

**Study no. 8**

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**Foreigners in the Danish newspaper debate  
from the 1870s to the 1990s**

**Bent Jensen**

**The Rockwool Foundation Research Unit**  

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**Copenhagen 2001**

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*Published by:*

The Rockwool Foundation Research Unit

*Linguistic adviser:*

Steve Churchill (Chapter 1 and 2)

Tim Caudery (Chapter 3)

*Address:*

The Rockwool Foundation Research Unit

Danmarks Statistik (Statistics Denmark)

Sejrøgade 11

DK-2100 Copenhagen Ø

Tel.: +45 39 17 38 32

Fax.: +45 39 20 52 19

E-mail: [rff@rff.dk](mailto:rff@rff.dk)

Home page: [www.rff.dk](http://www.rff.dk)

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## Preface

In 1997, the Rockwool Foundation decided to start a major new research project on non-Western immigrants' integration into the Danish labour market and their living conditions in general. This project was based on data from an extensive interview survey among eight of the biggest immigrant groups in Denmark, combined with existing administrative register data from Statistics Denmark.

The results of the study were presented in Gunnar Viby Mogensen & Poul Chr. Matthiessen (Eds.) (2000). *Integration i Danmark omkring årtusindskiftet. Indvandrerne møde med arbejdsmarkedet og velfærdssamfundet (Integration in Denmark around the turn of millennium. Immigrants' encounter with the labour market and welfare society)* (Aarhus University Press), and, in a more popular form, in Gunnar Viby Mogensen & Poul Chr. Matthiessen (2000). *Mislykket integration? (Abortive integration?)* (Spektrum), with reflexions and assessments by Marianne Jelved, the Danish Minister of Economic Affairs.

A pilot study was carried out in 1998-99, prior to the main study, with the aim of obtaining a broader understanding of the dynamics of immigration through, among other things, analyses by leading experts of the global demographic situation – and with it the underlying causes of migration – together with the more specific case of immigration to Denmark. The pilot study also included an analysis by Bent Jensen (MA) of the coverage by leading influential newspapers on the topic “foreigners in Denmark” in the period covered by the study, i.e. from the beginning of the 1960s to the mid-1990s.

This media analysis, published in David Coleman and Eskil Wadensjö (1999). *Immigration to Denmark. International and National Perspectives* (Aarhus University Press), which identified a number of fundamental features in the general debate and formation of opinion on this issue, and not least in the political decision process, stimulated interest for a new analysis going as far back as the 1870s. The aim of this new media analysis, which would include most of the political press and selected tabloids, was thus to give a more coherent understanding of the media's views on the various immigrations over the past 100 years or so. These results were published in the author's book: *De fremmede i dansk avisdebat fra 1870'erne til 1990'erne (Foreigners in the Danish newspaper debate from the 1870s to the 1990s)* (Spektrum 2000), of which the present book is a shortened version.

The Research Unit has received help and advice from a number of researchers during work on this book. Jette Drachmann Søllinge (MA), a press historian and senior researcher, has contributed extensively throughout the project, ranging from the development of ideas, assistance with the primary literature searches, methodological control, and professional comments on Bent Jensen's draft manuscript.

## 6 *Preface*

Associate professor Ole Hyldtoft (dr.phil) and professor Jens Vedsted-Hansen (dr.jur) have read and commented on the manuscript from the point of view of their respective fields (history and law). I am also very grateful to the library staff at Statistics Denmark, who have helped in obtaining the necessary secondary literature, and to the staff at The Royal Library's newspaper reading room, who have contributed much practical assistance.

At the Research Unit, I have received invaluable secretarial help from Hanne Lykke, who has read, checked and prepared the manuscript for printing.

Copenhagen, October 2001

*Gunnar Viby Mogensen*

## **1. The earliest immigration**

The analysis of the newspaper debate on “foreigners” in Denmark starts with the 1870s, around the time of a relatively strong immigration of – mainly unskilled – Swedish labour, and ends with the debate in the mid-1990s on the growing number of refugees from war-torn former Yugoslavia, a debate which also raged in many other Western European countries.

This chapter summarises the results of the analysis concerning the period 1870-1960, while chapter 2 and 3 present a more detailed discussion of the debate since 1960. A brief description of the various newspapers selected for the analysis is presented in appendix A, while appendix B offers a short description of some definitions used in the analysis.

### **1.1 Background of the earliest debate**

The Danish constitution dates from June 1849, and in the parliamentary session of 1874/75 the young democracy had started considering new legislation on foreigners in Denmark.

During the period from the mid-1700s to the mid-1800s a Danish national identity gradually emerged, and one by one the different social classes had come to national awareness. By the time Parliament (Rigsdagen, as it was termed up to 1953) began its debates on the new law, therefore, there was a clear “us versus them” sentiment throughout the country.

Among the specific reasons for the proposed legislation was especially the development in transport technology in the period. Thus, the explanatory notes to the bill for a new Aliens Act introduced in 1874/75 contained the following observation: “With the changes in the means of communication and in part also in social conditions, the assumptions and other related circumstances on which the present legislation on journeymen’s and other job-seekers’ access to this country are based, have changed to such a degree that it must be considered necessary to thoroughly revise the regulations currently in force”. Similar views on this issue were also intermittently expressed in the press, the first time concerning the thousands of poor Swedish workers flocking across the Sound in search of work.

### **1.2 The debate on Swedish immigration**

More significant migrations from Sweden to Denmark appear to have started in the 1840s, which, from the 1860s, stabilised at a relatively high level for the next decades. However, it is generally very difficult to keep count of the size of the migration, and the number of migrant workers in particular can only be guessed at. The Swedish authorities have fairly reliable figures for the more permanent migration from 1865, however. These show that, up to 1900, between 1,500 and 3,000 emigrated to Denmark each year, which growing industrialisation in

Sweden subsequently pushed down to 1,000 a year. According to the Danish population statistics, over 24,000 in 1880 and more than 35,000 in 1901 were of Swedish birth, corresponding to 1.2% and 1.6% respectively of the Danish population.<sup>1</sup> Permanent immigrants were greatly outnumbered by migrant workers, however. Willerslev (1987) estimates the total annual movement of migrant workers at about 7,000 in the 1870s, and between 8-10,000 in the 1880s.

Up to the 1870s, these were mainly young men from the countryside. In this period, the poverty of country life in some parts of Sweden was much harsher than the worst conditions in Denmark. Put another way, these were migrant workers in the prime of life who were used to hard physical labour for long hours at low pay. Two reports in the newspaper *Varde Avis* on June 3 and 10, 1869, describe how horrendous conditions in Sweden could be. In the summer of 1869, there was crop failure and widespread famine, and the paper urged readers to contribute to a national collection for the benefit of the starving Swedes.

Given the nature of the immigration, there were endless possibilities for inflammatory debate in the influx of Swedish labour that was taking place precisely at a time when the labour movement was starting to organise itself, by trades and politically, in line with accelerating industrialisation in Denmark. Immigration was considerable by Danish standards, and, for the most part, this labour force came from a background of crushing rural poverty. There was a distinct possibility that the Swedes could depress wages by adding to the competition for available jobs, and it was inevitable that the union movement would see it this way. Thus the scene was set for a widespread exchange of opinion in the papers of the period.

And this is precisely what the analysis shows – the Swedish workers figured in the debate again and again. At the start of the period, however, the inward migration of foreigners workers was not so great as to be reflected in *Social-Demokraten's* coverage of the new Aliens Act of 1875. At a time when Denmark was still in the final phase of a protracted economic boom, the main concern of the Social Democratic party was to wrest the previously so firm control of *domestic* workers from the state – which in fact it succeeded in doing. The labour movement was also internationalist-minded, and thus in principle made common cause with the working classes of other nations. The Social Democratic party was a member of the First International from the formation of the party in 1871 to the demise of the First International in 1876, and was also one of the founding members of the Second International in 1889. In a Nordic context, the party's internationalism was channelled into the so-called Worker Scandinavianism, which from 1886 had a fixed organisational framework in the form of regular congresses.

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<sup>1</sup> Statens Statistiske Bureau (1905).

In theory, therefore, circumstances should have ensured the Swedes a friendly reception by the Social Democrats – as long as they joined a union – when they began making their presence felt in the labour market. When an economic crisis broke out in the 1880s, however, it became more and more difficult to preserve this show of sympathy – especially during the worst years around the middle of the decade – which was hardly surprising given the massiveness of the immigration. Many of the contributions to *Social-Demokraten* now began urging the Swedes to stay at home. Social Democratic trade unionists demanded that public works should be reserved for Danes, and that the import of Swedish labour by private employment agencies should be banned by law.

*Social-Demokraten*'s coverage of the issue was probably also strongly influenced by the actions and mood of unskilled workers. On March 11, 1888, for example, a report in the paper from a meeting of the Unskilled Labourers' Union again complained that, despite the abundance of labour due to the slump, Swedish workers were being kept on in major public works, while Danish workers were dismissed. The meeting ended by calling on the union's executive committee to petition the Parliament to "consider the nation's own workers when carrying out state work, such that foreign labour is not imported when the country's own workers are unemployed". In April 1888, *Social-Demokraten* followed up with yet another article among many, which lambasted the landowner government then in office for being unpatriotic because it made such heavy use of Swedish labour in public works. Such accusations had previously been hurled at the employers.

Characteristically, however, even in the worst crisis years, and with few exceptions, the paper resisted the temptation to descend into direct xenophobia. On the whole, Swedes were neither portrayed as hot-tempered, greedy, unreliable or less intelligent, which are traits typically found in xenophobic descriptions employing the inflammatory use of recurring stereotypes.

On the contrary, in a number of articles, the Swedes were praised for their class consciousness, even though follow-up coverage showed that this had nevertheless been lukewarm at best – for example, in some of the many labour disputes of the period, Swedish workers were used as scabs. A comparison of the coverage in other papers, such as *Politiken*, also shows that, in some cases, *Social-Demokraten* chose to play down the notoriously violent clashes between Swedish and Danish workers in the labour disputes of the 1880s. It can also be seen from the paper that its journalists took it upon themselves to play a moderating role in the disputes, by trying to calm tempers and mediate between agitated Danish and Swedish workers.

Towards the end of the period, with the first hints of an economic recovery, it looks as though the paper was once again able to take a more relaxed view of the Swedish workers' presence. Now, it was again possible to mention the impor-

tance of international solidarity at the Scandinavian workers' congresses. The nasty clashes in a tight labour market were becoming a thing of the past, especially since a new group of wage-depressing poor workers were beginning to appear on the scene in the 1890s: Poles.

*Social-Demokraten's* renewed fundamental solidarity with the Swedish class comrades was also reflected in the negotiations on legislation on citizenship in the 1892-93 session, which was the first law of this kind to be introduced since the right to poor relief and the newly introduced old-age pension from 1892 had become conditional on Danish citizenship. Thus, *Social-Demokraten* championed the right of poor Swedes to obtain citizenship in the face of demands by the Conservative landowner government to reject the socially weakest applicants.

From its start in 1884, *Politiken* presented itself as an intellectual opposition newspaper with a rebellious streak. In the political landscape, the paper was definitely a centre-left, but nevertheless clearly non-socialist organ. This influenced the paper's coverage of the Swedish workers. Whereas *Social-Demokraten* more often than not declined to report actual violent episodes between strike-breaking or wage-depressing Swedes and the Danish workers, *Politiken* had no internationalist image to consider. The paper thus carried graphic accounts from the metropolitan area describing Swedes being attacked with blunt weapons and stones flying over the heads of mounted police summoned to protect the foreign workers. The paper's urban intellectual stance also allowed it to freely make actual derogatory remarks about the immigrants. If *Politiken's* portrayal were to be believed, then the Swedish farm hands were "flabby" and less intelligent, if not downright unreliable.

The paper was not completely consistent, however, as coverage of the deportation of two Swedish bootmakers in 1888 showed. In this case *Politiken* actually defended the Swedish socialist workers, praising them for their solidarity with Danish workers. However, this should also be seen in the context of the general, and ever present, conflict between the period's landowner governments from the Højre party (precursor to the present day's Conservative Party) and the opposition consisting of the Social Democratic party and the Liberal party (Venstre), and in this sense the report was clearly tactical.

The conservative papers, *Berlingske Tidende* and *Jyllands-Posten*, who supported the sitting Højre government, were somewhat ambivalent in their view of foreigners at this time. On the one hand, in the drafting of the Aliens Act of 1875, the obligation to have a passport was abolished in order to ease cross-border mobility of labour. However, the actual legislation revealed a clearly restrictive attitude, which reflected conservative demands for law and order and the protection of taxpayer's money against spongers.

In 1875, these papers wanted strict rules of residence for foreign workers in Denmark, and in 1893 even more wanted to restrict the number of Swedish workers granted citizenship – the latter for the express reason that Højre wanted to prevent poor Swedes from exploiting public funds, and, according to the Højre press, most of the citizenship applicants in that year were also lining up to be clients in the public relief system, which had been expanded at the beginning of the 1890s. In the deportation case in 1888, all the conservative organs fully backed the government's decision to deport the Swedish socialists.

On the issue of labour migrations in the 1880s, however, the mainly liberal attitude of the conservative press was justified partly by vague references to liberal theory – the free movement of labour – and partly by the interests of cost-conscious employers, public and private alike. There was no doubt, of course, that the Swedish workers contributed to depress wage rates through increased competition for jobs, even though this was not acknowledged in the papers' argumentation. Instead, *Berlingske Tidende* called attention to a weakened work ethic, with Danish workers going home or on holiday as soon as they had money in their pockets. The work ethic in Denmark was suffering, in other words, and according to these papers, here the Swedes could make a difference.

The Liberal *Fyns Tidende* took the middle road. From a taxpayers' point of view – it was, after all, the paper's readers, the solid Liberal farmers, who paid for a substantial part of the poor relief – the paper could support a strict Aliens Act in 1875. Moreover, for property owners an efficient police supervision of foreigners was also acceptable. On the other hand, as a representative of confirmed democrats, the paper had to speak up for the foreigners' legal rights, including the protection of foreign workers against arbitrary deportations.

Towards the end of the period, when that branch of the Liberal movement supported by *Fyns Tidende* – the Moderate Liberal party (Det moderate Venstre) – was cooperating with a Højre government, the taxpayer point of view seems to have got the upper hand in the paper during the 1892-93 debate on citizenship. For example, the paper supported stricter control on the right to citizenship to prevent foreigners deliberately exploiting the improved social system.

### **1.3 The debate on Polish labour**

The background to the immigration of Polish migrant workers from the beginning of the 1890s up to and including 1929 lies in the expansion of the Danish sugar beet industry. The Poles also found work on construction projects, and in brickyards and peat-digging, but the sugar beet fields were the main source of employment.

The first Poles to enter Denmark were mentioned in the papers in 1892, and this led to a surprisingly virulent newspaper debate, Social Democratic shop stewards fearing a new invasion of cheap, non-organised labour. The first barracks

for Polish immigrants were built in 1893, with room for 400 girls, and from 1901 recruitment began in earnest.<sup>2</sup> In 1901, a group of large farmers founded *Foreningen for Tilvejebringelse af Arbejdskraft for Landbruget i Danmark* (roughly, The Association for the Procurement of Agricultural Labour in Denmark). In 1908, *Landsudvalget for Anvendelse af udenlandske Arbejdere* (roughly, The National Committee for the Use of Foreign Workers) was established, whose members included the regional confederations of farmers' associations and *De danske Sukkerfabrikker* (Danish Sugar Mills). The committee functioned as a controlling body to ensure compliance with Danish protective legislation in the area – the first of these laws dated precisely from 1908 – and from 1915 it also took over the recruitment of Polish workers. After the First World War, as a result of the generally increased government control of the Danish economy, the intake of foreign workers was regulated by means of quotas negotiated between the employers and the Agricultural Workers' Union, and later by a government committee.

Table 1.1 shows the annual number of Polish migrant workers. As can be seen, migration took off around 1907 and increased steadily until 1914, when it culminated. Before 1907 and after 1914, the numbers were far less significant, and recruitment stopped altogether in 1918 and was only resumed again in 1920, though at a modest rate throughout the 1920s. In July 1919, the Agricultural Workers' Union had it ratified that its collective agreement with the agricultural employers also applied to foreign workers. During the next few years, the union also succeeded in keeping a tight rein on the import of Polish workers. There was a temporary stop to immigration in 1922, owing to continuing high unemployment and a rapid decline in the acreage of land planted with sugar beet, and this was made permanent by a Social Democratic/Social-Liberal government from 1930.

The number of *permanent* Polish immigrants is not precisely known. Nevertheless, Nellemann (1981) estimates that about 3,500 Poles had settled permanently in Denmark around 1930, many of whom had been “stuck” here during the First World War as a result of the uncertain, and at times completely severed, routes home.

As mentioned above, the debate on Polish workers in the Social Democratic press started in earnest in 1892, and remained topical until 1930.

Up until the First World War, *Social-Demokraten's* point of view – in accordance with decisions adopted in the Second International – was that labour migrations should be allowed, even though, as the earliest reports show, both party and press felt strongly threatened by the prospects of the immigration of large groups of impoverished East European workers. However, paper and party also

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<sup>2</sup> George Nellemann (1981), p. 32.

demanded that immigration should only be allowed on the condition that the government passed protective legislation. This was intended to prevent the exploitation of Polish labour and at the same time – though this was less explicit in *Social-Demokraten* - put Danish workers on a more equal footing with Polish workers in the competition for jobs.

Table 1.1. Estimated number of migrant workers from Poland, 1893-1929 (selected years)

1893	Kolbye 1950	Approx. 400
1896	Chronicles of St. Birgitte's Church	Approx. 800
1907	Official report of Parliamentary proceedings, 1907-8, Supplement A, column 4835 ff.	6,647
1909	Report from Ministry of the Interior	8,639
1910	-	10,419
1911	Statistiske Efterretninger 1911	10,320
1912	Report from Ministry of the Interior	11,957
1914	-	14,452
1915	Archives of the National Danish Committee	Approx. 2,000
1917	-	Approx. 400
1918	-	none
1919	-	none
1920	-	Approx. 800
1921	-	Approx. 300
1922	-	none
1923	-	Approx. 100
1924	-	1,427
1928	-	571
1929	-	488

Source: Nellemann (1981), p. 46 (the notes in the table refer to Nellemann's primary source).

Social Democratic party functionaries or journalists sought to help grossly exploited Polish workers from the arrival of the first Poles in 1892 and up to the outbreak of war, which many newspaper articles also bore witness to. Obviously, the paper was also interested in incidents where the Poles actively protested against bad working conditions, and conditions at various brickyards in particular led to a number of strikes and walkouts. The identification of the conservative press and the conservative parties with the exploitation of Polish workers was interpreted as a sign of the right's lack of patriotism, exactly as had happened in the debate on the use of Swedish workers in the 1880s: Thus employers, it was charged, showed an unpatriotic sentiment by hiring foreign workers while Danish hands went idle.

During and after the First World War, both the party and the union movement changed tactics. The Social Democratic Party became less internationally oriented, and in 1915 the Agricultural Workers' Union was formed. Up through the 1920s, *Social-Demokraten* argued persistently for checks on the import of migrant workers, but this was soon turned into a demand for a complete stop to immigration.

Towards the end of 1929, this became a key issue for the new Social Democratic/Social-Liberal government, and ended in 1930 with the government refusing to give employers permission to import Polish workers. This “stop on immigration” was to continue for the rest of the 1930s. However, since there was only a very limited number of Polish migrant workers in 1928 and 1929, this can be said to be of symbolic value only – in the sense that the new government and the Agricultural Workers’ Union both needed to show their voters and members that they could take a firm stand against the Poles, who had long been a thorn in farm workers’ side.

*Politiken*, like *Social-Demokraten*, covered the Poles from their first arrival in 1892. The tone was also very similar to begin with, this Social-Liberal paper expressing indignation at the exploitation of poor workers.

However, when the debate flared up again in 1907 – this time with the additional prospect of the import of Chinese workers – *Politiken* took a different course, strongly emphasising the need for a land reform, which was an important issue in the Social-Liberals’ political programme, and which could broaden the party’s voter base by establishing more small-holdings. According to the paper, an increase in the number of small-holdings could maintain a reserve of labour in agriculture, which the landed interests could also make use of, as an added bonus to the benefits of a land reform. *Politiken*, this time joined by *Social-Demokraten*, also demanded better conditions for workers in the agrarian labour market. The newspaper also approved of the drafting of protective legislation in the debate in 1908, and gave only moderate coverage to the murderous attacks on a Danish large farmer by a Polish gang in November the same year.

In its editorial policy, *Ekstra Bladet* took a line similar to that of its parent newspaper, *Politiken*. The paper sympathised with the drafting of protective legislation, even though as a tabloid it was never slow to carry hair-raising reports of Polish involvement in the criminal fringe, and even though it aired genuinely xenophobic views in November 1908.

*Aftenbladet* also had a strong penchant for the more sensational stories, but was otherwise quite sympathetic to the views of ordinary workers, without resorting to virulent attacks on the Poles. *Aftenbladet* also regarded employers as the main culprit.

On the whole, *Berlingske Tidende* saw nothing wrong in using Polish labour, which the paper lost no opportunity in emphasising was made necessary by the deteriorating work ethic of Danish farm workers. The Danish workers demanded too high wages, too short working hours, and, if the paper could be believed, were almost impossible to drive out into the fields. The Poles, on the other hand, were given top marks for diligence. When the question of protective legislation came up in 1908, *Berlingske Tidende* was mainly positive, which was partly due

to increased demands on protective legislation made by the Austrian authorities as a condition for allowing the passage of Polish migrant workers to Denmark (Poland was not an independent nation at this time, and most Poles came from Galicia which was a part of Austria-Hungary). A moderately worded law could be justified if it meant ensuring an adequate supply of Polish labour in the coming seasons.

The Liberal *Fyns Tidende* also accepted the need for protective legislation, which, as the paper observed, was a logical development of the efforts the legislature had made on behalf of Danish workers in previous years.

#### **1.4 Russian Jews and revolutionary refugees, 1905-20**

Russian Jews started arriving in Denmark around 1905. 1903 had been a year of pogroms, with the Easter pogrom in Kischinew as one of the most notorious. The bloody events during the abortive revolution in 1905 also caused harm to the Jews. The Russian government accused Jewish groups of being behind the revolutionary movement, and as a result the Jews became victims of the government's acts of vengeance. The oppression of the Russian Jews continued up to 1917, after which it changed character.

Immigration to Denmark is assumed to have been impeded by the administrative tightening of the Aliens Act in 1913 and 1914, and was further limited by changes in immigration rules in May 1917, which meant that all persons arriving from Russia were required to have a passport. The rules were tightened again in November 1917, when C. Th. Zahle, the Social-Liberal Prime Minister and Minister of Justice, proposed an amendment to the Aliens Act.<sup>3</sup> Under this proposal, which had an easy passage through parliament, persons without the right of citizenship or relief could be expelled or deported on the recommendation of the Minister of Justice "if the circumstances warranted it, no matter how long he had been in the country".<sup>4</sup> This was not enough to stamp out illegal immigration completely, however, and Jews were still entering the country in the 1920s, especially from Poland, where widespread anti-Semitism prevailed even after independence.

Almost all the Eastern European Jews who came to Denmark settled in Copenhagen, where they lived in ghetto-like conditions in the inner city. There is every indication that the poorest Jews sought near destinations such as Denmark, the more wealthy, who could afford the fare, preferring the USA and Canada. Apart from poverty, the main characteristic of these immigrants was that they were fairly young people from the Jewish communities in Russia. This had a rejuvenating effect on the Jewish community in Denmark, which had had a small birth

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<sup>3</sup> The Social-Liberals formed the government in 1909-10 and 1913-20.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted from Blüdnikow (1986), p. 200. According to the author, this merely legalised a practice which the police had followed for the past four years.

deficit in recent years, and which had otherwise been thoroughly assimilated into Danish society – precisely like Jewish communities in the rest of Western Europe. A third characteristic was that the immigrants were much more rooted in their faith, especially as regards Jewish cultural traditions, than the Danish Jews. And a fourth was that, in consequence of Czarist repression, many had socialist views, and many were closely or loosely connected to the socialist Jewish party, Bund, but also to other branches of the revolutionary movement.

The 1911 census counted 1,600 Russian Jews. In 1921, the Jewish community in Denmark totalled 5,875 persons, of whom 3,146 were recent immigrants or descendants of these. In other words, immigrants were in the majority. These should be seen as minimum figures, since many were never registered by the authorities because they only stayed here, until they found the means to travel on to the USA or Canada. Many also avoided being registered due to an ingrained mistrust of all forms of authority. Thus, according to Blüdnikow (1986), the censuses hardly give an accurate picture: The actual figure was substantially higher than official numbers.

In addition to this Jewish immigration from Russia and Poland, there were also revolutionary refugees who fled after the revolution in 1905 and, in subsequent years, also from the general persecution by the Russian authorities.

