

Trans people fight the state to regain control over their bodies

Danish jets and soldiers risk fatigue as they head back to Syria

No more welfare – Eskild Dahl Pedersen's radical plan for 'ghettos'

APRIL 2016 VOL. 3 ISSUE 4



Torture, terror and war trophies

Ahlam Chemlali listens to tales of abuse with the hope of stopping the violence

THE MURMUR is a Danish newspaper, which just happens to use the English language. Through original reporting and photography, we tell stories about what it's like to live in Denmark.

THE MURMUR



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SOME - TIMES you need to take a step back. That's what our photo editor Rasmus Degnbol did when he travelled through

Europe hot on the heels of the refugee crisis. But refugees hardly even feature in the series. Instead he used a drone to take photos from high above to show landscapes divided by borders, visible and invisible. The borders are the subject, he argues, for they have prevented people from going where they want to go.

The short-term solution to the crisis has been to open borders to those in need, and grant them the same rights as those in the country. But having formal rights isn't the same as effective rights. People thrive when they can access power through their network. You might have all the rights in the world, but without a deep understanding of how to use the system – or someone to trust as a guide – it's hard to realise your ambitions.

In our interview with Eskild Dahl, who heads the social services in the marginalised housing association Mjølnerparken, he explains how refugees continue to live on benefits and lack Danish language skills decades after they first arrived. We also talked

to author and sociologist Aydin Soei in this issue, who grew up in a similar type of neighbourhood in the suburb Avedøre. He would unlikely have written his latest book if he hadn't moved to a middle class part of the city when he was 10.

An uncertain future in a Danish 'ghetto' (as the government insists on calling them) is preferable to death in Aleppo. And in recent months civil society and private sector have launched a number of integration programmes to get new arrivals into work as quickly as possible.

But we should also invest heavily in making sure conflicts don't arise to produce refugees in the first place. Ahlam Chemlali, our cover story, makes this point. Her work for the anti-torture organisation DIGNITY is focussed on reducing conflict and violence in developing countries. Her horrifying tales of pervasive and systematic torture should make us appreciate the incredible justice system we have created, which means we never fear torture at the hands of the state.

Sure, it's great that Lukas Graham is number one on the US hit list, but it's a pity that Denmark's greatest export is a singer from Christiania – it should be its fair justice system and transparent institutions that secure the rights of all citizens.

What's that? The government has cut the foreign aid budget, which has severely affected the ability of NGOs to carry out this work? Oh. Well, at least we've got Lukas. **M**

I didn't tell anyone about the murder because I knew I would never be free of that identity. I would be characterised as the 'murderer's son'.

AYDIN SOEI, P28



Thanks everyone who came out to last month's launch at Condesa!



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We are looking for an aspiring journalist with a passion for reporting and feature writing to join us for a six-month internship starting in May, 2016. You need to be curious and self-motivated. You will be writing in English but we hope you can also read and speak Danish.

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MONTH IN REVIEW

Refugees make jobs
Asylum centres in Denmark will contribute to an increase of 0.5% to Denmark's GDP in 2016. The centres employ hundreds of Danes, many of whom were unemployed prior to working at the centres. Source: Mandag Morgen.

LOTS OF HAPPY PILLS
Children's use of antidepressants has increased by 60% over the past seven years. 1% of all Danish children were prescribed antidepressants in 2012. Source: Berlingske

RARE VIKING ARTEFACT FOUND BY CHANCE
Amateur archaeologist, Dennis Fabricius Holm, discovered the oldest Jesus artifact in Denmark while combing a field with his metal detector near to his home in Aunslev, a small village northwest of Nyborg. The gold cross weighs 14 grams and is believed to be from 900-950 AD. As the oldest image of the crucified Christ in the country, the artifact can now be seen at the Viking Museum in Ladby. Source: Politiken.



GRADE INFLATION AT UNIVERSITIES
Increasing numbers of university students are receiving top grades according to a study by Berlingske. Only 10% of students are supposed to receive a '12', the highest mark in the 7-point scale. However, 16% of students are awarded the mark, making it the single most popular grade given by examiners. The frequency of 12s is particularly high at Roskilde University, the Technical University of Denmark and the IT University, where approximately one in five students receives the very highest mark.

UN training refugees
Refugees will be offered training placements in Copenhagen's UN City in a partnership between the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Frederiksberg council. Gosia Andresen from IOM says the three month training positions will benefit all parties. "Many of the refugees received by Frederiksberg Municipality are young and resourceful - often with higher education. Lack of Danish-language skills can be a barrier in finding a job, but for the internationally profiled UN City these people can become valuable assets when working for the various organisations." UN City houses 10 different UN organisations and several have already indicated interest in the project.



LUKAS GRAHAM STORMS THE CHARTS
Lukas Graham is making international waves after their single 7-years topped 16 music charts across the world. After five weeks at number one in the UK, they toppled Aqua's previous record of four weeks, for Barbie Girl in 1997. In their media appearances, singer Lukas often talks about his upbringing in Christiania.

New deal slashes medicine costs
The Danish government signed a deal with the pharmaceutical industry that will lower the cost of hospital drugs by 10% over a three year period, saving hospitals between 200 and 300 million kroner a year. Health minister Sophie Løhde was responsible for the negotiations and, in a press release, she expressed her satisfaction with the results. "This is the best price agreement that has ever been reached with the pharmaceutical industry. It means that we will have more affordable hospital drugs in the upcoming years." As part of the agreement, the price of new hospital medicines cannot exceed the average cost of the same product in nine other EU countries. M

Natasha Jessen-Petersen



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#TRENDING

SEX SHAMING TEENS

High school magazines expose the sex lives of students, while intimate photos and videos circulate freely

IT'S NEVER been easy to be young – there has always been pressure to make friends and achieve academically. But at some Danish high schools, gymnasier, students also have to contend with a malicious culture of gossip and sexual shaming.

Radio24Syv revealed how students at Gammel Hellerup Gymnasium run a magazine called Mosquito that writes candidly about the sexual escapades of the students. Speaking on the radio, students explained that while many felt violated by the revelations of who was sleeping with whom, it was ill-advised to complain if you wanted to remain popular. Every year third year students choose a select few first year students for so-called "snuggle parties", in which dinner and drinks were paid for. At Espergærde Gymnasium, the students were selected

in an open ceremony in front of their peers.

More worrisome, however, is a culture of sharing intimate photos and videos without prior consent. In an interview with Information newspaper, a girl called 'Sofie' revealed how she was having sex with a friend one night when four of his friends showed up. She was only 15 at the time, and felt powerless to stop the sex act spiralling out of control. One of the boys filmed the incident and shared it with his friends.

"I knew I had been filmed that night, but I didn't think they would share the video with others," she told Information.

Sofie's brave testimony shed yet more light on the blight of revenge porn and the power of mobile phones and social media to do harm. The girl explained that without the support she received, she might have committed suicide.

The story sent shockwaves through Danish media and was the subject of discussion on DR2's popular debate programme Deadline. Host Martin Krasnik announced the debate on his Facebook wall, leading to some entertaining banter with feminist commen-

tator Emma Holten and provocateur Uwe Max Jensen.

MARTIN KRASNIK: Sex-Gossip at high schools – Where is the limit? Is it okay that a high school magazine published a story about a first year high schooler who lost her virginity?

UWE MAX JENSEN: Are there any programs that have not invited Emma Holten? There are a group of sources that appear again and again, read the book Gengangerne on the journalistic phenomenon of incessantly inviting the same people.

EMMA: I am currently one of the most popular experts on revenge porn in Europe – I just happen to be Danish and myself a victim. So it is perhaps not totally irrelevant in this context.

MARTIN KRASNIK: Thank you, Uwe, for your always very constructive contributions. This evening, between 2230 and 2300, there are 132 other TV-channels that will not feature Emma, all of which you can watch for your enjoyment. **M**

Peter Stanners



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If this opportunity interests you, email a CV and examples of your work to peter@murmur.dk

GET STUCK IN

Hija de Sánchez

ROSIO SÁNCHEZ is on a one-woman mission to bring authentic tacos to Denmark. It started last summer when the former Noma pastry chef launched the taco stall Hija de Sánchez in Torvehallerne. Her take on the Mexican staple won rave reviews and generated plenty of buzz – not least when some of her former colleagues made guest appearances in the kitchen.

The taqueria reopens for the summer in early April, along with a smaller stand named Tiendita – "the little place" – which will sell pickles, mole, margaritas and beer on tap. The jewel in the crown, however, is Sánchez's new permanent spot in Kødbyen, which opened in late March. Also named Hija de Sánchez, it'll be open all year and aims to draw crowds with its evening opening hours.

Sánchez decided to open the taqueria after growing frustrated with how other people were making tacos. "I thought, I shouldn't tell them how they should do it, I should just do it."

Despite her pedigree, however, the Chicagoan was apprehensive about how people would react to her unfamiliar undertaking.



Hannah Grant

world, including Spain and the US. But the American corn was too sweet and the Spanish corn contained too much water. Only corn from the Mexican state of Oaxaca cut the mustard.

"We realised long ago that it's not going to be like cooking in Mexico, or even in the United States, where it's easy to get tomatillos or a good jalapeño," Sánchez explains. But she refused to be deterred and tapped into Noma's illustrious imaginative spirit.

"I used to think, 'if we're not having tomatillos, we're not making green salsa'. But then I made all these other salsas and thought, 'this tastes Mexican to me'. By using gooseberries with a blend of different tomatoes instead of tomatillos, we were left with a bright salsa that's nice and green – and just as good, if not better."

Despite her success, Sánchez remains admirably humble. What's surprised her most? "Having a lot of repeat customers," she smiles. "When they'd come back, I'd be like, 'Oh cool. Hello again. Welcome back'." It's something you suspect she will have to get used to saying a lot more in the future.

**Slagterboderne 8, KBH V
Frederiksborggade 21, KBH K
Hijadesanchez.dk**

"I went from working at Noma, which was very different, to being out in the open and making something that's more accessible, that people are going to be eating five seconds after they grab it. I was very nervous."

The new Kødbyen location will feature a longer menu than at Torvehallerne and including dishes rarely available at the seasonal spot like fish tacos. Particularly eye-catching is the tacos al pastor, made with pineapple and pork marinated in a

blend of achiote and other chili peppers. Drinks will include aguas frescas and beer from Warpigs. Sánchez makes everything from scratch, including the masa for the tortillas – the most important part.

"You can make everything else taste pretty nice, but if the tortilla doesn't taste good," Sánchez sighs. "We put a lot of effort into making them the way they should be made so you can have a real taco."

Before she opened last year, Sánchez tried corn from around the

James Clasper



Early registration is advisable since places are limited.

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Preston Drake-Hillyard

Stedsans

FLEMMING HANSEN and Mette Helbæk found instant success last spring when they opened a restaurant amid the mulch of a rooftop farm in Østerbro. At Stedsans – meaning sense of location – the husband-and-wife team serve "clean, simple, local" food to diners squeezed around a large communal table.

Healthy, delicious and attractively plated, they were dishes that Instagram was practically invented for. And no wonder: Helbæk is also a food stylist. Thanks to the simplicity of the couple's cuisine, Stedsans became one of the hottest tickets in town.

Having shut for winter, Stedsans reopens in mid-May. But Hansen and Helbæk are spreading their wings and in early April they take their farm-to-table concept to Torvehallerne (where they'll be neighbours with Sánchez).

Helbæk says the menu will change with the seasons in order to provide diversity – an important part of their mandate.

"By eating this way, you give your-

self a great opportunity to bring little sparks of happiness into your life which you wouldn't be able to find if you just ate the same things every day."

Opening-day dishes are lumpfish roe with kale, sour cream and red onion; baked beetroot with fresh goat's cheese, roasted hazelnuts, thyme and blackcurrant syrup; braised veal shanks with steamed onions. The regular brunch options include vegetable hash with poached egg, and granola and yoghurt pots.

The couple – who describe themselves more as food activists than as restaurateurs – want to get diners eating food that's healthier both for them and the planet.

"The more people who taste this kind of food, the easier it is to change people's way of thinking," Helbæk says.

"The biggest compliment we can get is if people say they'll go home and do this at home," Hansen adds. "If they do that, it will be fantastic."

Frederiksborggade 21, KBH K
Cleansimplelocal.dk

Street food

A FEW MONTHS AGO the British journalist Michael Booth wrote a wonderfully waspish piece for Vice's Munchies in which he declared the death of the New Nordic cuisine. Lampooning the "edible lectures" given by "the leather-apron-and-beard brigade", Booth decried their fondness for "minimalist, meagre mouthfuls" of fermented grains and seaweed and their seemingly endless iterations of raw celeriac.

"New Nordic has run its course as a global food movement," he wrote. "It is the Norwegian Blue of the culinary world."

Booth should take cheer, then, from Copenhagen's ever-improving street food scene. From banh mi to gyoza, by way of the Aladdin's cave Papirøen, the hungry diner can wander the globe in search of satisfaction without ever leaving Copenhagen. But perhaps the best street food is made by restaurants temporarily taking over other kitchens.

MaoBao has taken up residence at the Nørrebro café Sidecar every weekend, and serves the Taiwanese street-food staple gua bao, pillow-soft stuffed buns. There's a choice of three fillings – pork belly, fried chicken and eggplant – while the side orders come with stamps in their passports. Try the Korean classic kimchi or, by way of Thailand, the pomelo and mint salad.



Nikolaj Mark

Venezuelan corn flatbreads, arepa.

Then there's La Arepara, which takes over the garlanded downtown restaurant Taller every Monday and Tuesday to turn it into a Caracas-style cafe. With salsa on the stereo and the joint festooned in red, yellow and blue, chefs Karlos Ponte and Luis Moreno ditch their celebrated and modern Venezuelan cuisine and instead pump out self-styled "jungle food".

