

DECEMBER 2017 VOL. 4 ISSUE 11

FINAL ISSUE

Fined for helping the government – foreign researchers reported to the police

Refugee Rescue is committed to ending deaths at sea

A foodie haven? Amager's no longer the gastronomic doldrums



Product of a violent past

Khaterah Parwani is a voice for Denmark's social and economic minorities

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.



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GOODBYE



Peter Stanners
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THIS IS the last issue of The Murmur. We've come a long way since our first issue in June 2014, and we've survived this far despite the odds. Throughout our 41 issues, we've stuck to our promise to deliver high-quality news and features about Danish society, culture and politics – in English, for everyone.

We've had to make some sacrifices to keep our writers writing, the printer printing, and our distributor driving. We made our own money, and earned some government funding along the way. But it's not been enough to grow in the way we had hoped. The sensible decision is to call it a day.

The Murmur wouldn't have been possible without my three co-founders, Jesper Nymark, Mark Millen and Kevin McGwin. They took a chance on including me in the project, for which I'll be forever grateful. Mark's done a fantastic job as our director and head of sales and marketing by keeping the money flowing. It's been an absolute pleasure working beside our art director Mette Salomonsen, who designed and laid out the newspaper every month. Rasmus Degnbol has been my rock as photography editor – I'm honoured he chose to work with me. Aileen Itani is the best proofreader I could have asked for. And special mention must also go to James R Luke (AKA Barnes) and Hristo Aleksandrov for tirelessly delivering the newspaper month after month.

But most important are you, the readers. I'm moved beyond words that we had a loyal audience who supported our work and shared us with their friends and colleagues.

I'm sitting at my desk at 22:33 on Saturday night. Tomorrow at 16:00, the newspaper goes to print for the last time. All I have to do is write this, and I'm not sure what I want to say. I've always found the editorial hard to write. If there's anything this job has taught me, it's to be sceptical of opinion writers. Few people have clear worldviews that can be condensed into regular chunks of prose. The world is too complicated for that.

I hoped to let the content do the talking. What we had to say about Denmark could be found between the lines of the interviews, features and articles about living in Denmark today. But no matter how hard we tried to diversify the content, we constantly found ourselves circling issues of identity and belonging – what does it mean to be Danish? What does it mean to be a minority in Denmark?

Denmark is a paradox. It's a small, homogenous country with enormous social cohesion. But it's also incredibly outward-looking and cosmopolitan. The first causes the second – the best defence against external forces is to be open to them.

It's this negotiation that Denmark is struggling with. And they're not alone. Brexit and Trump are both manifestations of a desire to claw back a sense of control and independence. The fear is that the outside world will corrupt what makes 'us' special.

For many Danes (and Brits and Americans) the biggest external fear is Islam – or rather, the idea that Muslims, armed with anti-democratic values embedded in Sharia law, will overrun Denmark through mass immigration, refugees, and rapid population growth. Just like in Germany in 1933, they'll vote away democracy.

This fear informs the highest levels of Denmark's right wing government. They express skepticism at the possibility of having religious convictions and also believing in democracy. The government – with the help of the Social Democrats – has now withdrawn Denmark from its obligation to resettle UN refugees. Their answer to perceived anti-democratic forces is to abandon humanism. To preserve Denmark as a free, open and tolerant country, the only solution is to be illiberal, closed and intolerant. How far will they go in abandoning their values in order to protect them?

Quite far, it seems. The repeated cuts to social welfare and spending on research, education and foreign aid would not have been possible without DF's votes – a party that is otherwise pro-welfare. In exchange for these votes, they've been granted restrictions on immigration. And as the number of immigrants and refugees has dropped, so

too has the quality of public services residents can expect. It doesn't matter that their grandparents in nursing homes only get one shower a week – at least they don't live next door to a Muslim. Ugh.

And look, I'm not an open-borders fanatic. It's the most vulnerable who are most affected by high levels of immigration, through competition for limited low-wage work and cheap housing. I'm a huge supporter of the EU, but even I had to admit in the Brexit debates that EU migrants to the UK suppressed wage growth at the low end of the scale and ultimately undermined support for the project. It's sad that Social Democrats are now lending their votes to the anti-immigration agenda. But if a majority of Danes want tighter borders, they've got to get in on the action in order to stem the flow of voters to DF. It's disheartening that the only conceivable future left-wing government would have to continue these strict immigration policies.

I don't have an answer to how many immigrants and refugees Denmark can afford to take. I'm hopelessly unqualified to answer that. I just know that the closer to zero we make that number, the less Denmark becomes a place that is worth living in. The collateral damage gets too high as it becomes increasingly impossible to make a life in Denmark without a Danish passport. The net just continues to tighten around those of us in the international community (expats, refugees and immigrants alike).

In the process, Denmark gets poorer, because we are the fresh blood that is vital for keeping Denmark culturally and economically wealthy. They can't do it without us – the people who move here for the promise that this country offers, and who now watch Parliament in shock and wonder, "How far will they go in abandoning their values in order to protect them?"

If anything, I hope that The Murmur contributed to making the argument that liberal freedoms and human rights are worth fighting for. That we need to listen to each other and acknowledge each other's hopes and fears. And that while the world is big and scary and there are horrible people out there with religious arguments to justify their bigotry, we all lose if we fight back with bigotry of our own. **M**

CONTRIBUTORS



Rasmus Degnbol Photo Editor and a winner at last year's Danish Press Photo Awards. Rasmus produced most of the photography in this issue, including drone footage of the Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh. @rasmusdegnbol



James Clasper Contributing Editor. This month James explored the rising gastronomic scene on Amager. @jamesclasper



Joshua Hollingdale Staff writer. Danish/British Student at Danish School of Media and Journalism and freelance reporter. He reported on the government's decision to push for changes to the European Court of Human Rights. @joshuaursin



Hana Hasanbegovic Staff writer. Originally from the Balkans, Hana has a master's degree in English. This issue she interviewed artist Ana Pavlovic. @HanaHasanbegov2



Bradley Axmith A translator, day trader, web designer, amateur viking ship builder and martial artist. Bradley wrote two stories – one about the dangers of increased police powers, and the other about a new centre in Nord Vest to help homeless EU migrants.



Gabriele Dellisanti Editorial intern. Media and communications student at Lund University, Gabriele took a look at gender equality and why Denmark is falling behind. @gabriedellisanti



Emily Taft Editorial intern. Graduated with a degree in English literature from the University of Cambridge last summer. She wrote a review of Royal Copenhagen's annual Christmas tables.

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[sumsum]

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SPROG

MONTH IN REVIEW

Refugees in work

More than 1000 refugees have begun the government's Basic Integration Education (IGU), developed last year to help refugees into the labour market – a collaboration between businesses and municipalities.

Failed asylum seeker dies onboard plane during forcible deportation

A 34-year-old Algerian man died following an altercation with police during his forcible deportation as a failed asylum seeker.

Police had escorted the man onto a plane bound for Paris when the conflict

erupted before take-off. Witnesses recalled that the police had to physically restrain the man, who was shouting, for around 30 minutes before he finally lost consciousness.

He was taken off the

plane and to a hospital, where he later died. The independent police complaints commission, DUP, has launched an investigation, which is normal procedure. Protests were held in Copenhagen following the incident.

Mail-order baby

A Danish couple bought a Polish baby from its mother for 5,500 kroner. They were found guilty of providing fake information to secure the baby a social security number. The child remains with the couple.

TEEN TERRORIST

A planned attack on two schools was averted in 2016 when its mastermind was captured – a girl who was only 15 years old at the time. She has now received an eight-year sentence for planning attacks on her own school and on the Jewish school Carolineskolle. The girl, who is from an ethnic Danish family, is thought to have been radicalised online by Islamic extremists. Her family found bomb-making equipment in their basement and called the police. The prosecutor called for an indefinite sentence, but the Eastern High Court settled on eight years.

Peter Stanners

Paradise pensions

The shocking extent of tax evasion was once again made clear last month with the release of the Paradise Papers. A cache of 13.4 million confidential documents from the law firm Appleby were obtained and analysed by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, exposing the secret tax affairs of more than 120,000 people and companies, including Queen Elizabeth II.

Appleby also helped Denmark's biggest pension fund, PFA, establish a hedge fund in the tax haven Cayman Islands in the Caribbean. The hedge fund Midgard Fixed Income invests primarily in Nordic equities, and last year moved its operations to Luxembourg.

PFA's CFO Anders Damgaard explains that they established the fund in the



The Cayman Islands

Cayman Islands to attract international investors, not to avoid paying taxes.

"If we had to sell a hedge fund from Denmark under Danish regulations, it would be very difficult for even a German investor to invest," Damgaard told Politiken. "It's practically impossible. This is in part because of the tax rules, but also local regulations and language barriers."

Tax minister Karsten Lau-

ritzen agreed that Danish regulations make it hard to set up investment funds in Denmark.

"Our tax rules are complicated. For many reasons, it is not attractive to establish hedge funds in Denmark," Lauritzen told Politiken. "Of course we have to fight tax havens, but we can also choose to lower taxes and reduce the difference between being here and in shady places."

TikTok / Joe Lin

#METOO

Peter Aalbæk Jensen has been banished from the award-winning Danish film company Zentropa, which he co-founded. Jensen was accused by nine former female staff interns of sexual harassment during their time at the company. For example, as punishment for making a mistake, he offered them a choice between spending a day working at his farm or lying across his knee to receive a spanking. 88 former and current staff members have since penned a letter contesting the image of Zentropa that has been presented in the media.

HIT HOUSE OF INTERNATIONAL THEATRE House of International Theatre (HIT) is an extended platform for international and English-language theatre, cultural activities and cultural exchange. Located in the heart of the city, on Huset-KBH's 4th floor stage, HIT presents international theatre that is unique, daring and engaging. HIT HOUSE OF INTERNATIONAL THEATRE	DEC SLAPSTICK SHERLOCK A witty and modern satire about a seemingly unsolvable but mostly idiotic and unreasonable mystery case, combining theatre, slapstick and music. A Manusarts production Nov 30 - Dec 10, 2017 Tue-Sat: 19.00 Sun, Dec 3 at 17.00 Sun, Dec 10 at 14.00	JAN SEX AND BETRAYAL A humorous cabaret about the challenges of dating in a modern world and intimate investigation into the roots of an affair. A Manusarts production Jan 18th-Jan 28 2018 Tue-Sat: 19.00 Sun 21st 17.00 Sun 28th 14.00	SEX AND BETRAYAL BETWEEN THE SHEETS A humorous cabaret about the challenges of dating in a modern world and intimate investigation into the roots of an affair. A Manusarts production Jan 18th-Jan 28 2018 Tue-Sat: 19.00 Sun 21st 17.00 Sun 28th 14.00
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CITY

Skyscrapers versus sunbathers

You're sitting on Islands Brygge at the height of the summer – basking in the final rays of sunlight after a day of swimming and sunbathing – when you're cast into shadow. But the sun hasn't set behind the horizon – it's behind an enormous skyscraper.

This could be the result of the decision to approve a new development, Postgrunden, beside Copenhagen Central Station. The plot of land currently houses the 100-year-old red-brick Copenhagen Central Post Building and the 40-year-old sorting facility Postterminalen. In 2015, former owner PostNord sold both for 900 million kroner to Danica Pension, which is leading the redevelopment.

Copenhagen Central Post Building will be transformed into a luxury hotel, while Postterminalen will be torn down to make way for commercial buildings and 520 homes – of which 100 will be affordable social housing.

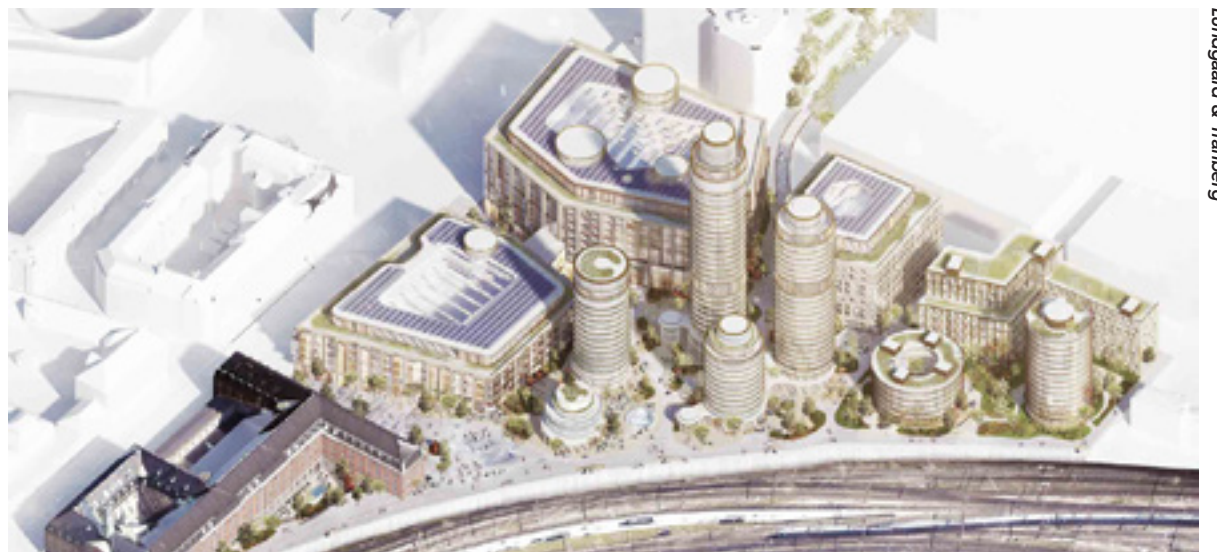
In November, City Hall's Technical and Environmental Committee approved the developer's plan, which will include five round towers rising 52, 54, 67, 93 and 115 meters tall.

It's the tallest tower that is expected block the final 20 minutes of sunlight on parts of Islands Brygge – a hugely popular and unique bathing site in the middle of the city – on the longest day of the year, according

We are talking about a shadow that will pass for five minutes late in the day. I think we can live with that.

**JAKOB HOU-
GARD FROM THE
SOCIAL DEMO-
CRATS (SOCIAL-
DEMOKRATIET)**

Peter Stanners



Lundgaard & Tranberg

A render of the Postgrunden development, looking south. In the bottom left corner is the Copenhagen Central Post Building, which will be turned into a luxury hotel. The towers will be a mix of residential and commercial buildings. The tallest will rise 115 meters, potentially blocking some of the late summer sun at Islands Brygge.

to calculations from architects Lundgaard & Tranberg.

Only the Social Liberal Party (Radikale) and the Red-Green Alliance (Enhedslisten) voted against the developer's proposal on November 6, preferring that the towers be lower.

Mette Annelie Rasmussen, a member of the Technical and Environmental Committee for the Radikale, told Berlingske that it was a "sad day".

"As it looks now, we are knowingly building in a way that will detract from other Copenhageners. I don't think that's the right way to go," she said, adding that if the plan could have been improved if the developers

were given one more chance to make changes.

"Every time we sat at the table with the developers and investors, we have been able to develop better solutions."

The reason the towers need to be so tall, argue the developers, is to create as much open public space as possible between and around the new buildings. Their ambition is that the new development will create a better urban connection between the Central Station and the Kalvebod Brygge development along the harbour.

Jakob Hougaard from the Social Democrats (Socialdemokratiet) ar-

gues that the benefits of the development will outweigh the brief loss of sunlight on Islands Brygge. With 4,700 workplaces projected to be created in the development, the municipality expects it will raise around 43 million kroner in annual tax revenue.

"You can't build in Copenhagen without casting a shadow," Hougaard told Politiken newspaper. "We are talking about a shadow that will pass for five minutes late in the day. I think we can live with that. The shadows caused by Postgrunden do not justify blocking a project that can create 5,000 new jobs, homes, and all the other benefits of the project." **M**



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Immigration Service cracks down on international researchers

International researchers at Danish universities are increasingly being reported to the police for violating their work permits. Their crimes? Giving talks about their research or working as external examiners at other Danish universities

PROFESSOR Brooke Harrington of Copenhagen Business School (CBS) is an internationally-recognised expert on tax havens who has received more than three million kroner in research grants from the Danish state. She faces a 13,500-kroner fine for holding seminars about tax evasion for the tax authority SKAT and the Danish Parliament.