*Social-Demokraten* was consistently sympathetic to the Russian socialist refugees and immigrant Jews during the years from 1905 and up to the end of the First World War. The paper showed full and massive solidarity with the political refugees, and also with the poor Jews as long as they did not serve to depress wages. If they did, the paper showed no hesitation in waging direct campaigns against them. There was a whole series of articles on this issue, for example, from spring 1911 to the following year. Since so many of the Jewish workers were employed as tailors, it was especially the tailors' union which felt the brunt of the influx. The paper argued that the master tailors who based their business on Jewish labour produced shoddy products. Added to this – a new argument in this kind of labour dispute – was the alleged health risk associated with Jewish products due to poor hygienic standards. By 1912, however, *Social-Demokraten* could proclaim that the struggle against foreign cheap labour had been won. *Social-Demokraten* used the occasion to summarise the party's position on foreign workers: Just as vigorously as the Social Democrats opposed sweat labour and scabs, just as vigorously did the party and the Social Democratic press want to help the Russian workers who lived up to their union obligations or the dissidents who sought protection against "Russia's bloody butcher's hands".

*Politiken* was also largely sympathetic to the two groups of immigrants, even though, as the paper made plain, this did not extend to the more conspiratorial refugees. However, the immigration of poor Eastern European Jews reached such proportions that the editor gradually became uneasy. In September 1913,

the paper sounded the alarm bells: Immigration was getting out of control! It was impossible to register all immigrants, and the large numbers arriving would soon begin to strain the Copenhagen municipality's budget, which, according to the paper, the authorities and the town's citizens were belatedly realising. The Russians were still pouring into Copenhagen in large numbers for one, and according to *Politiken*, patently obvious reason: "They have discovered that this is a pleasant place to come to. Denmark has a high level of social welfare, far higher than Russia. This is to our credit, of course, but it is a pity that it should encourage other countries' proletarian population to flock to us because we have free doctors, medicine, education, and many other benefits of a spiritual and material nature".

*Ekstra Bladet's* editors were also beginning to question the wisdom of continued immigration, perhaps most forcefully in November 1908 during the debate on the possible consequences for Danish aliens legislation of the murder of a Danish farmer by a Polish gang. Nonetheless, the paper supported the right of Russians and socialists to asylum, and, on the formation of the anti-foreigner *Danskerliga* (Danish League) in 1917, it also opposed any form of hatred of Jews in Denmark.

Not surprisingly, *Berlingske Tidende* and *Jyllands-Posten* found common cause in agitating for increased control of Russian immigrants, not least of Russian revolutionaries. These papers warned the conservative reader against the danger of supporting liberal insistence on the right of asylum for these Russian agitators, whereas the immigration of unassuming Polish labour was a different matter altogether.

Put another way: The conservative papers opposed the immigration of revolutionary refugees and foreigners who could make a claim on public funds, while at the same time insisting on the free movement of labour. In addition to this, they feared the spread of socialist and anarchist ideas in Denmark. The conservative papers were also influenced by the fear of the implications of the right of asylum on relations between Denmark and Russia, the Czar's family having close family connections to the Danish royal house. Moreover, Russia had supported Denmark in the war against Prussia and Austria in 1864: Denmark might again need Russian support against a threatening neighbour to the south.

### **1.5 Prisoners of war, revolutionary agents and White refugees, 1915-20**

Rather large numbers of Russian came to Denmark during and immediately after the First World War. There were two main categories. Firstly, sick Russian prisoners of war who, as part of an exchange agreement between Austria-Hungary and Germany on the one hand and Russia on the other, were, on Denmark's initiative, interned here. According to Blüdnikow (1988), several, mainly local, papers reacted against the internment: The newspaper *København* maintained that the government's underlying motive – that this impartial, purely humani-

tarian act would strengthen Danish neutrality – was out of touch with reality. *Silkeborg Avis* objected to the potential expense of the venture, while, in *Aarhus Stiftstidende's* view, it did not have the support of the population, and was, in addition, irrelevant to Denmark's relations to the belligerents. *Viborg Stiftstidende* reported that the German internment at the Hald camp near Viborg in Jutland was deeply unpopular with the local population.

The other category of Russians were prisoners of war who had escaped from forced labour in northern Germany. During the four years of war, Germany took about 1.7 million prisoners, who were routinely employed in civilian work in industry and agriculture. Labour shortages were especially acute in agriculture, which is why a large proportion of Russian prisoners of war were put to work in this sector. Inge Adriansen (1991) has estimated that about 6-7,000 prisoners of war – not only Russians, though – were employed in North Schleswig<sup>5</sup>. In addition to these, there were also large numbers of prisoners of war in other parts of northern Germany.

The first escaped over the border at Kongeåen in the summer of 1915, while more and more Russians arrived during the last two years of the war – in particular after the conclusion of peace between Russia and Germany at Brest-Litovsk in March 1918. In August 1918, some of the escaped prisoners were transferred to the then empty Horserød Camp, which by the autumn housed 650 refugees.<sup>6</sup>

An analysis of the media coverage of escaped prisoners of war reveals a pronounced hostility against the Russians in *Fyns Tidende*, *Jyllands-Posten* and especially *Ekstra Bladet*, which unleashed a massive dislike of these undesirables, who were regarded as difficult, as a threat to law and order, and as possible travelling revolutionaries.

The other papers expressed more understanding for the refugees. For example, *Social-Demokraten* made it easier for readers to identify with the Russians, mentioning that they were mostly family fathers who, as a result of captivity in foreign countries, had been out of touch with their families for years. *Politiken* also mentioned that the Russians had been driven to escape by homesickness. *Berlingske Tidende* even went as far as to play down the possible connection to revolutionary activity: These Russians had only vague notions of what was going on in their fatherland.

The next wave of Russian refugees came after the Russian revolution in 1917. In 1918 and 1919, the press was overwhelmingly sympathetic to the refugees who had been driven out by the Russian revolution and civil war. This included all

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<sup>5</sup> North Schleswig was 1864-1920 annexed by Germany, but returned to Denmark in 1920.

<sup>6</sup> Blüdnikow (1988), p. 101.

parts of the press, from *Social-Demokraten*, through *Politiken* and the tabloids, to the conservative newspapers. There was widespread agreement that flight was justified, since, according to the papers, the new regime brutally suppressed both the old upper class and political opponents of all kinds.

There were exceptions, of course. The revolution's refugees also included persons who, forced by circumstances, threw themselves into more shady activities. The publicity given to these persons in the press served at times to intensify the xenophobia whipped up by parts of the press during the war. There were also certain groups who were suspected of being out-and-out agents. With these, obviously, the conservative papers took every opportunity to vent their antagonism, and *Jyllands-Posten* did not hesitate to use the fear of Bolshevism in domestic politics by claiming that the Social Democrats had paved the way for possible revolution in Denmark by, among other things, calling for open borders during the world war.

Only the revolutionary organs expressed sympathy with events in Russia, claiming that the White terror constituted the real threat to human rights.

### **1.6 Hitler refugees in Denmark, 1933-40**

“German emigrants in the 1930s” is a euphemism for the refugees who were forced to flee Germany after the Nazi takeover in January 1933 and the refugees from Austria after its annexation by Germany in March 1938. According to Steffensen (1986), these refugees can be divided into the following categories: Political opponents of the Nazis, i.e. communists and Social Democrats, Jews, and those forced to flee on confessional grounds. Altogether, in the years after the takeover of power by the National Socialists in 1933 and the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939, about 500,000 people were driven into exile from Germany and from the growing domain of German fascism. Of these, Jews were by far the biggest group, cautious estimates of the number of Jews who fled Germany and Austria being approximately 280,000 and 125,000 respectively.<sup>7</sup>

The term “emigrants” used to describe political refugees goes back to the French Revolution, when it was applied to the French who fled after 1789. Some recent research objects to the phrase “German emigrants”, however, since the term “emigrant” indicates a certain degree of voluntariness, whereas none of these people left Germany of their own free will. On the contrary, what they had in common was precisely the threat to their liberty or life due to Nazi repression. In this sense, all the German refugees were political refugees – including the Jews, who at that time were not accorded such a status. Governments only recognised

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<sup>7</sup> Uwe Petersen (1985), p. 258. These figures are subject to some uncertainty, cf. also Lone Rünitz (2000), p. 19.

as political refugees those persons who were politically opposed to fascism, and therefore threatened in their homeland.<sup>8</sup>

Apart from German refugees, a smaller number of refugees also came to Denmark from Czechoslovakia after Sudetenland had been annexed by Germany following the Munich Agreement in September 1938, and after German entry into the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 with the setting up of a “Protectorate” of the Czech provinces of Bohemia and Moravia. In previous years, Czechoslovakia, together with France, had been one of the foremost havens for the German exiles, and these – together with many of the country’s own citizens – now had to flee again.

Refugees started pouring out in spring 1933, and by January 1934 about 60,000 Jews had managed to get out of Germany.<sup>9</sup> Widespread Jewish persecution in Germany in summer 1935 and the Nuremberg Laws in September of the same year continued to make Jews flee Germany. The number of refugees reached almost panic proportions after Austria’s annexation in March 1938 and the Crystal Night pogrom in November 1938, when Nazis and affiliated youth groups went on a centrally organised rampage of destruction of Jewish shops, property and synagogues.

In June 1933, *Berlingske Tidende* estimated the number of German refugees in Denmark at around 1,000, most of whom were Jews. According to *Politiken*, there were about 800 refugee Jews in the country. In 1937, the leader of the emigrant centre in Town Hall Square, in Copenhagen, estimated that there were 1,512 refugees in Denmark, and in November 1938, K.K. Steincke, the Social Democratic Minister of Justice, put the total number of refugees at 1,262, though not including those who arrived after July 1, 1938. Steincke estimated that, between 900 and 1,000 of these were Jews. The total number of refugees, then, was less than overwhelming, though there were considerably more transit refugees than these figures show.

With regard to access to Denmark, the Danish government at all costs wanted to avoid giving shelter to large numbers of refugees, and official Denmark also had the aggressive neighbour to the south to take into account. The authorities barred refugees from taking part in political activities. However, both the German Social Democrats and communists opened offices in Copenhagen, which sent political material south, even though communications became more and more difficult to maintain.

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<sup>8</sup> Denmark was no exception here; see, for example, Göte Friberg (1977), for a discussion of the Swedish position.

<sup>9</sup> Jacob Hanghøj (1998), p. 45. There is again some uncertainty as to the number of refugees: Rünitz (2000), p. 19, gives a figure of approximately 45.000 Jews in 1933.

In the analysis of the newspaper debate on German refugees in the 1930s, at least two things stand out:

First, no decidedly anti-foreigner articles have been found in the material presented here. In the main, all the papers were sympathetic towards German refugees who were driven out of their fatherland. On more than one occasion, the papers provided information to or supported private initiatives aimed at giving the refugees a basic level of maintenance in Denmark, neither the government nor conservative opposition parties recognising the refugees' rights to public assistance in any form, which, to be fair, was also the case in other countries. At the beginning of the period, however, *Social-Demokraten* and *Politiken* tended to be more direct in their support of the victims of Nazism than the other papers, though there were also times in 1939 when some conservative papers questioned the selection of Sudeter-German refugees for asylum in Denmark. Here, however, criticism focused on the suspicion that, in filling the Danish refugee quota, the government had favoured Social Democratic refugees.

Second, a characteristic of the papers' involvement was that, despite a more or less pronounced sympathy, it was never really whole-hearted or sustained. This is probably a consequence of the government's refugee policy, which tried to avoid a much too heated public debate on the issue so as not to provoke the big and increasingly aggressive neighbour to the south which, as the decade wore on, was more and more open about its territorial ambitions. And the German minority in South Jutland was a potential trigger which could set off a conflict. It was also connected with the state of the labour market, with soaring unemployment and the general economic depression of the 1930's.

When the government put forward its proposals for an even more restrictive Danish refugee policy in 1938, there were, characteristically, no protests from any of the leading papers. This gave the restrictions the appearance of a consensus policy involving all four main parties and their media. There were regrets about the way the situation was developing for the Jews in Germany, but at the same time agreement in the media that, on its own, Denmark could make no significant contribution to what then was called the "Jewish question".

### **1.7 German refugees, 1945-49**

The biggest and most massive element of foreigners ever to have come to Denmark within a short period of time occurred in spring 1945, when, over a chaotic period of four months, the country was overrun by 225-250,000 civilian Germans fleeing the rapidly advancing Russian troops in East Prussia. In addition to these – which alone corresponded to more than 5% of the Danish population at the time – there were already about 300,000 German soldiers in the country. So there was a total of over half a million Germans in Denmark in the days following the German surrender.

The first provisional registration in mid-May 1945 arrived at a figure of 238,000 German refugees and 23,200 non-German refugees from 35 different countries. The latter included between 8-10,000 Soviet citizens and about 4,500 refugees from the Baltic countries. In a more thorough census in June 1946, there were still almost 197,000 German refugees in the country, while the German troops had departed in May and the beginning of June 1945.

From the summer of 1943 on, the papers started printing articles describing the evacuation of children from areas in northern and central Germany that were under threat of air raids. On June 30, 1943, for example, *Politiken* wrote that almost 400,000 children had been evacuated to Hungary, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Denmark. In July 1943, the papers were full of reports of the massive allied air raids on North German cities, especially Hamburg, the second largest in the German Reich. On August 1, 1943, *Politiken* wrote "1,500 women and children from Hamburg at the border". It emerged that the Danish authorities had negotiated with the occupying power on the evacuation of refugees to German homes in North Schleswig. These refugees were billeted with the German minority, to whom it had already been common practice to send German children on holiday. In fact, "it had been common to use Denmark as a place of relaxation as early as 1943".<sup>10</sup> The Germans regarded Denmark as an oasis in a war-torn Europe – "the milk-and-honey front" – from which they could return home in good shape and with presents for the family. Up to the turn of 1944, however, there were only modest groups of refugees, and as yet mainly from North Germany. This was to change dramatically in the coming months.

It was probably Denmark's reputation as the "cosy little corner" of Europe which influenced Hitler's decision on February 2, 1945 to send some of the many refugees from East Prussia, Danzig and Pomerania here. The Russian advance in January/February 1945 set in motion the largest-scaled sea-borne evacuation in history, German ships transporting more than two million people westwards to Schleswig-Holstein and southern Danish ports. In the first wave of refugees in February and March, which came after the fall of the Oder-Neisse Line, over 165,000 people came to Denmark. This culminated in Easter 1945, when about 14,000 arrived on Easter Sunday alone, and continued to May 4, when Germany surrendered. Thus, the only remaining war aim of the German forces in northern Germany was to get as many soldiers and refugees as possible to safety within the English and American occupation zones.

The civilian refugees were primarily East Prussian farmer's wives and their children, though the ships also carried thousands of soldiers. The flight, first across land on foot or in caravans of horse-drawn carriages, and then by ship across wintry seas, was hazardous in the extreme, fugitives having to run the gauntlet of air bombardments, mines and torpedoes. The greatest loss of life

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<sup>10</sup> Henrik Havrehed (1987), p. 18.

occurred as a result of Russian torpedoing of German ships, e.g. on April 16, when 5,900 died.

Not surprisingly, after the liberation, the Danish press started venting strong antipathy to the German refugees. *Information*, a newspaper which had its origin in a resistance news service under the occupation, was, together with the communist *Land og Folk*, the Copenhagen paper printing the most hostile contributions. The attacks on the German refugees thus not only focused on the fact that they were appropriating the country's scarce resources, and that many top Nazis had tried to hide themselves among the refugees. The refugees had also become the object of direct hatred as representatives of a people who were almost by nature evil, and who had been consistently evil throughout recent European history. The paper's editorials were supplemented by a large number of letters to the editor, which were almost unanimous in their view of the evil, greedy, arrogant German, who only appeared civilised when he was militarily defeated. In the paper's opinion, no amount of education or re-education to democratic values was likely to have any effect, even though it ought to be attempted, of course.

Other papers took up the chorus during the course of the first summer after liberation. In *Social-Demokraten*, for example, apathetic German women, who were probably in a state of shock, were denounced for not being able to think about anything else than "food and drink". Newspaper reports of German sappers, who were forced to help clear the country of German mines and who risked life and limb in the process, were also symptomatic. There was little sympathy for the young German soldiers, and there were innumerable examples of Danish intolerance and hate in summer 1945 – though as the summer wore on, there were also some attempts to turn the tide. For example, a joint appeal for humanity in the press by 60 priests made a big impact.

The newspapers – like the population – gradually regained their composure. There were now more contributions which tried to portray Germans' situation in a more understanding light, while some debaters argued that the Danish refugee policy must be able to stand up to the verdict of history. The same view could be found in the papers when the Refugee Administration held a major press conference in March 1946 at the big new camp at Kløvermarken in Copenhagen.

There was general relief when the last Germans were sent home in February 1949, but even then a paper like *Ekstra Bladet* could not pass up the opportunity to gloat over the Germans' sad, but deserved, fate.

### **1.8 The Hungarian refugees, 1956 and 1957**

Almost immediately after the failed uprising in Hungary in October-November 1956, the *United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)* and the international organisation for emigration, *ICEM*, began relief operations to en-

sure the passage of refugees from Austria and Yugoslavia, which were unable to handle such large numbers of refugees themselves.

On November 27, 1956, the Social Democratic minority government under the leadership of H.C. Hansen announced its willingness to accept 1,000 Hungarian refugees from Austria. According to Lise Koch (1964): “In view of the enormity of the refugee problem, this was only a token gesture. On the other hand, the Danish government, unlike many other governments, did not attach conditions to the category of refugees it would accept. A train with room for 1,000 people was sent to Austria, and returned with all who wanted a future in Denmark”.<sup>11</sup> These refugees were billeted in 16 refugee homes run by the Danish Refugee Council.<sup>12</sup> Altogether, about 1,400 Hungarians had come to Denmark by the end of 1961, of whom 1,070 arrived in 1956. 133 refugees were repatriated, and 443 travelled on to a third country. This left over 800, of whom more than two thirds were men.

Lise Koch notes that the refugees were extremely difficult to integrate. Most had come to Denmark under the impression that they could continue overseas, and 742 also filed emigration applications. In other words, many were not at all prepared to be integrated and refused to learn Danish. Even though the Danish Refugee Council knew that the prospects for emigrating to other countries were slight, it felt compelled to offer English courses in order to prevent further unrest. A lot of Hungarians also believed that offers of employment were only given to try to make them drop their emigration plans. This, combined with a Danish unemployment rate among insured workers at 10% in 1957, meant that the refugees had to spend much longer in the camps than they otherwise would.

It is evident from the information given by Koch (1964) that the expanding Danish welfare society now also covered refugees, who benefited greatly from the improved social infrastructure. And where the administration or legislation was lacking, the Refugee Council was quick to apply the necessary pressure. Koch concludes: “To a large extent, the Hungarian refugees thus were ensured the same rights and obligations under the Public Assistance Act and National Insurance Act as Danish citizens, though in some cases they still had to apply for exemption”.<sup>13</sup> To the extent that the acts did not provide full equality, the authorities had to “try to adjust the law concerned, so that these refugees, who were after all invited to Denmark by the Danish government, received the same welfare and national insurance rights as Danish citizens”. The mind-set described in this work – which included a foreword by the Social Democratic Minister of Social Affairs – was thus far removed from the spirit of the 1930s on the arrival of the German emigrants. The government’s reaction to the Hungarian

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<sup>11</sup> Koch (1964), p. 15.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

refugees was also influenced by the Geneva Convention on Refugees, of course, which had been concluded in the years 1948-51, and by the establishment of UNHCR on January 1, 1951. The legal basis of the High Commission, together with the statute defining its constitutional status, was the 1951 refugee convention. This came into force in April 1954, originally only in the 6 countries that had ratified it, Denmark included.<sup>14</sup>

All the papers analysed here denounced the Soviet suppression of the uprising, with the sole exception of the communist *Land og Folk*, which has been included in this chapter to ensure that all positions in the debate are represented, also the more extreme.

*Social-Demokraten* saw the Soviet invasion as a monstrous genocide of Stalinist proportions and a flagrant violation of international law and justice. In the domestic debate, the bloody events were used as an apparently welcome starting point for a frontal assault on the communists. In April 1956, with a turnout of 75%, workers had thus rejected a proposed compromise in the collective bargaining, which the Social Democratic government subsequently turned into an act of Parliament. This resulted in widespread strikes and inroads by the communists into the union movement. As Henrik S. Nissen (1991) observed, "it was not easy to be a Social Democratic shop steward or union committee member in the next 6 months, where general meetings were quick to oust those who did not emphatically condemn the government's intervention".<sup>15</sup>

Soon after the invasion, *Arbejdernes Ungarnshjælp* (Workers' Aid to Hungary) was established, which was supported by *Social-Demokraten* with stirring reports on the progress of the collection. On November 11, the paper reported on the Soviet blockade of Budapest, presenting in strong terms the "moving and terrible report from Hungary" of a Swedish journalist. The next day, the paper estimated that 20,000 had been killed in Budapest, and on the 14th it described on the front page how "the first visible evidence of the tragedy in Hungary came to Denmark with the passage of a train with 32 mothers and 70 children on its way to Sweden". In a leader the day after, the paper stated that "What has happened in Hungary is a frightful relapse into the darkest Stalinist barbarity", and "(...) behind the impregnable barrier of the Iron Curtain, the Russians seem to have begun mass deportations of boys and young men – the same crime which has previously been committed against the Poles and the Baltic peoples".

On its front page on November 9, 1956, *Politiken* carried a report from a solidarity event in Town Hall Square, Copenhagen, and in a leader entitled "Inhumanity", the paper trumpeted that the Russian acts of violence had aroused the world's indignation. Since the Soviets had blocked Red Cross from giving aid

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Lone B. Christensen et al. (1995), p. 163.

<sup>15</sup> Henrik S. Nissen (1991), p. 153.

inside Hungary itself, help now had to be concentrated on the refugees, and here it had to be realised that, if events warranted it, Denmark would give asylum to the insurgents.

On November 12, after numerous critical articles on the Russian invasion, *Information* described the relief work carried out by Danish students, and in a leader on the 13th it condemned the Soviet refusal to let the Red Cross provide aid in Hungary during the immediate aftermath of the uprising: “Contrary to established international law, confirmed by recent agreements, the Russian occupying power and its Hungarian Quisling government stopped all international humanitarian aid at the border”.

*Berlingske Tidende*, which also covered the events in a series of highly censorious articles, ran the following front-page headline on November 14: “The whole nation rose in rebellion”. This paper also carried a report on the refugees in transit to Sweden. A Hungarian woman, who had been arrested under the old regime, described life in jail as hell. Moreover, the woman added, the Russian claim that the insurgents were fascists was pure manipulation.

*Vestkysten* also took the stance of firm opposition to the invasion, and like several of the other papers, it started a collection for the victims, with regular reports of which organisations and individuals had contributed.<sup>16</sup> *Vestkysten* also reported on the trainload of refugees on their way to Sweden on November 14 – the Danish sister nation had already taken *its* share of the refugees, who “were still paralysed with terror”.

On October 27, 1956, *Land og Folk* wrote that there had been heavy fighting in the streets of Budapest during the first phase of the uprising, and also that there had been a “massive demonstration by over 100,000 workers”, who called on Imre Nagy, the new head of government, to secure the withdrawal of Soviet forces. *Land og Folk* acknowledged that what was happening in Hungary at this time was a grave error, though it also reported that the great majority of the population had taken no active part in the uprising. On October 28, the paper wrote that a new government coalition had been formed which included most of the country’s democratic groups. It also reported on the setting up of a workers’ council in support of the new government, and at the same time warned in a leader that reactionary forces – the gentry, capitalists, fascists and Western imperialists – continued to stir things up, and had been the real driving forces behind the uprising.

On October 29, 1956, the paper emphasised that negotiations would start immediately on the withdrawal of the foreign troops, this demand having “become

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<sup>16</sup> From the 1950s, *Vestkysten* assumed the position as the leading Liberal organ. In this section and the following two chapters, therefore, this paper represents the Liberal press.

perhaps the only rallying point for all the rebel groups and for the population as a whole". On October 30, the communist organ again wrote that troop withdrawals had begun, and that the Soviet Minister of Defence, Georgiy Zhukov, had denied rumours in the Western press that troop reinforcements were on the way to Hungary. Zhukov was also quoted as saying that "the Soviet Union supports the new Hungarian government, because it is recognised by the Hungarian people".

On October 31 – four days before the actual Soviet invasion – the paper printed a statement by DKP's (the Danish Communist Party) executive committee: "It is the Party's view that any people should have the right and the possibility, by their own efforts and in peace, to decide which social order they want to live under (...). The events in Hungary emphasise that the stationing of foreign troops is a burden. Therefore, renewed efforts must be made to arrive at a solution whereby all troops from East and West are recalled to their homeland". A news article the same day reported on the foundation of a multi-party government, and cited Imre Nagy as saying that the "powerful democratic forces that had been unleashed demanded a decision in keeping with the times" in the form of the abolition of the one-party system. The same day, the paper hinted that the Soviets were ready to start negotiations with Poland, Hungary and Rumania on a continuing military presence, and on November 1, *Land og Folk* printed a statement from the Swedish communists, who declared their support for the Hungarian people's struggle to achieve legitimate demands, national independence, democracy and socialism.

All in all, at the beginning of November 1956, even a casual reader of *Land og Folk* could not have failed to realise the seriousness of the situation in Hungary, that reactionary elements had tried to exploit the uprising, but that democratic forces now had the upper hand, and that the legitimacy of these forces had been de facto recognised by the Soviet Union, which was now preparing to withdraw its troops.