That mostly means arepas – Venezuelan corn flatbread, chewy and gooey on the inside, crunchy and crispy on the outside – with a range of fillings. Standouts include fried spicy pork with red onion and tomato, and the more traditional black beans with cheese. But catch it while you can La Arepara's residence at Taller ends in late May. **M**

CITY



The 'La Tour Tower', designed by 3XN Architects

IKEA COMES TO TOWN

A stone's throw from Copenhagen city centre is one of the last remaining undeveloped tracts of land. Thousands of people cross it each day, from Dybbølsbro station to the Fisketorvet mall.

But by 2019 it might be transformed. A proposed redevelopment for the massive 74,000 square meter site will bring Copenhageners their very own Ikea warehouse. The Swedish furniture giant already has two warehouses on the outskirts of the city, but neither are particularly accessible for city centre residents.

The new warehouse will have car parking available, but will also offer residents the option of renting cargo bikes and trailers to transport their goods home.

The three-storey warehouse occupies the middle section of the plot, while to the north a large CABINN hotel has been proposed. To the south, two 77-meter-tall towers, designed by Bjarke Ingels, will be con-

structed that will house 500 students and young people.

Dorte Mandrup Arkitekter is responsible for the warehouse and CABINN designs, as well as the overall plan for linking the sites together. They envision an urban garden with a green recreational space and a restaurant.

"While working together with the City Council on the plan, it has been important for us to create an Ikea warehouse that also creates space for green areas and recreation with respect for the urban character," says Dennis Balslev, administrative director of Ikea Denmark.

The City Council will open a public hearing on the plan in May, which will run for eight weeks. In October they will vote on the plan, which so far has the approval of mayor Frank Jensen.

"It's a fantastic plan," he told Politiken newspaper. "It retains the spirit of Copenhagen and includes an exciting green area that all can enjoy. The new spectacular student homes and workplaces bring the area to

life. I am excited to hear what Copenhageners think of the project."

CONGESTION WOES

The new city centre Ikea will most likely be embraced by Copenhageners, overjoyed at the prospect of not having to traipse out to the warehouses in Gentofte or Taastrup. But if it proves popular for out-of-towners, it'll only contribute to the city's horrific traffic problems.

A new study commissioned by the Capital Region of Denmark has found that congestion is getting worse. Currently, 12 percent of rush hour travel is spent in queues – in 2025 it will be 18 percent. The analysis, carried out by Struensee & Co., puts the cost at two billion kroner a year, which will double over the next decade.

Copenhagen's traffic problems are well established and in 2012 then-prime minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt tried to introduce a toll circle around the city to combat con-

gestion. After the proposal failed to secure necessary support, she instead established a commission to present alternatives for reducing congestion. The commission's primary recommendation was road pricing – in which drivers pay per kilometre driven – but it too was rejected.

The population of the region is expected to increase by 200,000 by 2030, putting extra strain on public transportation. Struensee & Co argue that a more integrated public transport plan is needed for the region to make it easier for commuters to swap between forms of transport.

According to Berlingske newspaper, the main issue is that Copenhagen's public transport network is controlled by seven different companies, each with their own agenda.

"Differences in opinion amongst the owners, boards and decision-makers challenge the coordination of the companies," the report states.

NEW NATURE PARK

On to some more positive news – Nordea-fonden has donated 55 million kroner for the creation of a new nature park, Naturpark Amager.

Western Amager is already a collection of a variety of wild and natural areas, which cover around 3,500 hectares ten times the size of Central Park in New York. The donation will be used to link the areas together under one umbrella. The money will pay for new entrances, a visitor's centre and shelters for overnight stays. Other initiatives will be decided following a public consultation.

Despite being just two kilometres from the city centre, the nature area only receives around one million visitors a year. Dyrehaven, which is 20 kilometres north of Copenhagen, has seven million visitors annually.

"The area is an overlooked pearl which we are now transforming into a green and recreational oasis," Nordea-fonden chairman Mogens Hugo said. "We are proud to support Naturpark Amager because we think it will improve lives for the city's residents."

The ambition is to double annual visitor numbers within the next 15 years. **M**

Peter Stanners

Dorte Mandrup Arkitekter

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A crisis of perspective

The Murmur's photography editor Rasmus Degnbol documented Europe's borders from the air in a unique approach to covering the refugee crisis. The project won him the top accolade in the 'Open' category of the Danish Press Photo Awards

A four kilometer bus convoy waits outside the reception center in Presevo, Serbia. The busses come from across Serbia and are privately owned and run. The companies have been known to over charge for tickets. Here they wait for refugees to ferry north.

Gripping coverage of the refugee crisis has become a normal part of the news cycle – muddy camps, screaming children and desperate parents trying to make it north. Standing in their way are borders, visible and invisible, separating countries that long ago made a promise to eliminate them.

Rasmus Degnbol made borders the subject of his award-winning project Europe's New Borders. From Germany to Greece, he and his drone captured the sites that bar refugees from reaching their final destination.

When did you first get the idea for the project?

Around February or March last year, when the crisis was taking off. Europe had started to change and I couldn't understand why. I have not experienced countries so at odds with each other. Denmark and Sweden's relationship was at a breaking point as they fought over their refugee policies.

Then I started to think about how to tell the story of borders and places. My stories are quite subtle, I have a soft style, which isn't really suited to something large-scale and political. I wanted to do something other than photograph crying women and children.

But I still wanted to show the scale of the issue, therefore I decided on shooting the borders from above. I think we are growing tired of seeing the same images and I thought there was a need for a new way to talk about the refugee crisis, to maybe think of it as a border crisis. We will fix the refugee crisis at some point, but the impact on our borders will be felt for years to come. Over 60 years we've been slowly dismantling borders and moving closer together, but now it seems we are returning to the Cold War.

What equipment did you use, and were there any challenges in using it?

The first drone I built was a hexacopter, but I crashed it in July on Lesbos. But I wouldn't have been able to do the project with that drone, it was too big. So I downsized and built something a little more quiet so it wouldn't freak out the police at the borders.

Each country has its own rules for drones and in most countries you have to get permission to fly the drone when you are in the country. For the most part I tried to get permission, but in some countries I didn't care. The story was more important than the possible consequences.

The Hungarian police were really strict – I was detained three times and threatened with deportation so I left the country.

What was your route?

I started on the Greek island Lesbos. At the time there wasn't a lot of police and military so it was a good starting point with plenty of areas to practice using the drone.

Then I worked my way up north through Europe, following the route the refugees travelled as the borders collapsed. I tried to stay away from the most dramatic sites because the story was about borders and the consequences of borders, not violence.

Along the way I had lots of encounters with police. Some countries were good, Serbia and Croatia were svery easy going. But the Hungarian police were really strict – I was detained three times and threatened with deportation so I left the country.

Bulgaria was the only country other than Denmark where I was denied permission to fly the drone. Danish authorities wouldn't even let me take photos of the refugee tent camps. They said I could apply for permission, but there was no point because they wouldn't grant it.

How did the borders project compare with other journeys you've made?

It was strange. Normally when you're doing a story in a foreign country you are on the ground talking to as many people as possible, but this project was lonely. I had to keep my distance from other people to avoid being arrested. There was a lot of planning involved, I would scout different locations and plan for light and weather. Then I would show up when conditions were favorable to capture the images. I was anxious and paranoid a lot of the time.

Has it left a lasting impression on you?

I had encountered suffering and starvation through my earlier work, but I hadn't experienced death in the way I did in Lesbos, where 70 people drowned in one week. There were bodies everywhere, it was awful seeing the bodies, particularly the women and children. But it fuelled my desire to make the project, I channelled the energy I suppose. It was hard, I was stressed and paranoid along the way, but I knew I had to finish it.

What's next?

I will continue with the project and try to document the changes brought about by the pressure on the borders. We are now seeing the transport sector starting to change and I think the holiday season will be a total nightmare. The political aspect of Europe's border collapse will take a long time to recover, so it's a story that potentially has a very long lifespan. **M**

Peter Stanners

Refugees and migrants in the Croatian winter transitcamp Slavonski Brod are marched towards the train that will take them to Slovenia. They have been in the camp for around six hours where they have had access to hot tents, food and medical assistance.

POLITICS

LEGALISE WEED OR SHUT CHRISTIANIA?

If it were up to Copenhagen mayor Frank Jensen, cannabis would be legal in Denmark. But two proposals to trial legalisation of cannabis in the capital have been blocked by parliament. Danish drug laws are shaped by UN narcotics conventions that, despite being archaic, are avidly supported by powerful anti-drug lobbies.

Political party Alternativet have now announced its support for letting the state produce and sell cannabis, however.

"We should not fight cannabis as a drug, we need to fight drug addiction and abuse," MP Josephine Fock wrote on Facebook.

Most political parties prefer the status quo, with Dansk Folkeparti (DF) and Socialdemokraterne recently demanding that the Venstre government clear the illegal cannabis market on Pusherstreet in Christiania.

This wouldn't be the first attempt to close the street. Despite a massive police crackdown in 2004, and continual raids by the police's Task Force Pusherstreet, the market is still thriving.

"The environment in Christiania is raw and unfortunately the problem is escalating," Socialdemokraterne's justice spokesperson Trine Bramsen told DR. "It is estimated that drugs worth billions of kroner are sold there every year."

While the two parties were later joined by Konservativ, the government ultimately shot down the idea.

"I think both parties can easily figure out that it would require an enormous police presence in Christiania," Venstre MP Jan E. Jørgensen told Ritau. "I am not sure where they think we will find these police officers, whether it's border control, anti-terrorism or guarding the synagogue." **M**



OBITUARY – ANKER JØRGENSEN

Prime minister during the economic downturn in the 1970s and early 1980s, Anker Jørgensen is remembered for his commitment to social democratic principles, but equally for his inability to stimulate the economy

ANKER JØRGENSEN had no ministerial experience when he was offered the job of prime minister in 1972, aged 42. The day before he got the phone call, Denmark voted to join the EU, prompting the Socialdemokraterne PM Jens Otto Krag to resign. They needed a new leader and, as the story goes, Jørgensen had five minutes to decide. He took the job and is remembered as one of Denmark's most popular PMs, though his legacy is still under discussion.

Active in union work since his 20s, he was first elected MP for the Social-

demokraterne in 1964, and represented the party in parliament until 1994. His first stint as PM was short lived, after his party lost the 1973 election. But in 1975 they returned to power, and Jørgensen went on to win three more elections.

It was a difficult time to be prime minister. The oil crisis had suppressed the global economy and contributed to rising unemployment and inflation.

Jørgensen introduced popular welfare reforms, such as the early retirement programme efterløn. He had difficulty financing his spending, however, which resulted in a burgeoning deficit. He stepped down as PM in 1982, handing over power to the opposition, after failing to secure support for tax increases.

Jørgensen is considered the last true working class leader of the Social Democrats. He refused to live in the official prime minister's residence, instead he remained in his home in Sydhavn. In 1996 he moved into an elder care home in Copenhagen, and is remembered for walking around the block well into his 90s, with the aid of his two crutches.

Socialdemokraterne leader Mette



Frederiksen remembered Jørgensen on the party's website.

"Anker's contribution to democratic and social democratic worker's movement cannot be understated – his results, persona and outlook. Throughout his whole life he tirelessly fought for equal opportunity for all people."

Anker Jørgensen died on March 20, aged 93. **M**

HATE PREACHERS MAY BE BANNED

The government wants to bar foreign imams who hold "hateful" views from speaking in Danish mosques, but this could violate the right to free speech and religious freedom

THE MOSQUE on Grimhøjvej in Aarhus is well known for housing radical views. But it still came as a surprise when TV2 released undercover recordings, which showed imams preaching in favour of stoning unfaithful women.

While on film the imams stressed that such rules could not be carried out in Denmark, the shocking recordings reignited a national debate about the limits of free speech, particularly with regards to religion.

Weeks later, the government announced it wanted to ban imams with anti-democratic or hateful views from enter-

ing Denmark. Furthermore, they pushed to remove support for mosques that preach anti-democratic views.

"We would like to follow the inspiration of the UK and establish a list of people that we can prevent from coming to Denmark to espouse hateful views," PM Lars Løkke Rasmussen said at a press conference.

He added that the government also wanted to target individuals already in the country, arguing that religious freedom was being abused to undermine Danish society.

"We need to look into the possibility of criminalising statements that undermine Danish law while also respecting the constitutional freedom of religion in order to target those who undermine Danish law under the guise of religion or theology."

According to Politiken, all parties in parliament support new anti-extremism legislations, but differ extensively on specific policies.

DF wants parliament to withdraw citizenship from hate preachers and close down their mosques. Opposition Social-

demokraterne support the proposal to ban foreign hate speakers, but believe it should be the courts who decide. Enhedslisten and Alternativet support neither policy and would prefer to focus efforts on exit programmes for individuals in extremist communities.

Legal rights think tank Justitia expressed concern over the proposal to ban foreign imams as it could violate rights to both free expression and religion, which are guaranteed by European human rights conventions.

Director Jacob Mchangama argued that the government could only justify banning the entry of imams if it first outlined specific criteria for which types of statements should result in a ban, and to what extent the ban is designed to protect public order or safety.

"This way they can introduce a ban on fundamentalist imams and other extremists," says Mchangama. "Politicians should ensure that the ban is narrowly defined so that it doesn't also target statements that are controversial, but legal." **M**

IN BRIEF

Immigration minister sued

Foreign workers argue they have been cheated after the government retroactively changed permanent residency rules. Before January, workers needed to have lived in Denmark for five years to qualify. This was extended to six years in January, but workers who applied before the deadline, and qualified at the time, have not had their 5,450 kroner application fees refunded.