She was charged on October 13, which was 18 days before she completed eight years of uninterrupted stay in Denmark and qualified for permanent residence. If convicted, it would delay her right to permanent residency for for a further 15 years. It could also disqualify her from professorial positions elsewhere in the world and from obtaining travel visas, which are vital in her field of work.

"I'm in a state of total physical and mental exhaustion from this process," says Harrington.

"I'm getting no work done, unable to sleep or eat – just barely getting by. Six weeks ago I was on top of the world and barreling along with my research. Now that's all over. A decade-long research program brought to a screeching halt because I was foolish enough to agree to the request of the Parliament and SKAT to share my work with them."

RULE PREVIOUSLY IGNORED

According to her work visa, Harrington needs to apply for permission every time she wants to carry out work outside CBS. But Harrington is far from alone in being unaware of the rule – both SKAT and the Danish Parliament weren't aware that inviting Harrington broke the rules. And given that CBS is also being fined along with Harrington, the university's administration weren't aware that her external seminars were illegal.

"We think it's a natural part of being a professor at CBS that you also work as an examiner at the University of Copenhagen, or a PhD supervisor at Roskilde Uni-

I'm in a state of total physical and mental exhaustion from this process.

**PROFESSOR
BROOKE
HARRINGTON**



Professor Brooke Harrington.

versity. And suddenly the rules are being enforced when they weren't before," CBS Rector Per Holten-Andersen told DR.

The lack of awareness of the rule could be the result of constantly changing immigration laws. According to Information newspaper, Parliament has passed 68 changes to Danish immigration law between 2002 and December 2016 – roughly once every three months. One international researcher at CBS who was charged with illegally taking a secondary job had his fine rescinded because the Immigration Service hadn't explained the conditions that need to be fulfilled before taking on a second job.

"The many changes to immigration law makes it really hard for

practitioners and residents, who are affected by the laws, to make sense of them," Lucienne Jørgensen from the Danish Institute for Human Rights told Information.

Harrington's extra curricular activities also didn't raise eyebrows, given that Danish university law demands that universities share their knowledge with wider society.

INCONVENIENT AND ABSURD

Since being charged, Harrington has followed the official procedure in seeking permission to hold paid and unpaid guest lectures. Filling out the 19-page form, together with the organisation that invited her, took 15 hours.

"Given that I get an average of

three to five requests for public lectures each month, that means I'd lose a minimum of one full working week just to get permission to do those lectures. I would ask the Danish taxpayers, who pay my salary: 'Which parts of my job should I give up for a week each month to fill out this paperwork, teaching or research? And do you think this is a good investment of your contributions to the state?'"

According to Danish Universities, an organisation that represents the eight universities in Denmark, there are 14 cases like Harrington's that are currently pending.

"It is inconvenient, bureaucratic and absurd, because communicating knowledge to the world is a fundamental part of being employed as a researcher at a Danish university," writes Jesper Langergaard, Chairman of Danish Universities.

"We need to remember that one in four researchers employed at Danish universities is a foreigner. International researchers are responsible for a large portion of the world-class knowledge that is found at Danish universities. So shouldn't we engage these bright minds without the rigid rules and cold bureaucracy, and instead make their work simple and easy, and welcome them warmly to Denmark?"

Integration Minister Inger Støjberg argues that the Immigration Service is only following the rules by reporting researchers such as Harrington to the police.

"You need permission to work in Denmark, and that must remain the case in the future," she told DR. "Having said that, I also want to see if we can make the rules simpler."

Harrington is now considering her options and deciding whether it is worth staying in Denmark.

"Having my professional life ruined by being caught up in an internal fight between different parts of the Danish government is really painful." **M**

Rasmus Deghbol

Peter Stanners

If he calls you a herring, should you be pleased?

40
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GET STUCK IN

THE FOODIES MAKING **AMAGER** GREAT AGAIN

James Clasper digs in to Amager, and finds that Copenhagen's much maligned island is undergoing a gastronomic awakening

A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO on a night out in Copenhagen, Lisa Abend discovered the journalistic equivalent of virgin coal. As an American food writer, Abend has written for international media about some of the best dining in the world, and penned a book about life at El Bulli when it was the world's most experimental restaurant.

That night, she found herself searching in vain for a decent bite to eat on Amager. The island is known

James Clasper

for many things, including the airport, the beach, and a slew of cut-price tanning salons. But the quality of its restaurants isn't one of them. (I'm not counting the celebrated restaurants of Christianshavn and Refshaleøen – Noma, Amass, Kadeau, Barr, and 108 – even though they're technically on Amager.)

In fact, as Abend described in a delightfully droll piece for Munchies, many of the island's restaurants offer a kind of one-size-fits-all anti-cuisine,

with traditional Danish dishes appearing alongside ersatz simulacra of food from all corners of the globe.

"I realised that this loose mix of world cuisines – Chinese, Thai and frikadeller on the same menu – was a common phenomenon of Amager," Abend noted in her tongue-in-cheek taxonomy of the island's culinary range. "A part of the city that I had known for cheap rentals, Hells Angels and a love of solariums had its own cuisine. I called it Amager Fusion."

It's with a mix of relief and delight, then, that in this – the final Get Stuck In column – I can reassure anxious readers that change is afoot in the part of the city long known as the Shit Island (Lortetøen), a nasty nickname that tends only to expose the class anxiety of the person using it. You see, in the past year alone, a number of decent bars, cafes and restaurants have opened on Amager, each of which is worth seeking out, even if you're not an ækt Ama'rkaner.



Left and below: The icecream parlour Alice is founded by a former Noma waiter, and also serves amazing coffee. Photos: Alexander Kinunnen



Left and below: Toto Vin & Spisebar on amagerbrogade has an open kitchen and serves food inspired by Southern Europe. Photos: Jacob Hansen



Toto Vin & Spisebar is a buzzy joint a couple of kilometres along Amagerbrogade, the island's main drag. The best seats flank its bustling open kitchen, from which Toto's efficient waiters shuttle dishes that showcase southern European fare such as burrata, carpaccio, and agnoletti – a Piedmontese pasta, which at Toto is filled with roasted pumpkin, parmesan and sage. Other popular dishes include grilled duck hearts with chimichurri and lime, steak tartare with pickled cantaloupe, a vibrant tuna tartare that comes with avocado mayo, coriander and black sesame, and a mighty côte de boeuf with béarnaise sauce.

The standout dessert at Toto is the homemade apple and tarragon sorbet. But if the night's still young, consider cycling up the road to **Alice**, an ice-cream parlour founded by former Noma waiter Anders Lorenz. Adhering to the mantra that "the fewer ingredients, the better the ice cream," he makes small batches of about half a dozen flavours, ranging from classics such as chocolate and vanilla to more

esoteric options like toasted rice and malt. His aim is to make ice cream that's as pure and intense as possible. Indeed, Alice's chocolate sorbet contains so much Peruvian dark chocolate that, Lorenz says, "You're basically ruining us when you buy a scoop."

Alice first threw open its doors in the dying days of summer – a brave decision that may explain why it also sells coffee made with beans from Koppi, one of Sweden's top roasters. But it isn't the only new spot serving higher-quality coffee. This year also saw the opening of a second branch of the **Cub Coffee Bar** – formerly known as the Copenhagen Coffee Lab and arguably the best cafe in the city centre – as well as The Nomad & The Bean, which opened on Holmbladsgade in August. It works with a social enterprise in Myanmar to import single-estate Burmese coffee.

Though the so-called third wave of coffee – the shift towards more creative control over sourcing and roasting – appears to have crashed on Amager's shores at last, few peo-

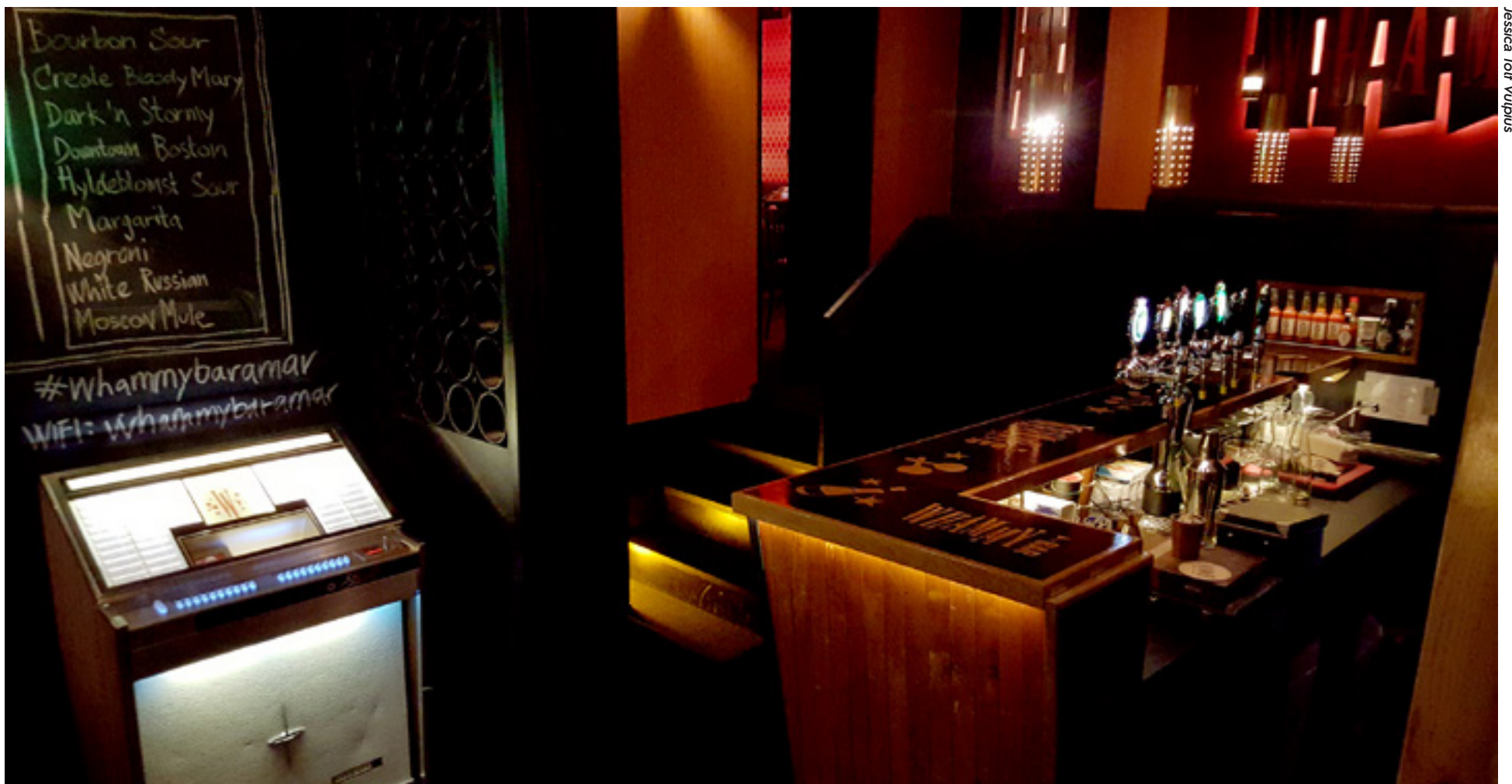
ple go out of their way for a decent cup of Joe. But in **H3**, which opened last summer, Amager has a seafood restaurant that's worth a detour south of the harbour. That's because it's a spinoff of Amager Fiskehus, the long-established fishmonger next door. Though H3's seasonal menu includes oysters, North Atlantic prawns, smoked eel and fishcakes, go for the fish n'chips. They are Copenhagen's best, bar none. H3 is a classy-looking place, too, with industrial furniture, stylish ceramics and elegant pendant lighting. And forget Tuborg. At H3, the dishes are best paired with a crisp glass of Sancerre.

Whammy Bar, a short stroll from Lergravsparken metro station, also serves decent wine. A modern take on the bodega, the stylish newcomer was named Bar of the Year in lbyen's 2017 reader's poll. It offers several local and international beers on tap, a range of well-priced classic cocktails and wine from Vinhanen. There's a decent jukebox, too, which isn't all that surprising: Whammy

Bar is part-owned by local record company Crunchy Frog, perhaps best known for early-noughties Jutland chart-toppers Junior Senior.

Move your feet, then, from Whammy Bar to **Amager Ølhus** and legendary bodega **Jaguaren** on Holmbladsgade, then onward to **Det Argentinske Vinhus** and finally to **Haabet Bodega Bar** on Amagerbrogade, and you should have yourself a rather enjoyable bar crawl.

Meanwhile, rumours persist about Amager's next big opening. (A ramen shop! An authentic taqueria! A natural wine bar! O tempora, o mores!). Some may rue the changes and lament how longstanding establishments make way for fashionable upstarts. On balance, though, it's surely a good thing that, after years as something of a gastronomic dead zone, Amager is being talked about for its burgeoning food scene – where the variety lies increasingly in its restaurants, and not in the far-flung origins of the dishes on individual menus. **M**



Whammy Bar in Amager was voted bar of the year in the iByen 2017 competition.

POLITICS

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENTS UNDER THREAT FOLLOWING NEW GOVERNMENT POLICY

Denmark joined the UN resettlement programme in 1989, and has resettled 500 refugees every year since. But now the government wants to adjust this number each year, based on Denmark's 'social and economic capacity'

THE REFUGEE crisis in the summer of 2015 prompted the right-wing minority government to significantly tighten immigration and asylum rules. Since then, the number of spontaneous refugee applications has dropped from 21,316 in 2015 to only 2,898 through the end of October this year.

Still, the government's work to reduce the numbers of refugees in Denmark is not finished. In late November, they introduced a law to Parliament that would scale back the country's obligations to the UN refugee resettlement program, which it joined in 1989.

Denmark currently accepts 1,500 refugees every three years from UN refugee centres around the world. They are selected by delegates sent by the Danish Immigration Service who are charged with prioritising refugees that they believe will integrate easily into Danish society.

The government now wants to set the number of refugees to be resettled on an annual basis.

"The assessment needs to be made based on the social and economic capacity of the society, taking into consideration the number of spontaneous refugee applications that are made in Denmark," the government states in the law summary, adding that it would be up to the Immigration Ministry to decide how many UN refugees to accept each year, with 500 set as an upper limit.

"We simply need some space to breathe," Integration Minister Inger Støjberg told Ritzau. "There is a very low flow of refugees to Denmark. We haven't seen a slower flow in the past nine years, so there is no doubt that our efforts have really worked. But there are still far too few who are self-sufficient in Denmark. That is one of the elements that plays a part."

GROWING NEED

In a letter to Parliament during the law's open consultation, the UN's refugee agency UNHCR noted that in 2016, 125,800 refugees were resettled around the world – a 20-year high. But while the number of displaced people needing new homes rose to 1.2 million in 2017, resettlement quotas had dropped.

"European resettlement has therefore become an increasingly important part of the global resettlement program," they write. "It is against this background that UNHCR sincerely regrets the Danish decision to halt both the 2016 and 2017 quotas, as global solidarity is currently needed to a greater extent in a long time."

The UNCHR also criticised the government's criteria that refugees be selected based on their "integration potential" so as not to be a burden on Denmark's "social capacity".



Nofa Zaghla plays with her children a day after she was reunited in Canada with her son Emad (second from left) whom she believed to be dead after he was captured by extremists in 2014. Zaghla escaped capture by extremists in 2016 and was relocated to Canada by UNHCR.

"UNHCR has always recommended that resettlement allocations be made primarily on the basis of the identified protection needs of eligible refugees."

Denmark is the only country to formally restrict its participation in the resettlement program.

SOLIDARITY

A number of organisations, including the Red Cross, the Danish Refugee Council, DanChurchAid, and the Danish Institute for Human Rights all noted that Denmark signed the September 2016 New York Declaration on refugees and migrants.

"It establishes that countries support several legal pathways to protection in third countries, including increasing resettlements. The Red Cross believes that Denmark, by cancelling its multiannual quota, neglects these promises," states the Red Cross.