However, in the following days, the situation took a dramatic new course, brought on by massive Soviet intervention. On November 2, *Land og Folk* printed a Hungarian protest to the Soviet ambassador in Budapest against the continuing stream of Soviet tanks rumbling into Hungary, and it reported that Nagy had asked the UN for protection, which he also intended to ask of the Western Great Powers. On November 3, there were conflicting reports in the paper about Russian troop movements, but on November 4, it continued to insist that negotiations between Hungary and the Soviet Union were under way. However, it also revealed that Nagy had enlarged his government with "yet more right-wingers".

On November 5, the following headline screamed from the front page: "Announcement from Moscow: "Counter-revolution crushed" – a new worker-

peasant government has been formed, Radio Moscow announces”. According to an account of the radio broadcast, Nagy’s government had imperilled socialism and the entire country by its policy of appeasement to counter-revolutionary circles. A new worker-peasant government had now been formed under Janos Kadar, and this “government had urgently requested the help of the Soviet troops’ supreme command in crushing the insurgents, who in the last days were protected by Imre Nagy’s government, which has now been dissolved after the resignation of honest patriots. (...). All honest patriots in Budapest and other parts of Hungary are making heroic efforts to disarm the insurgents and liquidate the nests of fascist resistance groups”.

The same day, there was also a lengthy account of Pravda’s – the main organ of the Soviet communist party – leader on Hungary. Among other things, this claimed that Hungary was in danger of falling into “the clutches of the big imperialist countries”. *Land og Folk*’s own leader stressed that the situation in Hungary was highly fluid, and that what was true yesterday wasn’t necessarily true today. Thus, Soviet intervention had been made necessary by a witch-hunt for “faithful socialist champions of the working class cause of a kind which even the conservative Danish press would have to describe as sadistic, and which called forth ugly memories of fascism”. Hungary had been unable to prevent large numbers of people from the old upper class and former SS members from pouring into the country from West Germany, and Hungary could have become “a new Korea – in the heart of Europe”. The paper was, in other words, rewriting history, and this continued in the following days under such headlines as: “White terror wreaks havoc in a Hungary in chaos” and “60,000 Nazis sent to Hungary”. On November 7, the paper printed a statement from the Chinese communist party: “The people’s victory in Hungary is a contribution to peace”. With this reversal in editorial policy, it thus became easier to portray refugees from Hungary as having been infiltrated by criminals and reactionaries.

Towards the end of November, there were still innumerable reports in the conservative newspapers, in *Politiken* and in *Social-Demokraten*, describing the sufferings of the refugees and condemning the Soviet invasion. *Politiken* related how the border with Austria had practically been turned into “a death zone”. The news coverage emphasised the fact that the refugees were just ordinary people: “You imagine refugees as being people in rags and tatters, but when they come here, you see that they are just people like you and me. Yesterday, they had a home, a job. Now they own nothing more than the suitcase or bundle of clothes they carry” (*Politiken*, November 24, 1956). The following day came the report that: “The special Danish train will soon be bringing 1,000 refugees” (*Politiken*, November 25, 1956). The paper also wrote that the stream of refugees into Austria was continuing, despite the Russian hail of bullets at the border.

A front-page article in *Social-Demokraten* on November 25, underlined the government’s efforts. In answer to the urgent request of the international High

Commissioner for Refugees, the government increased Denmark's original quota from 200 to 1,000. The refugees would be housed around the country, and they would be given residence and work permits. According to the paper, this news was received with joy in Vienna.

*Berlingske Tidende* reckoned (November 25) that the Hungarians were coming permanently: "In view of the current political situation, the Danish offer has been made in the expectation that the 1,000 Hungarian exiles will have to be absorbed in Danish society – in other words, provide them with housing, the means to settle down, and jobs". The paper also mentioned that the journey and residence in Denmark was underwritten by the State, but that private means were also included.

In an interview in *Ekstra Bladet* on November 25, 1956, a spokesman for the Danish Refugee Council stressed that the refugees could not be expected to twiddle their thumbs: "They must be given the chance to create a decent future in complete freedom, if that is what they want. Therefore, there will be no restrictions on their freedom of movement or in their freedom to seek work".

*Vestkysten* described on November 26, how the endless flood of refugees had created urgent problems in Austria, "though many countries had expressed a willingness to receive refugees". Denmark thus formed part of the large community of Western countries that supported the exiles.

On November 29, newspaper reports from Vienna told that the Danish refugee train had been filled in record time, and that many disappointed refugees were left standing.

*Ekstra Bladet* wrote on November 30, that the majority were ordinary workers, often believing communists: "If the world fully understood the nameless horrors we have been through, said Janus last night, there would not be a single communist left. When we describe what actually happened, it is often so horrendous that we are frequently called liars".

On December 1, 1956, *Politiken* reported that the reception was overwhelming: "It was a moving and, it can be said, a great moment". Danish State Railway employees, policemen, customs officials and others raced to the open compartment windows with outstretched arms to shake the refugees' hands and bid them – in Danish – an honest and deeply-felt welcome. Many, both Danes and Hungarians, cried openly". *Social-Demokraten* wrote: "The Dania train received a rapturous welcome at the border at Padborg. Hungarian rhapsody, welcome speeches and hot tea for the 1,000 refugees". *Ekstra Bladet* had interviewed one refugee, who said: "(...) the journey through Denmark was one of the greatest experiences of my life; the Danish people who met us at the station and who showered us with food and flowers have made an indelible impression on all of us. It was only

when we travelled through Denmark that we really understood what it means to live in a free country”.

On December 12, 1956, *Social-Demokraten* printed an account of Parliament’s budget debate prior to the passing of the Budget for 1957. This revealed that the Conservative former Foreign Minister, Ole Bjørn Kraft, had appealed to the government to accept more refugees. The government replied that it was monitoring the situation. At the moment, it was difficult to determine whether help should be given in Austria, or whether Denmark should take more refugees.

*Berlingske Tidende* commented on the Conservative member of Parliament’s initiative under the title: “More refugees to Denmark?” The paper cited copious extracts from Ole Bjørn Kraft’s contribution to the budget debate: “The entire Danish people are following developments in Hungary with the deepest sympathy. The Hungarians’ struggle is more than a struggle for their own freedom. But our sympathy and solidarity is worthless if it is not followed up by action. The reply which the Danish people have given is a noble and fine expression of our feelings, but events have now reached a high point of suffering (...). Have we opened the door wide enough? After the events that have taken place, I do not feel that enough has been done. I hope the government will consider offering to accept an increased number of refugees on the same conditions. We cannot stop at 1,000-1,200.”

All the papers involved – with the lone exception of *Land og Folk* – thus strongly argued that Denmark had an obligation towards the Hungarian refugees. All – again with the exception of *Land og Folk* – were also solidly behind the Social Democratic government’s decision in November 1956 to invite 1,000 refugees to Denmark. There was similar agreement that the government had acted correctly in not making specific demands as to the refugees who wanted to come to Denmark.

It can be added that, during this time of crisis under the Cold War, the newspapers – once again with the exception of *Land og Folk* – irrespective of their political allegiance, appear to have supported an increasing government involvement in the welfare and integration of refugees in Denmark. This seems to have paved the way for the later more extensive involvement in refugee issues.

However, cracks began to appear in this unusual consensus between the newspapers during the budget debate in December, when the Conservatives demanded that Denmark should take a further 1,000 refugees. This was supported by the conservative papers and *Information* in December, and later in January and February 1957, all of which strongly argued that Denmark should take more refugees. However, the government was just as insistent – albeit perhaps not as explicit – that Denmark should take more refugees only to the extent that Hungarians already in the country went on to a third country. Among the reasons

given was that it would be inordinately costly to increase the Danish contingent by another 1,000 persons.

The government was also on the defensive with regard to finding jobs for the refugees. *Information* had already called attention to this need in the midst of the effusive welcome given to the refugees on December 1, 1956, and the paper raised the issue properly at the beginning of January 1957 – little more than a month after the arrival of the refugees to Denmark.

*Information's* views were strongly endorsed by the conservative papers, who all demanded jobs for the Hungarians. The workers' organ countered with the observation that it was utterly unrealistic to expect the integration of 1,000 foreigners to take place completely unproblematically. Notwithstanding, the employers' hesitation was used by the Social Democratic party as an argument against accepting any more large groups of Hungarians, though they were willing to take smaller groups on especially compelling humanitarian grounds.



## **2. Migrant and guest workers, 1963-1980**

### **2.1 The opening debate: Economic boom and labour shortages**

Towards the end of the 1950s, somewhat delayed, the long economic boom which all western countries were experiencing in this period finally came to Denmark. From being relatively high during the first post-war years, unemployment had fallen to historically low levels by the beginning of the 1960s. Since practically all the remaining unemployment could be considered as seasonal, in reality there was now full employment, the result of which was a wage-price spiral. Consumption took off and the balance of payments showed a chronic deficit for the rest of the 1960s. The Social Democratic/Social-Liberal government which came to power in 1962 headed by Jens Otto Krag (Social Democrat) was quick to consider how such a situation – which, though not unfavourable, clearly demanded swift and firm action – could be resolved. The government was especially concerned about looming labour shortages in the crucial export industries.

On June 29, 1964, Hilmar Baunsgaard, the Social-Liberal (R) Minister of Trade, kicked off the debate in earnest with an article in *Aktuelt* entitled: "Foreign labour?" This was probably nothing more than a political feeler put out to assess the mood of union members in a trade union movement that had traditionally been relatively hostile to foreign workers: "All the indications are that Denmark will have a labour problem for a long time to come. There are two ways of solving this – either by limiting production and work to the productive capacity of existing manpower or by obtaining extra manpower. If we choose the latter, we can stabilise growth at a higher level than by choosing the former. To the extent we cover our need for more labour by importing foreign workers, we create higher economic activity and higher production. Other countries, e.g. Sweden, Switzerland and Germany, have created higher growth and welfare for themselves through this means. Denmark has now reached the point where we also have to include this option in our considerations."

In an article in *Politiken* the following day, Harald R. Martinsen (editor of an information service) cited a number of West European countries that had had extremely good experiences of the use of foreign workers. Denmark, he observed, hadn't even taken the smallest step. The trade unions were directly opposed, and neither the government, employers nor the press had examined the possibility. Martinsen mentioned Switzerland, "where immigration has played a clear and convincing role in ensuring steady and continuous economic growth". Danish workers had nothing to fear from foreigners: "As regards recession, the Swiss feel very reassured about the presence of foreigners. They can always send them home before unemployment hits the Swiss themselves. This is perhaps a cynical way of thinking, but it is nonetheless rational".

*Aktuelt* returned to the topic the same day in interviews with leading unionists. Viggo Wivel, president of DASF (the Danish union of unskilled and semi-skilled workers)<sup>17</sup>, observed in a comment that the situation was hardly so serious that it warranted an infusion of foreign labour and Edith Olsen, Kvindeligt Arbejderforbund (Union of Women Workers), was directly opposed. Hans Rasmussen, president of the Smiths' Union, also had strong reservations. But the smiths' leader could at least suggest alternatives in Denmark, Danish housewives in particular. Furthermore, he pointed out, firms should use a larger part of their profits on investments in labour-saving technology rather than paying big dividends. Like the unions, Kaj Bundvad (Social Democrat), the Minister of Social Affairs and acting Minister of Labour, was sceptical and, according to reports in *Aktuelt*, claimed that the labour market was already sufficiently liberalised.<sup>18</sup>

In *Ekstra Bladet*, the issue was commented on in a leader on June 30, 1964. Although the paper wasn't directly opposed in principle, in practice the editor did not believe that the Danish labour market could attract enough foreign workers. The labour shortage would therefore have to be solved at home, e.g. by easing the rules for joint taxation, which made it economically unattractive for married women to work. There were also leaders about foreign workers in *Information* and, like *Aktuelt* and *Ekstra Bladet*, reactions here were negative too. What the country needed most was investments in labour-saving machines and incentive pay systems.<sup>19</sup>

*Berlingske Tidende* was in many ways just as dubious about Baunsgaard's feeler. On July 1, 1964, the paper printed Hans Rasmussen's (president of the Smith's Union) views on the proposal's lack of realism, which were repeated in a leader the following day, despite the fact that, in principle, the paper was a firm supporter of a liberalised labour market. A few days later the paper observed that: "If you want foreign labour today, then, in reality, you have to go outside Europe, and much of what is available is unskilled, where the only

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<sup>17</sup> In 1973, the union changed its name to *Specialarbejderforbundet i Danmark (SID)* (*The Danish General Union of semi-skilled workers*).

<sup>18</sup> Statute no. 224, June 7, 1952 on foreigners' entry to Denmark constituted the current legal basis for the possibilities of foreigners to stay and work in Denmark. In accordance with the law, it was the Minister of Justice who decided the procedure for considering applications for residence and work permits. There was a different procedure for Nordic citizens, however, an agreement from 1954 having established a common Scandinavian labour market.

<sup>19</sup> "What an idea! Incentive pay systems can give 10-20% higher production without the need for more labour" (*Information*, July 1, 1964). This figure was based on information from LO's (Danish Trade Union Congress) time studies expert. Since the early 1950s, the trade union movement had actively supported the rationalisation of Danish industry, including work and time studies, while various Social Democratic governments had introduced tax policies favourable to technological innovation.

possibilities for employment are in the coal mining and iron industries". A report from Switzerland the next day was also equivocal. While these foreigners had undeniably contributed to increased wealth, there were signs of lower productivity and a decline in traditional Swiss quality. In addition, there were problems with migrant ghettos and a dichotomous labour market, in which foreigners were given the worst-paid and most dangerous jobs.

An article in *Jyllands-Posten* on July 1, 1964 discussed the seriousness of the labour situation in more general terms, and reported the start of a debate on the use of foreign labour. According to the article, the debate was part of the political manoeuvrings between the coalition parties, with Social-Liberal ministers supporting the idea and the Social Democratic party, and especially the unions, being more reserved. Responding to, for example, Kaj Bundvad's and some trade unionists' arguments that the Aliens Act was already flexible enough, the paper pointed out that, on the contrary, the unemployment insurance funds were too slow in answering requests for work permits forwarded by the Aliens Authorities. Put another way: A liberalisation was needed!

*Vestkysten* took the issue up in a leader, which described the proposal as a Social-Liberal attempt to cover up the government's lack of control over the economy. The leader drew attention to union reservations and confirmed that there was little possibility of finding large numbers of foreign workers at the moment. The two sides of industry would therefore have to concentrate on breaking down rigid demarcation lines instead, while the government needed to introduce policies designed to control costs which didn't worsen the export industries' competitiveness further.

## **2.2 The porker glut in 1965: A job for Spanish workers?**

Much immigrant labour in the 1960s from so-called third countries<sup>20</sup>, i.e. primarily Yugoslavians and Turks and, around 1970, also Pakistanis, was spontaneous. Trade organisations or large firms did, however, make some attempt to recruit foreigners systematically. In 1965, workers were needed to help with an overflow of porkers at the baconfactories, and this attempt to hire foreigners was followed closely in the press.

On July 24, 1965, *Aktuelt* revealed that the slaughterhouse workers' union had approved a trial import of foreign labour, the industry being notoriously short-handed. A condition of their approval was that the foreign workers had to join the union and be given the same pay and working conditions as Danish workers. The president of the meat industries confirmed to the paper that this would be a temporary measure only. The article expressed doubts about the plan's feasibility, however, and a few days later the newspaper commented in a leader that: "Large numbers of foreign workers should not be brought into the country be-

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<sup>20</sup> Defined as countries outside Scandinavia, the EU and N. America.

fore all domestic labour reserves have been exhausted, e.g. through rationalisations and higher labour market mobility. In truth, labour shortage precipitated rationalisation, while sufficient labour postponed it”.

*Aktuelt* also reported a disagreement between the slaughterhouses and the union. The employers now wanted 2,000 men, not the 100 which the article claimed the union had agreed to. The paper also reported that the employers would ask the Social Democratic Minister of Labour Erling Dinesen, for clarification on the conditions for a possible import of foreign labour. Asked by *Aktuelt* for his comments on this, the Minister said that: ”In principle, the government’s position on the question of foreign labour is that the labour market should be as free as possible. We already have a free Nordic labour market, and the question of the free movement of labour in the European labour market will be discussed in connection with a widening of co-operation between ”the 6” and ”the 7””. Notwithstanding, Dinesen did not directly support the use of foreign labour. Migrant labour led to greatly increased costs in the form of education and training and increased housing construction, and there had been considerable problems in other countries after guest workers had sent for the rest of their families. The Minister therefore found it easier, cheaper and quicker to solve the problem through rationalisation and planning.

The results of the negotiations between the employers and the Minister appeared in *Aktuelt* on July 29, 1965. The industry had assured the Minister that only between 100 and 200 Spaniards were involved, and that they would have the same pay and working conditions as Danish workers. Under these conditions, the Minister saw little problem in granting residence and work permits. Frands Petersen, acting president of the Danish Trade Union Congress (LO), said that, though his organisation would not stand in the way of the hardest-hit areas, it didn’t mean that LO would let foreign workers jump the queue for housing: ”We can’t spare housing for migrant labour, so the only solution is to accommodate them in some kind of camp”.

In *Politiken’s* coverage of the plan, the paper stressed the fact that there actually was extensive agreement between the employers and the slaughterhouse workers’ union, and that the slaughterhouses were indeed prepared to limit the initial introduction of foreign labour to those places where the need was greatest. On July 29, 1965, it was announced that: ”The Ministry has no objections to the import of labour”. In its account of the negotiations, *Politiken* emphasised that the two sides were ready and willing to solve any problem that might occur, pointing out at the same time that a bigger labour force would enable production in the canning industry to be increased by 15-20%. LO’s reservations were not mentioned.

A report in *Berlingske Tidende* on July 23, 1965 described how the porker surplus had grown to 21,000 tons. All storage space being full to capacity, the

industry had been forced to find cold stores in Sweden and Germany. On July 24, 1965, it was reported that the two sides of the meat industry had reached agreement that, as a temporary measure, employers could import foreign labour to help alleviate the problem. The article mentioned that, as there was insufficient labour in neighbouring countries, it would have to come from southern Europe: "This immediately creates bigger problems, both as regards language, food habits, housing, etc., and at the same time makes it much more difficult to limit to a short period".

This rather negative attitude, which fully reflected the paper's position the previous summer, was somewhat softened over the following days. The paper pointed out that the industry could increase exports by 20% if it had more labour, and J. Jensen, the union's president, was quoted as saying: "Danish workers have no objection to the import of foreign labour", though he also added that there were problems involved with using foreign labour, of course. Jensen stressed that these workers should have the same working conditions as Danish workers. On the 29th, *Berlingske Tidende* finally established that: "The import of labour will not create problems". According to the newspaper, the Minister of Labour had guaranteed that there would be no formal obstacles to the import of foreign workers. The Minister was also reported to be "very positive about the plans".

*Vestkysten* carried an article on the difficulties of the meat industry on July 23, 1965, but could already report the next day: "Spanish workers to start on porker glut". Judging by statements by the producers' association, the Spanish workers could start arriving very soon indeed. *Vestkysten* estimated that about 2,500 workers would be needed, and, like *Politiken* and *Berlingske Tidende*, thought that production could be increased by up to 20%. On the 27th, the paper revealed that: "Turkish labour was also available". At the same time as the negotiations were taking place in the Ministry of Labour, the Turkish government had made a request for work permits for Turkish workers. The request was passed on to the Danish Employers' Confederation (DA) for comment, whose managing director, Arne Lund, said that the confederation had no objection to the use of foreign labour. The article was quick to point out the effect this request would have on the domestic debate, since it had often been claimed that foreign labour was impossible to find. In fact, however, several European countries had "taken in Turkish workers for a long time".

On July 24, 1965, *Jyllands-Posten* quoted the president of the Meat Industry's Producers' Association as saying that the industry had a chronic shortage of labour, and that the use of foreign workers was a possible solution. In its subsequent coverage of the story, the paper focused on the industry's expectations regarding foreign workers, including the fact that any increase in production could be exported, spearheading what was likely to be a lasting market expansion.

The president of the producers' association gave an outline of the situation in an interview in *Information* on July 23, while on the 26th, the paper interviewed Erling Dinesen, who referred to the considerable problems which foreign workers caused. In an interview in *Information*, Thomas Nielsen, secretary of the LO, said that: "There's no need for foreign labour". The LO stressed once again the need for investment and further training, and pointed out that the import of foreign workers neither could nor should solve the problems. Those foreigners who did come should receive the same pay and conditions as Danish workers.

On July 28, 1965, *Information* carried an article describing the experiences of the widespread use of foreign workers in W. Germany. W. German recruiters and public authorities had already hired the first million workers from "the poorest corners of Europe". According to *Information*, foreign workers were mostly given those jobs German workers didn't want themselves. But in addition, the paper pointed out that the foreigners also had access to the W. German welfare system. In other words, the exclusivity of the welfare state – in the sense of its benefits being reserved for the country's own citizens – was hardly likely to continue in the face of the widespread use of foreign labour. The paper also reported dissatisfaction among German workers, arising from the fact that foreign workers were often given long-term contracts, which in some cases had led to the dismissal of German workers during a recession. But the foreigners themselves also had trouble adjusting, and at work would often hear comments that they were "dirty and lazy".

*Ekstra Bladet* started its coverage with an article on July 22, 1965, in which Erling Dinesen repeated his reservations about the plan. Niels Westerby, a Liberal MP, was also interviewed, though his views were rather different: "we should do everything possible to bring foreign labour into the country". Westerby, while acknowledging the fact that the impact of foreign labour should not be allowed to delay much-needed rationalisations, also insisted that some industries suffered from chronic labour bottlenecks, and that, here, the use of foreign labour was an obvious solution. At the same time, this use of foreign labour could dampen inflationary pressures, and thereby prevent a potential deterioration in competitive potential which could lead to rising unemployment.

### **2.3 On a broad front: The employers wanted foreign labour**

The views of the meat industry in the above debate were clear, and, from September 1965 at least, employers on a broad front started arguing more forcefully for the use of foreign workers.

On September 2, 1965, *Politiken* reprinted a leader from the DA's trade paper, *Arbejdsgiveren* (The Employer), which thundered that another summer of acute labour shortages had again made the situation urgent. The DA demanded an easing in the administration of the Aliens Act. The *Politiken* article ended with

the following quotation from *Arbejdsgiveren*: "The crucial thing from an employer's point of view is to be able to obtain the necessary labour and utilise costly machinery. It is much easier to maintain a stable and high employment rate if, through more flexible rules for the use of foreign labour, the bottlenecks in production and employment, all too common now, can be avoided".

Workers again voiced their opposition, and, as before, unskilled workers were the most vociferous. At the DASF congress in September 1965, Viggo Wivel repeated the union's opposition to the use of migrant workers. The president also pointed out that the foreigners could give social problems. However, the main argument was as before: "The employment of Danish workers can be pushed into the background, and we must therefore clearly signal our opposition". *Aktuelt's* slant on the DASF congress was: "Say no to mass immigration": "The mass immigration of foreign labour means that employers must guarantee foreign workers contracts of six months to a year – which is not unreasonable from the workers' point of view – which can mean layoffs if production falls, and since the foreign workers are guaranteed work for a specific period, the only workers who can be laid off are the Danish." The union could under no circumstances accept this "discrimination".

#### **2.4 The debate from 1967 up to the ban on immigration in 1970**

The previous section shows that, though there had indeed been a debate on foreigners in the press from the summer of 1964, the discussion – despite the clear positions of politicians, industry and union organisations – was somewhat surreal: in the event, hardly any had yet arrived. This changed towards the end of the 1960s, however, as immigration picked up speed.

The arrival of greater numbers of foreigners, together with the fact that the demand for labour during a thundering economic boom still was not satisfied, probably explains why Thomas Nielsen's – now president of the LO – in *Aktuelt* on September 24, 1967 subtly changed his previous statements. On the face of it, there was no change from July 1965: all foreigners should receive the same pay and conditions as Danish workers. This was an absolute and unchanging demand throughout the period – as it had been since the first Swedish migrant workers flooded into the country. The LO thus wanted regulations against abuse, and, under current rules, employers in areas covered by collective agreements would already be in violation of the agreement if they failed to pay foreign workers the same as Danish workers. Under these conditions, however, Thomas Nielsen was more open to the possibility of labour migration than previously: "I see nothing wrong in Danish workers going abroad for further training or other reasons, and, by the same token, I see nothing wrong in foreign labour coming to Denmark".

*Ekstra Bladet* enlarged on this in a leader the following day, though in another tone to begin with: "Foreign labour is clearly unpopular in Denmark – among wage earners at least. People can put up with workers from other Nordic coun-

tries coming to Denmark, which they have a perfect right to do under the terms of the Nordic common labour market. But there is little enthusiasm for those who come from further afield". *Ekstra Bladet* adopted Thomas Nielsen's standpoint, however. Some migration could be allowed, on condition that everybody received the same pay and conditions. The leader thus called for a revision of legislation to "prevent foreigners acting as scabs. And the relevant bodies in the labour market could do this themselves".

As mentioned above, the LO had implied that there were already large numbers of migrant workers in the country, which was confirmed in an article in *Ekstra Bladet* later that autumn, which disclosed that, according to the Aliens Authorities, Denmark had become a magnet for migrant workers. The gist of *Ekstra Bladet's* story was that "incipient unemployment, fraudulent assignment of work and increasing criminality among foreigners" would induce the police to introduce tougher border controls. It was also feared that foreigners would cost the state dear if the authorities had to pay for sending them back home.