More than 40 foreign workers have joined a suit against the state, though the lawyer representing them estimates that up to 200 people will ultimately join.

"We will take it all the way to the Supreme Court if need be," Tage Gøtttsche told Metroxpress. "These are people with good educations who have been attracted to Denmark because Danish industry is in need of their skills. They were promised conditions the government can no longer deliver."

Forests for sale

New agricultural laws almost tore the governing blue 'bloc' of parties apart, after Konservative criticised the negative environmental impact of allowing increased fertiliser on fields.

Now the government is opening negotiations for new laws to protect the environment. Only 89 million kroner is on the table, however, leading Liberal Alliance (LA) to propose selling off publicly owned forests to raise revenue.

"We don't believe the state was created to run a forestry industry," LA's environment spokesperson Carsten Bach told Berlingske.

Before the election, the blue bloc agreed to preserve 20 percent of Danish forests as untouched wilderness. LA now proposes to sell off highly productive forestry to private business, and open up public access to forests with high preservation value, though they will be owned privately.

"It costs the Nature Agency a huge amount to manage forests. We think private forestry can increase production in the forests that are not set aside. In addition to increased productivity, the state will benefit from the income of the sale."

The proposal to sell public forests was opposed by the Danish Society for Nature Conservation (DN).

"State-owned forests offer the public the best guarantee for access and are generally in a much better condition than private forests," spokesperson Nora Skjernaa Hansen told Berlingske.

Refugees at work

The Danish labour market is difficult to access without the right qualifications. As a refugee without the right language skills, it's even harder. In a bid to improve their chances, a new training and work programme has been launched.

The programme was agreed during the tripartite negotiations between the government, the confederation of unions (LO) and the employer's association (DA). All salaries and working conditions are set through these tripartite negotiations – a framework often referred to as the 'Danish model'.

Businesses can hire refugees aged 18 to 40 through the two-year programme, which includes skills and language training. During the period the refugees are paid the same as the union rate for student trainees. This prevents the refugees from being used as cheap labour, and undercutting Danish workers.

Benefits cut

There is now a limit to the total amount of benefits a person can receive after the government introduced its promised benefits cap. The ambition was to increase the income gap between benefits and low wage jobs.

Single people with no children may only receive a maximum 13,121 kroner per month before tax, a reduction of between 2,500 and 3,800 kroner.

Around 24,000 people on unemployment benefits are expected to see their income decrease, even though the employment ministry estimates that only 700 people will find work as a result of the change.

The benefits cap was criticised by the association of social workers, Dansk Socialrådgiverforening, which argues the majority of people receiving unemployment benefits are suffering from physical and mental handicaps that prevent them from joining the labour market.

"The benefits cap will worsen the finances of citizens who are already sick and who don't have the opportunity to enter the labour market," chairman Majbrit Berlau told Information newspaper. **M**

NORTH ATLANTIC 4 SEATS

The Faroe Islands and Greenland each elect two seats in the Danish parliament. All support the left-wing 'red' bloc.

SOCIALIST PEOPLE'S PARTY (SF) 7 SEATS

Sitting to the left of the Social Democrats, SF has a pro-welfare and environmental profile.

SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (SOCIALDEMOKRATER) 47 SEATS

Traditional left wing leaders with a strong relationship with trade unions. Despite increasing their share of the vote, they lost power last June when the opposition 'blue' bloc won a majority in the election.

RED-GREEN ALLIANCE (ENHEDSLISTEN) 14 SEATS

Furthest to the left sits Enhedslisten, which provided the former government with a majority on many policy issues, such as improved conditions for asylum seekers.

THE ALTERNATIVE (ALTERNATIVET) 9 SEATS

A new party launched last year by former Radikale culture minister Uffe Elbæk, they stormed into parliament last year with an aggressive green agenda and mission to improve parliament's political culture.

SOCIAL LIBERAL PARTY (RADIKALE) 8 SEATS

Former coalition partners with the Social Democrats in the last government. Centrist, focussing on fiscal discipline with a social conscience.

RED: 89 SEATS

BLUE: 90 SEATS

The government

THE LIBERAL PARTY (VENSTRE) 34 SEATS

Venstre leads the smallest ever minority government with support from the remaining parties in the 'blue' bloc'. Leader Lars Løkke Rasmussen resumes as PM after he was toppled in 2011.

THE CONSERVATIVE PEOPLE'S PARTY (KONSERVATIVE) 6 SEATS

A traditional conservative party with a focus on fiscal discipline and family values, they formed a coalition government with Venstre between 2001 and 2011. The 2015 election was their worst since their founding in 1915.

LIBERAL ALLIANCE (LA) 13 SEATS

A small-government and low-tax party, LA has carved out votes on the right wing. A relatively new party, they want to drastically remodel the Danish welfare state and the economy.

THE DANISH PEOPLE'S PARTY (DANSK FOLKEPARTI) 37 SEATS

Last election's big winners, rising to become the second-largest party in parliament. Their success has made them even larger than Venstre, which the remaining blue 'bloc' parties have selected to lead and form the government.



Getting a ghetto to work

A life on benefits should not be an option, argues social worker Eskild Dahl Pedersen. Creating jobs for refugees and paying for their education is the only path to integration and to break the cycle of marginalisation

DOZENS OF SATELLITE DISHES are affixed to the red brick housing estate Mjølnerparken. They indicate that the residents are beaming their television programmes from far off lands – around 84 percent of the 1,800 residents are non-Western immigrants.

Primarily home to refugees and their families, the housing estate is one of the most socially deprived in Denmark. One of the 25 Danish 'ghettos' classified by the government, 44 percent of the residents are not in work or education and around a quarter live below the Danish poverty line. The crime rate is dropping, but one in 50 residents has a conviction for drug or weapons offences.

Mjølnerparken's reputation was dealt a further blow after four young men from the neighbourhood were charged with assisting Omar El-

Hussein, the perpetrator of the 2015 terror attacks.

SOCIAL ISOLATION

Eskild Dahl Pedersen isn't surprised that the community was connected to the terror attacks. Since 2009 he has worked for Lejerbo, which manages the housing estate, and has headed up its social outreach programme since 2012.

"We face a difficult task in challenging the hate many residents have, whether it be toward the West, Denmark, the police, or the council," he explains matter-of-factly in his Mjølnerparken office.

Pedersen paints a bleak picture of life in Mjølnerparken and the social and cultural isolation felt by a large proportion of its residents. Many arrived in Denmark as refugees in the 1980s and 1990s, but despite billions invested in integration

programmes and benefits, a large number have failed to find a footing in Danish society.

"We have a concentration of residents who have lived on benefits for decades and who are increasingly marginalised from mainstream society. The result is that they have developed a warped understanding of how society works, which they then pass down to their children. When they meet mainstream Copenhageners they are ridiculed for their strange views, so they withdraw into their community that shares their values. It's a problem that is growing and growing."

NO MORE BENEFITS

Pedersen is campaigning for a radical rethinking of how we approach integration and unemployment. It's an acute issue and new solutions are needed if the large wave of new-

ly-arrived refugees are to be offered a better chance of becoming mainstream residents.

His proposal is simple: get them off unemployment benefits.

"We need to pull the plug and say 'living on unemployment benefits is simply not an option'."

The least generous unemployment benefit in Denmark is '*kontanthjælp*', which for couples with children can amount to around 14,000 kroner per month before tax. In March, the government introduced a benefits cap, reducing the total amount of benefits a family can receive. The idea is to make taking a minimum wage job more attractive, but Pedersen argues this strategy is not enough for refugees.

"These are people who have seen conflict and suffering. You really need to put them under much more pressure than taking a few thousand

Peter Stanners

kroner each month to create an incentive to work."

Instead, he wants to use the money spent on '*kontanthjælp*' to create jobs for anyone who wants one. He's already had success with the approach in Mjølnerparken, which has a job guarantee for any resident aged under 18. The jobs are unskilled – cleaning windows and collecting rubbish – and are paid according to union rates, which is below the money typically paid by gangs.

"The union rate means we can pay under-15s 60 kroner an hour, which is the same they would get working in a shop. But selling drugs will make you 75 kroner an hour, which we can't compete with. Still, the mothers prefer their children to take the lower salary. They know that the children who work with us end up finishing school, while those who sell joints end up going to prison and in debt to the state."

MUMS AT WORK

While Pedersen says the programme has proved a success for young people, he wants to extend the job and education guarantee to a harder demographic – their mothers.

"The women in Mjølnerparken tend to have children young, so when they're around 40 they need to find something else to do during the 20 years before they retire."

Pedersen thinks this is the area that will have the greatest impact

on breaking the legacy of marginalisation. He knows that many of the women studied and worked in their home countries before arriving in Denmark. If some study, the others could be paid to look after the children, he proposes.

But convincing the women, who may not have worked for decades, to go back to school or re-join the labour force is tricky. When he tries to convince them, he often uses an anecdote from his own life.

"When I meet women who say it's not possible, I use my mother as a role model. I come from a poor family with six children. My dad worked and my mum stayed home. Neither were educated and we were poor. My mum had her first child at 17 and when she turned 49 there were no more children who needed her. So she went back to school, completing 8th and 9th grade before attending college and earning her teacher certification. When she turned 57, she taught her first class," he says.

"We need to get the first generation of these women through education and into jobs to show them there is life after 40. Then the next group will be easier to convince."

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

Pedersen is candid about the anti-democratic attitudes held by many of the residents in Mjølnerparken. He attributes it to a combination of ignorance and politics.

On the one hand, many residents have little real contact with Danish society and appreciation of how services and institutions are paid for or were established in the first place.

On the other hand, far left anarchists – who have traditionally supported refugees and protected them from far right xenophobia in Nørrebro – have reinforced a message that the Danish system is inherently unfair, Dahl argues.

"The anarchists presented a narrative that the refugees were being cheated. That taxes should be higher, that the wealthy should give more to the poor. The absurd consequence of this was the creation of far right attitudes among Muslims in Nørrebro."

Pedersen says the Sunni muslim political organisation Hizb ut-Tahrir, which calls for a global Islamic caliphate, has a strong following in Mjølnerparken. He also alleges that many residents celebrate violence and harass ethnic Danes, Jews and gays.

"So if we are to succeed we need to challenge the warped perspectives that have been created. That is mostly through education and making sure that everyone has a minimum of a 9th grade education. This means they learn far more than Danish and maths. They learn about history, geography and biology. Their views are challenged as they learn.

The only way to fight extremism is through contact, compassion and dialogue, not guns and jail.

They learn that Danish society has qualities that are worth valuing, and that have been created because people worked for them. There's no such thing as a free hospital, someone paid for it, there's no such thing as a free school, someone paid for it."

COMPASSION AND DIALOGUE

Taken together, Pedersen argues that education and jobs will tackle the passive marginalisation of refugees.

"The only way to fight extremism is through contact, compassion and dialogue, not guns and jail. You can transform a far right extremist through conversation and persuasion. But in Mjølnerparken they have bounced between far left activists and radical imams. You don't become a mainstream Copenhagen-er that way. So that's my job – to introduce them to mainstream residents, people who aren't racists and who have a multicultural outlook," he says.

"In Lejerbo I make a vocal point that everyone is welcome here, even Shia muslims. We have 22 Shia families who are terrified of living out here. But I make the point to the residents that everyone is welcome, gays and Jews too. The extreme Muslims say to me, 'Eskilde, you don't really mean that'. And I reply, 'of course I do! You are also welcome to live here!' **M**



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Rasmus Degnbøl

"Torture videos are playing over and over in my head"

Ahlam Chemlali travels the world documenting torture for the organisation DIGNITY. The instability and corruption that creates torture can be beaten with the right investment, she argues. But this work has been jeopardised by government cuts to the foreign aid budget

'THE RAPIST from Brega' and 'The Butcher from Misrata' aren't characters from a sordid horror story – they're reality stars in Libya whose acts of torture and sexual violence are watched on computers and phones across the country.

"Torture is systematically filmed and shared and while it is entertainment for some, it is mainly a way of spreading fear – the videos are modern war trophies."

Uncovering the extent to which torture is practiced around the world is part of Ahlam Chemlali's job at DIGNITY, the Danish Institute Against Torture. In Libya she found that social media and technology have allowed torture to invade the everyday lives of millions of people.

"These videos blur the lines between reality and conflict, but everyone in them is real. The intersection of torture, porn, and

extreme sexual violence is a huge problem. Libya is a small country and just by knowing someone's surname you know which tribe they belong to. So everyone quickly knows who the victors and victims are."

Torture is nothing new in Libya and its former dictator Muammar Gaddafi deployed it mercilessly against his people to maintain hold over the country. Chemlali visited Libya soon after

Gaddafi was deposed in 2011 and remembers smoking a water pipe while gazing over the Mediterranean. But the calm was short-lived. Instead of transitioning to a democracy, the power vacuum was filled with competing militias who also employ torture to maintain their grip on power.

"Libya is suffering under chaos and total anarchy, with around 40 percent of the population dependent on humanitarian assistance.

Peter Stanners

Up to a million people are stuck in Libya waiting to go to Europe, the borders to Egypt and Tunisia are closed so the only direction they can travel is north. That's why the EU's policy of turn around migrant boats won't solve anything.

"We need to treat the root causes; an unstable Libya that we helped created through the Nato bombing of infrastructure. We did not stick around to rebuild the institutions. We have a responsibility for Libya's deterioration, and a responsibility for the migrants in the country."