The Immigration Service disagrees.

"In 2016, Denmark was the fifth-largest humanitarian donor in the world, measured per capita," they write. "In the budget for 2018, 2.5 billion kroner has been set aside for humanitarian aid, which is Denmark's largest-ever humanitarian budget."

Other signatories of the declaration have increased their commitment to resettle refugees, however. According to the UNHCR, EU countries had resettled 32,911 refugees by September this year – more than were resettled in all of 2016.

Christian Friis Bach, secretary general of the Danish

Refugee Council, argues that this demonstrates that EU countries recognise the importance of strengthening the resettlement programme.

"They have increased the number of resettled refugees, and Denmark is alone in sending a completely wrong signal at a very unfortunate moment," Bach told Kristeligt Dagblad.

In late November, 40 prominent academics, journalists and cultural figures signed an open letter together with the leaders of the major Danish aid agencies calling for the government to change course.

"The resettlement program is a sign of solidarity with countries such as Lebanon, Uganda, Pakistan, Iran and Ethiopia, which are home to more than a million refugees each. It supports the refugee work in Turkey, where more than three million refugees now live. In modern times, there has never been such great need for international redistribution based on global responsibility and solidarity with the world's weakest."

While the opposition Social Democrats support the minority right-wing government's proposal – granting them a majority in Parliament – the Danish People's Party (DF) has yet to signal its support. According to Ritzau, DF is hesitating because the current language of the law could allow a future government to accept more than 500 UN refugees per year. **M**

Peter Stanners

COPENHAGEN LOSES BID FOR EU MEDICINES AGENCY

Despite presenting a strong case for the European Medicines Agency, Copenhagen lost out to Amsterdam. Danish politicians blame Sweden for failing to support their neighbour

EU AGENCIES in London are the first victims of Brexit. But the spoils aren't going to Denmark – and the government blames the Swedes.

The European Banking Agency (EBA) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA) are among 40 EU agencies scattered across Europe, each tasked with specific areas of responsibility. Both have been based in London, but must now leave due to the UK's impending departure from the EU. 23 cities joined the competition to host one or both agencies, committing huge sums of money to lobby the 27 member states for support.

Copenhagen was in the running for the EMA, which is responsible for monitoring the safety of medicines and making recommendations to the European Commission on new medicine applications. Denmark already hosts a large pharmaceutical industry that would benefit from having the EMA nearby. The agency also comes with 900 staff and thousands of international visitors every year.

The Danish government put together an attractive bid to host the agency at the Copenhagen Towers in Ørestad, which would easily cover the agency's facility needs. The government offered to pay for the rental of the building for 20 years and to retrofit the buildings for the EMA's needs. The total cost to the Danish taxpayer would have been 1.7 billion kroner, which the government argued would be more than covered by the increased economic activity generated by the agency's presence in Denmark.

But in the second round of voting by EU members on November 20, Copenhagen was knocked out of the running, leaving Milan and Amsterdam in the final round. The Dutch capital won on a coin toss after both cities received the same number of votes.

Foreign Minister Anders Samuelsen of the Liberal Alliance argued that Sweden let Denmark down by not supporting them in the second round of voting. Stockholm's own bid was knocked out early in the competition.

"I am disappointed by the Swedes. They disappointed on a number of levels today," Samuelsen said, adding that they also let down their own third-largest city, Malmö, which would have benefited from having the EMA nearby.

"Sweden voted for the Italians, so I don't know what they must be thinking in Malmö right now. It must be hard for the Swedish government and the Swedish Prime Minister to explain," Samuelsen said.

Former Culture Minister Bertel Haarder of the Liberal Party (Venstre) – one of Parliament's longest-serving MPs – also expressed his disappointment. A decade ago, Denmark and Sweden worked together to secure the massive research facility ESS, which was located in Lund, southern Sweden, while the University of Copenhagen was brought in to carry out research.

"I remember it like it was yesterday, how the Swedish Research Minister Lars Leijeborg was so touched by Denmark's support that he tearfully thanked Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen," Haarder wrote on Altinget. "You would have thought that the Swedes would want to repay the favour. But they didn't. They didn't lift a finger to help Denmark get the EMA, even when it was clear that they couldn't get it themselves."

He added, "When will we learn to think Nordic? How long will we let selfishness and small-mindedness spoil it all? Together, we are big and strong and can have influence."

According to the Foreign Ministry, the Swedish government supported Milan in the second round of voting instead of Copenhagen. But Sweden's Europe minister, Ann Linde, says their vote was secret, and won't reveal which city Sweden voted for.

"I understand that Copenhagen is very disappointed, just like we are very disappointed that we did not win. But of course we want to maintain good relations with Denmark," she told Altinget. **M**

Peter Stanners

CONSUMERS BENEFIT FROM CHEAPER NUTS – AND HORMONE-DISRUPTING PLASTIC SOFTENERS

TAXES on a range of consumer goods are being cut following a deal between the right-wing minority government, the Danish People's Party (DF) and the Social Liberal Party (Radikale). It is hoped that the tax reduction will limit the number of Danes who travel to Sweden and Germany to shop for cheaper goods.

The tax cuts belong to a package of reforms designed to benefit the Danish economy. Danes will be encouraged to invest more of their savings in companies with a new policy that allows them to invest up to 50,000 kroner a year in stocks and pay only 17% on returns.

Finally, the government is investing in regional tourism initiatives, the platform economy, and policies to help businesses obtain international investment and secure talented foreign workers. In total, the deal will cost around 14.7 billion kroner in lost revenue by 2025.

"I am happy that we have found a majority to remove old and inconvenient taxes," Tax Minister Karsten Lauritzen stated. "It will be cheaper to be a Dane and run a business."

Taxes on many types of nuts will be abolished with the deal. Currently, there is a 36 kroner tax per kilo of almonds, and 24 kroner tax per kilo of hazelnuts – both will be eliminated.

Alcopops and tea will become cheaper. So too will the cost of purchasing products containing PVC and the plastic-softening chemicals phthalates. Phthalates are suspected carcinogens and endocrine disruptors, meaning they may cause cancer and/or interfere with hormonal systems. The government argues that the tax has had no noticeable impact on their use by producers.

Opposition left-wing parties have already promised to reintroduce the taxes on phthalates if they win the next election.

"PVC and phthalates are carcinogenic and hormone disruptors that we must at all cost remove from our everyday lives and those of our children," MP Dan Jørgensen of the Social Democrats (Socialdemokratiet) told Information newspaper. They are supported in that view by the Red-Green Alliance (Enhedslisten), Socialist People's Party (SF), and the Alternative (Alternativet). **M**

Dissing Weitling



The Copenhagen Towers in Ørestad, which the government hoped would house the European Medicines Agency.

Social Democrats surge and populists lose out

2017 MUNICIPAL & REGIONAL ELECTIONS: The Liberal Party loses its control of a majority of Denmark's 98 municipalities after a disastrous election that saw the Social Democrats secure almost one in three votes nationwide and the Danish People's Party fail to make a promised impact

"VOTE DANISH."

And Danes did. They just didn't vote for the Danish People's Party (DF), whose election slogan tried to remind voters that immigration policies can also be influenced at the local level.

Nationwide, DF lost 1.4 percentage points, and had to settle for 8.8% of the vote. It is the first time that the anti-immigration populists have lost ground in an election in almost two decades. Although they have wielded vast power in Parliament, trading their support for right-wing governments for concessions on immigration, their predicted breakthrough in Denmark's 98 municipalities and five regions has yet to materialise.

While support for the Liberal Party (Venstre), which leads the national governing coalition, shrank by 3.6 percentage points to 23.1%, the left-wing leaders Social

MUNICIPAL & REGIONAL ELECTIONS 2017

Turnout
70.8%

Votes
3,176,020

Most popular candidate:

Jacob Bundsgaard
(Socialdemokratiet)
Aarhus

39,841 votes

Peter Stanners

Democrats (Socialdemokratiet) stormed forward, winning 32.4% of the national vote, up 2.9 percentage points from 2013.

These results mean that Socialdemokratiet mayors now control 47 out of 98 municipalities, up from their earlier total of 33. Venstre lost 11 municipalities, and now controls 37. DF had set its sights on three municipalities, but ultimately secured control of only one, Læsø.

The Conservative People's Party (Konservative) matched DF's 8.8% in last month's municipal election, representing a small gain on their previous result. They nevertheless lost five municipalities, and now only control eight.

DF's poor performance caught many analysts off guard, given its steady progress in general elections over the past two decades. Speaking to Ritzau newspaper, professor Kasper Møller Hansen

from the University of Copenhagen explained that most models for election performance predict that national gains will be turned into local ones.

"DF performed unexpectedly given their 20-year history. We have been wondering about that. I can see they have lost ground in pretty much every municipality. But they should have made gains."

It could be that DF's primary focus on immigration didn't appeal to voters in a local election. Municipalities and regions have enormous power over local welfare, from schools and day care to hospitals and transport infrastructure. Voters who chose DF at the national level may have decided that supporting left-wing pro-welfare parties would be the wiser move this time, not least because successive right-wing governments have inflicted deep cuts

on public services and unemployment benefits – cuts that would not have been possible without the support of DF.

In the elections for the Regions, which are primarily tasked with managing the public health service, Socialdemokratiet also outperformed Venstre, securing control of four of the five Regions – Venstre lost Region Zealand to Socialdemokratiet.

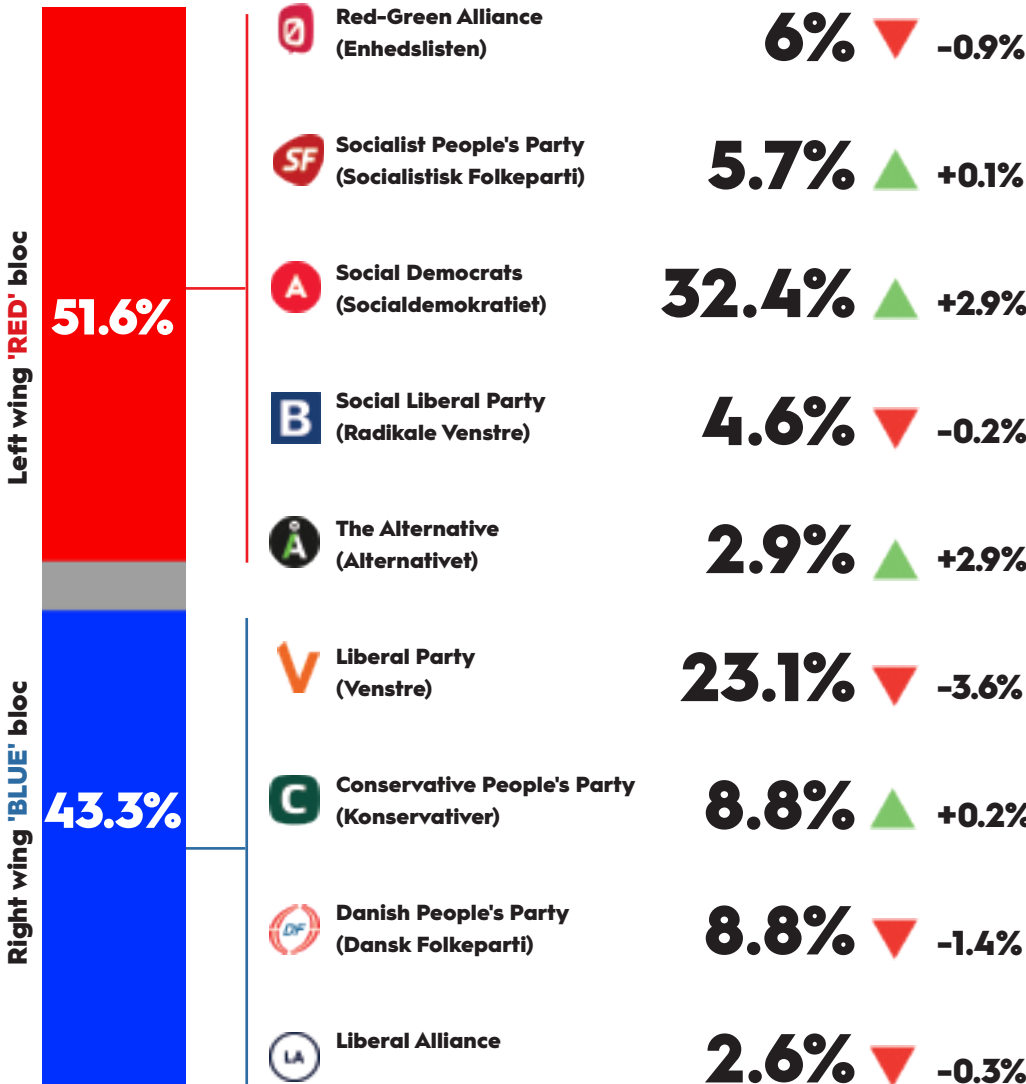
A potential upset was underway in Region South Jutland, where former Foreign Minister and former leader of the Socialist People's Party (SF), Villy Søvndal, was a candidate. But despite increasing SF's share of the vote from 4.5% to 13.6%, Søvndal was not invited by the sitting chairperson, Venstre's Stephanie Lose, to distribute political roles in the Region.

"I feel poorly treated," Søvndal told DR. **M**



Peter Stanners

2017 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS – NATIONWIDE RESULTS



Copenhagen remains 'red'

2017 MUNICIPAL & REGIONAL ELECTIONS: Newcomers The Alternative secured ten percent of the vote in their first municipal election and won control of a powerful city administration. The Danish People's Party lost influence in City Hall, however, as right-wing parties secured only 13 of 55 seats

FRANK JENSEN could have been forgiven for being a little apprehensive ahead of last month's municipal election. The Social Democrat (Socialdemokratiet) Lord Mayor has been at the helm at Copenhagen City Hall for the past eight years, and has invested in making the city CO2 neutral by 2025, providing cheaper and more convenient day care, and ensuring better cycling and public transport infrastructure.

It was not a threat from the right that Jensen faced, however, but from his own left wing. The Social Liberal Party (Radikale), Red-Green Alliance (Enhedslisten), Socialist People's Party (SF) and The Alternative (Alternative) used the campaign to warn the mayor that his policies haven't been quite green enough. If the four parties had secured 28 of the 55 seats in City Hall, they could have formed a 'red-green' alliance without him.

It wasn't to be, though, and the parties fell one seat short. As leader of Copenhagen's largest party, it fell to Jensen to lead negotiations on how to distribute the political roles in City Hall, resulting in a broad agreement that included parties on both sides of the aisle.

It was a good election for the left wing. Despite losing a seat, Socialdemokratiet remained the largest party in City Hall with fifteen seats, followed by Enhedslisten, who held onto their previous total of eleven. Alternativet were voted the third largest party with ten percent of the vote, earning them six seats. Radikale and SF both lost a seat, winning five each.

"It has been a historic night,



CITY OF COPENHAGEN

Following the 2017 municipal election, the 55 seats in Copenhagen City Hall were divided so:



Peter Stanners

and I can't believe it went as well as it did," Alternativet leader Niko Grünfeld stated.

RIGHT-WING MISERY

For the right wing, it was a dismal evening. Earlier this year, Venstre members ditched leading candidate Pia Allerslev in favour of Cecilia Lonning-Skovgaard, hoping that her more pro-business and low tax profile would attract voters. The strategy backfired, and Venstre won only 7.8 percent of the vote, down from 11.4 percent in 2013, losing two seats in City Hall.

"Our result certainly isn't amazing. But it is satisfactory because we remain the largest right-wing party in Copenhagen," Lonning-Skovgaard told Politiken.

While the Liberal Alliance and Conservative People's Party (Konservativer) kept their two and three seats respectively, the Danish People's Party (DF) shed 2.4 percentage points, shrinking to 5 percent and losing a seat. In total, the right wing secured only 18 percent of the vote and 13 of the 55 seats.

DIVIDING UP POWER

The division of political posts in City Hall is based on a proportional system called d'Hondt. The seven administrations is each led by a political committee and its own 'mayor'. These roles are divided up between the parties, with each taking a turn to choose its preferred administration – the order of choice is based on the election result.