At the same time, letters to the editor, especially in *Ekstra Bladet*, but also partly in *Aktuelt*, grew harsher in tone, presumably influenced by the increasing references to southern men in newspaper crime reports. One of the observers of the press in this period, Jørgen Würtz Sørensen, concludes: "Apart from unemployment, crime, the housing shortage and Danes' right to their own country, one other factor became a recurring theme in the debate from the beginning, namely foreign workers'/southern men's relation to women. This was partly to do with the fact that a lot of Danish women fell for "southern-looking" men, and partly to do with the way they treated women, and with it their whole perception of the relationship between the sexes".<sup>21</sup>

March 1968 saw the first question about foreign workers in Parliament (Folketinget). It was put to Lauge Dahlgard, the Social-Liberal Minister of Labour, by the Socialist People's Party (SF), who wanted social counselling to be available for foreign workers too. Influenced by growing unemployment in 1968, the trade union movement, and especially DASF, were still active voices in the debate, their main concern being to ensure that immigration was regulated. According to Højsteen (1992), of all the unions, DASF was the one most affected by competition for jobs and which pushed the hardest for an administrative tightening of work permit regulations, in which they actually succeeded in May 1969. In 1968, *Aktuelt* also began to probe into the problem of unscrupulous Turks who swindled unsuspecting countrymen out of large sums of money and lured them to Denmark with promises of work contracts and permits. It was clear that immigration was dominated by Turkish workers.

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<sup>21</sup> Jørgen Würtz Sørensen, (1998a), p.19.

At the same time as the rules were tightened in May 1969 – e.g. foreigners suspected of seeking work were turned away at the border, even if they had money both to support themselves and for a return ticket – a more general debate flared up after the first violent confrontation between Danes and foreign workers. Confrontation is perhaps too strong a word; it was an unmotivated attack by some Rockers on a house where a group of Turks were living.

In the following days the incident led to an outcry in the press. *Aktuelt* carried the story on the front page: "This is why they were beaten up: The Turks are stealing our jobs", and "Why didn't the police intervene?" Witnesses said they "were shocked by apparent police passivity" at what the paper described as "the attack by a gang of leather-jacketed bullies". The Turks themselves were described as peaceful and much liked at their workplace. Like *Aktuelt*, *Information* also lambasted the police for intervening too late and, in a leader, maintained that Denmark now had a "pariah caste" (May 17, 1969). The paper also predicted an "outbreak" of xenophobia if unemployment were to continue over a longer period. In response to the attack, *Ekstra Bladet* published articles describing the difficult position of foreigners, with many small and non-unionised employers paying non-union rates, and landlords charging sky-high rents.

*Information's* leader on May 17, 1969 echoed the call for a *real immigrant policy* made by *Politiken* three days earlier: "Whereas OECD says that, for a job to go to a foreigner, it must be vacant for a month, Denmark only requires it to be vacant for a week. There can be no doubt that this particular openness gives some people in this country the distinct impression that we are more tolerant than others. But since this openness hasn't been followed up by any coherent policy on foreign workers, such easy access to the Danish labour market has ended up doing immigrants more harm than good. There is no doubt that the almost informal immigration of labour has turned Denmark into a country where migrants are guaranteed to get stuck with the worst-paid jobs, which nurtures the feelings of those who see immigrants as pariahs, and to become easy victims of property speculators and employers who couldn't care a fig about the agreement on equal wages for Danes and foreigners" (*Politiken* May 14, 1969).

A feature in *Aktuelt* followed suit with a call for government regulation of immigration, based on the Swedish model. Policy makers in Sweden had drawn up rules for how many foreign workers were needed and then given the job of recruitment to the Swedish consulates. It was the responsibility of the consulates, which thus functioned as recruitment offices, to check whether immigrants were guaranteed a job and accommodation on reasonable terms, before they emigrated. In June 1969, the then Liberal/Conservative/Social-Liberal (VKR) government appointed a committee under the Minister of Labour, Lauge Dahlggaard (R), chaired by N. Elkær-Hansen, a chief county civil servant, charged with drawing up new rules for the issuing of work permits. The committee included representatives from various ministries and the DA and LO.

Non-organised immigration accelerated up to 1970, and the unions and Social Democratic press dealt with many cases of poor wages and bad work conditions, which led to fresh calls for tighter regulations. *Ekstra Bladet* continued to cover guest workers' living conditions in articles criticising their housing standards, contributions describing incompatibilities between Danes and foreigners began to appear again, and the papers started writing about foreigners' welfare problems.

On January 1, 1970, stricter rules for work permits came into effect, which meant that a work permit could no longer be granted during a stay in Denmark. Job-seekers now had to apply for a work permit at one of the Danish embassies or consulates, and applications had to be accompanied by a written offer of a job from a Danish employer, together with a letter certifying that no qualified Danes could be found for the job. Permits were issued for a period of six months, but could be renewed. The rules were designed to create a balance between supply and demand, and also ensure that foreign workers went back home again. Despite the new rules, however, the debate rolled on, and there was a growing realisation that something had to be done to ensure orderly conditions.

## **2.5 A stop to immigration**

On October 26, 1970, *Berlingske Tidende* carried a background article on guest workers and at the same time published a Gallup poll on peoples' attitudes to them. The article quoted experts as saying that, according to present population trends, 10,000 extra workers a year would be needed, and that more than 50,000 were needed at the moment. The Minister of Labour warned that Danes would have to get used to immigration, even though he acknowledged that there was a problem with guest workers. The article emphasised that different interest groups had different views of the matter: "Symptomatically, the differences in opinion are reflected in employers' criticism of the insufficient and unqualified supply of new labour, while, on the other side, workers' views are reflected in the former Social Democratic Minister of Labour's call for a temporary stop to immigration and his reasons for this, being social and human considerations for foreign workers" (*Berlingske Tidende*, October 26, 1970). The Gallup survey confirmed this: Many workers and – less predictably – an even greater number of farmers failed to see the point of importing foreign labour, while the great majority of white-collar workers and big businessmen regarded foreign workers as an economic gain for the country. Overall, a majority of 46% did not think it benefited the country, 34% saw it as a gain, while 20% were undecided. Politically, only Conservative voters were overwhelmingly in favour, while a majority of the other parties' voters disapproved. On the question of whether foreigners depressed wages, workers, especially unskilled workers, were more uneasy than others.

On October 27, 1970, the Social Democratic party, prompted by increasing social problems and incipient unemployment among guest workers, proposed a motion in Parliament for a temporary stop for guest workers.

*Jyllands-Posten* carried a report about rising unemployment on October 27, 1970, in which it was mentioned that the government was considering a proposal for further restrictions on guest workers' coming to Denmark. Elkær-Hansen commented that, as a result of the regulation system introduced on January 1, 1970, guest workers were crowding in Hamburg waiting to come into Denmark. The government's solution to this was to propose that work permits only be issued in guest workers' own country, i.e. as in the Swedish arrangement.

*Vestkysten* carried a more detailed account of the Minister of Labour's deliberations, which, he claimed, should "make the temporary stop proposed by the Social Democratic party unnecessary" (October 28, 1970). The idea was that employers "could "order" the guest workers they needed via Denmark's representatives in the countries concerned, who would co-operate with local employment services". That foreign workers were no longer exclusively flocking to the cities, but had also settled in *Vestkysten's* rural hinterland was evident from another article the same day about Danish lessons for Turkish guest workers at a local brickyard, which they "followed attentively". However, a letter to the editor in the paper the same day – "No to foreign workers – an open letter to the Minister of Justice" – showed that some of *Vestkysten's* readers were also against foreigners. The letter was an angry response to the Minister of Justice's bill on race discrimination. In the writer's opinion: "If the bill is passed, it will be a criminal offence to do something so fundamental and necessary as to fight to preserve Denmark as an independent country with an ethnically homogeneous population, a common culture and a common religion". The reader also claimed that an alliance of "employers, various influential persons and leftist intellectuals" were advocating "lifting practically all restrictions on migrant workers", but that "the Danish people as a whole, and working-class people affected by migrant workers in particular" were increasingly opposed. In the reader's view, none of the political parties were aware of this opposition to guest workers, and this had resulted in a political vacuum – a claim which has since been documented by research<sup>22</sup>: "At the moment, ordinary voters who want to voice their concern over this issue have no political party they can turn to".

An article in *Berlingske Tidende* on October 28, 1970 – "No reason for stop" – can also be seen as a contribution to the ongoing debate. This was an interview with professor Ernst Schellenberg, a leading German Social Democratic politician, who maintained that German industry could absorb a lot more foreigners than it had up to then. The message to Danish readers was that there were no large groups of guest workers on their way from Germany to Denmark at the

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<sup>22</sup> Jørgen Goul Andersen et al. (1992), p.171.

moment. On November 5, 1970, *Berlingske Tidende* quoted a just-published DASF report as again deploring the lack of policy in the area. The union proposed a number of new regulations, e.g. that immigration should be limited to fewer countries, that immigrants should not make up more than 25% of any one occupational group in a firm, that work permits should only be issued in the country of origin, and that employers should keep wagebooks so that the payment of wages could be checked. The unions also stepped up demands that all guest workers should be unionised.

The Social Democratic party's demand for a temporary stop for first-time work permits became reality on November 6, 1970: "As of midnight there has been a temporary ban on all further entry of foreign labour. This is a temporary measure and is for the coming winter period only (...). The reason given for the ban is the fear of unemployment over and above normal seasonal unemployment in the coming months" (*Information*, November 6, 1970). It transpired that both the DA and the LO had taken part in the negotiations at the Ministry. *Berlingske Tidende* stressed the fact that the DA had reservations about the initiative. Firms with a desperate need for manpower could be granted exemption, however. The then president of DASF, Anker Jørgensen, was quoted as saying that the stop for issuing first-time work permits was a significant concession to the trade union movement and the Social Democratic party, and that the way was now open for the solution of guest workers' social problems.

*Jyllands-Posten* (November 6, 1970) also saw the stop as a concession to the LO, while *Vestkysten* the same day gave ample space to Lauge Dahlgaard in an interview: "The import of foreign labour has grown to such proportions – about 1,000 a month – that, with the onset of the winter season, when we know with certainty that unemployment among Danish workers will increase, we have to take some sort of action to limit the number of guest workers". The Minister also stressed that it was an administrative decision, "which really has nothing to do with either the Social Democratic party's desire for an immediate stop to guest workers or the extensive demands made in DASF's report". Moreover, the Minister drew attention to the possibilities for exemption, which were added as a concession to industry. According to the Minister, the opposition had demanded a total stop for new immigrants.

*Ekstra Bladet* ran a series of articles in autumn 1970, which, among other things, attacked housing speculators who exploited guest workers and, not pulling any punches, the paper deplored what it regarded as generally racist behaviour among Danes. On October 29, the paper turned to foreigners' social position: "These people find themselves in the same situation that Danish workers found themselves in around the turn of the century. They have been let down by the government, the social authorities, employers and the unions". Through interviews with foreign workers, the paper described how they had usually borrowed money for the journey, that unemployment meant they couldn't pay this back,

and that in this way they were forced to stay in Denmark. The Turks now unveiled plans to form a union for foreign workers, since "Danish unions haven't done anything for us". The paper's report on the entry ban under the heading "Gate slammed shut on guest workers" on November 6, was therefore completely in the spirit of the editorial line. The article reported that the employers had been extremely critical, while Anker Jørgensen referred to the DASF report, which described the situation as chaotic. Accordingly, Social Democrats were determined that Parliament discuss the issue in the form of a general debate on foreign workers.

The debate was held on November 10, 1970 and it was reported in *Berlingske Tidende* the next day. Here, it was emphasised that the stop in itself had not led to disagreement between the government and the opposition, but that the Social Democratic party had criticised the government for its last-minute attempts to formulate a policy in the area. *Jyllands-Posten* attached equal importance to the political agreement, but stressed that the Minister had declared that the "curb" would be softened by various possibilities for exemption. In a similar vein, *Information's* report noted that the parties' spokesmen had been satisfied with the temporary halt to immigration, which now gave the politicians a good chance to sort things out. According to *Information*, Finn Christensen, the Social Democratic spokesman, had referred to a KFUK (YWCA) poll of guest workers in Roskilde which showed that many were leading a miserable existence at the railway station and in stairways. The Conservative MP, Palle Simonsen, maintained that it was becoming a problem to ensure that laws and regulations were being observed. Svend Kjær Rasmussen, of the Left-Wing Socialist Party (VS), went furthest in the criticism, accusing the government of deliberately trying to stir up racial discrimination in order to divide wage earners.

*Politiken's* report complained that the debate had been too brief, but, like the other papers, emphasised the fact that all parties were otherwise in agreement. *Vestkysten* quoted Palle Simonsen as saying that, though the Conservatives regarded the ban as a sensible measure, it should not be allowed to aggravate the labour situation in industry for longer than strictly necessary. The Liberal MP, Robert Christensen also found the ban correct, since it meant that conditions for the guest workers could be improved.

On December 12, 1970, *Berlingske Tidende* reported the Minister of Labour's statement to Parliament. The Minister wanted guest workers to play a complementary role in the economy. On the one hand, he said, we should not import so many unskilled workers to low-wage jobs that structural adjustment, including investments in new technology, ground to a halt. But, on the other hand, "we should not allow labour shortages to continue for so long that bottlenecks become permanent and viable export industries get into difficulties. The supply of foreign labour should at all times be regulated accordingly". *Politiken* and

*Jyllands-Posten* adopted the same angle in their articles, while *Vestkysten* made it clear that the trend in population made some continued immigration inevitable.

On December 17, 1970, *Berlingske Tidende* recapitulated Parliament's debate on the Minister's statement. The emphasis was again on the political consensus. Finn Christensen (Social Democrat) interpreted the statement as a guarantee that "the situation prior to the stop to work permits for foreign workers will not be allowed to arise again". Palle Simonsen accepted the goal of balance in supply so that structural rationalisations were not delayed. The guest worker problem should therefore be included as an important part of general labour market policy. Robert Christensen (Liberal) adopted a positive tone: "Denmark was lucky to have guest workers, but he stressed that it was necessary to control the numbers, that there should be a balance". *Politiken* quoted the Minister as saying that the temporary ban should be a model for fixed rules for immigration according to the needs of the labour market.

In the event, however, the temporary stop didn't do much to dampen immigration either. And then there was also illegal immigration to contend with, which, according to the rumours circulating at the end of the 1960s, was considerable. In spring 1973, faced with a continued shortage of labour, especially in the metal industries, the DA negotiated a quota scheme with the Social Democratic government under Anker Jørgensen and with the unions. *Politiken* reported this on June 30, disclosing that, up to now, 2,000 new work permits had been issued. Only firms which belonged to an employer's organisation or were bound by a collective agreement could be considered.

When the first oil crisis broke out a few months later, in autumn 1973, and market conditions took a sudden turn for the worse, the unions renewed their demands for another stop, this time made to Anker Jørgensen's Social Democratic government.

Towards the end of November 1973, the papers were full of alarming reports on the oil shortage. *Aktuelt* reported that oil supplies had run down faster than expected, and this physical constraint on production led to widespread fears of rising unemployment. On November 28, 1973, the paper's headlines proclaimed: "Government to save employment: Speedy action to avoid crisis". DASF worried that up to 20,000 of its members could become redundant in the plastics industry alone, which fully "justified a stop to foreign workers". It was also predicted that thousands of foreign workers already in the country risked being sent home.

*Ekstra Bladet's* front-page headline on November 28, 1973 predicted "Over 100,000 will lose their jobs". Industry regarded the situation as "extremely serious", and inside the paper, Anker Jørgensen was quoted as saying at an election meeting shortly before the general election in December 1973 that "it is

necessary to limit the intake of foreign workers". In the leader on the same day, the paper recalled the "spectre" of the 1930s, when "unemployment was a stark reality in thousands of Danish homes". If such a situation arose again, "one way of solving it could be to reduce the number of foreign workers, and another to reduce working hours – though neither is ideal". On November 29, 1973, *Politiken* reported that the three main unions involved wanted a ban on guest workers. The three unions, which for the time being only wanted a temporary ban, were: the Women Workers' Union in Denmark, the Danish Metal Workers' Union, and DASF. And now the employers also dropped their objections: "It is inevitable, they say".

On November 30, *Aktuelt* reported an "Immediate stop to foreign workers. In addition, foreign workers who already have a work permit will be sent home when it expires, unless the employment situation improves considerably". According to the paper, the stop to foreign workers had been agreed upon at a meeting between the unions and employers, Minister of Labour Erling Dinesen (Social Democrat) and Minister of Trade Erling Jensen (Social Democrat) the previous day. The unions were reported as being satisfied with the negotiations: "The government has agreed to our request. It doesn't solve all the problems, of course, but it does address some of our concerns on the employment of foreign workers".

Like the papers mentioned above, *Vestkysten* also published articles describing the serious energy problems and the spillover effects on employment. On December 1, 1973, the paper reported that the union movement in Esbjerg would insist that, irrespective of their contractual rights, foreign workers should be laid off before Danish workers. This did not include workers from EC countries, however: "John Leo Thomsen, head of the workers' local joint organisation said that the situation had been discussed and that the general feeling was that Danish labour should be guaranteed employment as long as possible. This meant that foreign labour must be laid off first. Those on 3-month contracts should be sent home with pay for the period in which they were promised work, said Leo Thomsen".

On December 1, 1973 – the day after the ban on guest workers was imposed – *Information* observed: "The possible shortage of oil in Danish industry is already wrecking normal industrial relations. Collective agreements are being suspended. Occupational health and safety legislation is being disregarded. Mass layoffs are being announced. Foreign workers are being openly declared unwanted. Firms are closing down. These are some of the more extreme examples of the effect of the energy crisis". Under the sub-heading "Xenophobia", the paper noted that "foreign workers in Denmark will bear most of the brunt, either through layoffs and repatriation or because they push Danish workers out. Earlier in the week, the LO called for a ban on foreign workers on account of the oil crisis".

## 2.6 Guest workers and the recession

In June 1974, Kaj Westergård, an economic statistics expert at the Ministry of Labour, proposed a new solution to the migrant worker issue. The oil crisis had worsened the balance of payments deficit, and the headline of Westergård's article in *Aktuelt* on June 17, was characteristic of the period: "Might currency considerations make immigrants preferable to migrant workers?" Westergård based his article on the recently published *Perspektivplan II* (Perspective Plan II), which predicted continued labour shortages in the export industries. Unemployment was therefore no more of a spectre than that "those firms which produce the goods and services that help ease our trade deficit with the rest of the world must expect a drain on their manpower. It is therefore not surprising that it is precisely from this quarter that the most eager calls to plug the "holes" with foreign labour come". Westergård noted that there was still no clear picture of the economic effects of immigration. However, the results of a study by the West German central bank showed important implications for the balance of payments: "The primary goal of migrant workers in western countries is to earn money to support family and relations in the home country. Only foreign workers who have brought their families here, and who have lived and worked in the West for many years, have savings on a level with those of the native population." Foreign workers thus created a form of capital flight, and the downward pressure this exerts on the balance of payments might therefore be reason enough to warrant a continued stop to immigration in favour of a determined effort to "integrate the migrant worker and his family". The word "integration" had thus entered the debate, though clearly from the point of view of the needs of the receiving country.

Unemployment continued to increase, however, soon especially among foreigners, and the nature of the problem changed. In March 1976, *Berlingske Tidende* ran a series of articles on the deteriorating situation for foreigners. On March 17, 1976, the paper printed an article entitled: "Unemployment hits our migrant workers hardest". The emphasis was on the exposed position of migrants, which the article illustrated by the case of a labour exchange centre in Copenhagen. Among SID's 6,000 foreign members, 2,100 were out of work, corresponding to a unemployment rate of 35%, against an average of 25% for the union as a whole. *Berlingske Tidende* continued: "The migrant worker came to Denmark to earn and save money so that he could return home to a better life. This was his only reason for leaving family, friends and place of birth. Without work it must seem pointless to endure a socially desperate existence in a country he perhaps doesn't even like. But he cannot return empty-handed to derision – and perhaps debt – either. So rather wait and hope". This empathy with migrants' situation also characterised articles on problems with the reunification of migrant workers' families, on their children's difficulties at school, and on the cultural conflicts they were faced with. The paper stressed society's obligation to integrate the children, and Danes were exhorted to show more tolerance, whether foreign workers stayed in the country or returned homed.

Other articles around this time in this main conservative newspaper indicated that the probability was that the migrants would be *staying*. On March 20, 1976 the paper cited a recently published report on the number of foreign citizens. This showed that, while a lot of single men had returned, this was offset by "a corresponding influx of women and children. This implies that the social problems associated with migrant workers' stay in this country will increase". The nature of international migrations was thus changing, towards a higher degree of family reunification and "network-determined" migrations. On March 23, 1976, it was reported that, influenced by economic conditions, the EC was rethinking its immigrant policy. More precisely, the EC was reinterpreting a 1970 agreement on the gradual free movement of labour between Turkey and the EC, due to be implemented between 1976 and 1980. Faced with an estimated one million potential Turkish immigrants, the EC was digging its heels in.

The general debate on immigrants intensified towards the end of the 1970s – influenced partly by the increase in family reunifications. The questions being asked now were: Should migrant workers be sent home or be allowed to stay? Should they be given the right to vote in local elections, and how much should they be allowed to deduct in tax for money sent to the family in the home country (deductions under so-called "family maintenance contracts")?

A new party, the Progress Party (Z), stormed into Parliament in the election on 1973, and towards the end of the 1970s was venting its views on immigration, "which found great sympathy in large sections of the population, but which had not previously been represented in Parliament" (Højsteen, 1992). Conservative politicians were also making sporadic attacks on immigrants with a number of critical articles in *Jyllands-Posten* in particular. In one such article on July 21, 1979, for example, the Conservative politician Ib Stetter criticised the Liberal/Social Democratic coalition government for its lack of policy on migrant workers and refugees, observing at the same time that "there were numerous problems in absorbing people of a foreign culture into our society". On August 3, 1979, Ib Stetter wrote in the same paper that the Danish Conservative party would demand the immediate expulsion of all foreigners – including those with Danish citizenship – involved in drug-related crimes: "They must not be given the chance to poison our society ever again. They should be deported irrespective of family ties". In the middle of September, the paper also reported the news that the government was going to "Put a stop to migrant workers' abuse of tax allowances". Anders Andersen, the Liberal Minister of Taxation, announced that, in the coming parliamentary session, the government would crack down on the unintended use of these deduction possibilities. The paper reported: "It appears that many migrant workers abuse the right to deduct money sent home to support their family from the amount of tax due. In many cases, this money is deposited in an account which the migrant worker withdraws himself when he leaves Denmark" (*Jyllands-Posten*, September 15, 1979).

In autumn 1979, *Jyllands-Posten* also conducted a readers' debate through the letters to the editor columns, "where many readers called for migrant workers to be sent home from economic motives".<sup>23</sup> To judge by a study carried out by Ole Hammer involving selected papers in 1982 and 1984, this would be a recurring theme in the debate conducted through readers' letters in many of the Danish dailies in coming years.<sup>24</sup>

On November 21, 1979, the papers reported a parliamentary debate on immigrant policy, initiated by a question from the Left-Wing Socialist Party, perhaps as a reaction to the sharper tone in the migrant worker debate.<sup>25</sup> The debate on the question coincided with the announcement by the new Social Democratic government, on taking office on November 6, 1979, of an overall review of immigrants' conditions, including the right to vote in local elections. The Prime Minister, Anker Jørgensen, had also promised that the government – now a Social Democratic minority government – would continue its efforts to revise the rules on immigrants' tax allowances.

*Politiken* wrote that, during the debate on November 20, 1979, the government had confirmed that the proposed changes in the election act would be introduced in a bill. Anker Jørgensen also stuck to the decision to limit the tax allowances, among other reasons because, he said, many Danes failed to see the reason of the scheme, and that this growing dissatisfaction could develop into a general animosity towards guest workers. And while the Prime Minister rejected any thought of a separate Immigration Ministry, he vowed to do everything possible to further immigrant integration. In fact, according to *Politiken*, all parties – apart from the Danish Conservative party and the Progress Party – acknowledged that Denmark had a responsibility towards guest workers. Several party spokesmen spoke out against "the attempts in recent years to whip up hatred against migrant workers, based on incorrect and undocumented information on abuses of the social system, criminality, etc." Completely unperturbed, the spokesman for the Progress Party demanded that work permits for unemployed immigrants should no longer be renewed.

*Information's* coverage of the debate, together with *Aktuelt's*, cf. below, was probably the most extensive. A leader heaped abuse on the Progress Party in particular: "(...) Ole Pilgaard Andersen, spokesman for the Progress Party, emphatically denied that his party supported a smear campaign against migrant workers – but on the other hand, foreign workers' *exploitation of our social*

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<sup>23</sup> Højsteen, (1992), p. 58.

<sup>24</sup> Hammer, (1984), p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> The question was formulated as follows: "What does the government have to say about the situation of immigrants' families and other foreigners, and what does the government propose to do about it?"

*system* ought to be looked into, and something should also be done about *all these marriages of convenience* between Danes and migrant workers, not to mention all the *foreigners who enter the country on a false passport, large numbers of whom lived in Christiania* (an "alternative" community on a former military base in Copenhagen). When Preben Wilhjelmsen from the Left Wing Socialist Party later demanded documentation for these allegations, Pilgaard could only lamely reply that "it was evident from numerous other debates" and "it had also been mentioned in the press" (*Information*, November 21, 1979).