EVERYDAY TORTURE

Chemlali wants us to see torture as a phenomenon that can arise in any country under the right circumstances. It's an important indicator for how well a country is doing, and it says a lot about the state of its judicial system and the level of poverty and corruption.

"We normally associate torture with dungeons and underground chambers. But it's rarely like that," she says, explaining that what she most often comes across is 'everyday torture'. One example is police that are placed under pressure by their superiors to meet unrealistic crime detection rates. The police then use violence to extract confessions.

"This is a huge problem and it takes place all over the world, from the Philippines to Kenya and South Africa. Torture becomes a norm and a culture that then filters down through society. It becomes normal to beat your wife and children and this fosters a cycle of violence."

Victims of torture tend to be poor, as they lack the resources to defend themselves. But anyone is at risk of torture and persecution, though religious and ethnic minorities are particularly at risk.

"The goal is to dehumanise the other and make the other an enemy. We see it a lot in conflict areas, for example the American forces tortured prisoners in the Iraqi prison Abu Ghraib. The goal was to portray the people as subhuman and not worth grieving for."

Torture is systematically filmed and shared. It is mainly a way of spreading fear – the videos are modern war trophies.

DIGNITY has a broad mandate, which includes preventing torture, rehabilitating victims, as well as carrying out research and anti-torture advocacy. At the top level they lobby governments to sign and ratify anti-torture conventions. On the ground they collaborate with local organisations that help them to carry out research and raise awareness of torture.

They also work together with police, who are often the main perpetrators of violence and torture, to train them in better practices and interrogation skills and techniques.

"There is often a lot of violence in prisons, but by employing just a few techniques they can become conflict free, which is in everyone's best interests. We worked in one prison in Liberia, where we introduced anger management and play therapy that involved allowing prisoners to go out and play soccer. Before, the guards and prisoners would fight almost everyday, but as soon as they were playing football against each other this changed. So the solutions can often seem basic to some ex-

tent, but it's simply about behaviour change. Signing a convention doesn't make a change, you have to change people."

TRAUMA

In some countries, such as Libya, the risk level is too high to do more than document and report on torture. They hand out questionnaires and carry out interviews in the general population to discover their exposure to torture and the impact it has had on their lives.

Torture victims often suffer from trauma, whose symptoms include depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. The effects are also felt on friends and families of victims – so-called secondary trauma.

Chemlali noticed something uncanny when conducting research in Libya. Individuals who had never been subjected to torture themselves, nor had anyone close to them, were reporting similar trauma symptoms as torture victims.

"A lot of the people I interviewed in Libya showed similar symptoms and reactions – somat-

ic pain, lack of sleep – without being exposed to torture. What we found is that just watching videos of torture and looking at pictures was as traumatising as witnessing it first hand. Even though there's a barrier, it still creates trauma. This is important because it brings torture to a new level – everyone can be exposed."

PERSONAL IMPACT

Chemlali has met hundreds of torture victims. She has heard their stories and seen their scars. She has even had to watch videos, where grinning and laughing men perform horrific sexual crimes. She knows that she is equally at risk of being traumatised, and in the beginning she wasn't sure how she would react.

"The first few missions were a test: would I return crazy and take it out on my family and friends, or could I decouple myself? Thankfully I could, I found ways of coping. But of course my work still affects me, I'm human after all. I have torture videos playing over and over in my head, and stories I've heard that I will never forget."



Ahlam Chemlali on mission in Uganda.

The need to be in the field and experience the reality of torture drives her to keep an emotional distance, she explains. She worries that by remaining at her desk, reading stories and calculating figures, the issues could become abstract.

"I need to see these people and the pictures in order to be able to talk about what's really going on, so I manage to keep a distance. My work can help bring about justice and give a voice to people who otherwise wouldn't be heard. I'm the child of immigrants from Morocco, and I've always been taught to be aware of how lucky we are to live in this stable part of the world. With privilege comes responsibility – this has guided me through my studies and work."

CUTS

DIGNITY's ambition to build a conflict free world is now being undermined, however. The government's cuts to foreign aid has forced DIGNITY to close down projects.

Chemlali sees the cuts as fundamentally counter-productive, particularly in light of the government's stated aim of focusing spending in areas close to conflict zones, rather than on aid for refugees in Denmark.

"The government is showing an enormous lack of leadership and international solidarity and responsibility. Torture arises because of poor institutional practices, but the cuts make it really hard for us and other NGOs to make change and prevent countries from becoming failed states," she says.

Chemlali points out that the government still finds money to continue its history of joining US military interventions in the Middle East. Danish airstrikes both contributed to the fall of Gaddafi and more recently have been aimed at the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

"What we spend on aid doesn't even come close to military spending. But it takes decades to rebuild infrastructure and institutions after military interventions. The cuts are completely counterproductive."

BIG PICTURE

The refugee crisis, the conflict in Syria, and Libya's status as a failed state are normally spoken about as though they were sepa-

The first few missions were a test: would I return crazy and take it out on my family and friends, or could I decouple myself?

rate and distinct issues. But Chemlali claims they are a part of a bigger picture that connects Western military interventions with a lack of investment for democratic movements and human rights.

"If we want to reduce the migration pressure on Europe, then we are doing the opposite of what we should be doing," says Chemlali, referring to foreign aid cuts. "Politicians are so detached from reality they don't even know what's happening on the ground. We live in a country where we have an abundance of resources and stability – we can't just block ourselves off."

Refugees who do arrive in Den-

mark are often traumatised, says Chemlali, who estimates that 40 percent of Syrian refugees are victims of torture. While Denmark took in over 20,000 refugees last year, the government's focus has been on reducing the number by eroding living conditions, reducing benefits, and making it more difficult to be granted family reunification.

But Chemlali says the worst part of the reaction is the language used by politicians in the ruling bloc to justify closing the borders.

"These people are fleeing torture and have already been dehumanised once. But now – simply in

the way that we talk about the refugee crisis – it is happening again. People have talked about an 'invasion', a 'flood', or a 'tsunami', making it sound like a natural disaster rather than just people. We frame them like they are sub-human. Politicians suggest the men are traitors who should have stayed behind to fight for their country. It's absurd and lacks any historical perspective. We forget the refugee crisis we went through in Europe. The solidarity has vanished and instead we are building walls and fences. It's sad to see the richest continent in the world close in on itself when it should be accepting responsibility." **M**



Rasmus Degnbøl



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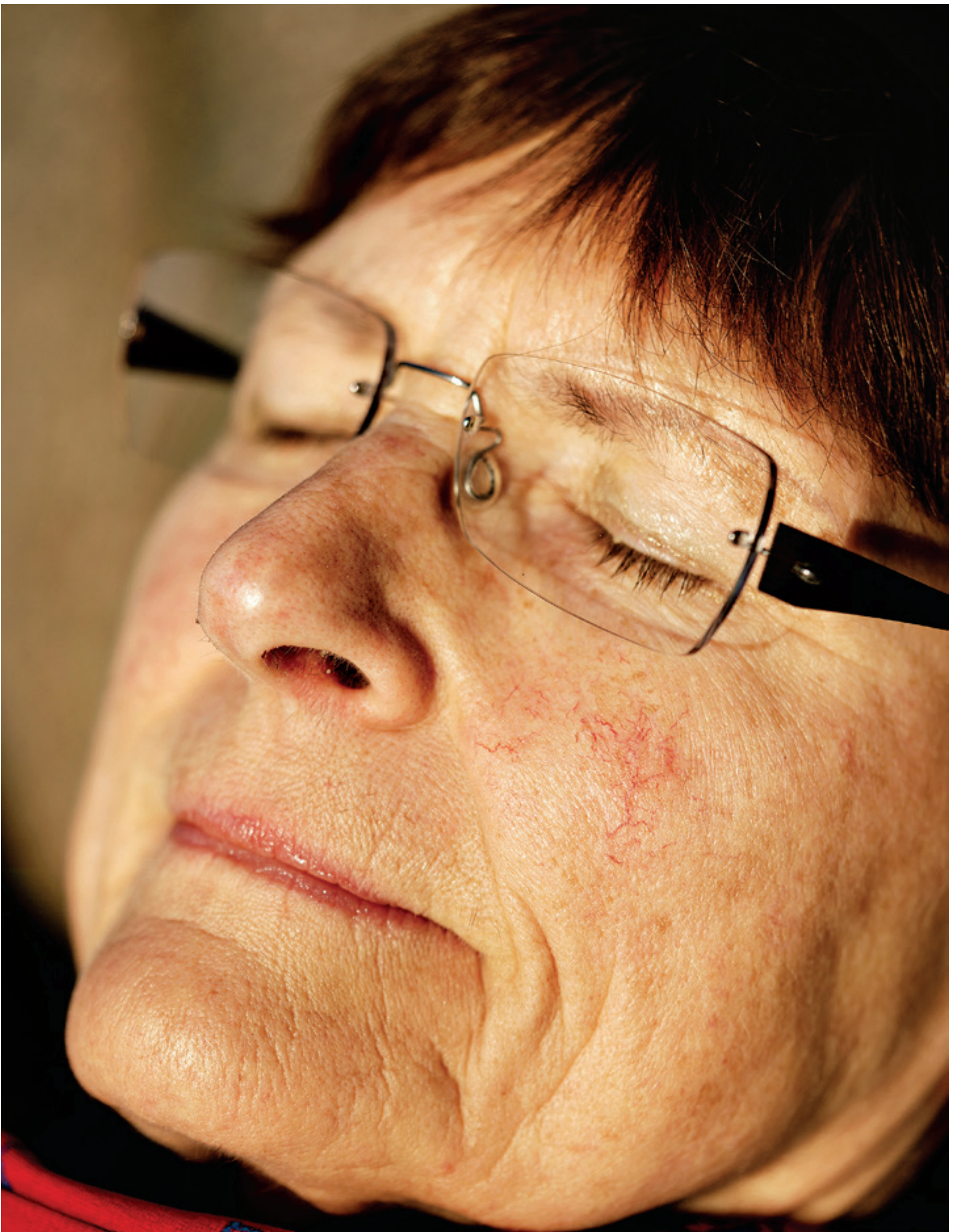
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CAPTURED

Spring Fever: Photographer Lasse Kofod snapped some Copenhageners enjoying the first rays of the season .





Jan Kjær, Flyvevåbnets Fotojeneste

A Danish F16 at its base in Skrydstrup, Jutland, shortly before its departure to Syria this year.

Head first into the Syrian quagmire

The Danish parliament has voted to commit troops and air force in the fight against ISIS in Syria. The government says Denmark has a duty to participate, the opposition claims it is misguided, while the military warns of overreach

WHEN SYRIAN and Russian forces recaptured the historic town of Palmyra from the Islamic State (IS) in March, it was reported with relief. With archaeological ruins dating back more than 2000 years, there was concern that IS's hate of non-Islamic history would leave the city in rubble. While the town suffered, the damage was far less widespread than feared.

It was a major loss for IS, which has been steadily losing territory since the US started launching airstrikes in August 2014. But as their control over Iraq and Syria has diminished, they have opened up a new front in the conflict on European soil. Terrorists allied with the Islamic State (IS) have struck Europe twice in six months, killing 130 in Paris and 32 in Brussels.

The attacks demonstrate the complexity of the war against IS. An irreconcilable mesh of interests

and alliances are spread across dozens of rebel and state actors.

JOINING THE COALITION

Denmark has now decided to throw its weight around, and once again participate in a war in the Middle East.

In 2014, Danish F-16 jets joined the US-led military intervention against IS in Iraq. Last summer they returned to Denmark, but they will soon fly out again once Parliament approves a plan to increase Denmark's military involvement in the fight against IS.

According to the Ministry of Defence, Denmark will commit four F-16 fighter jets (plus three on logistical standby), a C-130J transport plane and up to 60 special forces soldiers. All in all Denmark will contribute around 400 combat and support units, making Denmark's contribution to the coalition the highest per capita. The cost of the

operation has been estimated at a total of 280 million kroner.

The military intervention is supported by the opposition parties the Social Democrats (Social Demokraterne) and the Social Liberal Party (Radikale). But with the situation on the ground remaining complex, and unanswered questions over the legality of extending the fight into Syria, the Socialist Peoples Party (SF), the Alternative (Alternativet) and the Red-Green Alliance (Enhedslisten) voted against the proposal.

Despite the lack of consensus, the Liberal Party (Venstre) government argues that it is vital that Denmark participate.

"The international coalition is facing an incredibly difficult operation and while it would undoubtedly be easier for us to close our eyes to the problem and make other people deal with it, recent events

in Europe have shown that this not an option," said Venstre defence spokesperson Peter Juel Jensen.

He argues that the Brussels attacks demonstrate the importance of defeating IS in Syria, and stresses the need for showing solidarity with allied countries directly engaged in the war.

"Denmark has a long tradition of participating in the fight against terrorism and that is why we are ready to take the fight. We need to stand shoulder to shoulder with other countries that fight terrorism and believe in human rights," Jensen explained, adding that while the conflict in Syria could not be resolved with military means alone, there needs to exist physical security before the rebuilding of Syria can begin.

THE OPPOSITION

It's not the first time Venstre has

Elias Thorsson

led Denmark to a war in the Middle East. Under PM Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Denmark sent troops to both Iraq and Afghanistan, which forged close ties with the US.

While Jensen feels it vital to maintain this special relationship, that view is not shared by Alternativet's foreign affairs spokesperson Rasmus Nordqvist.

"I don't see a need to join the US every time they want to use their military. We have unfortunately had a tendency to follow them around and I think we should do things differently," Nordqvist said, adding that military intervention could have an impact on the ongoing Geneva peace talks.

"Danish military involvement should not be the way forward, especially not now when there is a possibility of a lasting ceasefire. Many researchers have pointed out that the main result of dropping bombs is creating more recruits for IS."