Socialdemokratiet earned two administrations (first and third pick), while the remaining five were

divided between Enhedslisten (second pick) The Alternative (fourth pick), Venstre (fifth pick), Radikale (sixth pick), and SF (final pick),

DF is the only party to lose control of an administration due to its poor performance in the election. The party's leading candidate, Carl Christian Ebbesen, has been responsible for the Culture and Leisure Administration for the past four years. He has instead been given positions on a number of less powerful municipal boards.

Socialdemokratiet chose the Finance Administration whose leader is the city's Lord Mayor (Frank Jensen keeps the job he has had for the past eight years). Enhedslisten also chose to continue at the Technical and Environmental Administration.

Jesper Christensen (Socialdemokratiet) will move to the Children and Youth Administration from his previous post heading the Social Services Administration, which will now be lead by the Radikale's Mia Nyegaard.

Niko Grünfeld from Alternativet will take control of the Culture and Leisure Administration, Venstre will manage the Employment and Integration Administration, while Sisse Marie Welling had no other choice but to take on the Health and Care Administration

ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY

When Alternativet and Enhedslisten both took a pass on the Employment and Integration Administration, left wing voters were alarmed – allowing right-wing party Venstre to control this administration was seen as bad news.

Venstre's minority right-wing governments have over 12 of the past 16 years passed a series of unemployment and social reforms that scaled back the size of the public sector and decreased unemployment and disability benefits.

The Culture and Leisure Administration is among the least powerful administrations in City Hall, but in a defence of Grünfeld's new position in Politiken newspaper, Alternativet's local division argued that it could still have far-reaching impact on people's lives.

"The Culture and Leisure Administration affects areas such as children, youth, integration, democracy, employment, entrepreneurship, citizenship and sport. It represents in a significant way the municipality's cooperation with civil society to create an inclusive and cohesive society with strong and positive communities," wrote Alternativet Copenhagen on Facebook.

Ninna Hedeager of Enhedslisten also took to Facebook to explain why she and her party chose not to take responsibility of the Employment and Integration Administration.

"Our committee in Copenhagen has chosen the Technical and Environmental Administration because we think it's a position from which we can fight for equality for the greatest number of Copenhagengers through housing policies, by hopefully securing cheaper rent for many of those who have been hit by the government's poverty-creating reforms, and also by creating a city without pollution, where everyone has access to green spaces," she wrote. **M**

Copenhagen's Seven Mayors



Frank Jensen
Lord Mayor / Leader of Finance Administration



Ninna Hedeager
Mayor of Technical and Environmental Affairs



Jesper Christensen
Mayor for Children and Youth



Niko Grünfeld
Mayor of Culture and Leisure



Mia Nyegaard
Mayor of Social Affairs



Cecilia Lonning-Skovgaard
Mayor of Employment and Integration



Sisse Marie Welling
Mayor of Health and Care

The illusion of gender equality

Denmark was the last Nordic country to get a dedicated feminist political party – perhaps not a surprise, given that Denmark performs worst on gender equality in the region



Rasmus Degnbøl

Photographed in her home, Irena Lukic stood for office for the Feminist Initiative in last month's municipal elections, and received 137 votes.

IRENA LUKIC moved to Denmark in 1992 at the age of five, when her family fled the war in Yugoslavia. She grew up in Vordingborg, South Zealand, and now, at 29, lives in an apartment in Nørrebro.

Lukic stood for office in November's municipal elections as one of four candidates for the Feminist Initiative (Feministisk Initiativ). The party, which was only launched in Denmark this year, received 0,7% of the votes in Copenhagen Municipality.

"Although I was born in Yugoslavia, where gender roles follow

Gabriele Dellisanti

traditional stereotypes, I grew up in a family that was very oriented toward equality. My father would constantly make fun of his friends who believed that only women should take care of household chores," said Lukic.

She discovered feminist subcultures after moving to Copenhagen, and was attracted to events and lectures that focussed on improving gender equality in Denmark. She eventually joined Feministisk Forandring, a movement that promotes dialogue and activism in the field, and was one of the only members to decide to

get involved in politics directly.

Feministisk Initiativ was launched in Denmark earlier this year as a sister party to the original organisation, founded in Sweden in 2005, whose goal is to promote equality and representation for both women and men. Norway and Finland followed suit in recent years, but Denmark was the notable exception. At a conference earlier this year, Gudrun Schyman, leader of the Swedish feminist party, encouraged Danish women to take up the mantle.

"She emphasised that it was not going to start itself. 'If you

want a feminist party, you should start it,' she told us, so some of us volunteered to initiate the work," says Lukic.

14TH IN GENDER EQUALITY

While Denmark may consider itself a global and European leader in gender equality, startling figures suggest that there are areas of Danish society where women are still far from being equal to men – especially compared to the rest of the Nordics. This is why Lukic believes Denmark needs a party that addresses equality and discrimination in society.

"We need structural solutions for structural problems," she says.

In one of the most influential rankings – the Gender Gap Report, published annually by the World Economic Forum – Denmark ranks 14th, performing significantly worse than the rest of the Nordic countries, which were all in the top five.

While Denmark was tied for first in educational attainment, it did especially poorly in economic participation and opportunity (36th) and political empowerment (16th).

"In Denmark, women are very well educated, but when it comes to power and reaching top positions in Danish society, there is still a clear divide between men and women," explains Rebekka Mahler, academic researcher at Kvinfo, a Copenhagen-based knowledge centre that focuses on gender equality and diversity.

MORE PATERNITY LEAVE

Both Mahler and Lukic argue that the current Danish parental leave system is an impediment to the career development of women. Denmark is the only country in the Nordics without a 'father's quota', a portion of parental leave that only the father can take. Instead, mothers and fathers can choose how to share 32 weeks of leave in addition to 18 weeks given to mothers before and after birth.

Danish women ultimately take the majority of this shared leave, which reduces their total time in employment and lifetime earnings. Employers are also more likely to be wary of investing in a female candidate for a job if they are more likely than men to take long periods of parental leave.

"Not long ago, I attended a course for job-seekers in Copenhagen," recounts Lukic. "There was around 80 of us, and the vast majority were women about my age. On the introduction day, we were given suggestions on how to write a job application. One of the first things they told us was that if we are young women around age 30, we shouldn't mention our age."

According to Mahler at Kvinfo, both legislation and culture are to blame.

"On the one hand, the system does not force men to take time off, and on the other, women are still expected in

Danish culture to undertake a greater share of childcare than men," she explains.

DANES BELIEVE EQUALITY HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

A study conducted by Jørgen Goul Andersen and Ditte Shamshiri-Petersen at Aalborg University's Department of Political Science reveals that men in Denmark are dramatically less concerned about equality between genders than in the rest of the Nordics.

The researchers also found that Danes are more committed to maintaining traditional gender roles than their Nordic neighbours.

"It is obvious, also to Danes, that men and women are equally capable of assuming political leadership positions, but it is not equally obvious that fathers and mothers should share the responsibility for children. For Danes, there is far from universal agreement that men should take paternal leave," they wrote.

Both Lukic and Mahler believe that the main reason that Denmark is lagging behind in gender equality compared to the rest of the Nordics is not a pervasive "conservative" mentality, but rather a widespread misconception that the country has achieved full equality.

"In Denmark, we are convinced that we have achieved gender equality, but we haven't. People think there is nothing more to fight for, and that is why we are performing so poorly. The numbers show that gender equality has definitely not been achieved, and we are not really working on it," Lukic observes.

Mahler agrees, and stresses that Denmark has to start addressing the issue of gender inequality in the workplace and in political representation.

"In the way we Danes see our country, we believe we have reached full equality, and in our understanding of the issue, we believe there is nothing to work on. Equality represents an important part of our identity," she says. "But it is quite clear that we are not quite there yet, and the recognition of our problems is the first step we should take." **M**

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A centre for migrants in Nordvest tests the paradox of growth

As Copenhagen transforms into a proper metropolis, its vaunted liveability is in danger of becoming unaffordable for many. Grassroots initiatives like Kompasset in the Nordvest district demonstrate that it is possible to push back against the forces of commercialisation – but could they just be making the situation worse?

ON A FORMER AUTO BODY LOT, nestled between a row of birch trees and a dour, two-story ambulatory care building, an urban oasis is taking shape. The skeletal remains of a fish on a grill, surrounded by benches made of wooden pallets, speaks of a feast enjoyed the night before. Adjacent to the fire pit, carpenters are installing wooden panels on the inside of a container, giving it the appearance of a conference room.

The facility will eventually include a herb garden, lounge, stage and bicycle workshop for residents on a 450-square-meter open space. But it's more than just another urban iteration of hipsterism.

Kompasset (The Compass) is a shelter for primarily EU migrants who move to Denmark for better opportunities, but who do not have access to public services because of barriers to the Danish labour market and the wider society.

Words:
Bradley Axmith

Photos:
Rasmus Degnbol

At Kompasset, which is managed by Kirkens Korshær (a charitable arm of the Danish Folkekirke), its 80 daily users can find help from on-site counsellors and volunteers, and access services like legal advice, language lessons, lockers, showers, coffee and a bed to crash on during the day. Supporting the migrants is a staff of 11 – both in Kompasset and street workers – and 40 volunteers that speak several of the European languages native to the (mostly) men using the premises. The project is funded primarily by Kirkens Korshær and the EU, and is a collaboration with Emergency Architects & Human Rights (EAHR) and the volunteer neighbourhood association 2400 Hippieness.

Kompasset is built on land that is not zoned for habitation, but the organisation has nevertheless applied for permission to house clients overnight. If approved, Kom-

passet will take over as a night shelter from Kirkens Korshær's facility at Hellig Kors Kirken in Nørrebro, and provide 40 beds for use by the homeless in acute need.

The overall goal of the project is to mitigate the homelessness created by prejudice in the labour market, and to advance integration – goals that can help fill an acute shortage of labour currently affecting the Danish construction and hospitality sectors.

Christian Cramon, manager at Kompasset, argues that European migrants are marginalised by policies designed to prevent them from sleeping rough and being a burden on public services.

"There is political support for ensuring that Denmark doesn't become a place that attracts migrants because of benefits. But they end up without any support in dealing with health issues that are not emergencies – they can't

get help for addiction, for example. They get nothing, so our job is to make life more reasonable for them," says Cramon.

Kompasset helps migrants understand what they can reasonably expect from their time in Denmark, such as whether they will be allowed to work. They also help translating fines or other communication from the public authorities. The migrants that show promise of settling in Denmark are given individual mentoring as well as help finding housing and work.

"You can't just stick a homeless person in an apartment and expect them to look after themselves. You need to take a more holistic approach."

SOCIAL DIVERSITY

The project is also helping to maintain the character of the neighbourhood, even as it undergoes rapid gentrification. 2400 Hippi-



Above: Christian Cramon, manager at Kompasset.

Left: The bunks in Kompasset that will serve as a night shelter if they receive permission from the municipality.

Opposite page: An aerial view of Kompasset, in the Nordvest district of Copenhagen.

ness, a residential group with around 40 active members, has collaborated to create the outdoor facilities at Kompasset. By organising events like an annual block party, they hope to keep Nordvest – whose postcode is 2400 – open to everyone. Kompasset contributes to this vision by ensuring diverse social strata in the neighbourhood.

"I asked all our members what they thought of the project, and they told me they think the migrants are just really nice," says Rune Alexander Birkvad Sørensen, who administers the Facebook page for 2400 Hippieness. He added that he hopes there will be more interaction between residents and Kompasset's users when the project is completed.

"It's a very positive project, and the people in our group are a bunch of idealists. When you create something good for the local area, for other people, you create something good for yourself too."

Copenhagen has undergone rapid growth over the past two decades, during which several formerly gritty districts have become fashionable, family-friendly areas. In the late 1990s, Islands Brygge was transformed from an industrial wasteland into a harbourside getaway with luxurious apart-

ments. Vesterbro likewise went from a seedy red-light district to the headquarters of all things hip.

Nordvest is the latest district to undergo this transformation. Once known as a raw, semi-industrial melting pot, flashy new apartments are now springing up on empty lots. As Vesterbro and Islands Brygge become increasingly unaffordable, established design firms and thriving creative companies have been lured to Nordvest district by the appeal of lower rents and a distinctive, inspired street life – and they are bringing with them a surge of galleries, restaurants and cafés catering to the new residents.

But, as is often the case when an area becomes gentrified, these new residents and businesses put at risk the very authentic charm that lured them there in the first place. The overheated property market that results segregates citizens based on wealth and, in worst-case scenarios seen around the world, feeds intolerance, discrimination, criminality and fear.

NOT A NEW VESTERBRO

Nordvest may escape the worst, however. According to senior researcher Rikke Skovgaard Nielsen from the Danish Building Research Institute at Aalborg University –

an expert in urban studies and authority on Nordvest – the lessons gleaned from Vesterbro are not lost on residents in this area.

"One of the things we found in Nordvest is that people said, 'We don't want to go the way of Vesterbro and become completely gentrified. We want to continue being ourselves'. Residents are coming together and saying that they want something else for their neighbourhood," she says, referring to initiatives such as Kompasset.

But she warns that the process of engagement has a caveat.

"These volunteer organisations are among the kinds of actors that can help create different neighbourhoods, but it is not certain that they can keep it that way. The other side of the coin is that people who buy flats prefer that the house prices go up. Especially when people start having children, they suddenly don't want all this diversity on their doorstep as they did when they were young and didn't have all these responsibilities."

This is the paradox that can turn grassroots groups and start-ups into the very motor that accelerates commercialisation, argues Marie Stender, an anthropologist and researcher at the Danish National Building Research Institute at Aalborg University.

In trying not to gentrify the area, [...] they may in fact contribute to rendering the area more attractive.

MARIE STENDER, THE DANISH NATIONAL BUILDING RESEARCH INSTITUTE AT AALBORG UNIVERSITY.

"In trying not to gentrify the area, through urban gardens and services for locals and foreign migrants, they may in fact contribute to rendering the area more attractive in other peoples' eyes, and hence transforming it from a worn-down working class district to something more vibrant, trendy – and, later, worth investing in," she says.

Whether Kompasset makes the area more attractive, remains to be seen. Skovgaard Nielsen calls the initiative one of many test balloons that will indicate the direction and speed of the transformative trends taking shape in Nordvest.

Cramon says they intentionally designed Kompasset to be open to the local community, without a gate closing off its yard.

"We went the locals to use the outdoor space too. Being open creates a dialogue when conflict arises between our users and our neighbours. And it also means that people feel comfortable knocking on the door and being curious, and maybe proposing some positive collaborations."

Since diversity is the stated goal of both the City of Copenhagen and local residents, winning approval could represent a victory both for Kompasset and the struggle against gentrification. **M**



Police corral aggressive football fans on the way to the stadium in Copenhagen, last February. The police have paid compensation in the past for illegally detaining football fans.

New laws threaten to shift the balance of power between citizens and the state

Protestors are being prosecuted using new, stricter laws designed to protect public servants from violence. But the latest increase in police power won't necessarily protect the police from demonstrators, and may instead be merely a means for politicians to signal that they are "tough on crime"

A DECADE after the Youth House was torn down in Nørrebro, the conflict between its former anarchist residents and the police still festers. The riots that followed its demolition in 2007 brought Nørrebro to its knees, resulted in the arrests of 714 people, and cost 40 million kroner in police overtime. This March, at a demonstration marking the ten-year anniversary of the demolition, businesses were vandalised and anarchist sympathisers threw projectiles at the police.

In prosecuting this behaviour, the authorities have a new tool at their disposal, The Respect Act (*Respektpakken*), a set of laws designed to protect the police and other public servants from assault. The laws were passed by Parliament last year following a decade that saw a steady rise in violence and threats against public servants – from 47 cases in 2007 to 98 in 2016.

"We are increasing the penalties in a number of areas in order to regain respect for the people who work for our community," Justice Minister Søren Pape Poulsen said after the laws were passed.

The Social Democrats (Socialdemokratiet) were the only left-wing party to support the laws.

"Respect for the people who look after us all needs to be restored," the party's legal affairs spokesperson, Trine Bramsen, told DR.

"The people most likely to commit these offences need to be held on a short leash and made to understand the serious consequences that will ensue if they're violent or threatening to police officers."