*Ekstra Bladet* was also highly critical of possible clamp-downs. Among other things, the paper had quoted the Social Liberal MP Bernhard Baunsgaard as describing the action against the tax allowance as "petty": "It was us who asked them (the foreigners) to come. They must be allowed to support their families, otherwise we risk destroying their family patterns" (November 21, 1979).

*Aktuelt* stressed the general agreement: "The debate showed that a very large majority in Parliament, with the Progress Party as almost the only exception, stands behind a common desire to improve things for immigrants". Commenting on the Prime Minister's statement, the paper mentioned that he had referred to a partial paper from the 1977 Aliens Act Commission on administrative guidelines for residence and work permits and for procedure in deportation cases. Anker Jørgensen was also quoted as saying that, though the ban on further immigration would be upheld, he wanted to liberalise conditions for those immigrants already in the country. Professor Ole Espersen (LLD), the Social Democratic chairman of the parliamentary law committee, was quoted as drawing attention to immigrants' economic and cultural importance, and Peter Brixtofte (Liberal) as having warned against using the group as a plaything for party-political interests.

*Jyllands-Posten* stressed that all the party spokesmen agreed that the situation for the over 50,000 immigrants from Pakistan, Yugoslavia and Turkey was serious. The paper also noted that a "very large majority" agreed that "Denmark should be ashamed that it is precisely this small section of the population that has the biggest problems as regards unemployment, education, housing and well-being". According to *Jyllands-Posten*, the debate had on the whole revealed a willingness to ensure that Denmark adopted a more humane immigrant policy in the future. Peter Brixtofte (Liberal) was quoted as saying that the goal for a revised immigrant policy should be both to integrate the immigrants and to ensure the preservation of their cultural background. The main impression the article gave was one of general sympathy, and that, supported by the political consensus in the Parliament, the government already had new legislative initiatives under preparation. *Jyllands-Posten* thus showed towards the end of this article that it did not fully support the view of either the majority of its readers in the paper's letters-to-the-editor debate or the contributions of right-wing politicians earlier in the autumn.

*Berlingske Tidende* reported on the government's policy statement on immigrant integration and a statement from the Prime Minister that "these groups have nothing to fear for their future". Summing up, *Berlingske Tidende* said that the debate had been broad and far-reaching, and that most of the parties had adopted the government's position. On November 22, 1979, the paper printed an interview with Hagen Hagensen (Conservative), in which he expressed his deprecatory views on changes in the election act. Furthermore, in Hagensen's opinion, current rules requiring that a foreigner must have lived in Denmark for seven years before qualifying for Danish citizenship were too lax.

A new parliamentary debate in November 1980 fanned the flames of the immigration issue once more. The same occurred in spring 1981, when the then Minister of Housing, Erling Olsen (Social Democrat), outlined ideas for special immigrant towns or quarters, which residents themselves could plan. *Ekstra Bladet* commented on the proposal in a leader on March 21, 1981, in which it stressed that "there can be no doubt that Erling Olsen means well". But the paper warned against trying to solve immigrants' problems by segregating them in special quarters. On the contrary, they should be solved by forcing social housing out into "the large Green Belt, where municipalities have up to now blithely turned their backs on the country's social problems".

## **2.7 Summary of the debate from the beginning of the 1960s up to around 1980**

It appears from the above account that the debate on foreign labour started in the summer of 1964 in an article in *Aktuelt* written by the then Minister of Trade, the Social-Liberal Hilmar Baunsgaard. At this early stage the argumentation was not overwhelmingly sophisticated, it merely being maintained that an influx of migrant workers in a situation of chronic labour shortage could increase the country's wealth. With the exception of *Politiken*, however, Hilmar Baunsgaard's proposals for the employment of foreign labour met with resounding criticism in the other papers. In *Aktuelt*, but also in *Berlingske Tidende*, *Information* and *Vestkysten*, the opposition of the trade union movement received the most attention. The unions and Social Democratic politicians thus embarked on a course they were to hold for the rest of the 1960s: They would at any time prefer investments in new technology to the import of Southern European workers, who would increase pressure on wages and preserve outdated production forms and systems. At the same time, it was pointed out that the spectre of unemployment was always present, and that there were still unexploited reserves of labour among married women. *Information* presented similar views, with a focus on technological modernisation rather than the import of unskilled workers.

By the following year, when the debate on labour problems in the meat industry broke out, the right-wing papers had worked out a clearer position. All these papers now accepted that the use of foreign labour could ease industry bottle-

necks, dampen inflation and facilitate market expansions. In this connection, *Vestkysten* and *Jyllands-Posten* were perhaps also influenced by the fact that there were clear agricultural interests at stake. *Aktuelt* and *Information* were largely unsympathetic to this, while the tabloid *Ekstra Bladet* was reconsidering its views on the use of foreign labour.

In the years up to 1970, these positions remained more or less unchanged, though union views vacillated according to the risk of unemployment, i.e. the economic situation. Thus, in 1967, one could be forgiven for thinking that unemployment was a thing of the past, and Thomas Nielsen, the LO president, was able to sound more accommodating in *Aktuelt* than two years previously. But when trade conditions briefly worsened in 1968, at the same time as immigration increased, union attitudes once more hardened, especially among unskilled workers, who wanted a total ban on immigration.

Towards the end of the 1960s, union arguments also focused more on the increasing social problems among migrant workers, prompting both *Aktuelt*, *Information* and *Politiken* to call on the government to formulate a proper immigration policy.

The pressure culminated in the autumn of 1970, and resulted in the first temporary stop in first-time work permits for foreigners. It now also appeared from the newspaper debate that a majority of the population was sceptical about continued unregulated immigration, and that the political establishment in fact agreed that the rules should be tightened, thereby giving politicians a chance to formulate a clearer, more coherent policy. Disagreement now centred on the length and degree of the ban, with the conservative papers – and also *Ekstra Bladet* – arguing for a more flexible stop as a safety valve for continued labour shortages in certain industries.

When the oil crisis broke out in the autumn of 1973, the fronts had softened further - the majority of the papers were now agreed that the ban should be total, at least for a while, even though *Information* more than implied that guest workers had become scapegoats in a game that the Danish government was finding it hard to control. For its part, the trade union movement felt that their fears of the 1960s had now been confirmed.

With the change in the nature of migration up through the 1970s from labour migrations to family reunifications, and with the subsequent increased recourse to the welfare system, the debate changed tack again towards the end of the period. A contributing factor in this was also that the political vacuum for opposition to immigration, which a reader had drawn attention to in *Vestkysten* in 1970, had now been filled by the appearance of the Progress Party. Also some Conservative politicians now adopted a much harder line on the earlier guest workers and their families than they had before the worsening in trade conditions.



### 3. The debate on asylum-seekers

#### 3.1 Introduction

Until the middle of the 1980's the number of refugees had remained relatively small, and the source of the refugees had continued to be primarily Eastern Europe. However, the pattern of the debate altered from the mid-1980s, as a consequence of the increase in the number of refugees seeking asylum.

The Danish Parliament had set up a committee on refugees in 1977. One of the tasks of this committee was to draft more detailed administrative procedures for notification of the granting of residence and work permits and for handling expulsion orders, these procedures to be used at least until a new act on aliens was passed. This resulted in a report on administrative procedures in 1979 and a further report in 1982 which included a proposal for a new legislation concerning aliens.

In drafting the proposed new government legislation, the Minister of Justice, Erik Ninn-Hansen<sup>26</sup>, based his proposals on the views of the majority on the committee. The opposition proposed a number of amendments, based on the views of the minority of the committee. Among other things, the minority wanted to give foreigners already in Denmark greater opportunities to bring dependants into the country.

In 1983, between the first and second reading of the bill, Erik Ninn-Hansen in *Jyllands-Posten* stated his belief that the welfare system made residence in Denmark an attractive goal for people in poor countries. The new act on aliens, then, should be formulated in such a restrictive manner that Denmark, with its population of only five million, could remain a "nation-state in the future".

Despite the minister's reservations, the final negotiations over the act saw a compromise on the issue between government and opposition, with the extreme right-wing Progress Party distancing itself utterly from the legislation. In the debate the party said that the views of the majority in Parliament were in conflict with the will of the Danish people.

One of the central themes of the 1983 legislation was an improvement in the rights of refugees. Refugees for whom Denmark was the first country in which they had sought asylum were to have a legal claim to such asylum, and a number of safeguards were included in the process of handling applications. Any foreigner who sought asylum at the Danish border now had the right to enter Denmark and to remain in the country while the application was being heard. The newly-established Directorate for Aliens took over the handling of asylum ap-

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<sup>26</sup> Conservative. The Government at the time was formed by a right-of-centre coalition.

plications from the Aliens' authorities of the police. Any disputes could be brought before the Refugee Board, also a newly-established body, which comprised three officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Social Affairs and Justice, two representatives from the Danish Refugee Council and one representative of the General Council of the Danish Bar and Law Society. With the introduction of the revised legislation Denmark gained an international reputation for taking the lead in operating a humanitarian refugee policy.

As will be seen from the following, the legislation provoked violent debate in the years succeeding its passage. This debate has continued right up until the present day. However, since it is difficult to distinguish and analyse current trends in opinion in present-day newspaper writing, this chapter will only cover the period until the end of 1994.

### **3.2 The debate after the new Aliens' Act came into force**

In the summer of 1984, when the influx of refugees was still on a modest scale, the majority of the newspapers were still in favour of the new act. In the late summer of that year, however, newspaper comments began to reflect a sometimes high level of dissatisfaction with the increasing number of refugees, and in many cases a feeling of clear hostility towards them. Conservative politicians began to suggest that a revision of the 1983 act was needed – a view which appeared to find an echo in several newspaper reports. For example, on August 13, 1984, *B.T.*<sup>27</sup> published an interview with Liberal MP Svend Heiselberg: "We must try to hold back this mass invasion by Iranian refugees. I fear we shall soon see 25-30,000 Iranians living in Denmark and creating an Islamic revolution." In August, many papers published a report from the Ritzau news agency that described how floods of refugees were being attracted to the country by the new legislation.

On September 26, *Jyllands-Posten* wrote that "the reality is that Denmark is open to anyone who asks for political asylum". The next day, the paper published the results of a survey by *Observa*: "Every second voter would say "no" to an increase in the number of refugees." Fewer than one in ten believed that Denmark accepted too few refugees. In a leader published the same day, the paper demanded that the authorities should ensure that refugees had genuinely fled spontaneously, "that is, that they are people from areas where their lives or their freedom are endangered on political, religious or other grounds. The idea is not that we should take planeloads of people who could live in perfect safety in their home countries, even if their material standard of living might be low." The dividing line between *genuine refugees* and *economic migrants* was emphasised on September 30, 1984 by *Berlingske Tidende*, which quoted an official from the Directorate for Aliens as saying: "A number of economic migrants have concealed themselves among the refugees, using forged passports as a means of obtain-

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<sup>27</sup> An evening paper.

ing a new refugee identity.” The paper also published an interview with an Iranian, who stated that the differences in the laws of the various countries were significant: “So they come first to Denmark, and take the temperature of the water. The news spreads very rapidly: no-one has been thrown out, it’s safe, and so many more follow.”

In October 1984, the Minister of Justice once again perceived a link between the new act and the flow of refugees; on October 10, *Berlingske Tidende* quoted from Ninn-Hansen’s written statement to Parliament, released in advance of the parliamentary debate on the new act concerning aliens, as follows: “I warned Denmark against undertaking an obligation which is disproportionate in international terms and which at the national level it does not have the capacity to fulfil.” *Politiken* reported the debate on the act under the headline “Majority for a mild legislation on refugees – government proposal gets a rough ride”. It was clear that a parliamentary majority made up of the Social Democrats, the Social-Liberals and two left-wing parties wanted to retain the existing act. Later that autumn, the Conservatives reiterated their belief in the need for restrictions; and there was a constant flow of objections to the refugee policy from the Progress Party, as expressed for example at its national congress in September 1984.

By the end of the year the debate had become so generally intense that Queen Margrethe took up the topic in her traditional New Year broadcast, a point which was extensively reported in the press. One other factor causing the debate to heat up was the ever increasing number of asylum seekers now arriving not only from Iran but also from Iraq, Lebanon and Sri Lanka.

The intensity of the debate, and the fact that it involved points of fundamental principle for the parties, interest groups and others involved, is discussed in sections 3.3.1 to 3.3.3 below describing the commentary in *Berlingske Tidende*, *Jyllands-Posten* and *Vestkysten* in 1985; these three newspapers were in general especially critical of the 1983 act. Sections 3.3.4 to 3.3.7 describe the progress of the debate as expressed in the other papers.

### **3.3 The debate in 1985**

#### **3.3.1 The debate in *Berlingske Tidende* in 1985**

*Berlingske Tidende* published around 50 items concerning foreigners in January 1985, including pieces related to the Queen’s New Year message; the front page headline on January 1 was “The Queen told us off”. The paper published the full text of the Queen’s speech: “On the one hand, we are proud that refugees choose to come to our little paradise; but when we see them getting confused over our way of living and our language, then feelings of hospitality are forgotten all too quickly, and disappointment sets in on both sides. There are others, too, that have had the same experience, namely guest workers and their families. Now times are a little harder than they were when many of them came here; and things are often especially difficult for those who are not from families that have

lived here for generations, and who therefore find it harder to adapt to the changing times. Then we come along with our so-called “Danish humour” and our “smart” comments. So we begin to treat them coldly; and then it is not so far from that to harassment and worse – and of that, we ought to be ashamed.”

The further coverage of the subject in January can be divided into two categories. First, there were more wide-ranging comments on Denmark’s obligations towards refugees; the debate on a revision of the act had again become a concrete issue, largely on the initiative of Erik Ninn-Hansen. Second, news items on asylum seekers continued to be published.

The majority of the more general items expressed significantly more sympathy for the refugees than had been the trend during the autumn of 1984. For example, the actor Erik Wedersøe penned a passionate defence of the refugees headed “Unbelievably cold hostility”, and Professor Jørgen Grønnegård Christensen declared that politicians should not give in to popular opinion, but should instead “clearly and unequivocally state that this is an obligation that we have already undertaken”. While the editorial coverage stressed that refugees should integrate themselves into society, the majority of the letters to the editor expressed their opposition, saying that the foreigners only came to take advantage of the welfare system.

The news coverage of asylum cases focused on Iranians; two Iranians were refused asylum in an appeal to the Refugee Board. Since the cases would set a precedent, they aroused considerable interest. News of the refusal to grant asylum was published on January 11, and the next day the Iranians who were threatened with expulsion were quoted as saying “Through this decision, the Danish people have condemned us to hell.” The chairman of the Refugee Council, Professor Thor A. Bak, expressed his “amazement” at the decisions in the two cases.

The next day there was a different viewpoint, with an assistant commissioner from the Aliens Division expressing his views. He pointed out that Denmark had consistently observed the terms of the Geneva Convention, and would certainly never send a person to his or her death. The assistant commissioner added that many refugees left Denmark voluntarily for such reasons as: “It’s too cold here, and cigarettes are too expensive.” According to this official, then, many of those in the country were economic migrants.

On January 14, 1985 the Minister of Justice was quoted as saying that “the Iranians must leave”. The Danish Refugee Council had urged the Minister to grant the two Iranians temporary residence permits, but Ninn-Hansen pointed out that under the new law he no longer had that power. The article also stated that the Ombudsman would like to determine whether there had been any errors in the Refugee Board procedure. The next day the paper announced that “the two

Iranians are to have another chance". The Ombudsman had criticised the Refugee Board for undue haste, and had requested a new assessment of the case.

The views of the Liberal party on refugees were expressed in an article on January 15, which reported an interview with the Foreign Minister, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen. The Minister emphasised Denmark's responsibility, but at the same time suggested that a clearer distinction could be made in the legislation between "genuine and phoney refugees". It was the use of precisely this type of argument that was the basis of a criticism of the government put forward in the same article by the sociologist Jacques Blum, who claimed that the government was largely responsible for the fact that the debate had become so violent because they had made "the refugee case into a question of economics – and of whether a refugee was "genuine" or not". That, he said, "is the application of a double standard. It means that people have been prejudged." An almost identical view was put forward by Thor A. Bak of the Refugee Council when on January 18, he commented on the Government's policy that "they are whipping up public opinion against people in need .... It is primarily the politicians, and especially the Minister of Justice Erik Ninn-Hansen, who are using the refugee issue as ammunition in a fight between Government and Opposition."

In mid-March the influx of refugees was undiminished, and on March 13, 1985 the paper published an article entitled "Tougher controls on refugees". It seemed that several right-wing politicians had been joined by a spokesman for the Social Democrats, the former Minister of Justice Ole Espersen, in agreeing to the idea of making admission harder by giving "extended powers to the Chairman of the Refugee Board" to refuse entry to people at the border if it was clear that they were not refugees – though with the provision that the rules regarding residence permits should be relaxed at the same time. On the tougher controls, Espersen was quoted as saying: "We naturally do not want to see people who are quite obviously not refugees staying in Denmark for months while their cases are being heard. However, we would like to see the Chairman of the Refugee Board working in co-operation with a representative of the Refugee Council." The paper concluded that the 1983 act probably would be changed.

On March 20, 1985 *Berlingske Tidende* announced that the negotiations between the Government and the Social Democrats had broken down, and that the Social Democrats, Social-Liberals and two left-wing parties had put down a proposal to give the Minister of Justice increased powers to grant temporary residence permits on humanitarian grounds in cases where asylum seekers were denied refugee status by the Refugee Board. It was proposed that one possible reason for granting a temporary residence permit could be "the degree of fear that a foreigner appears to display at the prospect of being sent home". The Opposition further proposed that the Chairman of the Refugee Board, acting together with a representative from the Refugee Council, should be empowered in appeal cases to reject manifestly groundless applications for asylum. It was apparent that the

Government would press ahead with its own proposal that this power be given to the Chairman of the Refugee Board acting alone, but it was still hoped that a compromise could be found.

By the end of May 1985 the final details were settled. On June 1, *Berlingske Tidende* published details of the negotiations, which had ended in a broad compromise the previous day, although the Progress Party had been excluded. The result was an alteration in the powers of the Minister of Justice to grant temporary residence permits, and a decision that a three-man committee consisting of the Chairman of the Refugee Board, a representative from the Refugee Council and a ministerial official would have the power to reject manifestly unfounded cases. The Progress Party came under heavy attack during the debate from the other parties. For her part the Progress Party leader, Pia Kjærsgaard, said that the act was “an attack on the Danish people”.

Despite the change in the act, the debate kept going and indeed reached a new peak on July 27, when during a town fête some residents of Kalundborg attacked a group of Iranians. The attack made the front page of *Berlingske Tidende* on July 28, and there was comprehensive coverage on the inside pages, including reports on the way mainstream politicians distanced themselves from the attack. Only the Progress Party remained apart from the general consensus. Pia Kjærsgaard expressed the view that the violence could also be seen as “an expression of the animosity which the people feel towards the Government’s policy on refugees”.

August 8, 1985 it was reported that the flood of refugees continued unabated; the paper described how an entire Lebanese family of 40 people, including babes in arms and the very elderly, had asked for asylum. According to this conservative paper, a further revision of the act was called for. The debate continued throughout the autumn, and the end of 1985 saw a further tightening of the act. The parliamentary negotiations were reported in *Berlingske Tidende* on December 11. It was underlined that negotiations had centred on the concept of “manifestly unfounded applications for asylum”. The most significant change in the act was that it was no longer possible to appeal against refusal of asylum to the Refugee Board if the Directorate for Aliens and the Refugee Council were in agreement that the case was unfounded. According to the paper, the reason for the change was the long hearing time for cases and the prospect of reaching the figure of 10,000 asylum seekers in 1985. The Government and the Social Democrats backed the compromise, and even the Progress Party voted for it, since the party saw it as a small step in the right direction. The Social-Liberals, the Socialist People’s Party and the Left-wing Socialists Party voted against the change. During the debate, these three parties had described the changes as an attack on legal status of asylum seekers, and they had demanded a definition of “manifestly unfounded application”.

### 3.3.2 *Jyllands-Posten*

During January *Jyllands-Posten* published many articles on the problems of finding places for refugees to live in towns and villages around Denmark. The Social Democrat mayors of Kolding and Vejle were particularly strongly opposed to the Refugee Council's plans to quarter large groups of Iranians in their towns. The mayors were dissatisfied with the plans to house the asylum-seekers right in the centres of the towns, and they also resented the unwelcome costs of providing services for the asylum-seekers.

On January 7, 1985, *Jyllands-Posten* reported that the National Association of Local Authorities wanted to take up the matter. The chairman of the association, Mayor Evan Jensen (Liberal) of Lejre, was quoted as saying that "the state should provide extra grants for local authorities which accept large numbers of refugees". The next day, *Jyllands-Posten* reported that the Minister of the Interior, Britta Schall Holberg (Liberal), was willing to consider amending the state grants to local authorities so that those with large refugee centres would be compensated through this system. However, the minister did not think that she could get more money in total for the local authorities, only that the available funds could be redistributed. At the same time, Bjørn Elmquist (Liberal) warned that the local authorities should be very cautious in this area and not start making offers of Danish language courses or other means to help refugees to be integrated when they were only being given temporary accommodation and had not yet been granted asylum. The Social Democrats, in contrast, as reported in the paper on January 9, wanted to apply pressure on the government to pay the extra costs involved to the host authorities. The issue of refugees thus became a question of economics in the debate in *Jyllands-Posten*, and on January 10, the leader was indeed headed "Refugees and the economy". The editorial maintained that since the granting of refugee status was a state responsibility, the state, and not the local authorities, should bear the costs involved. Furthermore, it was Parliament that had passed the 1983 act, which had "clearly led to a veritable invasion of refugees".

Towards the middle of the month, *Jyllands-Posten* printed various items of news which could be interpreted as indicating a view that the legislation was perhaps too liberal, and that not all refugees could be regarded as genuine. For example Claus Tornøe, Head of the Directorate for Aliens, was quoted as saying that 85% of all asylum-seekers were granted refugee status; and in the same article the view was expressed that it was the 1983 legislation which had "opened the way for the flood of refugees". The paper also published an interview with the UN's High Commissioner for refugees, Poul Hartling<sup>28</sup>, who said: "Let me make it clear that not all refugee cases are equally straightforward. They can be full of tricks ... . It's really not always true that people are in danger. Often, they just

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<sup>28</sup> Poul Hartling was former Liberal Danish Prime Minister (1973-1975) and Minister of Foreign Affairs (1968-1971).

want to be in some other place than where they are. And so they invent a story that they are refugees who are in danger. We see cases where people are actually just adventurers who want to see something of the world.”

In a leader following the publication of this article, the paper wrote that “only a tiny handful of right-wing extremists want to see Denmark close its doors to refugees. The vast majority believe that we should fulfil our international obligations and accept people who have been persecuted and terrorised in their own countries. Let that be our irrevocable principle!” However, “only the blind” would claim that a flood “of the proportions we have seen in the past couple of months would not lead to problems . . . . And when someone with the authority of Poul Hartling, the High Commissioner for Refugees, says that refugees often invent stories to the effect that they are in danger, just to get to some other country, attracted there by that country’s social welfare system and educational and work opportunities – then it is reasonable to ask whether we should indeed let in all and sundry.” The paper also wrote on January 17, that neither the Social Democrats nor the Socialist People’s Party were prepared to see the act made tougher. As the paper put it, “Neither the former Minister of Justice Ole Espersen (Social Democrat) nor the Socialist People’s Party are concerned about the fact that the majority in Parliament is out of step with the public as to their views on the new liberal aliens act.”

A more unusual contribution to the debate was published on January 26. This was an article in which Søren Krarup, a parish priest, discussed “the so-called immigrants”. Concerning popular opinion among the Danish people, he wrote: “The strong reactions from the public are nothing but a genuine protest against the lies. At the same time, the views expressed by the authorities are the product of either fear or hypocrisy, preventing the truth being told. People are scared. People have been scared off making their opinions known by a campaign which is an equal mixture of Salvation Army admonitions and Sunday-School unction”. In his article, the priest metaphorically described Denmark as “a home”: “An old nation state is exactly like a home. Here the family – the populace – can find sanctuary and companionship.” However, the politicians were turning this home into a public hostel. Other, mutually opposed contributions to the debate were published under titles such as “We must distinguish between refugees and immigrants”, “Justice must find things strange in Denmark” and “Parliament forgot to listen to the voice of the people”. This last article was written by a former Progress Party Member of Parliament, who was putting forward the party’s increasingly familiar argument that the Parliament which had passed the legislation on aliens was in conflict with the will of the people.

In the view of the paper, as expressed on March 20, 1985, the situation was “still a couple of steps away from consensus on the refugee legislation”. In its coverage of the parliamentary negotiations, the newspaper emphasised that the Government and the Opposition were trying to find a compromise solution. The

negotiations had temporarily broken down because of the Government's desire that the Chairman of the Refugee Board acting alone should have the authority to carry out the urgent decisions on manifestly unfounded asylum applications. On June 1, the paper described the result of the efforts to find a meeting point. "It was the most emotionally charged debate of the day. The duelling was particularly intense between Berhard Baunsgaard, the leading campaigner for the refugees, and Pia Kjærsgaard of the Progress Party. Baunsgaard almost flew up to the rostrum when Pia Kjærsgaard claimed that the Progress Party would be looking after Denmark's interests by putting a stop to the flood of refugees."

