that people in power are held accountable for their misdeeds and corruption. As far as I'm concerned, Copenhagen is one of the best and prettiest places I've ever been to.

Maintaining your identity, religion or patriotism to the country you left and keeping ties with the people that come from your native country isn't a sign of being an alien and hostile element to society, but of just being human. It is very hard to change the identity that has shaped you from childhood.

Moving to a new country is also incredibly difficult. You are basically ripping up the life you know for a life that is new. You are far away from family and friends, and everybody speaks a language that is not yours. So holding on to what you know, with people you know and understand, helps make this transition easier, more doable.

And despite me listing all these horrible things about the Icelandic diaspora at the beginning (and believe me it is a dias-

pora), most of it is just people that come here, settle down, pay taxes, have families, make Danish friends and speak the language. However, it is easy to forget these people if we only hear about the bad elements. If you were to search for news about Icelanders in Ekstra Bladet, you would think we were some kind of violent handball hooligans (which maybe is not that far off?).

A basic guiding principle in journalism holds that it is not news when a dog bites a man, because it happens so often. But if a man bites a dog, that is news. That is because nobody reports on the mundane. People being decent to each other and living a fine, respectable life is not news – it is the norm. Therefore, our reality is often shaped by what are in truth rarities.

Religious scholar Reza Aslan explained this novelty syndrome pretty well when he said that if the only thing you knew about planes was based on news about plane crashes, you would probably be terrified of them. I think there is a nice element of truth in that.

So, all I ask is that if you are going to hate groups for being terrible citizens, for not conforming to society, for not blending in or swearing allegiance to Dannebrog and Dronningen, then be even handed – hate everyone equally. **M**

WHAT'S ON • FEBRUARY

ALL
MONTH

CHANGING AARHUS
Take this time travel tour of Aarhus in this magnificent photo exhibition that shows how the town has changed through the decades.

Musikhuset Aarhus
ripudaman.info



HERE COMES THE RAIN
What climate change means for Copenhagen is more rain, and that is just something we have to accept. Exhibition 'Regnen Kommer' asks whether we can design our city to adapt.

Dansk Arkitektur Center
dac.dk

ALL
MONTH

SAVE THE CHILDREN
This exhibition explores how the treatment of children changed dramatically during the 20th century - from cheap labour to protected offspring.

Designmuseum Danmark
designmuseum.dk

2

C'MERE
New York rockers Interpol take the stage at Vega for two concerts this cold February. Go and reignite your love for early 2000 guitar rock.

Vega
billetlugen.dk
Feb 2 & 3



VOLCANIC VIKING ROCK
Icelandic metal band Sólstafr are bringing their glacial attitude and Eyjafjallajökull riffs to Pumpehuset as part of their promo tour for their latest album *Ótta*.

Pumpehuset
billetlugen.dk
Feb 4

5

CLASSICAL ELECTRO
Normally, concerts by the Royal Academy of Music involves instruments and musicians. But this time the instruments have been replaced by speakers that perform electro written by the students.

Musikhuset Aarhus
musikkons.dk

6

IN PUBLIC
Come to a seminar in English on new formats in public art. A number of artists present their different approaches to working in the public arena.

Det Kongelige Danske Kunstakademi
billetto.dk



THE FUTURE TEN
Ten recent photography graduates showcase their works. See what the future of Danish photography has in store and then get drunk in the after party.

Studiet, Meinungsgade 8C
<http://on.fb.me/1uAyA0P>

13

BAROQUEING
SMK Fridays offers up a concert installation by We like We, a recorder art performance by Ragnhild May and a crash course on baroque musc by Mikkel Bogh.

Statens Museum for Kunst
smk.dk



PINHEADS AND HELLRAISERS
Galleri Oxholm and Cinemateket celebrate the legacy of English horror icon Clive Barker. The exhibition opening is followed by a screening of Lord of Illusions at Cinemateket.

dfi.dk
ends March 8

13

YOUNG LORD
Young musical talent Lord Siva recently released the highly anticipated EP, '180'. Come see the young cat that is hailed as the future of Danish hip hop.

Radar, Aarhus
billetlugen.dk

Elias Thorsson

20

LOWER BREMEN
One of the many great things to come out of creative centre Mayhem is the punk band Lower. This time they are venturing from outer Østerbro and into the heart of downtown.

Bremen Teater
billetnet.dk

WHAT'S ON • FEBRUARY



DRONES DAY

UK duo The KVB will perform their dark, heart raising music at Nørrebro's primo rock bar Drone. Expect to be entertained, come early, Drone isn't that big.

Drone
thekvb.co.uk
 Feb 21

24

LORD OF THE NINETIES

Do you miss the nineties? Well you're in luck! Come see the Lord of the Dance Riverdance show. This evening Michael Flatley will be there, but for the rest of the tour he will be there as a hologram.

Musikhuset Aarhus
billetlugen.dk

26

AUTOBAHN AWESOME

Starting today German electro godfathers Kraftwerk will host eight unique concerts celebrating their 40-year-long back catalogue, all in 3D of course.

Koncerthuset DR
billetlugen.dk

31

ICY PUNKS

After quickly establishing themselves as the princes of the Danish punk scene, Iceage went international and big. This is an extra concert as the originally planned one sold out fast.

Jazzhouse
billetlugen.dk

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