MORE POWERS TO THE POLICE

The laws were put to use following the March demonstration. The first of seven cases to be seen at Copenhagen City Court resulted in a nine-month sentence for one 23-year-old man for throwing two stones that hit a police vehicle during the demonstration. In August, the judge concluded that his actions incited attacks by others that contributed to further unrest.

"I can gladly report that the Re-

The changes in Respektpakken include:

- Harsher sentences for offences against public officials and disturbing the peace
- The criminal code's special rule for violence and threats against public officials is extended to include indirect threats
- Introduction of a new harassment rule in the criminal code for the protection of public officials
- Harsher sentences for offences against off-duty public officials
- Harsher sentences for all forms of crime targeting individuals or members of their immediate family carrying out public service
- Harsher sentences for verbal abuse of public officials
- Organisers of demonstrations have economic liability in the event of vandalism

Source:
Danish Ministry
of Justice

Bradley Axmith

spektpakke that we enacted just before the New Year is starting to prove its worth," declared Poulsen at the Conservative People's Party (Konservative) conference in September.

Respektpakken also criminalises behaviour that takes place in digital forums, lengthens sentences for violence towards public servants, and makes organisers of public unrest culpable for criminal behaviour and liable for damages in the event of vandalism.

These are the latest in a series of laws to empower the long arm of the law. The 2004 Police Act (*Politiloven*) allowed police to preventatively detain individuals "who are at risk of committing public disruption, and who present a threat to individuals and public safety" for up to six hours. In 2005, 1,001 administrative detentions took place. The number of administrative detentions has only increased over the years, swelling to 4,296 in 2015, of which 2,224 were for the purpose of maintaining order and security.

In 2009, in the lead up to the COP15 UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, police powers were further strengthened with the Deviants Act (*Lømmelpakken*), which allowed police to preventatively detain individuals for up to 12 hours, even if no crime was committed. They detained over 1,900 demonstrators during the conference, including a mass arrest of 905 demonstrators on Amager. Over 200 ultimately joined a lawsuit against the police, in which they successfully argued that the mass preventative detentions were illegal under human rights law.

The ruling by the Eastern High Court didn't immediately change police practices, however. Counter-protestors at far-right rallies, football fans, and pro-Tibet demonstrators have all been illegally held in administrative detentions that resulted in compensation payments between 2009 and 2012.

IMPACT ON CIVIL LIBERTIES

Given that the courts often rule that these administrative detentions are illegal, legal affairs think tank Justitia argues that the Dan-

ish police are pushing their powers to the absolute limits, and in the process are undermining fundamental individual rights.

"The information provided by the National Police clearly shows that the police increasingly prioritise the need to maintain peace and order at the expense of citizens' freedoms, including freedom of assembly," says Jacob Mchanga-ma, director of Justitia.

"Freedom of expression and assembly is one of democracy's cornerstones and is therefore protected under both the constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights. This is a matter of legal certainty and a sign that the police in many cases do not sufficiently consider the respect of citizens' fundamental rights."

The Danish Institute for Human Rights also argues that the police are violating human rights. In a 2013 report, the organisation called for a revision of the *Politiloven's* rules on preventive detention in order to limit its scope and duration. In their 2016 report on human rights in Denmark, the Institute again recommended that the Justice Ministry ensure that police do not violate European human rights laws with preventative detentions.

STATUS QUO

When Liberal Party MP Søren Pind introduced *Respektpakken* in 2016, during his time as justice minister, he stated, "A condition that Denmark remains a safe and well-functioning country is that we have respect for each other, for public spaces, and for the institutions and people who represent our common interests."

It should instead be called the Fear Act, argues Nick Allencroft, editor and founder of DenOffentlige.dk, a news media outlet focused on the public sector. For example, a 58-year-old woman was slapped with a 7500 kroner fine under *Respektpakken* this August for insulting a public official over Facebook, calling them a liar, among other things.

Allencroft argues that the legislation lacks measures to reinforce

the state's respect for its citizens, citing scandals such as those involving the tax ministry and public transit that have resulted in billions of kroner in lost tax revenue.

"*Respektpakken* increases the power of the state by giving it the legal means to intimidate, threaten and control its citizens," he says.

POLITICAL SIGNALLING

Lawyer Marc Jørgensen represented a number of the demonstrators who were illegally detained during COP15 and later granted compensation. He is pleased that in recent years the police have changed tactics, resulting in fewer illegal mass arrests.

He is more concerned by the steadily-increasing powers being granted to the police through laws such as *Respektpakken*, which is disrupting the balance of power between citizens and the authorities. Jørgensen represented the 23-year-old man who was first sentenced in August. The verdict was appealed but on November 29, the Eastern High Court upheld the nine-month sentence.

"It's hard to say what sentence he would have received before *Respektpakken*, but in my view it shouldn't have been longer than six months," says Jørgensen.

While there need to be sanctions to protect the police and other public servants from assault, the new laws offer them little additional protection.

"The laws are designed by politicians to show that they are tough on crime. So they will continue to propose new laws and harsher sentences in the future. It's only going in one direction. No politician will ever call for shorter sentences – that would be political suicide. We could easily end up in a situation next year with a new riot, followed by politicians calling for tougher punishments. But they don't prevent riots – I have seen no evidence of that. Riots occur for different reasons, and even in countries with harsh punishments there are riots. It is political signalling without any effect beyond punishing young people really hard." **M**



CAPTURED

Rasmus Degnbol

Kutupalong refugee camp

THE ROHINGYA are a Muslim minority from the coastal state of Rakhine in Myanmar that have faced persecution by the country's military rulers and ultra-nationalist Buddhists for

the past 40 years. Their plight has only made international headlines following the most recent crackdown, however, which according to UN Secretary General António Guterres is an example of ethnic cleansing.

A young woman I met in the refugee camp Kutupalong in Bangladesh told me that Roh-

ingya are denied education and freedom of movement by the police and military.

"If we wanted to go somewhere, we needed to go get permission and pay a lot of money, and this visit could easily mean that we would be beaten, raped or kidnapped and murdered," she said.



The magnitude of the camps in Southern Bangladesh, just a few kilometres from the border, is hard to comprehend. Scruffy and makeshift shelters stretch as far as the eye can see. The sheer number of children is heart breaking. Reports suggest that close to 600,000 of the one million refugees are chil-

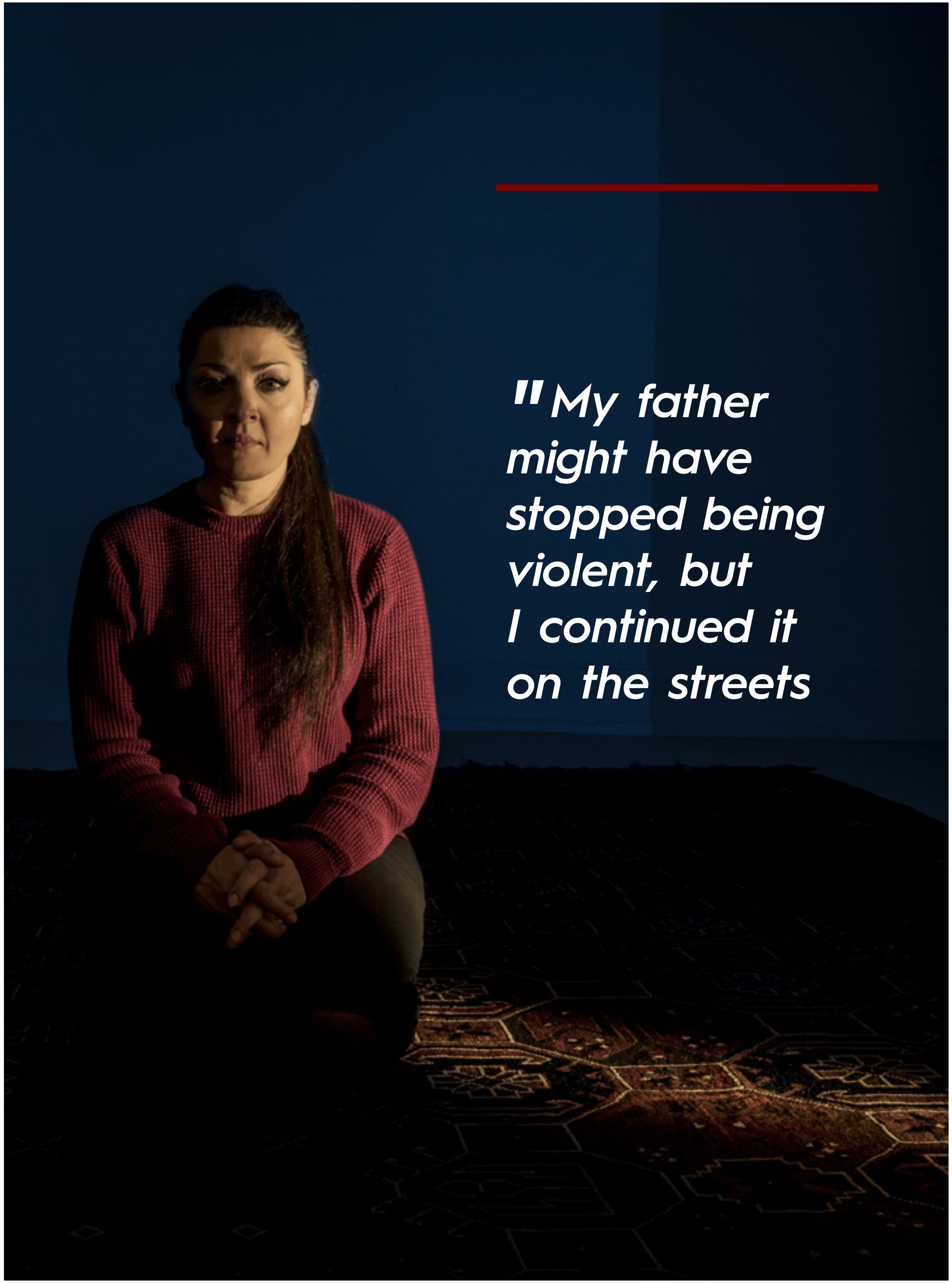
dren – you literally see children everywhere. Many are orphans whose parents were killed in Myanmar, while others were simply separated from their parents as they fled the military that was burning down Rohingya villages near the border.

In late November, Myanmar and Bangla-

desh signed a deal to return the refugees. The terms are as yet unknown, however, and there are concerns that the Rohingya will continue to be denied citizenship and basic rights. This makes them vulnerable to continued persecution by the military, police and local populations in Myanmar, where the murder and rape

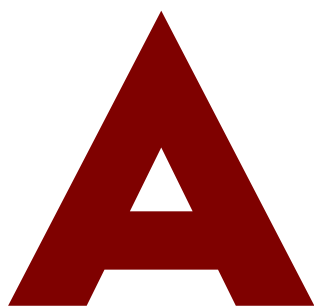
of men, women and children are well-documented tactics.

Will the world remain quiet to appease geopolitical forces in the region? I hope this is the last time I have to visit Kutupalong refugee camp and listen to the Rohingyas' stories of horror. **M**



*"My father
might have
stopped being
violent, but
I continued it
on the streets*

Khaterah Parwani is a loud-mouthed feminist who fights social control as a legal expert and mentor. But while her mission ought to find support across the political spectrum, she's been subject to a smear campaign. She explains that no matter how Danish she declares herself to be, she may never be treated as Danish enough. It's a type of mistrust many minorities face, and it exposes the hypocrisy of those who demand that outsiders assimilate or leave



At school, we would compare who had bruises and who had been beaten, even with my Danish friends. I was not the only one having trouble at home."

Khaterah Parwani is talking about growing up in Urbanplanen, a marginalised housing project on Amager. She moved there at the age of three with her family after they fled Afghanistan as refugees.

It's a story she has told plenty of times before, and it explains how she ended up in her line of work – 33-year-old Parwani is spokesperson and legal consultant at EXITteirklen, which fights social control and psychological violence through conversation support groups.

We meet in their Copenhagen offices, just off the walking street, Strøget. I take my shoes off and walk across the carpeted floor to one of the wooden tables, lit by a low hanging lamp. It's a calm space, a sanctuary compared to the thrumming hustle of shoppers outside. That is, until EXITteirklen founder, Sherin Khankan, bursts into the room with some colleagues in tow.

Across the table, Parwani shushes Khankan, eliciting laughter, before continuing to explain how EXITteirklen functions. In five locations across Denmark, they bring together women suffering from psychological violence and social control. In groups of no more than ten, the women share their experiences and receive legal help and support from the organisation's 40 volunteers. 70 percent of the women being served are ethnic Danes.

"We had a case of a mother who weighed her daughter every day and controlled her food because they lived in a high-class society – that's a type of psychological violence. And then we have a girl who is in a relationship with a criminalised man who has tried to isolate her completely to protect his honour," says Parwani.

She is now developing an offshoot of the programme, called EXITmentor, which works one-on-one with at-risk individuals, offering

them specific support and guidance based on their personal circumstances. The project received 680,000 kroner in funding earlier this year through the *Satspulje*, an annual government fund that finances labour market, health and social sector initiatives to assist marginalised citizens.

CHARACTER ASSASSINATION

Parallel communities, Islamic extremism and the low labour market participation of refugees and minorities are frequent talking points of Integration Minister Inger Støjberg. So she really ought to celebrate EXITteirklen and EXITmentor, since these integration programmes tackle social control and promote the independent living and labour market participation of minorities in particular.

And yet, she and other right-wing politicians have actively tried to prevent the organisation from receiving Satspulje funding. This year, two million kroner was set aside for projects to combat social control, and it was this category of funding that EXITteirklen successfully applied for.

But in a June email that was leaked to Berlingske newspaper, Støjberg wrote to parties in Parliament to argue that the pool should be reallocated given that EXITteirklen was its only applicant. There were other pools of funding that received a single applicant, however, which Støjberg did not demand to be reallocate.

Berlingske also revealed that three right-wing MPs had tried to lobby left-wing parties to revoke EXITteirklen's funding, though this time the criticism was of a more personal nature. A letter from Conservative (Konservative) MP Naser Khader, Liberal Party (Venstre) MP Marcus Knuth, and Danish People's Party MP (DF) Martin Henriksen argued that the women at the helm of the organisation were not fit to receive the money.

They accused Khankan of defending punishment by whipping and excluding men from her mosque, and Parwani of defending the Islamist organisation Hizb ut-Tahrir (HUT) and speaking "condescendingly about society".

The letter was broadly condemned after its publication. Parwani is a well-known figure in the Danish press, writing on integration, pov-

There is a taboo in the public debate. We can talk about hate crimes against Jews and LGBTQ people, but the minute we talk about the Muslim minority and their experience wearing headscarves, it gets really hard.

Words:
Peter Stanners

Photos:
Rasmus Degnbol

erty and feminism, and it was she that first revealed her short-lived flirtation with HUT. Her supposedly 'condescending' attitude has won her fans across the political spectrum and media establishment, and in 2015, she won the Suzanne Giese Memorial Grant for her work promoting feminist issues.

Sherin Khankan established EXITteirklen in 2014, and is a religious scholar and practicing Muslim who is critical of fundamentalist teachings. She is also a female imam at the Mariam Mosque in defiance of the patriarchal structures that, she argues, are embedded in Islamic practices, and the only imam in Denmark to perform interreligious weddings. In an op-ed for Religionen.dk, she wrote, "I am against any type of death penalty and barbaric method of punishment, regardless of its political or religious origin." She is now suing Khader, Knuth and Henriksen for defamation.

Khader later expressed regret about the letter, and argued that it should have focussed on Khankan and Parwani's apparent lack of expertise in the field. And yet, the civil service clearly saw things differently when it approved their application for funding, based in part on the women's experience working with both local and national authorities.

So what's going on?

REPRESENTING MINORITIES

A week after Berlingske published the leaked letter, Parwani took to the stage of the Bremen Theatre with three other women, Geeti Amiri, Natasha Al Hariri and Halime Oguz. As women with minority backgrounds, each possesses a distinct voice in the Danish media. They haven't always agreed, so the show at the Bremen was meant to present a united front in addressing feminist issues that affect women like them.