In a commentary headed "Faster hearings of asylum cases" published on December 12, 1985, *Jyllands-Posten* discussed the compromise between the Government and the Social Democrats; a satisfied Erik Ninn-Hansen estimated that in the future, the decision of each case would take around 14 days.

### 3.3.3 *Vestkysten*

A number of contradictory threads can be traced in *Vestkysten's* coverage of the topic in January 1985. On January 1, the paper printed the text of the Queen's speech under the headline "Congratulations to the Queen", the journalist Søren Bloch enlarged on the content of the speech in a background article entitled "Danish racists' hardening view: Immigrants are primitive, stupid, naive and idle. Snide Danes make life tough for immigrants".

Later in the month there were a number of items defending the refugees and their rights, including a letter to the editor from Søren Nørgård Sørensen, MP (Social Democrat), who claimed that Denmark accepted very few refugees. However, there were other trends displayed in the paper. For example, on January 16 an article quoted from *Jyllands-Posten's* interview with Poul Hartling under the headline "Extensive trickery in refugee cases". On the same day, in an article headed "Danish farmers fear Iranians", the paper quoted the Chairman of the Agricultural Cooperative Association in Ribe County as saying that he would like to see an act requiring that buildings on land bought and added to a farm should be demolished if they were not sold again within a year. He said, "When refugees can be housed in Vejle, without the municipal authority being aware that this is going on, it doesn't take much imagination to see what disused farm buildings might be used for", and one didn't want Iranians as neighbours. In a leader, the editors stated their belief that one could readily accept Poul Hartling's statements at face value: "High Commissioner for Refugees Poul Hartling is a nice man who expresses himself politely. When he says that "Refugee cases are not always straightforward. They can be full of tricks," this can be translated into straight Danish as meaning that refugees are often full of lies."

In July 1985, the paper reported from Kalundborg that the Union of Immigrant Associations had requested that an effort should be made on all sides to enable Danes and foreigners to live in peaceful coexistence. On July 31, there was a re-

port of a meeting of the Parliamentary Legal Committee at which, according to the Prime Minister, Poul Schlüter, there had been general agreement to “support the line advocated by the Government – namely to ensure that refugees can live here with us in safety”. There were reports from Ribe County on various initiatives to counter racism, and from Varde came the claim that “Race riots in Varde would be quite impossible!”

### 3.3.4 *Politiken*

If we turn now to consider the other papers, we find that *Politiken* during January took a special interest in the Iranian asylum seekers, as evidenced by a number of leaders in the course of the month. These leaders argued against the wish of the conservatives to tighten the legislation. According to *Politiken*, the 1983 act did no more than embody international agreements and what normal propriety demanded.

In the regular news coverage, and also in many other contributions to the debate, the Iranians’ case was constantly defended. Several news reports accused the authorities of dragging their feet in asylum cases and of using incompetent interpreters. Around January 20, 1985 there were pieces concerning the allegedly threatening behaviour of a policeman during hearings for the Iranians, and *Politiken* announced that the Social Democratic MP Erik B. Smith would request that the Minister of Justice would make himself available for consultation in the Justice Committee.

The paper described the parliamentary negotiations of March 22, under the headline “Asylum seekers gain a respite”. This report stressed the fact that the opposition parties, including the Social-Liberals, had proposed that the Minister of Justice should have the power to grant temporary residence permits on humanitarian grounds. The possibility of a quick settlement of manifestly unfounded appeal cases was described as an efficiency measure. The paper emphasised that the Social Democrats and the other opposition parties insisted that the civil rights of refugees should be guaranteed.

In July 1985, *Politiken* strongly condemned the violence in Kalundborg. The leader of July 30, claimed without reservation: “It cannot be denied that this was the product of racism. The actions are the result of a number of sad truths about the attitudes of some parts of the population.” In December, the tightening up of the legislation on aliens was presented under the headline “Criticism of new asylum legislation”. The paper quoted the opponents of the change as saying that it would result in a weakening of civil rights and would also damage Denmark’s international image.

### 3.3.5 *Information*

As with *Politiken*, opinion expressed in *Information* was overwhelmingly in favour of retaining the 1983 legislation. For example, on January 2, 1985 the

newspaper reported the outcome of a parliamentary question from the Left-wing Socialist Party to the Minister of Justice in the words “Ninn-Hansen does not know how many economic migrants there are among the refugees,” and on January 13, *Information* reported from Geneva that the possible expulsion of the Iranians had awakened international attention and concern. Sources in the U.N. High Commission for Refugees stated that no country had as yet sent Iranians back to their homeland. Other articles backed the Iranians’ case in Denmark.

On January 15, a leader headed “The price of openness” was published. The leader expressed the view that the decision to deport the two Iranians had further intensified the already bitter argument over the new refugee policy. According to the paper, it was clear that the two asylum-seekers were not political refugees in the normal sense. “Their real challenge to the Ayatollah’s regime in Tehran lies in the fact that *after* leaving Iran, they came to Denmark and asked for asylum”. In other words, the Directorate for Aliens was faced with the problem that some asylum-seekers only became refugees at the moment when they applied for asylum. However, this was not a new situation, said the article. The same thing happened in the case of Polish refugees in the 1960s. At that time, politicians had never hesitated to grant asylum; the request for asylum was in fact “in itself a political act which had to be taken into account in considering the case”. The only valid criterion after that, said the paper, was the degree of political oppression in the asylum seekers’ homeland, and since Iran and Iraq both had repressive regimes, it would only be in very rare cases that it would be possible to refuse asylum under the new refugee act. The paper also claimed that this was a common European problem, since “the situation regarding refugees in Europe is approaching total anarchy” (January 24, 1985). A few days later there was an interview with Candida Toscani, the head of the European section of the U.N. High Commission for Refugees. She reported that there were Iranians everywhere.

On June 26, *Information* published a whole supplement filled with articles opposing xenophobia in Denmark and in other countries. Headlines included “The racism in our hearts” and “Turks are Germany’s new Jews”. On December 11, 1985, *Information* announced, “Aliens Act tightened up”, and the criticisms of opponents were given full coverage in an otherwise neutral article.

### 3.3.6 *Ekstra Bladet*

There was full editorial support in *Ekstra Bladet* for the sentiments which the Queen expressed in her speech, and during January a number of items were published warning strongly against racism in Denmark. In several articles, criticism of racism was used as a springboard for attacks on the right wing in general and the Progress Party in particular.

In its news coverage of the refugee issue, *Ekstra Bladet* was notable for its sympathetic coverage concerning the fate of the Iranians, and the paper was active in

reporting on and publishing critical items on the alleged racism displayed by the police during case hearings. Corresponding sympathy and solidarity were noticeable in a number of leaders, such as that of January 15, headed “The refugee test”, which included a strong attack on the Progress Party. On January 19, the paper published a leader entitled “Hatred of foreigners” in which the sympathy was expressed as follows: “It may well be that there really are many Danes who believe that bookkeeping, finance and cold calculation of figures should guide our fortunate little country in every detail. But we must have freedom! If we are not allowed to share our good fortune with those who are in need, then perhaps we should be thinking of leaving Denmark.”

On June 1, the paper reported that “Those condemned to death are allowed to stay in Denmark. The politicians have saved the Iranians – even though they cannot be given refugee status.” In a leader published the same day, the paper “in the name of humanity” welcomed the fact that Erik Ninn-Hansen “will in the future be obliged to issue a temporary residence permit in every case to all the politically persecuted Iranians who end up in Denmark in their flight from the lunatic Khomeini”. That day’s *Ekstra Bladet* also published a report from a village in southern Jutland called Øster Højst, where a group of residents had threatened to block the roads into the village when a group of refugees were to be housed in the disused inn. Now the Iranians had arrived. “First Khomeini. Now Øster Højst. Village klansmen drive Iranians away.” The article spoke of “the burning racial hatred” that had erupted in the little town. It was reported that a group of Iranians had left the village again, routed by “this town that describes them as knife-wielders and fears for the safety of their children and the aged”.

In December 1985 *Ekstra Bladet* did not write specifically about Parliament’s tightening of the Aliens Act, but the editorial sympathy of the paper was evident in articles such as “They are to be sent home to Khomeini. Ministry of Justice official suddenly gets cold feet in incomprehensible deportation case” (December 12, 1985).

### 3.3.7 *Aktuelt*

*Aktuelt* also supported the sentiments expressed in the Queen’s speech, with front-page stories such as “Enthusiasm over New Year’s message” and “Margrethe receives lots of praise”. On January 2, interviews with many immigrants were published, in which they expressed their great delight about the initiative. The paper had also interviewed Vibeke Storm Rasmussen, the chair of the Social Democrats’ immigrant committee and a local politician, whose support was perhaps a little more restrained: “I agree with the Queen in her rejection of Danish “humour” which is directed against people who are different in some way... . But I think there is a high degree of solidarity among those who, for example, stand in the unemployment queues together with the immigrants. We have not paid sufficient attention to the fact that we have created large concentrations of both immigrants and refugees in the local communities around Copenhagen, as a

result of which the problem there is somewhat different from that in the rest of the country”.

A leader on January 3 gave this political signal: “The Queen’s warning is timely. Just when the political right are trying with all their might to change Danish refugee policy, because it is beginning to cost money.” In an article the same day the argument was put forward that Denmark had accepted fewer refugees than other western European countries. This report was based on the reply to a parliamentary question from Torben Lund (Social Democrat) to Ninn-Hansen, which had confirmed that this was the case. Torben Lund concluded: “That’s why we should uphold the Aliens Act, which the Minister of Justice voted for himself, as it stands.”

Many other items published in *Aktuelt* in the course of January showed continued support of the 1983 legislation, and a number of articles defended the Iranians threatened with expulsion. However, many of the letters to the editor published in the paper were strongly opposed to the policy on refugees, and one could well get the impression that the opinions of the editors were not fully in tune with those of their readers.

When negotiations on the tightening of the Aliens Act were in progress at the end of May 1985, the paper described these negotiations under the headline “Parliament rages against refugee witch-hunt”. It was stated that “all the parties in Parliament, with the exception of the Progress Party, condemn the witch-hunt which is being directed from a number of factions against the refugees who have been granted permission to stay here in Denmark”. The attack by Torben Lund on the Progress Party received especially detailed attention in the report, and it was also reported that developments in Øster Højst had caused alarm among MPs. In December 1985, with the year’s significant tightening of the legislation on aliens, *Aktuelt* described the changes very briefly. The idea was that the revised act would mean quicker hearings of cases. The opposition party’s criticisms were given in summary form.

### **3.4 1986: Another round in the battle over legislation on aliens**

The year 1986 had hardly begun when the debate started up again, generally focusing on either attacking or defending the current legislation on aliens. On January 1, *Ekstra Bladet* published an article entitled “Block to refugees a tragedy”. The article concerned a new agreement with the DDR whereby asylum seekers’ access to Denmark via that country would be barred. “The consequence will be hundreds of human tragedies.” The article also announced that a group of Danes wanted to start an association, to be called “The Friends of Refugees”. *Berlingske Tidende* published an article about the new organisation on the same day, and quoted the Social-Liberal Bernhard Baunsgaard as saying: “I can well understand people wanting to help refugees when the Danish authorities have declined to do so. There have been times in earlier history when it has been

necessary to break the law to help people in need.” Several of Denmark’s bishops criticised the tightening of the legislation in *Politiken* of January 2, 1986. “We must be open and tolerant. We have no cause to moan. We are a rich society, and if we don’t think we have the means to take care of refugees, then we can always pay a little more in taxes,” said Bishop Henrik Christiansen.

It was in the context of such a turbulent debate that *Vestkysten* published on January 2 a commentary by Laurits Tørnæs, the Liberals’ political spokesman, concerning the new agreement with the DDR: “We shouldn’t be scared over the agreement with the DDR.” Tørnæs rejected criticism from the Refugee Council, and went on: “The central rule should now be that a plan to take a certain number of refugees is included in the budget. These refugees must be approved by the U.N. High Commission and should come from the U.N.’s refugee camps.”

The debate rumbled on through 1986. A fairly widespread conception among those in the political centre that pressure on the borders continued led to yet another amendment to the act in October 1986 (see below). Another factor contributing to the act being changed was that both the Government and the Social Democrats pointed out that stricter rules in Sweden and West Germany necessitated a tightening of the Danish regulations.

On October 11, *Aktuelt* published an article on the new parliamentary negotiations. According to the article, Ole Espersen had given the impression that the Social Democrats would be willing to compromise with the Government if “certain changes” were made in the Government proposal. Among the proposed amendments was to lay down that asylum seekers who came from transit countries where they were in fact perfectly safe should in the future be turned away at the border, and also that valid passports and visas would be required for entry to the country. The article also stated that the spokesmen for the older parties had made yet another attack on the Progress Party. Pia Kjærsgaard herself had spoken of “people who are deadly tired of the whole refugee circus, which has brought violence and terror to Denmark”.

An article in *Berlingske Tidende* published the same day painted a similar picture, but laid stress on the Conservative Minister of Justice’s words in Parliament: “At one point, so many asylum-seekers were strolling across the border into Denmark that it assumed the character of a migration”. *Berlingske* explained what divided the Government and Social Democrat positions. The Government wished that the *de facto* refugees – refugees who were not covered by any refugee convention, but who nevertheless were in danger – should no longer have a legal right to a residence permit. Ole Espersen expressed the Social Democrats’ opposition to this: “We agree with the Government that a revision of the act is required. Our precondition is that we do not want thereby to send any asylum-seekers home to a perilous existence; but this is not what the Government wants either” (*Berlingske Tidende* October 11, 1986).

In *Information*'s coverage of the negotiations, Ole Espersen was quoted as saying: "We agree with the Government that the situation has changed to an extent where we cannot simply remain passive. But we are very sorry that it will be necessary to revise the current legislation, which is and which should be a model for other countries to follow." The Socialist People's Party and the Left-wing Socialist Party were reported to have flatly rejected the proposal, which they saw as a return to the legal situation that pertained before the 1983 legislation.

*Politiken* discussed the negotiations under the heading "Opposition to the asylum act" (October 11, 1986), stressing that the Government could not get its proposal passed without amendments, but that compromise would be difficult, as Ninn-Hansen insisted that the proposal had to be accepted as a whole. *Politiken* also emphasised that the Social-Liberals were not willing to support the proposal in its current form, and "neither are the Social Democrats, according to the former Minister of Justice Ole Espersen. The Socialist People's Party and the Left-wing Socialist Party will certainly not put their names to limiting the number of asylum-seekers." Like *Politiken*, *Vestkysten* quoted Ninn-Hansen as saying that the proposal had to be taken as a whole: "If we start to mess about with it, it will end up having next to no effect, and we'll be back where we started" (October 11, 1986). Pia Kjærsgaard was quoted as saying that "the refugee legislation has become a taboo, and asylum-seekers are economic migrants and deserters. They should be kicked out of the country."

On October 13, 1986, *Berlingske Tidende* announced agreement between the Government and the Social Democrats on a stricter asylum act, since the Government had given in to the Social Democrats' demands over *de facto* refugees. It was stated that there was opposition to the new tightening of the 1983 legislation in some sections of the Social Democratic group. Similarly, *Jyllands-Posten*'s coverage on October 13, reported that a compromise was in sight, as the Government had given in to the demand to change the legal status of *de facto* refugees<sup>29</sup>, and *Aktuelt* echoed, "Broad compromise on refugees now in sight". The article mentioned that during the negotiations Ninn-Hansen had forcefully rejected a request from the Refugee Council that they should assist the police in the cases that would arise, when refugees arrived at the border. "The Danish Refugee Council is a private organisation, and this is a question of border control. It must be absolutely clear as a general principle that private organisations will not be allowed to assist the state in this control." *Politiken* described the negotiations from the angle "Tougher for refugees". The most significant change was again seen to be the fact that refugees could now be turned away at the border if they came from a country where they had actually been living in safety.

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<sup>29</sup> The press discussion that day also made it clear that under the new law, the Government would be able to fine airlines and shipping companies who transported foreigners to Denmark without passports or visas.

The amendments to the legislation were passed by a majority comprising the Government parties, the Progress Party and the Social Democrats, while the Social-Liberals, The Socialist People's Party and the Left-wing Socialists Party voted against. During the final debate in Parliament, the Social Democrats in particular were criticised by the three parties who voted against for abandoning the line on which the four parties had been united before the passage of the 1983 legislation.

As early as October 20, *Politiken* published an article describing how refugees were now being stopped at Copenhagen Airport. The Airport Police Chief described the effect of the change in the act: "Last Sunday we received 40 asylum-seekers. Of the nine who arrived yesterday, five had landed in transit at a West European airport, and these were sent back there. The other four Iranians had come directly from Turkey, and they were sent to the refugee camp at Sandholm." The Chairman of the Refugee Council, Thor A. Bak, showed no surprise at these developments: "Rumours spread quickly, and that's why so many refugees came here to try to get accepted. The refugees hurried to get here before the act was passed."

The Government and the Social Democrats recognised the need to spread information about the new rules. This recognition was reflected in a feature by Ninn-Hansen in *Berlingske Tidende* and a piece by Ole Espersen in *Aktuelt*, both published on October 20.

Ninn-Hansen stressed that the 1983 legislation had provided extensive civil rights to the refugees, and Denmark had committed herself to a greater extent than any other country to giving residence permits to refugees. The original act was passed on the assumption that other countries would also accept similar obligations, but that had not happened. As the problems had grown to massive proportions, so the need for a revision had become acute. The Government's solution was an ongoing adjustment of the legislation by means of a new paragraph in the act which said that asylum-seekers could be turned back at the border if they came from certain safe countries. Ninn-Hansen argued that this rule was in accordance with the 1951 Convention, and the basis on which an asylum-seeker could be recognised as a refugee had not altered. The article concluded with a reference to the sovereignty of the nation state: "We now have an act which once more makes it possible for us in Denmark to decide which foreigners we want to accept into our country. I think that's splendid. But there should be no doubt that in the future we want to help those people that are in need around the world. We shall continue to accept refugees here, both those who arrive on their own and those accepted under U.N. quotas."

Ole Espersen's article in *Aktuelt* was headlined "Modest reform of the Aliens Act". He stated that the Social Democrats regarded the changes as fully defensible, "though naturally we would have preferred not to have found the changes

necessary. We must however never forget that our obligation is first and foremost to find room for those in genuine need.”

### 3.5 An appropriate number?

The entire process concerning the three revisions of the 1983 Act indicated that the debate was unlikely to reach a conclusion in autumn 1986 with the implementation of the third and most stringent set of restrictions. The parties of the left wing had expressed dissatisfaction, as had the Social-Liberals. Furthermore, the Progress Party had also – although for completely different motives – been vociferous in its criticism of the refugee policy, even though the party had voted in favour of the October 1986 revision. However, there was also a degree of internal disagreement within the government and the Social Democratic party.

On August 14, 1987, *Information* published the existence of such a split within the ranks of the right-wing government. Party Chairman Flemming Kofoed-Svendsen, the Christian People’s Party, confirmed to *Information* that Denmark should accept around five thousand refugees per year, but Erik Ninn-Hansen, the Conservative Minister of Justice, only wished to guarantee to the United Nations that Denmark would accept two hundred and fifty quota refugees per year<sup>30</sup>.

Moreover, discontent was brewing among the ranks of the Social Democrats. On September 5, immediately before the general election in September 1987, and the day before the party’s annual congress, *Det fri Aktuelt* put the cat among the pigeons with a front-page splash under the headline: “Social Democrats bury critical report”. The newspaper article commented on the way in which the executive committee of the party had delayed the central committee’s reading of a report from the party’s committee on refugees and immigration. “A report from within the Social Democratic party strongly attacking refugee organisations in Denmark has been shelved by the party’s executive committee until after the general election .... The report accuses the Danish Red Cross and the Refugee Council of making the handling of refugees into a commercial enterprise. At the expense of the state and without public knowledge or control.” The committee was chaired by Vibeke Storm Rasmussen, the county and municipal politician, who “had been working with problems concerning refugees and immigrants for ten years via her position on Albertslund Municipal Council and on Copenhagen County Council”. From the report, the article quotes a demand that immigrants should be required to adapt to the conditions of Danish society to a far greater extent, as well as for much tighter rules concerning when refugees and immigrants should be permitted to marry citizens from their country of origin. The report also proposed setting a maximum limit to the number of foreign citizens entering from countries outside the EU. It also mentioned “attitudes, actions and conditions among immigrants and refugees that are unacceptable to Social

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<sup>30</sup> This figure does not include spontaneous asylum seekers.

Democrats". All in all, the committee was pressing for a political standpoint concerning the groups of aliens that Denmark should accommodate.

On September 6, 1987, *Jyllands-Posten* stated: "Social Democrats pave the way for a tightening of policy on refugees." The article described a number of the new restrictions that the committee advocated and, at the same time, quoted the party chairman Anker Jørgensen as saying: "Denmark is a small country, so we must avoid being overrun by foreigners. Accepting too many refugees will damage Denmark both economically and culturally." On October 13, 1987, *Information* published an interview with Vibeke Storm Rasmussen. The interview again made it clear that, in fact, the report contained proposals for tightening a number of existing regulations, and included the proposal that young immigrants should not immediately be allowed to marry "a cousin from their country of origin or bring their spouse to Denmark unless both husband and wife can prove that they have learned the Danish language". In addition, the report suggested a ceiling of 5,000 immigrants per annum, and that this total should include both refugees themselves and other family members who may seek reunification with their relatives in Denmark. The report also included a draft proposal for the possibility of offering immigrants and refugees a sum of money if they wished to return to their homeland.

On October 18, 1987, *Politiken* wrote: "Social Democrats in turmoil about refugees". According to *Politiken*, Svend Auken, the new party chairman, was preparing to dismiss Vibeke Storm Rasmussen. A new and politically "heavier" committee was to formulate a cohesive policy on immigration and refugees for the Social Democrats. Auken also expressed his opinion that it was time for an "anti-racism campaign" aimed at changing attitudes, a campaign which had the support of the entire union movement. He said that it was also necessary to "build models to ensure a more even distribution of the expenses linked to accepting and accommodating aliens". The party chairman argued that "unemployment is increasing rapidly, and that is why I want to solve this problem now. We must avoid the risk of a "scapegoat mentality", i.e. blaming immigrants and refugees for our own problems."

On October 18, 1987, *Jyllands-Posten* published the fact that, under any circumstances, there were administrative difficulties linked to the large number of asylum seekers. A survey carried out for the newspaper by the Danish Red Cross showed that, even a year after the Aliens Act had been tightened, there was still a considerable backlog of cases dating back to the "refugee flood" of 1986. One applicant had waited no less than three years for a decision. However, the article also made it clear that the modifications to the act had slowed the stream of refugees "far more effectively than the politicians had originally imagined".

On October 19, *Information* broke the news: “Social Democrats to introduce anti-racist information campaign” and published an interview with Ole Espersen, who stated that one of the aims of the campaign was to eradicate the “quasi-racist” political parties in Denmark. Asked whether the party’s participation in the 1986 act had not, in effect, been a concession to this self-same racism, Espersen answered: “Either you say that everyone has the right to seek asylum and has the right to live here while their applications are being heard, or you have to say that we will grant entry to everyone who does not have a safe place to live elsewhere. That is what we have chosen to do now.”

On February 18, 1988, *Berlingske Tidende* announced that “a new commission on aliens” had in fact been set up by the Social Democrats with the aim of drawing up concrete proposals for a conciliatory agreement with the government parties, as the 1986 revision contained provisions stating that the act was to be revised after two years. However, Elsebeth Kock-Petersen, the Liberal spokesman on the immigration question, believed that the leaders of the Social Democrats would have to implement a radical change in policy if they wanted such an agreement. The following day, the newspaper straight out the headline: “Threat from the Conservatives: Referendum”. The Conservative Members of Parliament had agreed at a meeting to press for a referendum on immigration policy – a proposal that had been aired by the Progress Party – if a majority of politicians outside the government parties wished to ease the restrictions that had been introduced in October 1986. The newspaper referred to the fact that Ole Espersen had spoken in favour of administrative relaxation on a number of occasions. In addition, *Berlingske Tidende* commented that tightening the provisions of the act had led to a considerable fall in the number of asylum seekers: “The government believes that the arrangement is working according to plan while organisations including the Refugee Council criticise the act for sending refugees back to the countries where they are persecuted. Both the Socialist People’s Party and the Social-Liberal Party are appealing to the Social Democrats to alter the Act to avoid erroneous expulsions” (*Berlingske Tidende*, February 19, 1988).

On the same day, the journalists Anna Winding and Jan Jørgensen also revealed that “the truth behind the myth of the hordes of refugees that have flooded in over the borders is that only 21,500 of them entered the country in the 1980s. In fact, they would not fill one end of the national football stadium.” (*Berlingske Tidende*, February 19, 1988). Søren Jessen-Petersen, the leader of the UN Refugee Commission for Scandinavia stated that “we can see that our refugees are in a tough situation”. However, Jessen-Petersen conceded that the 2–3,000 refugees to whom the country granted entry over a period of just a few months in 1985 and 1986 was clearly more than Danish society could accept. “But as the situation is now, there is a glaring contrast between the humanitarian values that Denmark wishes to stand for, and the policies it enforces regards refugees.” The UN official also pointed out that work should be done to find international

solutions and that in this case, Denmark could reasonably be expected to accommodate 3–5,000 refugees per year. The article revealed that it had been stated during the current debate about the revision of the act that “both the parties in government and the Social Democrats had mentioned the figure of 3–5,000 as an “appropriate” number”.