Holger K. Nielsen, foreign affairs spokesperson for SF, shares Nordqvist's view and adds that the complexity of the conflict means Denmark should desist from involvement.

"One of the main reasons we oppose this move is the very unclear idea about who we are fighting. Are we fighting IS, Assad – are there other groups we will end up fighting? There are too many conflicting interests at play that we don't understand," said Nielsen.

Both Alternativet and SF would prefer to focus Danish resources on humanitarian assistance and on working towards a political solution to the conflict.

QUESTIONABLE LEGALITY

Last November, the UN Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 2249, which called on member states that have the capacity to combat IS "to take all necessary measures, in compliance with international law".

While Alternativet voted against the military intervention due to the lack of a clear mandate, the questionable legality of the intervention does not bother Søren Espersen, the Danish People's Party's (DF) foreign affairs spokesperson.

"We are not interested in those questions. Other people find it problematic, but I don't see it that way. It is critical that we take the fight to IS. The attacks on Brussels made it clear what a difficult situation we are facing. We are dealing with a serious plague."



Sharpshooters in the Iraqi army that have been trained by Danish forces.

It is critical that we take the fight to IS. The attacks on Brussels made it clear what a difficult situation we are facing. We are dealing with a serious plague.

**SØREN ESPERSEN,
DANSK FOLKEPARTI**

The Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET) claims that the risk of a terrorist attack on Denmark remains "serious". In a report released last year, PET stated that Denmark's activist foreign policy was one of the key factors in making Denmark a target for international terrorism.

Espersen maintains that Denmark should not be deterred.

"It is always more dangerous when you get involved. When you stick your neck out, the risk of someone cutting it off increases," said Espersen

RISK OF FURTHER CONFLICT

Last month, foreign minister Kristian Jensen admitted to TV2 that Danish Special Forces would be engaging in "high risk" operations, but would not face the Syrian military.

Major Jacob Barfoed, from the Institute for Military Operations, explains that the missions can broadly be categorised into three parts: training local forces, collecting intelligence that could help in the fight against IS, and providing support to local troops in calling in airstrikes. It is also possible that Danish forces will participate

in raids on IS positions, such as the skirmish last month that led to the death of IS's second in command Haji Imam.

But while obvious risks face the Special Forces on the ground, Barfoed claims their greatest threat is in the air. By expanding operations from Iraq into Syria, there is a real risk of Danish airplanes coming into conflict with the air defences of the Syrian military – or its Russian allies.

"The difference with Iraq is that Syria has a non-friendly air force. The Syrian government has surface-to-air missiles protecting its territories and if Danish fighter aircraft stray into their airspace then they could be shot down. The aircraft travel at such speeds that the transition from IS territory to the government's can happen very fast. And while the coalition has doubtlessly coordinated with Russia, that has supported the Syrian government with surface-to-air missile units, clashes cannot be ruled out."

THE STRAIN ON THE AIR FORCE

The Danish Air Force was forced to prematurely end its operations in Iraq last summer after running

into a serious complication – exhaustion. The ageing F-16s and their pilots and mechanics were under stress, leading the air mechanics union to call for a year-long break for its members.

The government scaled back its commitment, but the risk of exhaustion remains.

"The mood has improved since last summer when the technical personnel union warned the Danish politicians that the airmen were worn down after the year long deployment. The military personnel generally see this as a moral and important mission," explained Barfoed.

"But the risk is should the conflict drag on for years and years, morale will suffer. If we keep committing personnel to long missions abroad beyond the capacity of the Fighter Wing structure, then both pilots and mechanics might start to consider their positions and potentially apply for jobs in the private sector or risk having their families break apart. Should this happen, it might have serious consequences for the future of the Air Force and the capability to provide forces for international deployment." **M**



Tomas needs regular doses of testosterone to align his physical body with his identity as a man. But to get the hormones he needs the approval of a psychologist.

"The state is killing my identity"

Transgender individuals say they must endure degrading medical evaluations in order to secure vital hormone treatment and surgery. Many remain stuck in the system for years, grappling with depression and suicide or relying on black-market hormones

"IN THERE, I played the game. Everyone knows you have to, but not everyone can manage to do it because you have to remember your lies and answer the same questions again, and again, and again."

It almost sounds like a line lifted from a dystopian novel. But Tomas, a transgender man who has chosen to remain anonymous, is talking about his mandatory therapy sessions with the state-run Sexologisk Klinik (sexology clinic) at Rigshospitalet in Copenhagen. Hormone treatment is only prescribed after a clinic psychologist gives their stamp of approval.

Words:
Lena Rutkowski

Photos:
Rasmus Degnbøl

Tomas was born with a body that is classified as biologically female and needs regular doses of testosterone to align his physical body with his identity as a man. He doesn't believe he needs therapy for this. He needs hormones. But in Denmark, 'gender dysphoria' – a clinical term delineating the experience of not identifying with the gender assigned at birth – is classified as a mental illness.

In the Danish medical lexicon, the official diagnosis is 'transsexualism.' This means transgender people fall within the exclusive remit of a clinic specialising in sexual

dysfunction, and which also treats people suffering from sexual dysfunction, sexual deviants, and perpetrators of sex crimes.

Once, specialist doctors were able to describe hormone replacement therapy (HRT). But a 2014 health reform led by the national health authority, Sundhedsstyrelsen, centralised all transgender treatment under the Sexologisk Klinik. According to a report released by Amnesty International Denmark last month, the clinic's practices are violating human rights.

Amnesty is collaborating with the trans community on a cam-

campaign to change the health system and declassify gender dysphoria as a mental illness. They interviewed ten percent of the patients currently receiving treatment at the Sexologisk Klinik and found that very few had been approved for HRT, even after two years in the system.

According to campaign leader Helle Jacobsen, most trans people are subject to a series of degrading and humiliating medical evaluations where they feel constantly forced to prove their identity.

The campaign is critical, says Tomas, because "in there, it's virtually impossible to win."

PROVE YOU'RE TRANS

Annalize Troest, Acting Deputy Director at Sundhedsstyrelsen, says that the guidelines for transgender health were changed because they concluded that the treatments on offer to transgender patients at several private gynaecological clinics were uncoordinated and lacked uniform standards.

But the clinic's approach has been slammed by the trans community as discriminatory and invasive.

Mark Nielsen, a 39-year-old trans man, has attended the clinic for two years. He says that it adheres to outdated gender binaries. As a departure point, the clinic assumes that patients are cisgender – meaning that your biological sex and self-identity match up – unless they can prove they are trans.

To satisfy the clinic's understanding of what it means to be trans, individuals need to display hallmark traits of their asserted gender. That means acting stereotypically masculine or feminine, and answering 'correctly' to questions that range from bizarre, to the deeply invasive.

"On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied are you with your clitoris? Do you think about your parents when you masturbate?" says Nielsen, reeling off a list of questions.

"People look over when you say 'clitoris' out loud in a café," he says gesturing at his coffee and slapping his hand over his mouth in mock horror. "But that's the kind of stuff we're being asked at the clinic all the time. And it's completely irrelevant – my gender is between my ears, not my legs."

Another time, Nielsen was asked his thoughts on modern dance and ballet.

"Because of course, 'real men' aren't supposed to like dance. My psychologist also asked me if I perform more 'male' in bed. I retorted, 'how do you perform more male in bed?' I tried to make her come out and ask if I use a strap on, but she chickened out. She wouldn't answer my question, even though I have to answer all of hers."

Proving your identity at the clinic can feel like a rigorous exam, scrutinising a person's personality all the way back to childhood.

"They asked my mother to come in and explain if I had a normal birth," says Nielsen. "They made me bring in photographs of myself as a child – physical copies, because digital photos can be manipulated. I guess they've never heard of scanners."

I'd say you'd need private therapy after your 'therapy' at the Sexologisk Klinik.

TOMAS

PLAYING THE GAME

While Nielsen has seen no progress at the clinic, Tomas was approved for HRT after just two sessions. He thinks it's because he had started taking hormones illicitly beforehand, which allowed him to 'pass' as a man. He also deliberately wore masculine clothes and pulled out his piercings before he went to meetings at the clinic.

"I knew what to say and how to play the game. And I lied. A lot. About being the kind of man that they thought I should be."

Tomas also argues that patients must tread carefully within gender boundaries to get what they want.

"Don't ever, ever say that you used to wear a dress, or that you've been sexual with boys. They'll just tell you that you get turned on by wearing dresses or masculine clothes. Because they're sex therapists, they think about it in terms of sex."

Under the new guidelines set by Sundhedsstyrelsen, a multidisciplinary team must carry out the treatment of transgender people. This includes psychiatrists, plastic surgeons and gynaecologists with knowledge of transgender issues.

According to Troest from Sundhedsstyrelsen, the Sexologisk Klinik was the only medical centre which applied to treat transgender people under the new rules, and was found capable of the job. But Nielsen scoffs at the idea that the clinic's practitioners are gender experts.

"Feminist discourse states that cisgender people don't have to be traditionally feminine or masculine. Girls can play with cars, and men can be hairdressers. But if you are trans, that's a different story."

Nielsen's psychologist once suggested that he was sexually attracted to children and animals, because he defined himself as pansexual – someone who doesn't limit their partner to any specific biological sex or gender identity.

"She had to look up the word on Wikipedia. And this is someone who is writing her PhD on gender theory."

Both Nielsen and Tomas say they are privileged because they already have access to their hormone prescriptions. But other trans individuals are not so lucky, says Nielsen.

"Those people are afraid that if they do not comply and don't answer these horribly invasive questions about their sex lives, then

their cases will be rejected. So they have to play along."

According to Tomas, playing along takes a profound emotional and mental toll.

"My biggest fear was that I would end up believing what they tell me, or what I tell them, and that I would become someone else. The state is killing my identity. It may sound extreme, but that is exactly how this system works."

HEALTH RISKS

Nielsen discovered that he was transgender five years ago and was referred to a specialist. He tried out different kinds of testosterone treatment and settled on a type that produced the fewest side effects. All without any gruelling psychological evaluations.

"I didn't have to prove anything. He trusts his patients. If you say you're transgender, you're transgender."

Tomas' story is rather different. Before his official prescription was granted, Tomas hunted for black market hormones. In 2014, he lined up an appointment with a gynaecologist renowned for trans treatment, but before they could meet, the doctor had to stop seeing trans patients due to the impending reform.

Tomas had heard that the Sexologisk Klinik was notorious for prolonging trans cases. He felt there was no choice except to turn to the black market.

"Mentally, I had already begun to transition ahead of my body, and I suddenly couldn't bear the thought of not having testosterone."

HRT is sensitive to dosage and can pose side effects, so recipients should be monitored with regular blood tests. Tomas ended up sharing a prescription with a friend, but lied to his doctor in order to receive a blood test, saying he had obtained the testosterone abroad.

"I felt like I had to choose between my mental and physical health."

While the Sexologisk Klinik only provides prescriptions for one type of testosterone, Nielsen's doctor is allowed to continue filling his old prescription. But if his doctor retires, Nielsen has no choice but to rely on the clinic.

He also needs the clinic's permission to have a hysterectomy. This is vital because taking testosterone may increase his chances of ovarian cancer. But after two years at the Sexologisk Klinik, Niels-

en is yet to get the green light on the surgery.

"I could die waiting because they won't take something out of me that I don't need or want. I know one transgender man dying in hospital right now. They found out too late."

MENTAL ILLNESS

Admitting to any form of mental illness could also stall your case at the Sexologisk Klinik, says Nielsen.

"For cisgender women, if you want hormone treatment and you have depression, those would be treated like separate issues. But If I want hormone treatment and I have depression, I'd be told to deal with the depression and come back."

He uses the example of a 19-year-old trans man who suffered from anxiety, after experiencing transphobic violence in his small town. The man was rejected from the clinic three times and told to return when he stabilised. Nielsen says the clinic didn't consider the possibility that withholding treatment contributed to his mental anguish.

Tomas also worries that trans people suffering from mental illnesses won't get the necessary help for their psychological issues, because they dare not speak up in the clinic.

"The person deciding what you can do with your body medically should not also be your psychologist. It discourages you from being honest. In fact, I'd say you'd need private therapy after your 'therapy' at the Sexologisk Klinik," he says, adding that gender-confused teenagers are particularly vulnerable in the clinic's environment.

"It's such a confusing phase to go through and you need to discuss it in a healthy environment with a gender expert. I would say it's impossible to figure out your gender in the clinic. It feels like you already need to have all the answers."

In 2014, a 19-year-old transgender woman, legally known as Jan-nick Norsted, hanged herself. She had been rejected by the Sexology Klinik for being too young. Nielsen holds the clinic accountable for turning its back on a patient.

"They told her to come back at 25, some arbitrary number. They have blood on their hands."

ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO BACK
Jacobsen from Amnesty feels that when it comes to trans rights, ►



Mark Nielsen has waited two years for the Sexologisk Klinik to approve a hysterectomy. Without it he has an increased risk of ovarian cancer from his testosterone treatment.

Denmark took one step forward, and two steps back. Prior to the reform, Denmark was the first European country to allow its citizens to legally change gender without a clinical diagnosis. This allowed people to self-determine their legal name, or decide what gender is displayed on their social security card.

But after the Sexology Clinic was given the monopoly on transgender treatment, trans people lost their right to self-determination. Jacobsen says the system is discriminatory and threatens Denmark's international reputation as rights-progressive.

"The health reform doesn't correspond with Denmark's general approach to LGBT rights. We're facing international scrutiny. At the UN periodic review, Holland and Uruguay asked us about this point."

Tomas is more cynical, however.