After the show, Parwani was approached by the former Danish PM, Helle Thorning-Schmidt.

"She told me that I need to send champagne and flowers to Naser Khader. She said, 'Now I am following you, but

I didn't know who you were before'. That's been our experience – everyone we have worked with on integration projects has contacted us about working together again."

EXITcirklen has evidently benefited from the recent publicity, with major newspapers reporting on their work and talking to women who say the organisation has saved their lives.

But Parwani isn't surprised to have been targeted, given her outspoken views on discrimination towards Muslims in Danish society and on ineffective integration programmes that receive public funding.

"I see a structural problem with hiring academics to try and make changes they know nothing about. They don't use local resources or the minorities in the local societies. I have criticised that a lot. I think what's different about our project is that minorities are represented. I think that's important," she says.

UNIVERSAL PROBLEMS

So is Parwani qualified to work with issues of social control and psychological violence, and offer legal advice to immigrants and asylum seekers navigating the Danish system? Her story begins when she arrived in Denmark as a three-year-old with a father prone to violent outbursts.

"We have the best relationship now – I love my father. But he brought the culture from Afghanistan to Denmark. For him, it was normal to have communication problems with his wife and to use a lot of violence. He used it as a tool to raise his children because that is normal in Afghan culture," she says.

"Then one day he was really angry with me and was about to hit me, and when he raised his hand I said, 'It's really amazing that a poet like you, who knows a lot of words and is really good at saying how he feels, needs to beat me every time you get mad'. At first, I thought he was going to go berserk, but later he called me down and said, 'I am sorry, you are right. I am going to change starting today'. And he did."

While her father never raised his hand to his wife or children again, her own transition took a little longer.

"My father might have stopped being violent, but I continued it on the streets. I was very violent as a young person in my 20s. I was still troubled, despite mentoring other young women. I stopped when I got into a relationship with a young Afghan man who was very, very violent – so violent that I ended up in the hospital. When I began my relationship with my current boyfriend, it was the first period of my life that I lived without violence."

The women she was mentoring were

When I began my relationship with my current boyfriend, it was the first period of my life that I lived without violence.



Khaterah Parwani, photographed in the Copenhagen offices of EXITcirklen.

fellow Afghan refugees that she helped in her late teens and early 20s. Some had experienced similar episodes of violence, as well as difficulty entering the labour market despite having taken a post-secondary education.

This work made her aware of the discrimination and hate crimes directed at the Muslim minority, which she believed were both under-reported and under-prioritised in the legal system. So she abandoned her studies in design to study law while volunteering at the anti-discrimination legal organisation DRC.

"There is a taboo in the public debate. We can talk about hate crimes against Jews and LGBTQ people, but the minute we talk about the Muslim minority and their experience wearing headscarves, it gets really hard. Politicians won't speak about it, and it's a huge problem. It's part of the political culture we have. For the past five years, we have seen that it's okay to attack the Muslim minority – just look at the way we have been treated. I am not even religious. I have had a half-Jewish, half-Ahmadiya-Muslim boyfriend for ten years. But still, just the fact that I have roots in a Muslim country, they use that to try to paint a different picture of me. Martin Henriksen even said that you can't trust Muslims because 'they speak with two tongues'."

At this stage, it's uncontroversial to suggest that there is a generalised mistrust of Danes of Muslim descent among right-wing politicians and media. It's also well-established that non-Western immigrants are a net cost to the state and are overrepresented in criminal statistics. Parwani is tired of hearing that these struggles are embedded in the group's religious teachings, which supposedly encourage segregation and the formation of parallel cultures. But while Parwani argues that their struggles aren't unique to Muslims as a group, cultural norms do play a role.

"Seventy percent of the women who come to our discussion groups are ethnic Danes. This shows that psychological violence is a universal problem. But there are also structural, cultural and religious norms that we have to think about. When you have a Muslim girl who sees it as necessary to come to a crisis centre, she has no one to support her. Danish girls have their friends and family. That's a huge difference. Muslim women are more accepting if their husband controls them, or puts a set of values or rules over them and says these are your limits, and uses religion or something else," she says, adding that culture also plays a role in the Copenhagen gang war.

"We know from research about the biker gang community that young guys who flirt with the community tend to have a past that includes socioeconomic problems and dysfunctional parents. But when it comes to gangs made up of young men with minority backgrounds, it's not the same. They tend to have a strong background. But what's interesting is that many of them grew up with violence at home, and when you accept violence at home,

it's easy to accept these gangs – that's the tipping point, accepting violence as a tool to attain your goals."

PARALLEL COMMUNITIES

Parwani only really 'discovered' Denmark in her 20s. She spent her youth in Urbanplanen cut off from middle-class children, her family unable to afford the cost of after-school programmes. When she was admitted to law school at Copenhagen University, she attended only a few classes before deciding to just study at home.

"I felt so excluded. I was embarrassed to sit beside these students wearing expensive clothes. I felt like a 'perker' for the first time in my life," she says, using the derogatory term for a Middle Eastern immigrant.

She found a study group of fellow Danes with minority backgrounds that she felt more comfortable with. Looking around the cafeteria, she says, she could pick out the different socio-economic groups that clustered together.

But this segregation has roots that are deeper than mere culture. Housing policies, for example, have grouped many immigrants into city suburbs that have become marginalised communities over the past two decades. It wasn't the minorities and refugees who chose to create these isolated housing communities, she argues.

She brings up Abdel Aziz Mahmoud, a prominent Danish journalist about her age, who arrived in Denmark with his family the same year as she did. But while her family was sent to Urbanplanen, his was sent to live in a middle-class area of Middelfart, on Funen.

"His parents remind me a lot of my own, but because they lived in a completely different neighbourhood, with high resource neighbours, his years in Denmark were completely different than mine. We are friends today and talk a lot about it. You can compare our stories in many ways, but it means a lot who lives around you and can influence you every single day. I had to tell my father not to beat me. But imagine if he lived in Middelfart, and his neighbours could tell him that from day one. We would have had another life. In Urbanplanen, no one told my father."

VOICES

Mahmoud is another member of a growing generation of minority Danes in public debate. This development has been a long time in the making, and Parwani feels it is long overdue. She points out that until now, organisations that represented minorities were still managed by ethnic Danes. This is changing, not only with the increasing number of minority voices in the media, but also in their representation in civil society – Mahmoud is chairman of the board of Mino, a new organisation that represents and engages minorities in Denmark.

"We hadn't really heard from the Muslim minority until now. We now have these different voices fighting for equality – but we want

Freedom of speech and other freedoms found in our constitution are nothing new to me. They were things that my Afghan father taught me when he raised me. They are not strictly Danish values.

to lead our fight ourselves and represent ourselves. We don't need a white woman or a Dane to lead us," she says.

Parwani also worries that the debate about minority rights and representation can be too focussed on social, rather than economic, discrimination.

"We can be inspired by Danish feminists. Danish women focus on equal pay, and we need to do that too – we don't always need to focus on discrimination. We also need to fight against social economic structures," says Parwani, adding that cuts to unemployment benefits are designed to hit minority communities hardest. She points to Geeti Amiri, who has written about her own escape from social control and the struggle to assert her independence from an Afghan family.

"We need to speak to them about what happens when a family doesn't have enough money. This is important. I think that Geeti – even though she doesn't know it and doesn't speak about it – is a good example of what happens when you grow up in that socioeconomic layer. We need to be inspired by the Danish women."

Tackling economic inequality and poverty, as well as social control and violence in families, will go a long way to addressing the integration issues that Denmark faces, argues Parwani. But first, the government needs to discard the notion that immigrants must abandon their social and cultural heritage before they can be fully accepted as Danes.

"It's just so stupid. If you always talk about Danishness as something that is better than other cultures and religions, then of course you will have a problem," she says, adding that the assimilationist agenda is built on an anxiety that foreign cultures threaten and undermine Danish values.

"I don't understand this anxiety. Freedom of speech and other freedoms found in our constitution are nothing new to me. They were things that my Afghan father taught me when he raised me. They are not strictly Danish values." **M**



Testing the limits of the European Court of Human Rights

Danish courts often overturn deportation orders for foreign criminals in order to satisfy obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights. While the government is now seeking international backing to allow national courts more say on deportation, critics argue that the issue lies with the Danish courts and their overly strict interpretation of the convention



Wikimedia Commons

Inside the European Court of Human Rights, in Strasbourg, France.

CREATED in the aftermath of World War II, the European Convention on Human Rights is central to Europe's understanding of the freedoms that people are owed. The 47 signatories are members of the Council Europe, whose citizens can take cases to the European Court on Human Rights (ECHR), which rules on potential violations.

But in recent years, the ECHR has proved unpopular among some member states, including Denmark, which argues that the convention makes it too difficult to deport foreign criminals.

Joshua Hollingdale

Poised to take over the rotating chairmanship of the Council of Europe for six months beginning in November, the government wants to initiate a discussion on how the ECHR interprets the European Convention on Human Rights. But Foreign Minister Anders Samuelsen of the Liberal Alliance, who will serve as the Council's chairman, is not calling for a total reformation of the system.

"The reason we are raising this debate is that we want to protect our conventions from losing public support. Support falls

when judgments are passed that the public does not understand – when you get a sense that the criminals are being protected rather than a basic understanding of the law," he said.

"Denmark needs a strong international legal system whose decisions are respected."

PM Lars Løkke Rasmussen issued a statement supporting the foreign minister's initiative.

"In Denmark, we are witnessing a critical debate on the interpretation of the conventions by the European Court of Human Rights, specifically concerning

the deportation of criminal foreigners. It is not compatible with the public's understanding of human rights when deeply criminal persons cannot be deported. That I can neither understand nor explain," he says.

Take serial offender and Croatian citizen Gimi Levakovic, whose deportation order was overturned in May 2016 by the Supreme Court, which found it would violate his right to a family life as outlined in the ECHR (he has two young children in Denmark).

Cases like his have frustrated

politicians, who argue that the convention has too much power to overrule Danish law. The Danish People's Party (DF) even wants the convention written out of Danish law.

"Today we have a convention in which it is very difficult to alter anything. It should be much easier to deport criminal foreigners and easier for Denmark to decide which family reunification rules should apply to refugees. At the same time, we should generally have better control of our immigration policies in Denmark," Martin Henriksen, foreign spokesperson for the party, told Berlingske newspaper.

MODEST PLANS

But are the court and convention really getting in the way of deporting foreign criminals? Danish courts could tighten their practice regarding the deportation of foreign criminals without falling foul of the ECHR in Strasbourg, argues Jonas Christoffersen, Director of the Institute of Human Rights.

"In cases resulting in sentences of least a couple of years, there is a clear difference in sentences passed by the European Court of Human Rights and the Danish courts," he told Altinget. "[The two Danish high courts] judge more mildly than the Strasbourg court when it comes to deporting foreigners for serious crimes."

Mikael Rask Madsen, Director and professor at the Centre of Excellence for International Courts at the University of Copenhagen, agrees. In the case of Levakovic, it is normal for national courts to assess an individual's 'affiliation', or where they belong, regardless of their nationality.

"This is certainly a real issue in this era of globalisation. However, the case was decided by the Danish Supreme Court and not, as some seem to believe, by the European Court of Human

It should be much easier to deport criminal foreigners and easier for Denmark to decide which family reunification rules should apply to refugees.

MP MARTIN HENRIKSEN, DANISH PEOPLE'S PARTY

Rights. The real issue in this case is how Denmark interprets the Convention and whether this reflects the contemporary standards in Strasbourg," he says, adding that the idea that Denmark is not able to deport criminal foreigners has been debunked – Justitia has determined that Denmark deported 2000 criminal foreigners last year alone.

The government has stopped short of calling for the human rights convention to be renegotiated, however. Doing so could result in a cascade of requests from council members that might prefer looser rules on human rights. Russia and Azerbaijan, for example, have repeatedly been sanctioned by the courts for violating human rights.

According to Madsen, the government's actual ambitions are far more modest.

"The primary focus is on the subsidiarity principle, in an attempt to make it clearer when national legal institutions are in a better position to make decisions than European ones. Another key goal is to reduce the number of cases currently pending in Strasbourg. Finally, the government wants to improve the interaction between the system in Strasbourg and member states, that is, the legal-political interaction."

He adds that the Danish government also wants to give national governments more power at the political level of the Council of Europe. This would give member states greater ability to manage developments in Strasbourg.

"The government will focus on how the Committee of Ministers – the principal organ of the Council in terms of political power – can be better positioned to have a say and comment on developments in how the Court is developing and interpreting the convention," Madsen says.

This could result in a declara-

tion – signed by the 47 member states at some point over the next six months – allowing national courts greater room to manoeuvre when it comes to deporting foreign criminals.

"Denmark can't show up with a narrow national agenda only focused on the expulsion of foreign criminals, but must instead bring to the table broader issues of interest to many member states. If one seeks influence in Europe, including on specific issues, the way ahead is to broader issues and that way impact more indirectly on other areas," says Madsen

GOVERNMENT TO TIGHTEN LEGISLATION

In October, the government, along with the Social Democrats and DF, established a working group to recommend action to help the Danish courts deport more criminal foreigners. The group made five recommendations.

In a November meeting of Parliament's Commission for Foreigners and Integration, Integration Minister Inger Støjberg said the government was taking steps to implement the recommendations.

"My opinion is clear: criminal foreigners do not belong in Denmark. The government is determined to leave no stone unturned in deporting the highest possible number of criminal foreigners," Støjberg said at the consultation.

But Trine Bramsen, Justice Spokesperson for the Social Democrats, later told Rizau that she was not convinced by Støjberg's answer.

"We have not been given an answer to the question of whether Danish courts are able to deport more people. This is definitely not the last we've heard of this case." **M**

- The recommendations of the government's work group on criminal deportations:**
1. Seek administrative deportation and rejection of criminal foreigners for the sake of public order
 2. Make rules regarding judicial deportation sentencing for criminal foreigners clearer
 3. Make rules regarding conditional deportation clearer.
 4. Enable authorities to impose shorter entry bans, which should trigger more deportations
 5. Best practices – give all relevant institutions better access to information about court verdicts regarding deportations

The European Convention on Human Rights

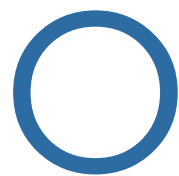
An international treaty under which the member States of the Council of Europe promise to secure fundamental civil and political rights, not only to their own citizens but also to everyone within their jurisdiction. The Convention, which was signed on 4 November 1950 in Rome, entered into force in 1953. *Source: ECHR*

The European Court of Human Rights

The European Court of Human Rights is an international court set up in 1959. It rules on individual or State applications alleging violations of the civil and political rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights. Since 1998 it has sat as a full-time court and individuals can apply to it directly. In almost fifty years the Court has delivered more than 10,000 judgments. These are binding on the countries concerned and have led governments to alter their legislation and administrative practice in a wide range of areas. *Source: ECHR*

Refugee Rescue is committed to stopping deaths at sea, and has helped thousands of refugees and migrants who risked drowning as they crossed from Turkey to Greece. CEO Jude Bennett is now based in Copenhagen, and argues that we need to get used to this migrant flow, because the factors pushing them to leave are far from being resolved

"They will keep coming, and they are still coming"



On the cliffs of Lesbos, a team of lookouts keeps watch over the sea. At its narrowest point, the strait between the Greek island and Turkey is only seven kilometres. But even with binoculars and telescopes, it's not always easy to spot the black dinghies, packed with dozens of refugees and migrants, against the backdrop of the deep blue sea.

The lookouts belong to Refugee Rescue, a British-registered charity that carries out search and rescue off the coast of Greece. Committed to preventing deaths at sea, the skilled search and rescue team aboard their speedboat *Mo Chara* (which means 'My Friend' in Irish) ensures that refugees and migrants safely find their way to shore after travelling to Europe across the strait. Since the charity began its work in 2016, it has helped close to 6,000 people and prevented countless deaths.