On February 20, 1988, *Berlingske Tidende* published a verbatim account of the immigration debate in the Danish Parliament the previous day. During the debate, the Social Democrat Torben Lund made it clear that his party did not, in fact, wish to relax the restrictions of the Aliens Act, whereupon Grethe Fenger Møller of the Conservatives conceded that her party was therefore willing to drop its backing of the move towards a referendum. During the debate, most parties again attacked the Progress Party. Mogens Glistrup of the Progress Party had thus been met with “massive contempt from all sides” when he compared the influence of Muslim refugees on Denmark with the effects of arsenic in a glass of water.

On February 28, 1988, the editorial in *Berlingske Tidende* laid out the paper’s official evaluation. Firstly, the paper firmly reiterated that Denmark had accepted refugees for centuries, and that these refugees had introduced valuable qualities to Danish society. Recently however, the Danish policy on aliens had “unfortunately given rise to a debate that has occasionally been tarnished with a hint of racism and which has often demonstrated what could easily be termed malice”. According to the paper, the Danish Parliament was particularly responsible for this. In fact, the 1983 act had exacerbated an already bad situation: “It gave everyone waiting at the borders the right to demand entry to the country and to stay here while their applications were processed. The stream of refugees became so big that it overwhelmed any possibility that might have existed for dealing with the purely practical problems. The act was more far-reaching than any of Denmark’s international obligations.” As a result of the stream of refugees, the Danish Parliament was obliged to introduce restrictions to the act, and the number of refugees seeking residence has since decreased.

In January 1991, *Politiken* warned of the threat of new problems arising in connection with the imminent influx of people from the former communist countries, as these people had a clear picture of the possibilities offered by the rich West. Actually, the background to the article entitled “Rich Europe raises the drawbridge” was a conference held by the European Council with the aim of establishing a common European policy on immigration. According to *Politiken*, this conference resulted in a number of proposals for common and more restrictive rules for immigration. The article mentioned that possibly the most important reason behind the restrictions was a growing feeling of resentment towards these aliens in Western Europe, but it was also the case that this wave of immigration actually influenced the social order in the west, in that immigrants worked illicitly and were used by employers to push wages down. At the same

time, the journalist could see a link between the influx of tens of thousands of young men with weak ties to society and a rise in criminality. Even though the article contained a certain amount of criticism of the dual standards displayed by many countries in this regard, it could be regarded as a contribution to the domestic debate, with *Politiken* sending out partially new signals.

At the same time, there was talk of the possibility of a flood of genuine refugees arriving in the country as a result of the unrest in the Baltic States caused by these countries' attempts to achieve national independence. On January 27, 1991, *Politiken* published a Vilstrup survey showing that there was a high level of public support for Denmark granting asylum to refugees from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The right-wing government had already announced that Denmark was prepared to grant entry to refugees from the Baltic. However, when these refugees first began to arrive in Denmark via Sweden, the Aliens Act actually proved to be an obstacle to granting them entry, as Sweden simply had to be considered a first safe country of refuge. On January 27, Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann Jensen (V) stated to *Politiken*: "The act is too inflexible. We have no opportunity to decide whom to accept." Thus the right-wing parties that formed the government had also – somewhat unexpectedly – voiced their opinion that the act needed revision.

### 3.6 The municipal dimension

Finding room for the numerous refugees in municipalities throughout the country revealed major differences from region to region, with some local authorities accommodating large numbers of refugees, while others were unwilling to accept more than a few. As the distribution of guest workers also revealed major variations, with a relatively high concentration in a limited number of municipalities controlled by the Social Democrats – in the County of Copenhagen, and in the Municipalities of Århus and Odense – a heated debate was almost guaranteed as the number of refugees increased. Or, perhaps more precisely put: to the re-emergence of a debate that had roots stretching back to 1980, when Erik Mørk, the then Municipal Manager of the Municipality of Ishøj, had stated: "Other municipalities export immigrants and social problems to us."

In August 1987, Per Madsen, the Social Democratic Mayor of Ishøj, put himself in the spotlight by voicing strong criticism of what he interpreted as the Muslim immigrants' unwillingness to adapt to Danish society, using the slogan "when in Rome, do as the Romans do." The mayor received backing from *Ekstra Bladet* on August 11, 1987 in a lead story about 'Little Turkey' and in an article headlined "Ishøj split: Mohammed or Madsen". The lead story picked up the pieces from the 1970s and made it clear that Denmark had never managed to draw up a policy on immigration. This meant that such immigration as had taken place had developed according to "the principle of self-service". The Danes should accept "a fair number of refugees who are threatened with torture or execution, but we cannot take the pressure off the Turkish unemployment

queues without this having far-reaching political, economic and cultural effects". In other words, the nation should not turn a blind eye to "the exploitation of our social system, for which some Turks have acquired a taste". In the article, Per Madsen was quoted as having made statements about Turkish immigrants grossly abusing the social services. According to the mayor, the worst problem was that the Turkish children in Ishøj were being married off to Turks in Turkey, and so all of a sudden, their in-laws were living in the municipality, too. "In 1978 there were 644 Turks living here – today, there are 1,440."

The editorial in *Vestkysten* on the same day examined the question and expressed sympathy for the initiative taken by Per Madsen. When Pia Kjærsgaard appeared on the scene with "her irresistible urge to pander to cheap, uncommitted points of view", *Vestkysten* had to distance itself from this, but it was necessary to "discuss seriously the problem that the Mayor of Ishøj aired on the radio news yesterday. It is obvious that if around 14 per cent of the population of a municipality are immigrants from other countries, primarily countries that have a different cultural background, then this will inevitably create problems. Especially when the immigrants are unwilling to accept the initiatives to facilitate integration that the host country is striving to establish." The editorial ended by claiming that immigrants would do better to stay at home if "they feel themselves tainted by any and every contact with Danish culture, Danish norms and Danish tradition ... . And they should be made aware of this. Even hospitality has its limits."

On August 17, 1987, *Information* reported on an internal conference for the Social Democrats which was attended by the party's Members of Parliament, the executive committee and a number of leading municipal politicians. The conference was held as a part of the Social Democrats' preparations for the approaching general election, and a central theme of the meeting was the party's stance on the question of immigrants and refugees. Ole Espersen gave *Information* the following summary of the discussions: "Everyone agrees that we should grant entry to refugees. However, the problem is the extremely concentrated placing of refugees and immigrants in some municipalities." Per Madsen had been granted a conditional support at the meeting as his fellow mayors had backed his assertion that there were problems in Ishøj and other municipalities. However, the party refuted the mayor's statements about a "Khomeinification". In practice, the Social Democrats wished to work for a proposal for county-by-county distribution of refugees in accordance with a quota system. The Social Democrat Thorkild Simonsen, at that time chairman of the National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark, pointed out to *Information* that there was a proposal from his organisation concerning municipal rights of requisition – including the right to allocate privately-owned leased properties. This could help to even out the spread of refugees throughout the country. However, an article in *Information* on the same day reported that the right-wing government rejected this approach. Thor Pedersen, Minister of Housing, said: "That would completely ruin

any refugee's possibilities of achieving reasonable living conditions. Situations can quickly arise in which the police may have to protect immigrants from protesting owners and tenants."

In the summer of 1993, it was Britta Christensen, the Social Democratic Mayor of Hvidovre who made the headlines by announcing that the municipality would not accept any more refugees. *Politiken* reported the events in Hvidovre on July 22, 1993 under the headline: "She wants to provoke. Hvidovre Mayor says no to more refugees." The paper added an editorial comment to a subsequent interview with the mayor: "The way in which the Municipality of Hvidovre deals with the refugees who have moved there – or, rather, the refugees seeking residence there – gives a hollow ring to the Social Democrats' fine words." The mayor stated that the municipality naturally did not wish to break the law, but referred to the fact that over the years, and without any noticeable effects, the municipalities of Hvidovre, Ishøj, Høje-Taastrup and Albertslund had submitted around 70 reports to the government detailing the special problems relating to refugees and immigrants. The desired system for a fairer distribution of refugees had therefore yet to be established. The interview concluded with the following statement: "To live in peace is all about respecting each others' differences, but if these differences begin to dominate, then it is bound to go badly wrong. And in Hvidovre, we have reached the limit of what we can deal with".

*Jyllands-Posten* reported on the Hvidovre matter on July 24, 1993 as, following a decision by the Supervisory Board in Copenhagen, the Social Democrat municipal politicians had been threatened with fines if the town council upheld its decision to refuse to house more refugees. It appeared that the municipality had "tried in vain to set up an agreement with the Danish Refugee Council for a maximum limit of 90 new refugees per year". Several Social Democrats on the town council stated that the high concentration of refugees in the municipality threatened to undermine its economy, and that essential municipal tasks such as child-minding arrangements and municipal services for the elderly were in risk of deteriorating.

The discussion about municipal distribution continued throughout the summer and into the early autumn of 1993 with talk of the emergence of ghettos in council housing gradually becoming a well-known refrain. Gaasholt and Togeby mention that "the Social Democrats were again put under pressure by a number of mayors hostile to immigrants, and Poul Nyrup Rasmussen blamed the party's poor Gallup figures on the immigrant problem" (Gaasholt and Togeby, 1996:30). At the turn of the year 1994/95, the problem re-emerged, this time greatly exacerbated by the likelihood that the status of 18,000 refugees from the former Yugoslavia would change from temporary residence to asylum.

### 3.7 The debate on refugees from former Yugoslavia

The rules for family reunification were tightened in 1992. This, added to the restrictions to the 1983 act introduced in 1985 and 1986 could possibly otherwise have led to a deceleration of the rise in the number of citizens of other countries living in Denmark in the following years. This, in turn, could have dampened the debate.

However, in the summer of 1993, the newspapers continued to report<sup>31</sup>: “The number of immigrants is rising” and “Denmark is still attracting foreigners”. In fact, 1992 saw the second-highest annual intake on record of foreigners into Denmark – exceeded only by that of 1986. One of the conclusions reached by *Jyllands-Posten* was that “on the whole, tightening the rules for family reunification has not had a noticeable effect”. This conclusion applied in particular to the group of genuine refugees. *Politiken* reported on the group of around 9,000 refugees from former Yugoslavia who had arrived in Denmark in 1992.<sup>32</sup>

As regards the press coverage of the Yugoslavian refugees, in the summer of 1992 it was possible to recognise a similar pattern to that applying to the entry of the Iranian refugees in the summer of 1984. There was thus a “very positive attitude among the Danish population towards the necessity of helping the civilian victims of the civil war that was raging in Yugoslavia” – before the refugees began to make their way towards Denmark in large numbers, that is. During the autumn of 1992, a “degree of discord” gradually began to appear, and a number of articles expressed the fear of more widespread racism and of the development of “German conditions” with the newspapers citing the arson murders in Solingen, Lübeck and Rostock.<sup>33</sup> In Denmark, too, there were incidents involving attacks on refugee centres, and these were covered in depth by the media. In addition to this, the media gave extensive coverage to a number of incidents in which refugees had been caught stealing, and these articles initiated a war of words in the letters columns. Many articles in the media hinted at the fact that the Danish population did not consider Yugoslavians to be “real” refugees: “The negative statements from Danes are based on the lack of concordance between the mental image that Danes had of refugees and the real refugees they met. The Danes’ expectations were based on images related to the Second World War, when starving people fled in bare feet with their possessions in bags on their shoulders”<sup>34</sup>.

However the comprehensive media coverage of the war in Bosnia in late autumn 1992 led to a dramatic change in public opinion. It was then that it became clear

<sup>31</sup> *Jyllands-Posten*, July 22, and *Politiken*, July 22, 1993.

<sup>32</sup> John Aggergaard Larsen (1998) has analysed the way in which the media defined this new group of refugees, and this source is used as reference in the following sections.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, p. 16.

to most people that the Yugoslavian refugees really *were* refugees from war. In fact, the expression *the Bosnian war refugees* was introduced in the summer of 1993. This expression further underlined that these refugees had a legitimate claim to seek protection in Denmark.

At the same time, several newspapers reported the fact that large groups of Yugoslavian refugees were, in fact, already living in Denmark on temporary residence permits.<sup>35</sup> On July 25, 1993, *Jyllands-Posten* reported that about 10,000 Bosnian refugees had received residence permits of this kind, and that from “August onwards, around 1,000 more are expected to arrive in Denmark every month. Many are Muslims who have been driven from areas controlled by the Serb or Croat forces. However, no-one knows exactly how many there are.”

Two days previously, *Jyllands-Posten* had printed an empathetic description of life in one of the tent villages that the Danish authorities had been obliged, for practical reasons, to set up in the summer of 1993 to house the large numbers of refugees. The article described the conditions under which the refugees lived in the camps as extremely Spartan, but also made it clear that the Bosnian women were doing what they could to make light of their hardships. In addition, the article emphasised that many of the Bosnians had previously lived comfortable lives, owning houses and cars, and that the men had had good jobs before the war broke out. Here, Aggergaard Larsen is pointing out the fact that in general, this was a part of the picture the media drew of the Bosnian refugees. In fact, it was a question of “the refugees of today” from a society that was not so far removed in either time or space from Denmark, and the media placed special emphasis on the fact that anyone in Denmark could just as well have been subjected to the same fate. This further promoted acceptance, and a positive attitude towards this new group of refugees subsequently grew.

This positive view held for a while, but when, in December 1994, it seemed likely that around 18,000 refugees from former Yugoslavia were on the point of having their status changed from temporary residence to full asylum, the debate erupted again.

In reality, the debate about the likelihood of large new groups of refugees being granted permanent asylum coincided with a new chapter of the debate that the mayors of municipalities with large immigrant populations had kept running for almost ten years. On November 27, 1994, the front page of *Jyllands-Posten* carried the following story: “Kjeld Rasmussen, the Social Democratic Mayor of

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<sup>35</sup> In 1992, the Danish Parliament had passed an act concerning temporary residence permits for certain people from former Yugoslavia. This meant that the authorities could postpone the hearings of asylum applications from these people for up to two years. During this time, the people in question could stay in Denmark on their temporary residence permits.

Brøndby, who is also chairman of the Association of Local Authorities in the County of Copenhagen believes that immigrant families with several children receive positive special treatment compared to Danish families.” According to the mayor, only immigrants with large numbers of children – due to family allowances and rent subsidies – could afford to live in large flats in social housing projects. On December 1, 1994, the newspaper followed up on the story with an article under the heading, “Social Democrat Mayor: aliens policy flawed”: ““Danes are not ready to accept so many foreigners. That is why the policy on refugees and immigrants has missed its mark,” says Thorkild Simonsen, Social Democrat Mayor of Århus.”

On December 4, 1994, *Jyllands-Posten* published an article headed, “Mayors demand debate about foreigners”: “Politicians in Parliament have helped to foster xenophobia in Denmark because they have suppressed the debate about foreigners, ghetto problems and conflicts of culture.” Anders Bak, Social Democratic Mayor of the Municipality of Høje-Taastrup said: “Those politicians who are not prepared to do anything about the problems are helping to promote racism. Parliament should have dealt with this matter years ago. Instead, politicians have simply mouthed empty promises and handed the problems over to us in the local authorities.” Thorkild Simonsen was quoted as more or less agreeing with the criticism: “The politicians have not been honest. Now people are just beginning to be aware of the problems with refugees and immigrants, and we are facing very strong reactions from citizens of every social group.” Vibeke Storm Rasmussen, who had since become Mayor of the County of Copenhagen, also returned to the aliens debate: “Many politicians from my own party did not want to hear such things. They did not want to hear anything about problems with immigrants”. In the same article, the chairman of INDSAM (The Association of Ethnic Minorities) stated that Denmark was becoming a multi-ethnic society, but the politicians had not dared to initiate a debate about the organization of this society as they were afraid of losing votes: “Now the Danes are unprepared, and that means that immigrants and refugees are met with prejudice and xenophobic attitudes.”

This particular point of view, that the debate about the multi-ethnic society had been suppressed, was the theme of the paper’s leading article of that day: “Promote the aliens debate”. The article put forward the point of view that the centre parties had neglected to initiate a debate on “the problems linked to the increasing numbers of refugees and immigrants in Denmark. Insofar as any debate has been held about the far-reaching consequences of this, it has more or less been left to the extreme parties.”

On December 5, 1994, *Jyllands-Posten* stated: “Bosnians have nowhere to live”. A number of mayors of small towns and village communities in Jutland did not think that there were vacant houses in their municipalities for the Bosnian refugees, even though “Birte Weiss, Social Democrat Minister of the Interior, ex-

pects most of the 18,000 Bosnian refugees in Denmark to settle in Jutland". "The politicians in Parliament haven't got a clue what they're talking about. In fact, there are no empty residences. The only solution is for the state to build houses for the Bosnian refugees", said Erik Tychsen, Liberal Mayor of Billund.

On December 11, 1994, *Jyllands-Posten* carried the following news on its front page: "Mayor Thorkild Simonsen on foreigners: Glistrup is being proved right": "Thorkild Simonsen, Social Democratic Mayor of Århus, believes that the predictions about the development of the numbers of immigrants and refugees in Denmark made by Mogens Glistrup, the former leader of the Progress Party, are coming true. Thorkild Simonsen criticises Parliament for not taking appeals from mayors of municipalities with developing ghettos and large populations of refugees and immigrants seriously." Thorkild Simonsen was also quoted as saying that the fact that Glistrup "said it so incisively and so vehemently at the start of the 1970s forced the population to distance itself from the issue, and people were subsequently unwilling to enter the debate". "That was unfortunate", says Thorkild Simonsen, who took his share of the blame for rejecting Glistrup's claims: I was one of those people who did not believe that so many foreigners would come to the country, and that the number of immigrants would become so large that it would cause problems." An article inside the paper stated: "The ghettos are flourishing". 13.8 per cent of the population of the Municipality of Ishøj now consisted of refugees or immigrants. The corresponding figures for the Municipalities of Albertslund and Brøndby were 9.2 and 8.7 per cent, respectively. The figure for the Municipality of Århus was 4.4 per cent.

*Berlingske Tidende* started its coverage of "the mayoral rebellion" on November 29, 1994 with several mayors stating that they could not deal with any more aliens in their municipalities. On December 1, 1994, *Berlingske Tidende* rejoined the debate with a leading article entitled, "The right to be Danish". The premise for this article was the fact that the Liberals and the Conservatives had demanded the right to refuse to grant Danish citizenship to foreigners who had previously been found guilty of homicide or other violent crimes. The article gave full backing to this demand – "in fact, it is surely most natural to ask why in the world they are allowed to stay in the country after serving a sentence for homicide, rape, serious violence or drug-related crimes" – and then turned its attention to the current debate on the Bosnian refugees. Here, the paper claimed that it was problematic to give the "19,000 guests from the former Yugoslavia" the opportunity to seek asylum: "It was a clear precondition for the two-year-old emergency act that it was a matter of temporarily playing host to people in dire need. The idea was that they should stay here as guests but should not learn Danish nor be integrated ... If temporary residence permits are converted to permanent residence permits and normal asylum proceedings, then it is pointless to maintain the special legislation. This is a shame, because in itself, the guarantee of temporary residence opens the door to more flexible help than that which can be provided in accordance with normal asylum procedures."

In a new leading article on December 13, 1994, the paper had calculated that the cost of the Danish efforts to help refugees was on a steeply rising curve that had “long since” passed the DKK 7 billion per annum mark. And even though Danes were fundamentally considered to be a helpful people, the article did not believe that the population wanted “to lay themselves open to ridicule”: “Criminal elements and parasites feeding off asylum legislation should therefore be encouraged to leave the country as quickly as possible so that they do not poison the climate for those who really need help and behave in the way that is expected of guests. And who are prepared to adapt to the rules of Danish society with all its benefits and disadvantages if they should be granted permanent residence.” The article also welcomed Thorkild Simonsen’s contribution to the debate. The mayor had “a God-given ability to rock the boat and force people who would rather ignore reality to open their eyes and look around them” even though his input met with massive resistance from Social Democratic leaders, with Social Democratic ministers attempting to “gag” him. On December 14, 1994, the paper announced “Social Democratic leaders disagree on aliens policy”. According to *Berlingske Tidende*, the Prime Minister wished to play down the internal split over refugees, while “the Social Democratic minister Mogens Lykketoft expressed understanding for the criticisms that a number of Social Democratic mayors had levelled at the party leadership”. In an interview with the paper he said that it was “completely grotesque” that in the western region of Copenhagen unemployment among Turks was running at 56 per cent.

On December 16, 1994, *Berlingske Tidende* reported on “The day of hate in Parliament”. The debate on the Bosnian refugees had resulted in a clear right/left-wing split in Parliament with regard to the question of immigrants, and, according to the summary published in the media, the debate had been unusually heated. The paper concluded: “The Socialist People’s Party and the Danish Red-Green Alliance (Enhedslisten) had good reason to be satisfied yesterday. Deep trenches were dug between the government and the right-wing opposition parties.” According to the summary, Pia Kjærsgaard was apparently also satisfied with the result: “For the first time in many years, the Progress Party is not alone. But I am still not tempted to say: ‘I told you so’.”

In its report *Vestkysten* described how the “mayoral rebellion” was spreading and, on December 12, 1994, the paper quoted the *Jyllands-Posten* interview with Thorkild Simonsen: “Århus Mayor ready to concede that Glistrup was right”. This summary concluded: “Parliament must give careful consideration to the question of whether we can accept any more guests from foreign countries. However, this is one of the worst possible things that can be said to Parliament, as the members’ humanitarian attitude dictates that new groups of refugees should be granted entry to Denmark. Nevertheless, I think that in five years they will admit that I was right” says the Mayor of Århus.”

On December 15, 1994 *Vestkysten* published a leading article in which it maintained that “in the clear light of hindsight” the government should thank the right-wing opposition, as “passing the Bosnians Act seems very hurried, unfinished and, not least, out of step with public opinion. Danes understand and sympathise with the Bosnian refugees. Nonetheless, we should not turn a blind eye to the fact that Danish hospitality is closely linked to the fact that the Bosnians have only been granted a breathing space here – and not permanent residence. The three largest right-wing parties understand this point. The government has not understood it, and this means that it is good that the government has time to reflect on the situation until the start of the new year before reaching a final decision on the Bosnians Act.”

In its editorial coverage of “the aliens” during December, *Ekstra Bladet* attempted to draw a distinction between the Bosnian war refugees and immigrants in general. As regards refugees, the picture was clear in that the paper took a standpoint equivalent to the one it took in connection with the debate about Iranian refugees in 1985 and 1986. This meant that the paper criticised the right-wing parties for reneging on previous agreements concerning the Bosnians, and claimed that the Bosnians, who had already been subjected to a brutal war, had now become the innocent victims of machinations in the area of domestic policy. For example, on December 9, 1994, the newspaper published an article written by Birte Weiss, the Social Democratic Minister of the Interior, who explained the background for the “Act concerning the residence status of certain people from former Yugoslavia, etc.” of 1992 and made it clear that, in any case, it was the Conservative Minister of Justice, Hans Engell, who was responsible for the law and that the law had not given the Bosnians any special privileges but had in fact “taken away their constitutional right to have their asylum applications given due process in Denmark. Not for ever, but for exactly two years. After that time, the authorities were obliged to start an evaluation of each individual case in order to establish whether ethnic cleansing was sufficient grounds for asylum.” If Danes were in doubt as to whether the Bosnians were genuine refugees, Weiss urged: “Follow the daily reports of the Yugoslavian nightmare on television and then decide for yourselves. Or visit an asylum centre and meet a complete family – five, six or seven people living together in one room. Judge for yourselves.”

However, the letters column of the paper bore witness to a marked aversion towards the country’s policy on refugees. Letters with headlines such as “Red card for Weiss”, “Don’t forget the Danes” and “listen to Thorkild Simonsen” – with one reader even going as far as to suggest: “Let us elect Thorkild Simonsen Prime Minister as soon as possible” – were common. In addition, the paper’s coverage of the immigration question was far from the unambiguity of the editorial attitudes that applied to the Bosnian refugees. The paper highlighted a number of incidents of racism and discrimination against immigrants but, at the same

time, also published a number of fairly aggressive articles targeted at Islamic fundamentalism in Denmark and the abuse of the public social security systems.

In *Det fri Aktuelt*, the “mayoral rebellion” was, not surprisingly, the month’s hottest topic for debate and reflected a far-reaching and clearly stated difference of opinion between the top executives of the Social Democratic party and many of its voters, who supported the criticisms levelled by the mayors.

On December 5, 1994, the paper carried the following story on its front page: “Bosnians to live outside the bigger cities”, which can be interpreted as a concession to the party’s rebel mayors. Inside the paper, it was mentioned that the towns or parts of towns that housed large numbers of ethnic minorities would not be expected to accommodate any of the 18,000 Bosnians. This applied, for example, to the western region of Copenhagen and to Århus. However, in the same article, Birte Weiss categorically refuted what she termed the right-wing parties’ attempt to manipulate the mayors’ contributions to the debate: “There is a wide difference between the wonderful support that we receive from the decentralised and humanist Denmark, and the attempt at political posturing we see from the right-wing parties.” In a summary of an ‘end of the day meeting’ at *Det fri Aktuelt* on December 5, 1994, Weiss made the following statement: “The mayors’ talk about fear of contact is completely unfounded. It is rather an expression of the fact that they disagree with the policy of the government.”<sup>36</sup>

However, by necessity, the municipal political opposition had to be expressed in full in the columns of *Det fri Aktuelt* – for example on December 5, when a municipal politician asked in a political commentary: “Is there no-one in Parliament who knows what is going on in society? Throughout the Greater Copenhagen area, in fact, we have major ethnic and financial problems. And where is the help from our party colleagues on Christiansborg?”<sup>37</sup> On December 13, 1994, it became known that Hilmar Sølund, the Social Democratic Mayor of Herning, supported Thorkild Simonsen, and other articles published later that month in the same newspaper stated that support was being strengthened by the Mayors of Køge and Svendborg. In fact, Hilmar Sølund actually regretted that Denmark was obliged to live up to international conventions.