"I think Denmark is really good at promoting itself as a nice country, but on so many levels, we're not. We do it on so many levels with LGBTQ issues, tightening our borders, our treatment of refugees... we have problems with racism and feminism."

MISSING TRANS VOICES

Both Nielsen and Tomas agree that there's a lack of trans visibility in Denmark. There are very few trans voices in the national conversation, says Tomas, which further cements Denmark's binary

I will not have another trans man jump out the window while the parents wonder what the hell happened.

MARK NIELSEN

ideas about gender and nurtures transphobic attitudes.

While he's pleased that the media storm around Amnesty's campaign has drawn attention to the cause, he accuses national newspapers and the state broadcaster, DR, of representing trans people one-dimensionally.

"The national coverage of the campaign has been really shitty. Most of the time, the media makes us feel like circus freaks. 'Oh, trans people are being asked about masturbating,'" he says, mimicking a reporter. "Just like in the clinic, the sex element is all they care about, not our human rights."

He also says trans people are often reduced to mere test cases, or expected to exclusively discuss their physical experiences.

"I'd also like to discuss rights. Or I'd like to talk about the many nice and exciting things about being trans. But the media sees Amnesty as the experts, and we trans people are just the samples."

Tomas says it can be hard to muster up the necessary emotional energy to speak for trans rights and make people aware of the challenges.

"Trans people can be really vulnerable and many of us can't even get out of bed because it's so tough to be out there. Now we have to go talk to all these fucking journalists proudly waving their LGBTQ flags and congratulating themselves for discussing these issues. And we have to sit there, and smile, and

thank them for inviting us to talk."

Nielsen says that the struggle for trans people often goes unarticulated, but is ever-present.

"I am just a tired, old man. I drink coffee, vacuum, and go to the movies. I am just as boring as everyone else. But I face a whole lot of problems cisgender people don't have to deal with. There's an internal struggle between your mind and body, a possible external struggle with your family or workplace, or when walking down the street holding your boyfriend or girlfriend's hand."

Meanwhile, Nielsen agrees that participating in campaign publicity is not always easy for him, but he's resolved to push on.

"If I can do anything with my name, my face, via photos and interviews, I will. Because I will not have another trans man jump out the window while the parents wonder what the hell happened," he says.

"No more deaths. Not on my watch."

POSSIBLE CHANGES AHEAD

Following the release of the Amnesty report, Troest says Sundhedsstyrelsen has met with the Sexologisk Klinik and has planned meetings with a number of interested organisations with a view to alter the guidelines.

"The clinic has taken this very seriously, and will look into their questions and procedures for improvement."

But even if the current system is altered and the mental illness classification is abandoned, Tomas says that trans health still has a long way to go.

"As far as I know, there has been no long-term research into HRT and its long-term effects anywhere in the world. I think the longest test period is five years. So nobody knows what is going to happen to us. We need medical staff, administrators and doctors who are specially schooled in trans treatment."

Nor does a new health system mean that Tomas is relieved from the burden of trying to play by the rules of a cisnormative society. He says that transphobia goes to the very heart of Danish society, beyond its health institutions.

"Denmark's biggest issue is the way we talk about gender. There's a conservative way of thinking, and we need to open up the conversation before we can really help trans people. Even the terminology of 'gender dysphoria' doesn't make sense. If society were more trans-friendly, we wouldn't feel 'dysphoric.' For now, it feels like there is a big fear of people who are gender non-conforming, it makes people uncomfortable."

He flashes a smile that is both wry and weary.

"Luckily – and sadly – I know how to play the game. Not just inside the clinic. But out there in the streets." **M**

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The counter-citizens

Aydin Soei is best known for writing about young ghettoised Muslim men – alienated, angry and susceptible to radicalisation. But in his new autobiographical novel, the journalist and sociologist reveals a dark family secret to cast new light on Denmark's integration problems

It's hard to imagine Aydin Soei punching someone.

He greets me with a warm smile at his doorstep and chuckles at my small talk about Danes and their fondness for filter coffee. The sociologist and author arrived in Denmark as a four-year-old refugee from Iran in 1986, so he has an outsider's appreciation of the quirks of Danish culture. But then he hands me a steaming cup of the stuff, because he is, after all, a Dane.

Not that he felt like one when he was a kid. Back then, Soei was picking fights and throwing punches amidst the tall concrete blocks of Avedøvre, a suburb in south-west Copenhagen with a large immigrant population and a high crime rate. It's the kind of place, he says, that local kids would describe as a "loser area" with "loser schools."

"Young men from these backgrounds feel angry because they don't feel recognised as equal citizens. They feel like they're born with an additional debt to Danish society because of their stigmatised neighbourhood, their skin colour, their religion and their social status."

Words:
Lena Rutkowski

Photos:
Rasmus Degnbøl

Soei claims these young men are stuck with a feeling of 'counter-citizenship' – a rough translation of his self-coined Danish term 'modborger-skab'. His past works *Skyld* (Guilt) and *Vrede unge mænd* (Angry young men) explored the consequences of clustering immigrant families together into 'ghettos', which results in alienated youths, who become attracted to violence and susceptible to religious extremism.

"Modborgerskab" is increasingly popping up in the Danish lexicon in the aftermath of last year's terror attack in Copenhagen, when Omar El-Hussein, a 22-year-old Dane born to Palestinian immigrants, shot two people in an act of Islamic extremism. Denmark is not alone in wondering how the welfare state failed one of its citizens. The recent attacks in Brussels and Paris by local men with Islamic backgrounds has also left Europe trying to tease out the perpetrators' point of no return.

For Soei it was an act of violence that released him from the destructive social legacy of Copenhagen's ghettos. When he was 12, he relocated to a new neighbourhood with his mother after his father returned to Iran. In his new autobiographical novel, *Forsoning: fortælling om en fam-*

ilie (Atonement – the story of a family), he blows the lid off a dark family secret that was long kept from even his closest friends.

Soei's father didn't leave Denmark willingly – he was deported for murdering another man.

'STUPID GHETTO KID'

"I didn't tell anyone about the murder because I knew I would never be free of that identity. I would be characterised as the 'murderer's son'. I sometimes wonder if I had told people, would I have done as well as I have? Probably not. Because people would expect less from me."

The move from Avedøre to Gladsaxe proved to be a turning point for Soei, as for the first time he was being schooled with children from the Danish middle class.

"For a long time I couldn't let go of my identity as a stupid ghetto kid from Avedøre."

In his old neighbourhood, status was achieved through hypermasculinity – being physically strong and good at fighting. Recognition was found in gangs that dismissed the value of academic accomplishment. But in Gladsaxe he was shocked to find that this was not the case.

"On the first day of school I met a nerdy kid who annoyed me. So after a couple of days I walked up to him and hit him. I'm standing there, waiting for him to hit me back, but to my complete surprise he ran away crying. I found it so weird, but everyone looked at me as though I were the strange one. It turned out that in this new world fights didn't get you recognition – homework did."

It still took Soei a few years – and two criminal convictions – to shake off the self-destructive impulses and realise he could match the other students academically and go on to university.

UN-DANISH

"My son is growing up in a different world from mine, because when I was young the only people we knew with immigrant backgrounds also came from ghettos. Now there's a growing ethnic middle class who has been to university. I myself have moved up into a well-educated class, which has a completely different narrative."

Irrespective of class, however, Soei argues that anyone who isn't an ethnic European can feel alienated in Denmark because of skin colour. He points to the polarised political debate about foreigners, particularly those with Middle-Eastern backgrounds, which he argues is the result of immigration being a relatively new phenomenon to Denmark.

"We're still debating whether my son should be called a 'third-generation immigrant' instead of just 'Danish', even though he has a Danish passport. In a country like the US, he and I would just be considered Americans. It makes me think 'wow, are we still considered aliens here?'"

Soei says his cultural capital allows him to feel accepted most of the time. On a daily level, his friends, neighbours and colleagues don't make him feel like a second-class citizen, but for those with foreign ancestry who are struggling with school and living in poor neighbourhoods, it's a different story – one third of all young men with immigrant backgrounds end their schooling without being able to read and understand newspaper content.

For a long time, I couldn't let go of my identity as a stupid ghetto kid from Avedøre.

"They're the group we have to worry about because their low social status prevents them from being recognised as equal citizens. They feel permanently excluded, even within their own immigrant communities. These men find it difficult to find a girlfriend or a wife, because women from the same background don't want a loser man from the ghetto, as the girls tend to be better educated and want a man with the same social status."

For those left behind, Soei says that the stakes are higher today than ever before.

"The number of guns is exploding in these areas, and you've got a generation of boys growing up believing that guns are normal. There's a level of gang violence never before seen in Denmark," he says, adding that these men risk being drawn to religious militancy, which legitimises their status as outsiders.

"That's why there's a crossover between gangs in Copenhagen and radical Islamic militant groups, who are recruiting the same alienated men by exploiting their self-narrative of 'counter-citizenship.'"

COPING WITH EXILE

This reality parallels the fate of Soei's father, who spiralled into violence after moving to Denmark, where he felt like a second-class citizen.

"A lot of men from that first generation of immigrants didn't have jobs, but also weren't really there for their families – what the hell did they do with their time?" says Soei.

"They couldn't handle the realisation that they had to earn respect in Danish society rather than get it handed to them. In Iran my father was a regional leader of the communist party, but in Denmark he found himself at the bottom of the bottom. He reacted by becoming bitter, hateful, an alcoholic who eventually killed a man."

The situation for his generation would have been much worse if it weren't for the mothers, Soei argues. While the men railed against the loss of the breadwinner role expected of them, immigrant women pushed themselves to integrate for the sake of raising their kids. His own mother, Farideh, learned Danish, went to university and became an engineer in the wake of the family tragedy.

"It was very important for me that she had a strong voice in the novel so she didn't just seem like an oppressed woman from the Middle East. My book is the story of two parents who coped very differently in exile in a new country."

THE POLITICS OF 'GHETTOS'

To prevent the next Omar El-Hussein, Soei argues that the government must stop stigmatising disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Since 2010, the government has drawn up an annual list of especially marginalised public housing estates – more commonly called the 'ghetto list' – which suffer from high levels of crime and unemployment. Soei says that the term 'ghetto' is counterproductive to integration. He said as much to prime minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen when invited to speak at a conference in the wake of the Copenhagen terror attacks last year.

"I ended the talk by telling him that using the word 'ghetto' is a great political tool to make a segregated area seem like a threat. And it's in-

In Iran my dad would not have been allowed to act the way he did – his family, or neighbours would have said something. In Denmark, although he was diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic, there was this idea that his behaviour was the result of his Middle-Eastern culture.



fluencing a whole new generation of young boys in these areas. They don't have critical faculties yet, so when they're told their area is a 'ghetto', they hear that they are second-class citizens," he says, adding that housing estates should attract positive role models to move in.

"Social workers see it as a positive when 'Hassan' moves away from a stigmatised area to study at university. Where I studied in the US, it's seen as a negative, because you're a good role model and you're leaving. We should instead offer subsidised accommodation to incentivise them to stay."

As for ethnic Danes, they're rarely seen in these kinds of neighbourhoods and when they are, it's usually a transitory space for young students seeking cheap housing before moving on.

"They don't contribute anything positive when they live there, for them it's just a stopover. You have to incorporate families with children who integrate into the local community."

DIVIDED SCHOOLS

Children from immigrant backgrounds also suffer under the segregated school system, says Soei. More diverse schools would go a long way to integrating children whose parents have foreign heritage.

"We lose a lot of these boys in the schools in poor areas. In Denmark and Sweden – the two Scandinavian countries with the most gang members and highest rates of radicalisation – the kids are statistically more likely to share a classroom with others from the same, stigmatised background," he says. "Meanwhile Finland has the best immigrant social mobility in Scandinavia, partly because kids with foreign parents are much more likely to share classes with middle-class Finns."

He also argues that social services and teachers could play a stronger role in helping vulnerable families.

"In Iran my dad would not have been allowed to act the way he did – his family, or neighbours would have said something. But in Denmark the problems were treated with a 'hands off' approach. Although my father was diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic, there was this idea that his behaviour was the result of his Middle-Eastern culture. So his problems weren't flagged properly before he murdered a man."

According to the Soei, it's part of the same narrative which looks at these young men in stigmatised areas and assumes that they'll do badly in life.

"My point is that this is a false narrative. Society can't make the choice for them – they must do it. But to facilitate this kind of social mobility we need to look at schools, housing and risk factors in certain subcultures," says Soei.

"We should have started three decades ago," he adds, reflecting on his own family history. "But it's not too late." **M**

JOIN US

Partnerships / Advertising

We launched The Murmur in June 2014 with the mission of providing high-quality English-language journalism to the international and Danish communities in Denmark. In November 2014 our work was rewarded with a 1.1 million kroner grant from the Ministry of Culture. We are now distributed in over 350 locations across Denmark and continue to add new locations every month.

English-language media is important for Denmark. It brings together Danes and internationals and invites debate and dialogue far beyond Denmark's borders. In-depth reporting about Denmark helps new arrivals find their feet by providing context and nuance to the daily news stream. Danes benefit too, by learning about their country from an alternative perspective. In short, we believe we make Denmark richer.

But to maximise our potential we need to grow. We want to make podcasts and videos. We want to send reporters to all corners of the country to uncover the true state of Denmark. We want to stay free. All this costs money.

We are looking for partners to invest and grow our platform for quality and insightful journalism about Denmark. We are open to a range of different partnerships, from free newspapers delivered directly to your business to sponsored content and advertising.

We believe these partnerships will both enable The Murmur to fulfil its mission, while also strengthening your presence by increasing your reach to our thousands of monthly readers.

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Thank you for your support.