Co-founder and CEO Jude Bennett explains the organisation's mission from her office at VerdensKulturCentret in Nørrebro,

Copenhagen. Originally from Northern Ireland, Bennett used to work in Britain's art scene and ran a gallery in Wales. In late 2015, she got a phone call from a friend, Joby Fox, who had travelled to Lesbos as a volunteer to help the new arrivals landing on the beaches at the time. He told her how hazardous the situation was, with rescuers lacking the resources to help everyone who was making the journey. Boats were capsizing, and people were dying.

"He was working on Lesbos helping the refugee arrivals, and was traumatised after witnessing a shipwreck that left many dead," says Bennett.

She immediately flew down to Lesbos and noted the conspicuous absence of aid organisations. Even the Greek Coast Guard was ill-equipped to find and assist boats in trouble at sea.

So she and Fox decided to gather a team and buy a rescue boat. She knew a trained lifeboat captain in Belfast who could operate the vessel, and they drew on her connections in the art and music world to raise money. Thanks to donations from high-profile art-

I committed my life to this when I saw that the big organisations were not doing anything.

Peter Stanners



Jude Bennett, CEO and co-founder of Refugee Rescue.



Kenny Karpov

Volunteer spotters keep a look out over the narrow strip of sea between Greece and Turkey. If they see a boat full of refugees, they radio in the coordinates.

ists, they managed to buy a rescue boat and head back to Greece.

"In the van on the way down, I was calling around trying to gather a crew. We were a ragtag group to start with, but on our very first mission, we managed to rescue 177 people who were headed towards the rocks."

HELP HAS ITS LIMITS

Bennett is now pursuing a Masters degree in Disaster Management at the University of Copenhagen, having met her Danish husband while working on the island. While she oversees much of the daily operation from Copenhagen, the organisation has committed land and sea crews who work around the clock on Lesbos to prevent needless deaths.

One problem they experienced early on was that smugglers were sailing over the strait and dumping the refugees and migrants along

hazardous and inaccessible parts of the coast before sailing back. But the rescuers were having difficulty keeping track of where the boats were going. So they created a land-based spotting team atop the coastal cliffs in order to give them a better overview. In one case, they managed to help the Greek Coast Guard intercept a smuggler on his way back to Turkey.

Ordinarily, the rescue boat is dispatched once the spotters see a boat heading over the strait. If it isn't in distress, Mo Chara will guide the boat to a safe place to land. The coast is rugged, and often the boats head towards the Greek lighthouse on Lesbos, which is located on a particularly treacherous stretch. If they do land on rocks, Mo Chara will pick up the refugees and take them to the harbour. Similarly, if the boat capsizes, they will pull people to safety.

There are limitations, howev-

It's sheer desperation – wherever they came from, they didn't make that journey for the fun of it.

er, as the rescue boat cannot enter Turkish territorial waters, or head out to assist a boat that spotters cannot see.

"Once there was a shipwreck in Turkey, but we couldn't see them, and if we can't see a boat sinking, it puts the crew at risk by sending them out there. I was getting phone calls, and information through Whatsapp groups, saying they were drowning. We sent the rescue boats to the border and called the Turkish Coast Guard, but they wouldn't let us cross."

THERE TO HELP

Refugee Rescue is the only remaining search and rescue organisations to continue operating on the north coast of Lesbos. Several fell foul of the Greek authorities and had their rights to operate revoked. So Bennett and her organisation walk a tightrope in trying to maintain a good relation-

ship with the Coast Guard while doing as much as they can to save lives at sea.

And it's been difficult. Soon after their arrival, the Coast Guard introduced new rules preventing more than one launch per day and requiring 24-hours' notice before setting out. These rules jeopardised the organisation's ability to respond to distressed boats, where time is of the essence.

"At that point I was like, they're not letting us do our job, they're fighting us every time we move. So we decided to put more media and legal pressure on the Coast Guard, and I eventually managed to speak to the harbour master. I got into his office and we explained that we are here to help, that we have trained rescuers, that we don't cost them anything, and that we are abiding by the rules and borders. Something positive came out of it, and they call us up now. But the ►



Trained captains and lifesavers man Refugee Rescue's boat, the *Mo Chara*, which means 'my friend' in Irish.

We focus on our rescue mission – no more deaths at sea.

Kenny Karpov

restrictions they put on us are officially still in place," she says.

Once the organisation lands refugees, it helps guide them to UN assembly points where refugees and migrants are supposed to stay for twenty-four hours before being taken to the major reception centres. Bennett says both the assembly points and reception sites are overcrowded and under-resourced, and Refugee Rescue volunteers have had to step in.

"We focus on our rescue mission – no more deaths at sea. But it's hard to stay that focussed, and we are expanding because there is a need. There was a lack of volunteers, so some people are helping in the kitchen and distributing clothes."

Saving lives at sea is one thing. Helping the refugees on land is another, however. Some segments of the local population are deeply sceptical of Refugee Rescue, so the organisation tries to ensure its team doesn't come across as unwelcome activists.

"We don't want to risk having our boat detained or our crew arrested if what we're doing doesn't have a direct impact on saving lives at sea. The Coast Guard gets pissed off and detains boats. We have to be careful."

Bennett doesn't mince words about the poor state of the UN reception centres, or about the overall lack of humanitarian help for arriving refugees.

"I committed my life to this when I saw that the big organisations were not doing anything. It was shocking that the UN and the big agencies weren't there. They are in the big camps, but these are old jails that are in disgraceful condition," says Bennett, referring to the Moira reception centre that has been identified by the UNHCR as a site of sexual and gender-based violence.

The absence of international aid agencies can be explained in part by the belief of governments around Europe that expanding the humanitarian presence in Greece will only increase the 'pull factor' – in other words, it would make it more attractive for refugees and migrants to make the journey to Europe.

Bennett and her team are used to being called 'egohumanists' and a 'taxi service' for people smugglers. But she doesn't believe that people decide to make the crossing lightly.

"It's sheer desperation – wherever they came from, they didn't make that journey for the fun of it. This affects the crew because it becomes about more than sea rescue, it's about dealing with the silent effects of war. That was something that touched us all, we couldn't believe it when we heard the media talk about these people coming here to steal our money and rape our women. These are outrageous accusations – they are regular people," she says.

WE HAVE TO ACCEPT THE FLOW

The crossing refugees and migrants have to navigate a number of threats to make the journeys. Their iconic orange life jackets are often fake, packed with absorbent material that actually makes them sink when they go overboard. In November, Refugee Rescue witnessed the Turkish Coast Guard shoot at a boat and pull it back to the Turkish coast from Greek waters.

The organisation has its own challenges too, primarily in ensuring they have enough funding to keep the operations going.

"Now we are panicking about having enough money. We can't plan more than two months ahead. It's really hard to mouth. Someone gave us half-price engines recently, but if anything happens to the boat, it can halt operations. As CEO, I'm trying to be more strategic to keep operations running well on the ground. In the longer term, we would like to expand, but we don't have the finances to make that a realistic option," she says.

They have now approached big donors such as the Roskilde Festival, and hope that putting down roots in Copenhagen will help them find partners to work with long term. Bennett has also become involved in raising international awareness about the need for a more humane asylum system and about the risk to human life that has resulted from the EU's deals with Turkey and Libya – including billions of Euros in cash being handed over to prevent refugee boats from setting sail.

"Hopefully we can find a way to move forward instead of funding a Libyan mafia to shoot at people and pretend it's search and rescue," she says.

"The push force behind refugee flows is something we have to accept. They will keep coming, and they are still coming." **M**



Mo Chara pulling into port in Lesbos with refugees and migrants, rescued from the sea.

Roman Kutzowicz

SPONSORED POST

Globally Local: Integration means Retention

How do we make Denmark a more attractive place for both Expats and Danish repats to call home? In other words, what does it take to attract, integrate and retain global minds so that they can contribute to both the Danish economy and the Danish society as a whole? Globally Local is here to help

GLOBALLY LOCAL is a new company launched on December 1 by Thomas Mulhern and Anita Mayntzhusen. Both have worked extensively with Expat and Danish Repat families, and they now seek to provide a roadmap for successful integration and thus, retention here in Denmark.

Their mission is to provide authentic integration and internationalisation opportunities for Expats, Danes living abroad, and repatriating Danes. The concept is to meet the individual and/or the entire family in their unique situation by providing services including but not limited to practical, legal, linguistic, psychological, educational and networking services. These services are offered in the form of workshops, seminars, professional sparring and different packages designed to assist internationally minded companies, schools and organizations in their work.

Globally Local offers a unique approach that focuses on helping both Expats and Danish repats overcome the barriers to successful integration and reintegration. Globally Local feels that Danes coming home from abroad often share similar barriers to integration as Expats, and are thus in just as much need of assistance. In addition, the company uniquely focuses on the needs of the children in this process in a way not done to date, as they have observed how the entire families' well-being is crucial to the success of the family and therefore to the duration of stay and or attraction for the employee to return to Denmark.

Globally Local offers tailored solutions geared towards helping organizations as well as individual families meet the challenges of being in Denmark. This approach is accomplished through a thorough and ongoing process, up to two years, with the company, family, school or organization.

The benefits according to Globally Local are clear: Businesses have the potential to bolster their bottom lines by reducing costs



ticker / Kristoffer Trolle

with relation to failed foreign assignments, while simultaneously enhancing the retainment of global talent within their organizations. It is estimated that it costs the average company roughly \$250,000 U.S. a year in to keep an expatriate and his or her family in an overseas assignment. In addition, the added organizational value that can be provided by employees that have both an understanding of foreign markets and have cultivated an understanding of the Danish work culture is invaluable. For Danish universities, retaining talented foreign researchers will sub-

stantially reduce costs, as these institutions invest substantial resources in trying to help the researcher and their partner or family settle in.

Globally Local believes that by creating shared experience predicated upon belonging, for Danes, Expats and Danish Repats, we make possible the conditions necessary for authentic integration and thus, a feeling of home for Expats and Danish Repats to be a part of. Shared experiences that unite Danish, Expat and Danish Repat families, promote intercultural exchanges, provide crucial

networking opportunities, maintain and develops bilingual Danish/English communication, allow those in the process of learning Danish to have a voice and give families the flexibility to leave Denmark, but also an incentive to stay in Denmark. Now only time will tell if this approach succeeds in attracting, integrating and retaining global talent in the local Danish communities. **M**

To hear more or book a meeting, you can contact Globally Local at 25 85 14 11 or 23 84 99 22.

Globally Local



Marrying into a better future

With a series of open-hearted letters, Danish-Serbian artist Ana Pavlović tries to portray how it feels to be a young, hopeful migrant woman confronted with the culture shock of Danish society

When artist Ana Pavlović was 22 years old, in 1999, she decided to leave her past in the rubble of her bombed-out

Belgrade home and start a new life far to the north, in the promised lands of Scandinavia.

With the exception of an estranged cousin, she didn't know a soul when she arrived in Copenhagen, and had no idea how she was going to make ends meet. Despite these uncertainties, however, her future looked brighter in Denmark than in the bleak and defeated Yugoslavia.

Two decades on, Pavlović is an award-winning graduate of the Danish Royal Academy of Fine Arts and a frequent contributor to the Danish art scene. Her works focus on the human psyche and the feeling of estrangement – more precisely the dichotomy between Eastern and Western Europe – and the stigma that accompanies it.

In her latest work, *Love At Last Sight*, she

collaborates with her partner and fellow artist, Vladimir Tomić, to examine the in-between state of living in Denmark while still having strong ties to the Balkans.

The exhibition is a fusion of memories and experiences from those early days in Denmark. The centrepiece is a series of letters between Pavlović and her mother back in Belgrade. She has also created a memory collage based on the experiences of other Eastern European migrant women.

The letters reveal the intimate thoughts and reflections of women who have to make difficult, and sometimes controversial, decisions.

"In my work, I tend to focus on themes that are close to me. It's usually things that I've experienced myself in some shape or form. It's crucial that there is a dose of authenticity and honesty as well as something everyday-like in the materials that I use. That's why I involve other people who share similar experiences in my work. In this case, in addition to using my own letters, I also use letters that other young migrant women from Eastern Europe have written," she says.

"The status of migrant women is in many

I desperately wanted to leave Serbia, fuelled by the idea of a freer, more normal and better life in the West.

Hana
Hasanbegovic

ways very specific and very appealing. I came to Denmark in 1999 from Serbia, at first as an au pair. I later stayed in the country because I married a Dane. I desperately wanted to leave Serbia, fuelled by the idea of a freer, more normal and better life in the West – just like lots of other young people from Eastern Europe. Unfortunately, this migration and brain drain is very present even today – young people leave and are ready to make severe compromises. Today it's even harder to be a migrant, due to the rise of right-wing sentiment in Europe and the rest of the world. There is this huge resistance to refugees and economic migrants, from both politicians and citizens."

COMPLEXITIES AND TABOOS

Pavlović is aware that some viewers might see her work as problematic in the way it deconstructs the image of Danish society as quaint and open-minded.

"These letters really get under your skin, especially those regarding marriage migration. This is a very taboo-ridden topic, with a lot of prejudice, stigma and self-stigma. I speak from



Above left: A still from a video installation showing new images being made from a collage of old photos of the artist and her mother.

Above: Ana Pavlović with a family photo of New Year's Eve celebration in Belgrade.

Right: Exhibition poster for *Love at last sight*, that includes a collage of images of Ana Pavlovic and her mother.



experience. Eastern European women are predominantly portrayed either as victims or as predators. These letters really show the complexities of this issue. The women experience feelings spanning from actual love and belonging, to practical concerns and the constant feeling of unworthiness," she says.

In one of the letters, a young woman writes to her family in Serbia:

"The system here is close to some sort of fantasy, they offer you countless credit options, social help and other help with school, courses – they even pay you while you to go to school!"

But it's too early to want that for myself. Right now, my 3-month visa gives me time to think of something.

The first solution we thought of was asylum – telling some sort of story of how I can't take it any more (I wouldn't put this down on paper 'cause it's problematic). But now we've decided on a different approach: MARRIAGE!

[...]

A husband-on-paper can be found

for 700-800 Deutsche Marks a month, but we're still searching for the right one."

In a different letter, a young woman describes attending a family birthday with her new Danish husband:

"I want to tell you about a stupid event. His aunt turned 60, so she invited everyone over, including the two of us. She put our names on plates, so that everyone had a fixed seat at the table. The food was very good. I didn't know half of what I was eating. And little Danish flags everywhere... and then you sit there for an hour, two hours, three... Meanwhile, no one spoke a word to me – and they all speak English very well. After a few hours of trying to keep up with the Danish conversations, my mind got fed up. I told him that I would leave and he could stay, and he started to apologise for this and that. Such disrespect. I felt like shit. Sitting there for four hours without anyone speaking a single word to me."

The women experience feelings spanning from actual love and belonging, to practical concerns and the constant feeling of unworthiness.

IMPORTANT STORY

Through the letters, we witness the development that the young women go through, as well as the experiences of the families left behind in the Balkans. We see how both sides develop coping mechanisms and survival strategies to deal with the impact of chasing a dream of a better life.

When asked how it felt working with such intimate material, Pavlović explained that she debated whether to go ahead with it or not.

"Working with personal material is very difficult and emotional, especially when it's personal items like these. Laying out your intimate letters, family photos and life story for people to freely interpret is a little messed-up. You're afraid you'll be judged – but that's exactly why this work is important!" she says.

"My goal isn't to tell some finite story about a group of women. It's to put the material in a new context, so that we can view it from a different perspective and on a grander scale. I'm not afraid of exposing myself and my intimate life – I'm more afraid that people won't care about this story and these shared experiences, because they're not unique, and they're definitely still around." **M**

Bars are stocked with casks of Christmas beer, advent calendars are piled in the supermarkets, and Christmas markets are popping up overnight – all signs that the festive season is fast approaching. But for many, Christmas is only properly on the horizon once Royal Copenhagen has unveiled its six Christmas tables



Royal Copenhagen's iconic floral pattern replaced with skulls at Alban Lendorf's table, 'The Flipside'



Anne Marie Vessel Schlüter's table references *The Nutcracker*, with her own 'Nutcracker' as a centre piece.



The Royal Ballet table decorators: Alban Lendorf, Anne Marie Vessel Schlüter, Kristoffer Sakurai, Ida Praetorius (standing) Femke Mølbach Slot (sitting) and Andreas Kaas.