On December 14, 1994, the newspaper reported: “Social Democratic group divided on refugees”. It was stated that Poul Nyrup Rasmussen had “launched an attack on the Social Democratic mayors who have criticised the party’s policy on refugees”. The mayors should “give it a rest” and instead take part in the committee work, which, according to the paper, should solve the problems.

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<sup>36</sup> *Det fri Aktuelt*, December 6, 1994.

<sup>37</sup> The Parliament house.

Thorkild Simonsen was interviewed on the same day. To start with, he distanced himself to a degree from the interview in *Jyllands-Posten*. "I would never have talked about Glistrup if the journalist had not brought him into the discussion. My honesty prohibited me from saying that everything that Glistrup has said has been utter rubbish. Some of what he said has turned out to be true." According to the interview, the mayor's main concern was that the gulf between the politicians in Parliament and the people should grow so wide that it would allow racism to flourish. And the mayor sensed the beginnings of xenophobia. When asked about the current situation as to the Bosnian refugees, he said: "I think that it was right to accept the Bosnian refugees. I experienced a strong feeling of solidarity from most people in this regard. However, people still maintained that they should only be allowed to stay in Denmark for two years. I remember a meeting at a school at which Ritt Bjerregaard said that it would never work. Birte Weiss gave her a regular dressing down. However, Ritt Bjerregaard was proved right, and people remember that today. What was promised on the basis of the very best intentions has never become reality." Thorkild Simonsen also made it clear that he would rather have seen broad agreement and compromise on the subject of the Bosnian refugees with the participation of the Liberals and the Conservatives, "which would have strengthened the population's respect for the decision to a fantastic extent".

However, the greatest number of column inches throughout the month was devoted to the party's official policy on refugees, as displayed in the Danish Parliament's negotiations about the Bosnians' future in Denmark. On December 12, 1994, the newspaper wrote that "Glistrup and the Progress Party thank Thorkild". Birte Weiss was quoted as having said that Thorkild Simonsen must have misunderstood the new asylum law, adding "you can't expect the Mayor of Århus to keep up with everything". Thorkild Simonsen's relationship to Glistrup was also the theme of a leading article on the same day. In this article, the paper claimed that "the question of immigration did not play a central role in the latest general election campaigns as most of the population do not consider it to be important. There are hundreds of associations and thousands of people throughout the country who are participating in a beneficial working relationship and reaping the benefits of the fact that Denmark is also a multi-ethnic society." On the subject of Thorkild Simonsen, it was mentioned that his criticism "purely on the basis of respect for his integrity and good political judgement" would be considered important and "the members of the Progress Party will know how to abuse it. An experienced debater such as Simonsen should know that. One area in which he is right is that the Danish debate about refugees and immigrants is far too polarised, as every form of critical debate is immediately shouted down as an expression of racism."

On December 13, 1994, the paper concluded: "Social Democratic grass roots reject Thorkild Simonsen". The paper stated that Poul Nyrup Rasmussen had refused "to comment on immigration policy at all. He refers to Birte Weiss, the

Social Democratic Minister of the Interior, who has little time for the Mayor of Århus' points of view. In Birte Weiss' opinion, the immigration debate is conducted excellently within the ranks of the Social Democrats and she thinks that the much vaunted problems are highly over-exaggerated." Poul Øland, Chairman of the Copenhagen Social Democrats, expressed his disappointment over Thorkild Simonsen having hinted that Glistrup's predictions were about to come true – "that's way off the mark". Several members of the party executive were quoted as saying that Denmark could not stop the flow of refugees without breaking international conventions.

The refugee theme appeared in yet another leading article on December 14, 1994, in which it was stated that the Prime Minister was attempting to take the mayoral rebellion into consideration by encouraging mayors throughout the country to come up with concrete proposals for solutions to the problems surrounding refugees and immigrants. Poul Nyrup Rasmussen was quoted as warning against hysteria and, according to the article, made the point that "the flow of refugees to Denmark has more or less dried up". The article claimed that these were all wise words, but chose also to draw attention to the fact that the question was so explosive in "his own party that he should unconditionally use the chairman's powers necessary to deal correctly with the debate".

However, this partial concession to opposition within the party was not completely consistent. In fact, during the paper's coverage of the negotiations in Parliament, emphasis was placed on the fact that the three right-wing parties were consciously speculating in the "imminent refugee rebellion among the Social Democratic mayors". On December 15, 1994, the summaries also highlighted the fact that "Weiss stands firm on Bosnians' Act: The Bosnians' Act will be passed without amendment on January 12, 1995 when the three right-wing parties' postponement of the third reading expires". Birte Weiss again took advantage of the opportunity to criticise the mayors: "There are great differences between the cards that the municipalities hold when attempting to integrate immigrants. And I hope that the municipalities will carefully consider and improve their efforts in the area of immigrant integration now this debate is over." Torben Lund, the party's political parliamentary spokesman added: "Thorkild Simonsen has a credibility problem in this case and I am surprised by the way in which certain Social Democratic mayors have chosen to discuss the matter." On December 16, 1994, *Det fri Aktuelt* reported that the USA was prepared to accommodate 200 of the Bosnian families that had arrived in Denmark. In the USA, the refugees would be assured a home, education and a job, while the Danish Parliament only discussed their subsequent fate. It was therefore possible to interpret the development of the debate as indicating that the Social Democrats wished to end the month by putting the lid on the issue of discontent within the party.

In the special Friday Column of *Politiken* on December 2, 1994, Torben Krogh managed to squeeze in the re-opened debate under the headline: "When racism turns really nasty". Torben Krogh found that "the statement quoted from the Mayor of Brøndby was a clear-cut example of a manipulative appeal to racial prejudice". The trend continued in the days leading up to Christmas, on December 10, for example, with a contribution to the debate under the headline, "Give refugees something to do. Years of passivity wear people down" and on December 13, "Illegal imprisonment of asylum seekers".

On December 14, 1994, however, *Politiken* stated that the likely arrival of "18,000 new citizens adds fuel to the debate – several mayors are demanding an end to the flow of refugees, claiming that they cannot cope with any more". At this point, the Municipality of Odense announced that the strain was too great. According to the article, a large number of immigrants via family reunifications would have to be added to the original figure of 18,000 over the coming years. Likewise, the protest from Århus was followed up: "Social Democrat Thorkild Simonsen has now also criticised the government for allowing the Bosnians to enter Danish Society. And in a previously unheard of sharp tone. Thorkild Simonsen reacts to the badly balanced *distribution* of refugees in Denmark. It is true that Birte Weiss, the Social Democratic Minister of the Interior, has promised that the Bosnians will be placed outside large towns, and that the local authorities involved will receive financial compensation – but, as Thorkild Simonsen points out, many of the Bosnians will subsequently move into the large towns. And no-one can stop them." It was also stated that the Chairman of the National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark, Liberal Mayor Evan Jensen was advocating a stop to the flow of refugees into Denmark, as, in his opinion, the local authorities could not manage to integrate the 18,000 Bosnians and the other refugees who would be coming to the country in the following years. However, in a commentary in *Politiken* on the same day, Journalist Søren Nielsen rejected the mayors' considerations. "Town Kings' diagnosis mere routine".

In a leading article published the following day, the paper admitted "that it has taken a few days for us at *Politiken* to inform our readers thoroughly about the political upheaval that a number of mayors have caused in the aliens debate. This is not because we, here at the paper, suppress dissenting opinions or do not want to have the widest possible debate on the subject of refugees, immigrants and victims of the war in Bosnia . . . . Our hesitation is due to the fact that there is no sense in the statements made by Kjeld Rasmussen in Brøndby, Per Madsen in Ishøj and, of late, Thorkild Simonsen in Århus." The article noted that it was true that there were socially disadvantaged housing complexes in both Copenhagen, Århus and other Danish cities, but also asked a question as to whether this had anything to do with the fact that there were 18,000 Bosnians in the country living in centres where "they have less available space than in our prisons." The article then noted that in any case, the local authorities had been

provided for financially and that it was therefore nothing less than “unadulterated whining” when the mayors complained, and as the municipal elections were not within sight, the initiative could only be interpreted as “a tasteless attempt to dig even deeper into the state coffers”. There was thus no real reason for “the storm that the mayors have whipped up and which the three right-wing parties have seized upon as a reason for delaying a piece of legislation that Parliament has long since discussed in detail from start to finish”.

In another article that same day, it was also stated that “Denmark has a duty to help refugees”. In fact – due to its commitments to international conventions – Denmark was not free to choose how to act in the area of refugees and immigrants. A number of politicians from the Liberal Party would therefore not be successful in their attempts to prove that Denmark was free to choose its own policy in this area – even though, according to *Politiken*, they had tried. It was also stated that the government felt that it had been “grossly let down” by the Social Democratic mayors who “demand a political show-down on refugee ghettos. The same mayors have repeatedly asked Parliament not to get involved in matters relating to exactly this area.” Torben Lund, the Social Democrats’ political spokesman, noted that the mayors could rest assured that the government was ready to implement a centrally controlled solution to the problems and made it clear that “only respect for the autonomy of the local authorities and their stated will to solve the problems themselves had delayed central involvement”.

During the rest of the month, the “distancing” articles continued in *Politiken*, opposed to stopping the flow of refugees and also refuting the mayors’ criticism.

During the first days of 1995, *Politiken* rounded off the debate. For example, on January 1, 1995, the paper announced that the Social Democratic Prime Minister, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, would give the Danish people “a good New Year’s telling-off . Poul Nyrup attacks hostility to foreigners in New Year speech.”<sup>38</sup> On the same day, the paper published a lengthy contribution to the debate by Knud Vilby, Chairman of the Danish Association for International Co-operation: “Now is the time for composure”. Here, the politicians were encouraged to avoid letting themselves be carried away by what Vilby termed incomplete and manipulative information: “Ever since the Liberal Party Chairman said that integration of the Bosnians risked undermining the popular will to operate a humane

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<sup>38</sup> On January 2, 1995, *Politiken* published the speech itself: “There are only five million people in Denmark. I can well understand that many people are concerned and worried about the future of Denmark in a world dominated by immigration flows. After all, we have so much to lose. But we have both the assets and the strength to tackle this challenge. And think how it would be if the roles were reversed. We need to do our share. It is our duty as people living in a humanitarian society to provide all the support we can. If we do not, then this is a victory for cynicism. The discussion must not flounder on the question of whether there is room in Denmark to accommodate needy refugee families”.

refugee policy, it has become clear that the greatest threat to popular will is incorrect and panic-inducing information from responsible politicians – locally in the municipalities and nationally in Parliament – and, unfortunately, the passivity of a large group of local politicians.”

*Information* published an indirect contribution to the ongoing debate on December 6, 1994 in the form of an article entitled “Set up a refugee republic” by the artist Ingo Gunther. The artist pointed out that nations such as the USA, Canada and Australia had formerly competed earnestly to attract refugees. Now almost all countries – on the basis of short-sighted interests – considered refugees to be a burden.

On December 14, 1994, *Information* commented on the top level political conflicts regarding the refugee question. The standpoint adopted by the Liberal Party was characterised as: “Birthe-Rønn Hornbech’s usual prudishness and Ellemann-Jensen’s insupportable mock concern”. The article continued: “as the former foreign minister says, we must not risk “undermining the popular will for operating a humanitarian refugee policy”. No indeed. Much better to turn people away at the border, which you can also attempt to do by demanding a postponement of the legislation regarding the Bosnians’ long-term asylum.” Furthermore, the article spoke of “the Social Democrats’ own populist regional bigwigs, certain mayors apparently being willing to score cheap points through concern about the refugee question”. On the other hand, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen was praised for being prepared to do battle against this tendency in the party.

In an interview on the same day, the paper gave Thorkild Simonsen the opportunity to elaborate on his points of view, including the opinion that the mayor “has nothing against citizens with unpronounceable foreign names and foreign passports in their pockets ... . But he understands that the Danish population are not keen on seeing an increase in the proportion of their fellow citizens who come from foreign countries. Xenophobia is on the rise.” In particular, the mayor objected to the fact that “when moving (to Århus), 77 per cent of the foreigners arriving from outside the cultural circle of Western Europe chose to set up home in just four council housing complexes. Fifty-nine per cent of these foreigners live in just two of the 28 local communities in Århus.” According to the mayor, this created a ghetto consisting of the least integrated foreigners and the least advantaged Danes. During the interview, Thorkild Simonsen also expressed his opinion that discrimination and common malice towards foreigners among Danes could result in these foreigners being forced to live – as the interviewing journalist put it – “on the outskirts of society”. The mayor himself wanted the Prime Minister to enter the debate by addressing the attitude of the Danish people. The Prime Minister should thus explain to the people exactly what the government had actually done to promote integration. The interview also made it clear that the mayor “regretted a couple of the statements he had made during the past few days. One of these was the remark that the statements that Glistrup

made in the 1970s had been right. During an interview with *Jyllands-Posten*, the journalist introduced Glistrup into the conversation and Simonsen let himself be carried away and answered yes to the question of whether Glistrup was right.”

On December 15, 1994, *Information* reported: “Mayors have good experience with Bosnians”. “Mayors of municipalities that include asylum centres report friendly relations between Danes and Bosnians – but it will be hard to find sufficient housing.” On the same day, the paper also reported on a split between the Liberals and the Conservatives, as the Liberals were contemplating pressing for a referendum if the government changed the status of the Bosnians from temporary residence to permanent asylum: “At Conservative Headquarters, Helge Adam Møller, the party’s political administration spokesman is shaking his head. The Conservatives are not planning for a referendum.”

Finally, in a leading article published on December 16, 1994, the paper distanced itself in particular from *Jyllands-Posten*’s contribution to the debate and from the debate that had been initiated by the mayors and the National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark.

### 3.8 Summary

In a total evaluation of the voluminous newspaper material about refugees in the period from 1983 until the first half of the 1990s it is clear that the editorial attitudes are somewhat less unambiguous than they were found to be with regard to the debate on immigrants. However, a pattern appears, according to which newspapers such as *Politiken* more or less consistently defended the rights of the foreigners in relation to the Danish State throughout the period. This was expressed as early as the time of the first attempts to revise the 1983 Act in the autumn of 1984, and the editorial line held firm during the following two years as to the legislative modifications that were actually introduced in 1985 and 1986. In the same way, throughout the remainder of the period in question, the paper published several articles with a recurring theme, namely that of defending liberal legislation and stressing the humanitarian obligations that Denmark should meet. For example, the arguments chosen included highlighting the fact that the numbers of aliens in Denmark were still only small, stressing that by following the refugee policy it had adopted, Denmark was doing no more than living up to clearly defined international obligations and that failing to meet these obligations would damage Denmark’s reputation abroad.

A similar pattern applies to *Information*, which, throughout the period, published a string of articles defending the legitimacy of lenient legislation. *Det fri Aktuelt* also sought to maintain the 1983 Act and to insist on the civil rights of the foreigners. However, the paper also occasionally carried critical articles from the grass roots of the Social Democratic Party, expressed, for example, by its commentary on the critical report from the party’s Immigration Committee in 1986, which it printed on the front page. At the end of the period in question, the paper

covered in detail the split that had developed within the Social Democrats as a result of the immigrant question.

As regards the three right-wing papers – *Berlingske Tidende*, *Jyllands-Posten* and *Vestkysten* – the picture is less clear-cut. In a paper such as *Berlingske Tidende*, it is possibly a matter of routine to expect that the right-wing government's desire for a revision – i.e. a tightening – of the 1983 Act should be expressed more or less directly via an interview with the then Minister of Justice, Erik Ninn-Hansen, who time and again expressed concern about the new Aliens Act, and who also insisted that a distinction be made between genuine refugees and economic migrants. Various politicians and civil servants also spoke – via the paper – in favour of stricter legislation that could differentiate between these two groups of refugees. However, at the same time, the paper also published many articles pleading the case for Denmark maintaining the 1983 Act in its original form and expressing sympathy for the Iranians' situation, for example. This paper, too, carried a recurring argument, namely that there were not particularly many refugees in Denmark and that Denmark should accept its obvious humanitarian and international obligations.

*Vestkysten* does not deviate appreciably from the picture presented here of *Berlingske Tidende*, and throughout the period, *Jyllands-Posten* – which is, in fact, the paper that consistently carried the most high-profile articles against an open policy on refugees – published articles, including leading articles, which insisted that the rights of the refugees should be upheld. A consistent feature of the right-wing papers' presentation of their opinions was, however, a demand for amendment of the Act itself and the current administration so as to differentiate between economic migrants and genuine refugees. Furthermore, the papers also on numerous occasions stated that many of the refugees were not really refugees at all. Another oft-repeated demand was that criminal aliens who had been convicted of crimes of violence or drug-related offences should be expelled from the country.

During the period under review, the editorial position of *Ekstra Bladet* moved from staunch defence of all refugees and immigrants to an acceptance of the Social Democratic mayors' critical attitude to the immigrant question. The paper even went as far as to claim that certain groups of immigrants deliberately exploited the Danish welfare state. At the end of the period, the editorial team had returned to their previously well-established position of defending the Bosnian refugees while maintaining a generally critical approach to the immigrant question.

## **Appendix A - Description of the newspapers used in the analysis, based on the work of press historian Jette D. Søllinge**

*Aftenbladet*, which was a popular, old-fashioned kind of newspaper, appeared between 1887 and 1959. *Aftenbladet* started as a fighting organ for C. Berg's Liberal fraction, but six months later it became a popular newspaper, retaining its political views, however, until 1891 when it opted for the more vague stance of "democratic" (i.e. with social-liberal leanings). Between 1897 and 1903, the paper was characterised by its editor's, K.P. Korsgaard's, social reforming ideas which among other things were reflected in reprints of excerpts of Marx's and Engels' works. Circulation plummeted, but recovered as the paper from 1903 reverted to the former popular status. From 1919 on the paper was non-partisan. The contents were strongly sensational and entertainment oriented, and, from the 1930s, to an increasing extent sport oriented. Its readers mostly lived in Copenhagen, and were mainly workers.

*Aktuelt* was called *Socialisten* ("The Socialist") when it first appeared in 1872, and from 1874 was known as *Social-Demokraten* ("The Social Democrat"). It took the name *Aktuelt* from 1959, though from 1987-1997 it was called *Det fri Aktuelt* ("The Independent Aktuelt"). The newspaper was discontinued in April 2001. It has from the outset been the paper of the Social Democratic Party. It has always carried a significantly greater proportion of political material than most of the Danish press, and it also tended to draw a less distinct line between news and comment. The paper had increasing difficulty in maintaining its circulation, particularly since the Second World War, because it never followed the other papers in becoming less party-political in outlook. The pattern of circulation has varied considerably over time, depending particularly on the number of different provincial editions published. The readership was concentrated in the lower income groups (skilled and unskilled workers), but from 1950 onwards the paper has also increasingly been read by pensioners and white-collar workers.

*Berlingske Tidende* was established in 1749. The paper was consistently conservative in outlook until 1949, even though the political affiliation never showed strongly. In 1949 the paper declared itself to be independently conservative, with the aim of being the paper of the business community and the bourgeoisie. Today, the paper regularly sells 90% of its print run in the eastern part of Denmark, and largely within urban areas. Readers are mainly independent business people, senior management and higher echelon civil servants.

*Ekstra Bladet* first appeared in 1904 during the Russo-Japanese war under the name *Ekstrablade til Politiken* ("Supplement to *Politiken*"), but it achieved independent status and its new name in 1905. It belongs to the category of tabloid popular press. It was originally politically aligned with the Danish Liberal Party,

and then with the Social Liberals from 1905 to 1954/63. From then on it has been independently social-liberal, and without any specific party loyalty. Since its re-launch in 1963 in particular the paper has been notable for its lack of respect for both authority of any kind and for what it regards as old-fashioned morality and taboos. The contents and journalistic style are marked by sensationalism, with a heavy emphasis on violent death and crime, and also on scandal of all kinds - though the paper has a particular appetite for political or sexual scandal. Circulation was originally concentrated to the Copenhagen area, spreading later to the other large towns, and from the 1970s out to the provinces as well. At first the readership was mainly the Copenhagen middle classes; later the readership became much broader, but with a high proportion of workers and low-level white-collar employees.

*Fyns Tidende* appeared between 1872 and 1979. From 1969, it shared a Sunday edition with *Fyens Stiftstidende*, which was also its owner. The title was partly continued after 1979 as a special page in *Fyens Stiftstidende*, with its own editorial staff until 1989. Politically, the paper was associated with the Liberal Party, in 1890-1910 with the Moderate Liberals. After initial difficulties and political uncertainty, it achieved success with a political Grundtvigian (after Grundtvig, a Danish priest and poet, an early figure head of the folk high school) oriented line within the Moderate Liberals and a hostile attitude to the "European" highbrow Left-wing Liberals. In 1902 and for some years after, *Fyns Tidende* was the biggest paper in the provinces. The paper maintained its position as a politically agenda-setting paper up to the 1950s.

*Information* first appeared in 1945 as a continuation of a news service of the same name, operated by the Resistance during the German occupation. From the outset it was completely independent of party politics, and it has never attempted to align the views of its leader writers. In the early days the newspaper supported Denmark's membership of NATO and held views close to the neo-liberal stance; later during the 1960s, its standpoint was close to that of the "New Left". Until 1969 it was published as an evening paper; as such, and particularly during its first 5-10 years of its existence, it emphasized comment and debate. Later, it increasingly focused on publishing analysis of and background to the news. In the past 2-3 years the emphasis has switched back again to opinion. The content focuses on politics, in particular on foreign politics, and on culture. Readers are mainly highly educated.

*Jyllands-Posten* was first published in Århus in 1871 as a newspaper for the whole of Jutland. A supporter of the Conservative Party from 1877-1938, the paper then switched to being independently bourgeois. It has consistently kept a bourgeois liberal line and has been critical of centralized government, powerful organizations, and social welfare authorities. In 1969 the paper changed its name to *Morgenavisen Jyllands-Posten* ("The Morning Paper Jyllands-Posten") and made a push for sales in eastern Denmark, thus becoming a truly national paper.

*Politiken* first appeared in 1884 and was at first linked to radical circles in the Danish Liberal Party (the so-called “European” Liberals). In 1905 it formally espoused the cause of the Social-Liberal Party, and in 1970 the paper declared itself to be “independently social-liberal”. The newspaper aims at being culturally oriented, and cultivates an image as the paper for intellectuals. Half the provincial sales fall in Zealand and Lolland-Falster. The readership represents a wide range in socio-demographic terms, but is primarily urban. The paper is increasingly read by white-collar employees.

*Vestkysten* (Esbjerg) was founded in 1918 through the merger of two small local papers. Its circulation increased rapidly. The paper was a notable mouthpiece for the Danish Liberal Party, and after 1950 it was the party’s most important press supporter. In January of 1991 the paper amalgated with the conservative *Jydske Tidende* to form *Jydske Vestkysten*, an independent liberal paper and the only daily covering the whole of southern Jutland (the area south of Varde/Kolding).

Appendix table 5.1 gives the circulation figures for the major of these papers:

Appendix Table 5.1. Daily circulation figures for the national newspapers used in the analysis. Thousands.

	Berlingske Tidende	Politiken	Aktuelt	Informa- tion	Ekstra Bladet	Jyllands- Posten	Vestkysten
1963	*171.0	137.0	41.0	21.5	79.2	61.9	44.1
1973	146.0	121.0	53.0	22.7	245.0	79.2	54.0
1983	118.0	149.8	54.6	32.9	247.7	102.2	55.8
1993	134.4	152.0	41.3	24.4	182.4	145.6	**96.2

Source: Søllinge og Thomsen, 1991. The figures for 1993 have been calculated by Jette D. Søllinge from *Dansk Oplagsstatistik*.

Notes:

\* Morning edition

\*\* *Jydske Vestkysten*



## **Appendix B - Some definitions**

The term “foreigners in Denmark” – by which in the book is meant persons of foreign origin who reside in Denmark – requires further clarification.

In the study, “foreigners” includes both seasonal workers, actual immigrants and refugees. Also included are “descendants” as defined by Statistics Denmark: “Descendants are defined as persons who are born in Denmark to parents who are either immigrants or descendants. If a person is born in Denmark, but both parents are unknown, and the person is a foreign national, this person is also defined as a descendant”. Thus, the analysis will also include a debate about second- or third-generation immigrants where such a debate has been identified.

The term "Aliens" covers foreigners in the legal sense of people of nationality other than Danish.

The term “debate” is a significant element in the study’s title. The basic meaning of the term is a more or less direct dialogue/contrast of opinion between one or more individuals (debaters), but it can also be interpreted in a broader sense as “expressions of opinion”, reports of political meetings, and parliamentary debates. The broader meaning has been chosen in this analysis, and the debate is thus seen as expressions of opinion in this wider sense regarding “foreigners” as defined above.

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