Belgium's deadly circles of terror

Coordinated bombings in Brussels may have been in the works for some time, aided by an underworld where crime and extremism blur together



Miguel Descart / Flickr

Belgian soldiers on patrol in Brussels.

OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, Belgian counterterror officials told me they were working nonstop to prevent an attack and that the danger had never been so high. Today, their worst fears came true when coordinated bombings struck the airport and a subway stop in Brussels.

As part of my work on a forthcoming ProPublica/Frontline documentary about the terrorism threat in Europe, I travelled recently to Belgium to investigate the nation's central role as a staging ground for the Paris attacks four months ago.

"It is just a matter of time before terrorists will succeed in attacking Belgium," federal prosecutor Er-

ic Van der Sypt told me weeks ago in Brussels.

The concerns of Van der Sypt and other officials were driven by events as well as surveillance of suspects in Belgium and Syria. In December, Belgian police prevented two alleged plots, one by the remnants of the Belgian-led group that hit Paris in November and another by a radicalized motorcycle gang, the Kamikaze Riders. In the ensuing months police pursued fugitives linked to the Paris attacks and intercepted menacing phone chatter and WhatsApp chats filled with photos of jihadis posing with guns, camels and corpses in Islamic State's dominions in Syria.

In one intercepted phone call to

Brussels, a Belgian militant in Syria discussed his friend Bilal Hadfi, a Belgian suicide bomber who died in Paris in November, according to counterterror officials. The militant's mother warned him not to do bad things like his friend Bilal or she would pray for him to go to hell. The militant asked what the friends were saying about Bilal back in the "sector," the tough Molenbeek suburb of Brussels where many of the Paris attackers grew up.

"Are they talking about him? Are they praising him? Are they saying he was a lion?" the militant said. "For them, the jihad is all about recognition on the street, in the neighbourhood, the glory," a counterterror official told me.

The Islamic State claimed responsibility for the Brussels attacks. Investigators are trying to determine whether the perpetrators were part of the group of Belgians who provided support for the Paris plot. At least two suspected Paris plotters had remained on the run after the arrests Friday of Abdeslam and another suspect.

"We think there was a bomb maker who survived, someone who had put together the vests in Belgium, and we don't think it was one of those who died in Paris," a senior French counterterror official told me before the Brussels attacks. "Usually they don't want to lose someone with those kinds of skills in an attack."

Sebastian Rotella

ProPublica

It is also possible a separate cell carried out the attack in Brussels. A Belgian counterterror official cited intelligence reports that 180 European operatives were trained by the Islamic State and deployed back to their home countries during the past year. Some of those operatives, including at least three of the Paris attackers, used fraudulent passports to pose as Syrians and concealed themselves in the chaotic flow of refugees and migrants across the European Union's borders.

Officials describe the threat in Belgium as concentric circles: Hundreds of hard-core terrorists intent on striking Europe after express training by the Islamic State in what a captured French suspect described to interrogators last year as a "factory of terrorists" in Syria. Extremists willing to fight and die without leaving home. Gangsters who drink and gamble, yet support the Islamist cause with guns, cash, cars and documents. And loose networks of petty criminals and associates willing to shelter notorious fugitives like Salah Abdeslam, the suspected Paris attacker arrested last week in his native Molenbeek.

The size, volatility and street gang-like mentality of that underworld help explain how Abdeslam dodged authorities for four months – and how bombers eluded security forces on high alert and struck the Brussels airport and a subway stop near the European Union headquarters today. The estimated casualty count so far: more than 30 dead and 230 wounded. The convergence of crime and extremism in has reached dangerous levels in Belgium but reflects a larger European security challenge.

"You have so many people who are adrift, who are involved in common crime and decide terrorism is a shortcut to paradise," said Dolores Delgado, a chief counterterror prosecutor in Spain. "It gives them a chance to get revenge on society. It is a virtual army of people who follow a demented ideology whether they go to Syria or remain here. A large number

The bombers benefited from the support of an underworld where crime and extremism increasingly blur together.



A memorial site in Brussels following the attack.

of people who are ready to help an attack."

France and Belgium are the top targets because they have sent so many fighters to Syria, where they train with thousands of French-speaking jihadis from Tunisia and Morocco. The Belgian counterterror official said: "When the recruits arrive in Syria, they are asked, 'Do you want to fight here or go back home to Europe to be a martyr?' If they want to go back to Europe, they are given express training, a week of arms and explosives, then sent back. It's as quick as possible."

The coordinated attacks on the airport and the subway appear to have been in the making for some time, officials said Tuesday. The timing, however, may have been driven by fears that the arrests last week would expose other militants operating underground in Belgium, especially if Abdeslam and the other suspect cooperated with investigators.

"I don't think the attack was organized quickly as revenge for (Abdeslam's) arrest," said Delgado, the Spanish prosecutor. "The alert has been at a high level ever since the Paris attacks. It could be that they sped up a plot because they thought Abdeslam might collaborate. But their overall goal is to spread terror and chaos."

The fugitive Paris suspects and

the bombers benefited from the support of an underworld where crime and extremism increasingly blur together, making the threat even harder to identify. The phenomenon exists also in France, Denmark and other nations with sizeable populations of working-class, alienated children and grandchildren of Muslim immigrants. But it has reached dangerous extremes in Belgium. An increasing number of recruits and supporters of the Islamic State are violent criminals who radicalize rapidly, yet don't necessarily adhere to a fundamentalist lifestyle.

The Kamikaze Riders are a prime example. Their profile is rare in the world of Islamic extremists: a motorcycle gang with all the trappings of that subculture, yet radicalized and was implicated in a plot for an attack in December.

In Belgium, gangsters often provide crucial support to terrorist operations without even bothering to maintain a veneer of piety. Police describe robberies of fast food stores and drug dealers that, after further investigation, turn out to be done to finance trips to join the jihad in Syria. Even supposed hardcore Islamists break the rules: In calls caught on a wiretap, investigators listened to a veteran Brussels extremist scold his daughter for wearing a short skirt, then borrow money from friends and arrange for the

services of a transvestite prostitute, officials said.

Referring to some of the Paris plotters, a Belgian counterterror official said: "These guys are not stereotypical Islamists. They gamble, drink, do drugs. They are lady killers, wear Armani, fashionable haircuts. And they live off crime."

Petty criminals, friends and relatives, mostly of Moroccan descent, helped the clean-cut Abdeslam live underground in the capital despite an aggressive dragnet. They were motivated by family and friendship ties and a deep-seated hostility toward mainstream society that often doesn't have much to do with religion.

"When you do a raid on a house, in normal areas people talk or help if they think someone was a terrorist," Van der Sypt said. "People are not collaborating in Molenbeek. They are throwing stones at the police. It has created a community of people who don't go to school anymore when they are 11 or 12. They are very good criminals as teenagers. They become kingpins at 18."

Once again after Tuesday's attack, Belgian police were kicking down doors in search of fugitives suspected in the airport bombing. At least one fugitive was said to be on the run, and police found bomb-making equipment and an Islamic State flag during a search. ■

SPONSORED CONTENT



A true international & bilingual education

At Institut Sankt Joseph, expat and mixed families no longer have to choose between an international or Danish education for their children. For the first time ever, the International Bilingual Program seeks to offer the best of both worlds

THIS AUGUST, less than two years after the International Bilingual department opened at Institut Sankt Joseph, the student body has doubled to 150 students. Its swift growth is a testament to the demand by families for an educational experience that is both Danish and international.

Before the International Bilingual programme was introduced, foreign expats, Danish expats and mixed-marriage families faced a dilemma – Danish or international education? No hybrid option was available. It was an either/or situation. In the words of the Rolling Stones, "You can't always get what

you want!"

Families no longer face this dilemma, as the International Bilingual programme offers the best of both worlds. Institut Sankt Joseph is a private Catholic school with a 150-year tradition of providing a Catholic-humanistic educational program for its students. The International Bilingual program is a department within the larger school and operates under the school's guiding mission. It provides a common meeting point for Danish and international families who would like the possibility of authentic integration and internationalization. In short, it is a Danish and interna-

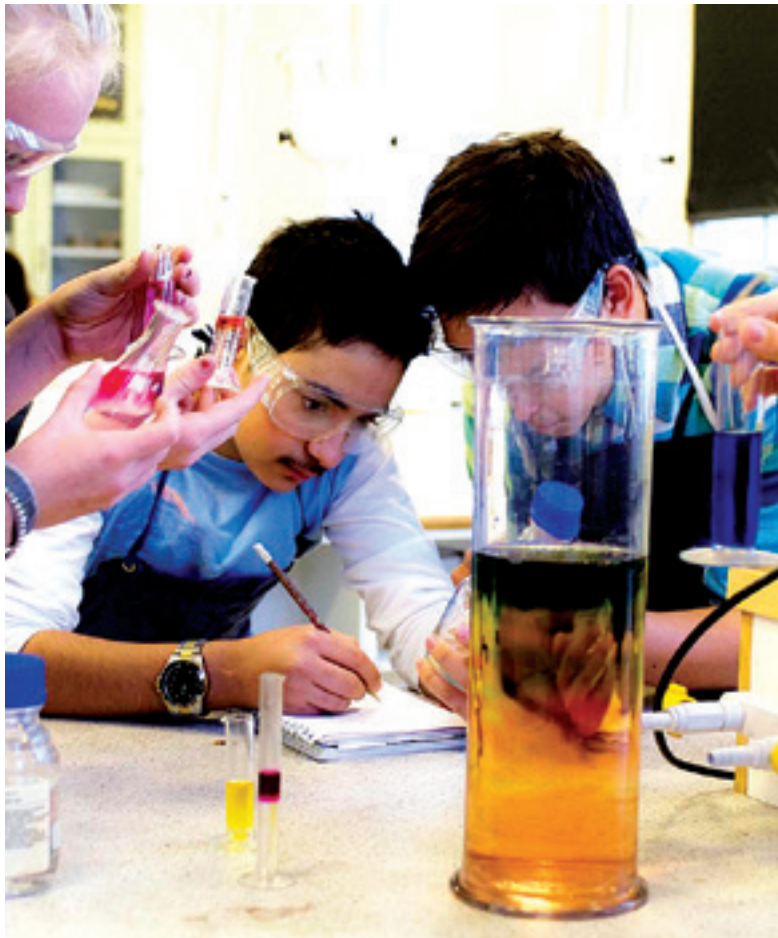
tional educational experience.

INTERNATIONAL AND DANISH

What is authentic integration? The school defines this as the ability to provide opportunities for children and families of different backgrounds to learn, socialise and simply 'be' together in a shared framework. The school has established a bilingual model, where half of the teaching is in Danish and half in English. Beyond the immediate linguistic goal for students to become bilingual, another learning objective is intercultural understanding, where students are capable of reflecting and com-

paring different languages and cultures with classmates who embody these cultural differences.

The school also works with theme weeks in which the Danish and International departments come together to focus on different themes. These project weeks take place three times a year and provide learning possibilities across traditional barriers. Institut Sankt Joseph believes that the concept "internationalisation" needs to be more than just a buzz word in schools. We express it by placing students of Danish backgrounds together with students from other linguistic and cultural



Institut Sankt Joseph is a private Catholic school located in Østerbro, close to Østerport station.

The school was founded in 1858. The International Department opened in 2014.

The international department offers classes from Grades 0-8 in 2016/17 and 0-9 in 2017/18

Education is in both English and Danish following both the Cambridge International Examination system and Danish national curriculum.

www.sanktjoseph.dk



backgrounds, locating Danish and International department classrooms next to each other, and making assemblies and common activities for all students.

FLEXIBLE EDUCATION

The other stated objective of the International Bilingual program is to give students and families the flexibility to succeed in Denmark and abroad both now and in the future. In practical terms it means curriculum is divided so that Mathematics, English, the Sciences and Global Perspectives are taught in English by native English speakers following the Cambridge International Examinations system. Danish, Art, Religion and Music are taught in Danish, by native Danish speakers following the Danish National Curriculum.

This dual curriculum model is designed to provide students with an internationally-recognised and transferrable level in Mathematics and English. This is important to many families that will be leaving Denmark in either the near or distant future. The school wants to provide families, which have many questions in terms of their future plans, the stability and comfort that goes with knowing that their children will transition nicely into a program if and when they leave Denmark.

Not all families will leave Denmark, so it is important that the

The school has established a bilingual model, where half of the teaching is in Danish and half in English.

Danish language and cultural immersion, which goes with being part of a Danish school, are cultivated and maintained. Institut Sankt Joseph believes that it can meet both of these objectives. The international bilingual program seeks to provide not only flexibility here and now, but also for the future. By this the school means that students will have the unique opportunity to attend either an international (IB program) or Danish gymnasium upon completion of studies at Institut Sankt Joseph.

"You can't always get what you want!" This is indeed the case for many scenarios one must encounter in life. One must choose one thing over another, either this, or that. For foreign expat, Danish expat and mixed-marriage families there has always been a difficult decision between choosing an international or Danish education.

But no longer! Institut Sankt Joseph's international bilingual program was designed to confront this dilemma and provide a hybrid solution where families have both an international and Danish educational experience simultaneously. The school feels that the hybrid option is a systemic need that families have the right to choose from amongst other options. In the words of the Rolling Stones, "If you try sometimes, you might just find, you get what you need!"

COLUMN

Culture cuts: Denmark slipping into invisibility

Arts organisations in the regions are on their knees following government cuts to culture. This short-sighted policy risks undermining one of the very reasons that Denmark is a model nation – its value for the ephemeral

TEN MONTHS AGO, I resigned my job on one of Britain's oldest music magazines, left the apartment in London I'd spent five years renovating and came to live in Denmark. I'd been visiting the country on-and-off for a while, sent here to report on arts events by newspapers and magazines at home. Increasingly I came to believe that in Denmark the arts were valued, were thriving, were fearless and were making a genuine difference to people's lives while creating a strong impression abroad. From its egalitarian modern opera house to the reckless and indiscriminate creativity of Distortion, I felt this country – from my limited experience – had it right.