DECK THE TABLES

Christmas tables

Since the 1960s, the porcelain manufacturer Royal Copenhagen has invited a wide range of people to offer their interpretations of the ideal Christmas dinner table, using the famous Danish porcelain as a starting point. Previous years have seen royalty, comedians, actors and creatives participate, and this year members of the Royal Ballet were invited to be the tables' co-creators.

The six tables, bedecked as imagined Christmas realms, will remain on display on the top floor of Royal Copenhagen's flagship store on Amagertorv until the end of December. This year's decorators include principal dancers Alban Lendorf and Ida Praetorius, soloists Andreas Kaas and Femke Mølbach Slot, former principal dancer Kristoffer Sakurai, as well as former dancer and leader of the ballet school, Anne Marie Vessel Schlüter.

Royal Copenhagen's creative director Niels Bastrup observed the natural ties between Royal Copenhagen and the Royal Ballet. "We are two very well-established institutions in the Danish cultural landscape, and we both have a strong sense of values, where craftsmanship and precision are focal points," he said.

And it's this idea of craftsmanship and precision that becomes apparent as soon as you see the tables. Immaculately presented, each appears like a scene in a film, caught mid-take. Between them, the tables reflect on family, friends and community, and capture the tiny

facets of what Christmas meals are about. It's incredibly deft storytelling from Royal Copenhagen, creating an homage to Christmas spirit – past and future – rather than a shrine to consumerism.

Kaas' table is inspired by his own apartment, and Praetorius' is set up as if a gathering of friends has come together after a show. Music plays and candles burn at Femke Mølbach Slot's table, as though someone is about to walk right in to plate the goose. It's on the brink of being filled with life, much like a set on the Royal Theatre stage.

Anne Marie Vessel Schlüter's table is an enchanting construction, built around the *Nutcracker* fairy tale, with a beautifully impractical floor made of walnut shells. Femke Mølbach Slot has designed a space for a dream 'date night' with her partner. It's romance to excess, with a grand piano, oysters, furs and diamonds, and jazz tinkling away in the background.

Kristoffer Sakurai's clean and minimalist table reaches into fantasy as he takes reference from Alexandre Dumas' novel, *La Dame aux Camélias*. The name tags reveal a table laid for his husband, his deceased father, ballet master Henning Kronstam, and Sakurai's former ballet coach and friend Ingrid Glindeman – all influential figures in his life. It's touching and bittersweet to look at a table so specific and full, laid for a party of people that cannot sit at it.

Despite being practical objects, laden with items you



Photos of Christmas tables: Clausi Thyrrstrup for Royal Copenhagen



(Clockwise from top left) Guests are imagined to squeeze together on the long bench at Ida Praetorius' table, 'The Afterparty'. Kristoffer Sakura's table, 'A table of dreams that connect two cultures' brings together his Danish and Japanese heritage. A detail from Andreas Kaas' casual and homely table 'A moment of closeness'. Shattered and unglazed plates litter the floor surrounding Alban Lendorf's table 'The Flipside'

'en pointe' at Royal Copenhagen

can buy, the tables require a suspension of disbelief, much like going to the theatre. Here, we willingly enter the illusion of sitting at the Nutcracker's table, where the character leaves the ballet and enters the dining room. Impossible schedules are cleared and places can be set for those we cannot have with us at Christmas.

And in that very idea, there's a neat parallel with ballet and its incandescently beautiful façade. Ballet is graceful and considered, and these tables are poised, neat and tidy. But in both, there is also a sense of messiness beneath the surface. While Christmas dinners are mythologised as perfectly joyful familial occasions with glistening turkey and fancy cutlery, they can also be incredibly fraught. The roast potatoes are overcooked, someone doesn't like their present, babies get tired, relatives get a bit too drunk – it is often impossible for Christmas day to live up to the fantasy.

Ballet can be messy too. In the middle of the six displays, there is a table called The Flipside, created by Alban Lendorf,

a graduate of the Royal Ballet School and now principal dancer at both the American Ballet Theatre and the Royal Ballet.

"We want to shock the senses and challenge traditions by twisting reality and showing the other side of perfection. The result is a deconstructed Christmas setting," he says.

He collaborated with four of his best friends to create a dystopia in the midst of the fantasies. It's a raw and even violent scene. The 'Full Lace' service lies unglazed and smashed on the floor, the iconic floral swirls of Royal Copenhagen are graffitied across the walls, a marble tabletop is cracked atop a gnarled tree stump, and a ballet barre is harpooned across the room.

In harsh handwritten capitals, Lendorf has scrawled a poem on the wall that describes a morning rehearsal where the dancers come together, 'sparkling and suffering...still wheezing for the flames'.

For its audience, ballet has an almost magical appeal. But the transient beauty that we see on stage is the product of thousands of hours of training and ach-

ing and wheezing. It's an unrelenting art form, fixated on fashioning the effortless. We do not see the ropes behind the stage, the rapid costume changes, the bunions and the bruises. Beauty is the product, but it's not necessarily the process.

Similarly, the delight of Christmas – in the familial rather than the religious sense – harkens back to childhood, when we saw the product but never the process. The turkey was never a fleshy, gut-filled thing on the counter to be wrestled into the oven six hours before dinner, it just appeared, crispy and hot. Gifts materialised overnight and family members appeared from nowhere. There was no logistical nightmare of train bookings or careful table coordination of those who do and do not get on. It simply happened.

At Royal Copenhagen, we can willingly buy into the effortless fantasy. The tables are laid for everyone – the fictional characters, the matching crockery and the elegant music. It's a nostalgic fantasy made real, and it really is en pointe. **M**



Decadent treats to be shared at Ida Praetorius' table, 'The Afterparty'.

Emily Tait

OP-ED

International residents need representation in Parliament

Telling researchers on temporary work visas how they can and cannot use their spare time is a gross violation of their right to live a normal life alongside Danes. If internationals were represented in Parliament, these sorts of ridiculously stringent rules might never be made – rules which undermine Denmark's ability to attract and retain vital foreign workers

BROOKE HARRINGTON is an internationally-recognised expert on tax havens, who is employed at Copenhagen Business School, and who has lived in Denmark for eight years. But she now faces a 13,500-kroner fine for holding seminars about tax evasion for the tax authority SKAT and the Danish Parliament.

Her work visa prevents her from working anywhere except CBS, and technically she needs to apply for permission every time she wants to 'work' anywhere else. This is weird, because under the Danish university law, universities are obliged to share their knowledge. Her employer, and the Danish parliament were all caught unaware by the situation. Danish immigration law is a castle built on shifting sands – 68 changes have been made since 2002.

She is one 14 foreign researchers to be reported to the police. Why on earth can't these researchers share their knowledge – for free or for money? Who is hurt? In a country that supposedly values civil society, democratic participation, volunteering, how do her actions violate this?

APPEASING THE POPULISTS

The problem isn't that she has to secure a visa to work in Denmark. I think borders and immigration restrictions are pretty reasonable. Not knowing who is residing in your country can have a destabilising effect and complicate the planning and budgeting of public services, as well as create undue pressure on housing markets.

Immigration and visa rules are drawn up in the political battle over Danishness. But there is no one in Parliament whose mandate is to protect the rights of international workers.

Peter Stanners

It is reasonable to place restrictions on immigrants, like creating strict conditions for earning full residency and citizenship rights, is also reasonable. These rules establish the needed security and stability that enable countries to open their borders to the workers that their labour market needs, but can't provide for itself. The idea that unemployment benefits should be restricted until one obtains citizenship or permanent residency is reasonable.

Immigration is a trade-off between national self-interest and the individual search for employment and opportunity. Getting this balance right is tricky, and will always leave some dissatisfied. Too few immigrants, and the economy will stutter.

But many Danes worry that too many immigrants could threaten social cohesion and national identity. Give too many rights to too many immigrants, and they may exert an undue influence on Danish society and its direction – in other words, they worry that Denmark's Danishness will be lost along the way.

But I would argue that Brooke Harrington's case, demonstrates that the balance has swung too far toward appeasing the populist right and their sense of national identity.

While you can reasonably demand that she remain in work, and even earn a certain minimum salary, forcing her to apply for permission every time she wants to share her knowledge outside CBS, is a gross and pointless infringement that ultimately violates Danish

ideas of participation and active citizenship.

PAYING A HIGH PRICE

So how did we get here, to the point where immigration rules are passed that actually undermine Denmark's own interests?

Immigration rules have become a means for politicians in Parliament to virtue signal to the population. The people who are affected by these rules have no political representation – so there is no downside to disenfranchising them – and the rules' enactment sends a message to anxious Danes.

But if Harrington and other international workers had political representation, this situation might never have occurred. Who is fighting in her corner in Parliament? Some parties take up the issue, but there's little incentive to represent a segment of the population that cannot vote for you.

The uproar in Parliament and in the media over the Brooke Harrington case suggests that it is obvious to most people that these rules are stupid. But it has taken high-profile cases to make an impact, and Harrington may pay a high price – if found guilty of a criminal act it could jeopardise her future here and her professional career. Does she deserve to suffer through this anxiety? Is this a way to treat people who are essential to supporting Denmark's economic growth?

Immigration and visa rules are drawn up in the political battle over Danishness. But there is no one in Parliament whose mandate is to protect the rights of international workers – whose job it is to

ensure that excessive administrative or psychological burdens are not placed on internationals that prevents them from living what is, by Denmark's own standards, a reasonable life.

Perhaps its time for an observer MP to take a seat in parliament and represent the 508,000 people living in Denmark without a Danish passport (9% of the total population in Denmark)? I don't think its such a crazy thought.

NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION

It's in everyone's benefits that internationals in Denmark are treated respectfully. International workers and the Danish economy need each other. And Denmark seriously risks pushing out hard-working individuals who only want to contribute. And then everyone loses.

Globalisation is here to stay. Many internationals may only be here temporarily, but as a group we are growing as demand for our skills and services grows. We are an essential component of Danish society. Without us, the Metro would not get built, universities would not be teaching students, classrooms wouldn't be cleaned, and Danish multinational corporations would be unable to compete in a global economy.

If you have a job and pay taxes, you should be allowed to use your remaining time in the manner that you see fit. Do you want to start a business and make money? Go for it! How does Denmark lose from more economic activity and democratic participation? It doesn't. **M**



This is the last issue of The Murmur. We want to thank all the contributors, editors, interns, journalists, photographers, illustrators and distributors that helped put together the 41 issues we published between June 2014 and today. It's been a joy working with you all.

Thank you 🥰



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| Cæcilie Parfelt Vengberg | Joshua Hollingdale | Moussa Mchangama | Tali Padan |
| Daniela de Lorenzo | Justine Garofalo | Nagieb Khaja | Thomas Fleurquin |
| David Gee | Kenneth Nguyen | Natasha Jessen-Petersen | Thor Fanndal |
| Dave Nothing | Kevin McGwin | Nereya Otieno | Tobias Havmand |
| Elias Thorsson | Kirsty Gifford | Nicola Witcombe | Uffe Elbæk |
| Emil Staulund Larsen | Khara Lewin | Nik Tan | Vanessa Ellingham |
| Emily Tait | Kristoffer Dahl Kvalvik | Nina Nørgaard | Vincent Hendricks |
| Erdem Ovacik | Kristian Madsen | Oliver Raassina | Yasmin Davali |
| Flemming Andersen | Kristian Weise | Polina Bachlakova | |

(This list might not be complete. My sincere apologies if I missed your name)



WHAT'S ON • DECEMBER

ALL MONTH

MY MUSIC
Pop music and art collide in a sensory overload of music videos, video art, sculptures, paintings and installations.

Arken
Skovvej 100, 2635 Ishøj
Arken.dk
Ends 25th March 2018



PAIMIO SANATORIUM
Design museum Denmark explores Aalto's outstanding work, the airy Paimio Sanatorium that was created in 1933 in reaction to the uncleanness of tuberculous.

Design Museum
Bredgade 68, KBH
designmuseum.dk
Ends January 21



THE NUTCRACKER
The Royal Danish Theatre presents The Nutcracker, the greatest of ballet classics and a perfect way to spend a December evening.

Royal Danish Theatre
1050 KBH
kgltheater.dk
All Month

6

CHRISTMAS CONCERT
This year the ensemble present Danish baroque music that has been discovered in The Royal Library's collections.

Black Diamond
Søren Kierkegaards Plads 1, kb.dk



AHMET ÖĞÜT
Collective memory, local history and cultural identity are among the subjects addressed by Ahmet Öğüt in his striking multimedia projects.

Kunsthal Charlottenborg
Nyhavn 2, KBH
kunsthalcharlottenborg.dk
Ends February 18

7

WINE AND CHEESE PAIRINGS
The 'Not Your Parents' wine bar is expanding into cheese pairings, offering a full tasting evening based on the assumption that no one really knows what they are doing anyway.

Not Your Parents – Wine Bar
Fiolstræde 25, ST, KBH
notyourparents.net

9

CHRISTMAS AT KØDBYEN
A Christmas market weekend full of classic apple slices, pork sandwiches with the taste of Christmas, gløgg, hot cocoa to warm up.

Kødbyens Mad & Marked
Flæsketorvet, KBH
koedbyensmadogmarked.dk
Ends December 10

14

THE LAST JEDI RELEASE DATE
Get your tickets now for the biggest film release of the festive season, perfect for the school holidays, and for star wars fans of all generations. May the force be with you.

Various cinemas

15

COPENOPEN POETRY SLAM
Monthly poetry slam in both danish and foreign languages. It is always a lively evening for participants and audience alike.

Husets Biograf
Rådhusstræde 13, KBH
huset-kbh.dk



ABSALON'S CHRISTMAS BAZAAR
Visit this year's 2 all-day Christmas bazaars in Absalon where you can find Christmas gifts, handmade Christmas decorations, handicrafts, home-made items, eateries and much more!

Absalon
Sønder Boulevard 73, KBH
Absaloncph.dk
December 16

16

CAROLS AND POETRY
St. Albans is affectionately known as the 'English church' in Copenhagen and on Saturday the 16th it opens its doors for a festive evening of traditional hymns and poems.

St. Albans Church
Churchill Parken 6, Langelinie
st-albans.dk



PARTY LIKE GATSBY AT VEGA
Party like Gatsby presents 'The Mad Mansion' - an immersive show & party, unlike anything you've ever experienced, visiting more than 15 cities.

VEGA
Enghavevej 40, KBH
Vega.dk
December 31

WHAT'S ON • JANUARY

6

MIKKELLER RUNNING GROUP

The first group training of the Mikkeller running team takes place on the 6th of January, where the weekly run is always followed by a craft Mikkeller beer.

Mikkeller Running Club

Flæskeforvet 25, KBH

www.mikkellerrunningclub.dk

6

NEW YEAR'S CONCERT AT DR CONCERTHOUSE

DR Big Band and the super-crown Curtis Stigers revive the spirit of Frank Sinatra's legendary collaboration with The Count Basie Orchestra

DR Koncerthuset

Ørestads Boulevard 13, KBH

12

NEW ORLEANS NEW YEAR'S JAZZ

The mini-festival brings together jazz, streetfunk, blues and soul served by the country's absolute best bands in the genre.

Pumpehuset

Stuðiestræde 52, KBH

pumpehuset.dk

14

WOLF AND SHEEP

Cinemateket's popular bilingual screenings continue this year with 'Wolf and Sheep', a fantasy-filled drama about a community in a little village in Afghanistan and its everyday life.

Cinemateket

Gothersgade 55, KBH

dfi.dk

COPENHAGENCARD

SEE MORE. PAY LESS.

COPENHAGEN CARD APP

The Copenhagen Card guide is also available as an app for iPhone or Android.



Free access to 79
museums and
attractions

Free transport by train,
bus and Metro
in the entire
metropolitan area

One adult can bring
along 2 children
under the age of
10 for free

**“Everything
you wish
for has an
expression
in Danish”**



**Olga,
philologist from
Novosibirsk.**

Sign up for intensive Danish courses in Hellerup and Lyngby
sprogcenterhellerup.dk



**SPROGCENTER
HELLERUP**