And I wanted to report on it. In an age where dubious religion has been replaced with the soulless pursuit of money, I felt the world could learn from Denmark's creative ferocity and the communicative and soulful nourishment it fostered. As foreigners asked themselves why this little country was continually rated the happiest in the world, here was a chance to point to its enlightened legislative attitude towards culture and education.

A year later, those sentiments feel a little naïve, even embarrassing. In that time, Denmark's international reputation among progressive individuals has plummeted, mostly due to the government's decision to legalise stealing from refugees. But that act of cynicism is the tip of an iceberg.

Largely concealed from international attention are the huge cuts to Danish welfare and education systems that are models of accessibility and economic delivery, as well as weakened environmental policies. Add to that a colossal re-

Many foreigners us admire Denmark because it always seemed to place value on ephemeral things. If that changes, Denmark will have sold its soul.

Andrew Mellor



'Lohengrin' at the Royal Danish Opera.

duction in funding for arts and culture that connect people – including immigrants like me – to what it means to be alive.

Offering a safe, dignified home to fellow human beings is a matter of life and death. How can that be compared to art? There are a few reasons. Firstly, as a proportion of government spending, culture is tiny. Secondly, it pays off financially in tax-receipts and job creation. And thirdly, it's not about either of those things. It's about placing value on something other than economic gain, on experiences that help us think, share, question, respect and love – that make sense of our welcoming of refugees in the first place. Even the neoliberal government in Britain increased its culture budget in 2015, stating that to do otherwise would be 'a false economy'.

Not so in Denmark, where spending on culture is to be reduced by 600 million kroner. The Royal Theatre has had its budget cut by 35 million (that, after ma-

jor cuts in 2011). The net effect for the theatre, among other things, is the impending loss of 14 positions in its orchestra. Arts organisations in the region are on their knees, unable to do more than the bare minimum (outreach work, experimental projects and cross-cultural collaborations are usually the first to be ditched). Ticket prices will be hiked to help cover the shortfall, taking performances out of the reach of many. Before long, an entire generation of Danes will become strangers to creativity. Denmark will slip into international invisibility, no longer delivering Lars von Triers, Kasper Holten or Møs to do great work on a world stage and inspire other Danes to follow them.

Not long ago I saw the opera *Lohengrin* here in Copenhagen. I can hardly describe how radiantly beautiful the orchestra sounded with the right number of musicians. As an opera critic, I was able to report to my editors in New York and London that the show was a good

one. As a human being, I was shell-shocked by the story, how well it had been told and what bearing it might have on my own existence. Opera can be difficult and it has a bad reputation. But in Copenhagen, in a modern theatre with a more down-to-earth audience, opera is as good as it gets. If I invited my mates from language school along to see *Lohengrin*, I know they'd be moved and changed by it. Government subsidy means – for the moment – that they'd also be able to afford the 125 kroner the cheapest seats cost.

Time will tell whether Denmark's great arts institutions will find the funding they need to survive, and whether they can continue to combine excellence and openness. Many foreigners admire Denmark because it always seemed to place value on those ephemeral things. If that changes, Denmark will have sold its soul, joining the world's crushing corporate conveyor belt. Even worse: I'd have to move to Norway. **M**

COLUMN

Sympathy for violence

It usually takes a tragedy for us to notice, but around the world angry boys are growing up into angry men with no regard for society. Without purpose, structure or guidance they'll find violent ways to cope – I know I did

I WAS DELIGHTED when I heard we were running an interview with Aydin Soei. I have followed his work for some years and always been impressed with his insights into the mentality of angry young men. Having been one himself, he is in a position to provide a realistic and unique perspective on an issue that is alien to most of our politicians.

His work also affects me on a personal level, because I was also once a very angry young man.

Growing up with a single mother and a mostly absent father, I harboured feelings of resentment and embarrassment. When I started school we lived in a two-room apartment and our upstairs neighbor was a junkie with a small daughter. She would throw parties every night, depriving us of sleep and turning my mom into a neurotic wreck. On the top floor lived another single mom with her two sons. My mom once told the boys to stop tagging graffiti in the stairwell, so they keyed our car. The last I heard they were both in prison.

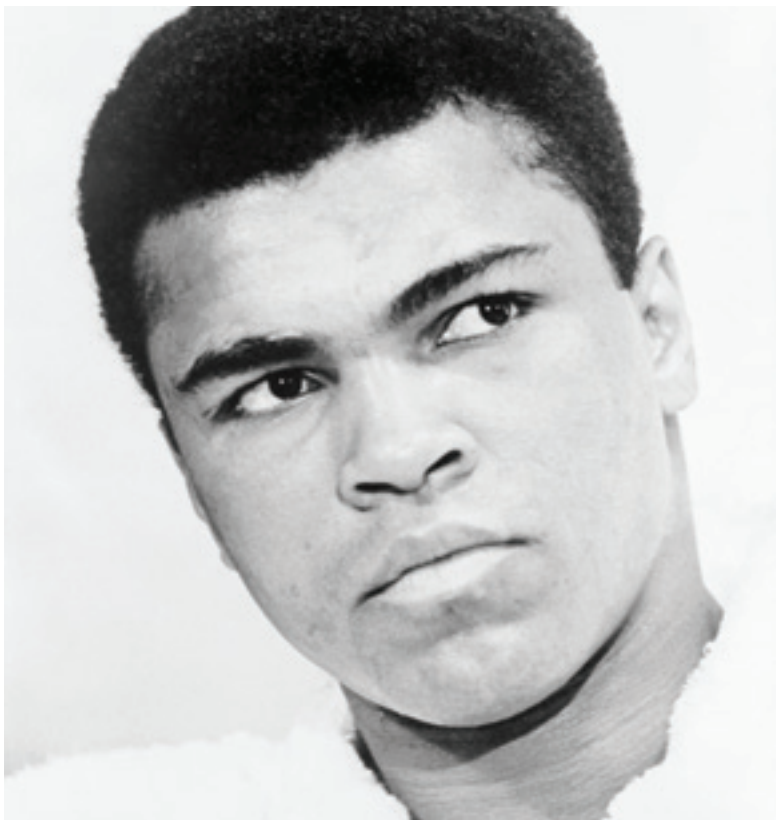
A stressful upbringing can easily create angry kids full of resentment, that spills out from the home and into the schools and everyday life. I never felt like I belonged anywhere. I could make friends, but had a hard time holding onto them. It wasn't until I joined a group of other angry young men, at age fifteen, that I felt a sense of belonging.

We would go to parties, get drunk, hit on girls, get into fights and be a menace to society. Some kids didn't seem to have any parents and were therefore always willing to throw parties. There was plenty of fun and carefree times and school mostly felt like a bother.

I ended my Danish education by calling my teacher a bitch, something I'm very sorry for.

We would go to parties, get drunk, hit on girls, get into fights and be a menace to society.

Elias Thorsson



Muhammed Ali was also an angry young man. He turned out OK.

But while my social life was so deeply nihilistic that it threatened my education, I needed it for the sense of belonging, a connection I felt I was lacking at home. It is an incredible feeling knowing you have a group of guys who have your back.

Everywhere in society there are wayward, angry young men from broken homes, doing badly at school. Most of them will end up becoming productive citizens, but along the way there are squandered chances, lost educational opportunities and, often, violence.

My turning point from that path is always at the back of my mind.

During a night of drinking right before my sixteenth birthday, my friends and I got into a serious fight. Later that night, as we stood outside a bar, my friend sudden-

ly yelled "run!". He took off, but as I turned around a police officer grabbed me by the shoulders and dragged me into a police van.

I immediately broke down in tears. I was no good at violence or macho alpha-male behaviour. The following morning, after spending a night in a jail cell, I was done. I would drop out of the group – clean up my act so to speak.

My friend who told me to run managed to evade capture that night, but kept getting into trouble, and I often wonder: 'what if our roles had been reversed?'. Would it have made a difference? Maybe not. I was never particularly brave or strong, but I guess I'll never know.

When I hear Soei talk about angry young Muslim men I feel a degree of sympathy. Because the problem of angry young men isn't that

they are Muslim, the problem is universal and can be found in every country and in every culture.

There is one amusing observation I've made. Having met both far-right hooligans and violent men on the far left, I've noticed that they seem to be the same. Angry, anti-society, and completely convinced of their ideas. It is as though somewhere along the way somebody whispered to them that their problems were either due to "the immigrants", or "capitalism". Anger is everywhere humans are.

There are no simple solutions or easy answers to the problem of angry men. But in my case, I lacked structure and order on which to build my life. I lacked self confidence because I didn't feel wanted. I lacked purpose, something to aim for, to enjoy.

There is a poignant story about Mohammed Ali who, aged 12, had his bike stolen. Angry and looking to attack the thief, he met a police officer who happened to be a boxing coach. The officer convinced Ali that he needed to learn how to fight if he wanted to be able to exact revenge. But he never got to beat up the thief, instead he stopped directing his aggression to the street and started spending all of his after-school time at the gym. The rest is boxing history.

Like Ali, angry young men need to find a healthier outlet for their emotions — they need guidance and purpose. Let's remember Omar El-Hussein might just as well have shot people in the name of a criminal gang as in the name of Islam. We need to confront the environment that fosters anger, alienation and resentment. Angry young men will always find an outlet for their aggression, let's try to make sure it is a healthy one. **M**

Wikimedia Commons

WHAT'S ON • APRIL



ENGLISH THEATRE
Why Not Theatre Company re-
turns with Love and Money, a
play about how greed affects
friendships, love and life.

Bådteatret
Nyhavn 16Z, KBH
teaterbilletter.dk
Opens April 7

8

GAME INDUSTRY SHOWCASE
The Nordic Game Jam is cele-
brating its 10th anniversary. Both
professional and hobbyist game
developers come together to
showcase their work and exper-
iment in a creative environment.

Aalborg Universitet KBH
A.C. Meyers Vænge 15, KBH
nordicgamejam.org
Ends April 10



RADIO FESTIVAL
Featuring This American Life's Ira
Glass, the festival will host 12 ra-
dio cinema events, 2 panel dis-
cussions, and 4 workshops.

radiofestival.dk
April 14-17

16

Sober Clubbing
Bliss Conscious Clubbing is a
drug, alcohol, and smoke free
musical event. More than a club,
Bliss fosters a liberating environ-
ment, one in which people feel
free to dance and let go.

Dansekapallet
Torv 1, Bispebjerg, KBH
bit.ly/blissclubbing

EVENT OF
THE MONTH



16

DESIGNER FLEA MARKET
The popular indoor flea market,
Finderskeepers, provides upcom-
ing designers with the chance to
show and sell their designs.

Lokomotivværkstedet
Otto Busses Vej 5A, KBH
April 30 – May 1

20

ART FESTIVAL
The International Performance
Art Festival will exhibit a variety
of contemporary performances
both site-specific and participa-
tory, which work to tackle cur-
rent issues.

Warehouse9
Halmtorvet 11C, KBH
bit.ly/artfestivalkbh
Ends April 24



SALSA FESTIVAL
The Copenhagen Salsa Festival
brings some of the best salsa in-
structors from around the world
to offer 50 salsa workshops in a
range of styles and levels.

Kedelhallen
Nylandsvej 75, KBH
copenhagensalsafestival.dk
April 22-24



DANISH AND NORDIC MUSIC
SPOT Festival seeks to create a
visible platform for Danish and
Nordic music. Both established
and new artists perform, hop-
ing to catch the eye of the music
agents in attendance.

Vester Allé 15, Aarhus
spotfestival.dk
April 28 – May 1

28

WALTZ ORCHESTRA
André Rieu, the Dutch violinist
and conductor, is back in Den-
mark with a new show. With his
60-piece Johann Strauss Orches-
tra, Rieu will perform a concert
full of surprises.

Forum
Julius Thomsens Plads 1, KBH
forumcopenhagen.dk



48-HOUR FESTIVAL
Nørrebro's 48 hour festival cel-
ebrates local culture with a di-
verse mix of over 50 events.

Nørrebro, 2200 KBH
48timer.com
April 29

30

SAKURA FESTIVAL
Inspired by the Japanese cel-
ebration, Copenhagen's Saku-
ra Festival encourages people
to admire the beauty of the 200
cherry blossom trees in Langelin-
ie Park while enjoying tradition-
al Japanese food, music, and art.

Langelinie Park
Langeliniekaaj 2, 2100 KBH
sakurafestival.dk
Ends May 1

Natasha Jessen-
Petersen

WHAT'S ON • MAY

1

MAY DAY

Celebrate International Workers' Day with thousands of other Copenhageners in Fælledparken.

Fælledparken
Fælledparken, 2100 KBH

**ADELE**

British singer-songwriter Adele is bringing her powerful vocals to Denmark, performing songs off of her newest album, 25.

Forum
Julius Thomsens Plads 1, KBH
forumcopenhagen.dk
May 3

10

VIKING MARKET

Experience Ribe's authentic annual Viking market, which will be bustling with people and filled with booths selling both crafts and food.

Lustrupvej 4, 6760 Ribe
ribevikingcenter.dk
Ends May 8

**IGGY POP**

Known in part as the vocalist of the proto-punk band The Stooges, Iggy Pop is performing his 2016 solo album Post Pop Depression in Denmark.

Falconerhalle Salen
Falkoner Alle 9, KBH
iggypop.com
May 5

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