



HUMANITY  
IN ACTION

A SELECTION OF REPORTS OF  
THE 2004 FELLOWS  
IN DENMARK, GERMANY AND THE NETHERLANDS

DECEMBER 2004

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American Program Board  
Danish Executive Board  
Danish Planning Board  
Dutch Advisory Board  
German Executive Board  
German Planning Board / Friends of HIA Germany  
American Mentors  
American Senior Fellows  
HIA Consortium of Academic Institutions  
Contributors



## 2004 HIA Fellows

(in alphabetical order)

### 2004 American Fellows

Liza Anderson (Swarthmore College)  
 Ebone Bishop (Brandeis University)  
 Elizabeth Breese (Wellesley College)  
 Julie Brown (Hunter College)  
 Christopher Caver (University of South Carolina)  
 Nita Colaco (Barnard College)  
 Mihailis Diamantis (Amherst College)  
 Mary Diebold (University of Missouri)  
 Nicholas Farrell (Colorado College)  
 Marta Galecki (University of Michigan)  
 Matthew Haney (University of California, Berkeley)  
 Christopher Hanson (Yale University)  
 Alissa King (Amherst College)  
 Ylber Kusari (Duquesne University)  
 David Lau (Yale University)  
 Charles Lockwood (Yale University)  
 Jonathan Miner (Wheaton College)  
 Fatimah Muhammad (University of Pennsylvania)  
 Josephine Ngo (University of Iowa)  
 Nilakshi Parndigamage (Yale University)  
 Ali Rosof (Johns Hopkins)  
 Jesse Salazar (University of Pennsylvania)  
 Caitlin Scholl (Reed College)  
 Kathleen Semanski (Boston University)  
 Brian Stout (Amherst College)  
 Samuel Walker (Yale University)  
 Tenzin Wangmo (Berea College)  
 Kan Yan (University of Texas at Austin)  
 Alexander Zevin (Brown University)

### 2004 Danish Fellows

Lene Aggernæs (Copenhagen University)  
 Solvej Berlau (Roskilde University)  
 Olga Louise Ege (Roskilde University)  
 Katrina Feilberg (Roskilde University)  
 Mikaela von Freiesleben (Roskilde University)  
 Mozhdeh Ghasemiyani (Århus University)  
 Kalle Kjær Kristensen (Roskilde University)  
 Mads Aarøe Mathiesen (Sussex University)  
 Gedske Marie Bruun Messell (Roskilde University & Copenhagen University)  
 Tine Munch Pedersen (Århus University & Roskilde University)

### 2004 Dutch Fellows

Anass Bendriff (University of Tilburg)  
 Jacqueline Bouscher (University of Amsterdam)  
 Linda Y.W. Butt (University of Leiden)  
 Elias Fels (University of Amsterdam)  
 Nailah Fernando (University of Tilburg)  
 Aldo de Pape (University of Utrecht)  
 Marije Roos (University of Amsterdam)  
 Kenza Tarqaat (University of Utrecht)  
 Izalina Tavares (University of Rotterdam)  
 Demet Yazililas (University of Nijmegen)

### 2004 German Fellows

Dania Iskenius (Albert-Ludwigs-University, Freiburg)  
 Kirsten Schüttler (Albert-Ludwigs-University, Freiburg)  
 Open University of Hagen)  
 Ruth Streicher (Freie Universität Berlin)  
 Sandra Engelhardt (University of Augsburg)  
 Franziska Exeler (Humboldt-Universität, Berlin)  
 Armin Huhn (Albert-Ludwigs-University, Freiburg)  
 Jan Henrik Fahlbusch (University of Erfurt)  
 Julian Junk (University of Constance)  
 Marius Osswald (University of Constance)  
 Ingo Schiermeyer (University of Constance)

## Introduction: Executive Director

Since founding Humanity in Action seven years ago, we have worked hard to define our objectives and mission. We employ the language of broad principles and values claimed by the human rights movement. Specifically, through educational programs and a vital international network—the foundations for action—we are committed to the protection of vulnerable minorities. And yet, somehow we—and I mean the Boards, Project Directors, Senior Fellows and 2004 Fellows—are constantly groping to find a succinct and accurate expression of our purpose and enterprise. The complexities surrounding HIA's programs and ambitions make it hard to "market" HIA. But it is precisely those complexities that reflect the vital challenge of HIA issues and the richness of personal interactions and commitments.

In Berlin, one Senior Fellow challenged the 2004 Fellows, Board members in attendance and Project Directors to describe HIA in just a few sentences. We fumbled with frustration. In a letter to Neil Karbank, the Chair of the HIA Board of Directors, one of the 2004 Fellows expressed both the need and the difficulty in regard to definition:

The events of the past month are nearly indescribable. At home or abroad, when asked about the nature of Humanity in Action, I fumble for a brief, encapsulated definition; one that will do justice, in some way, to the immensity and ambition of the academic and social exchange that I experienced....

Eyes glaze over, heads nod listlessly, but still I try. We study human rights, religious, ethnic and political minorities in one of three European countries. We begin by examining the Holocaust in which a minority was programmatically dehumanized and then exterminated. This is the point at which our very notion of human rights and international law was formulated and enshrined in the United Nations, the Convention on Human Rights, the Nuremberg Trials. Here is the origin of the word genocide itself. How does this history affect immigration and civil rights in the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany today? Are there lessons to be learnt? What are the pressing human rights issues in these countries today?

Responsible people need to face these urgent questions at a time when Europe may be moving slowly, albeit at different rates in each country, into the eye of a perfect storm. There are a multiplicity of causes: declining populations of so-called traditional Danish, Dutch and German and French peoples; hugely expensive social welfare systems; aging populations; weak political, educational and religious leadership; the clash

of values, among the traditional populations and those who started to live in Europe from the 1960s and their progeny, relating to religion and secularism, family life, sexual orientation, gender roles, employment, educational opportunities, residential segregation, poverty and international issues, mainly taking place in the Middle East and mainly centered around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that ignites political activism in European countries.

"The global epidemic of intergroup conflict," Drs. David and Beatrix Hamburg wrote, "with all its explosive mixture of ethnic, religious, and national strivings, is badly in need of illumination. People everywhere need to understand why we behave as we do, what dangerous legacy we carry with us, and what we can do about it to convert fear to hope." The reports in this volume examine some of the legacies, as well as ethnic and religious conflicts that incite fear among many people, but engender hope among others. These 2004 essays illuminate issues, attitudes, policies, behaviors and values in regard to the presence of minorities in Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands. The writings constitute a call for concern and involvement in dealing with growing ethnic, religious and national tensions.

The Holocaust is a critical part of that legacy and a basic historic reference for HIA inquiries. We constantly look to that history to understand the actions of perpetrators, victims, resisters and bystanders; to inform current issues; and to help us guard our democratic values and institutions. One guide is Christabel Bielenberg, an English woman married to a German lawyer, who lived in Berlin in the early 1930s. She and her husband faced agonizing personal challenges as they choose to befriend those who opposed Hitler's policies. In *The Past is Myself*, she wrote about an incident when SS thugs attacked some Jews in a restaurant. Fortunately, they escaped but they were not the only ones. Other patrons simply fled the scene to avoid an ugly tempest. "It was just another incident," she recalled, "and it was not the picture of the drunken buffoons in brown shirts which stuck in my mind, for they were a sight we had got used to; it was rather the hurried scrambling to depart...the sudden void. It was not the agitation but the acquiescence that shocked me...."

If one listens closely, as we do in HIA, in this time of growing suspicions and extremism, one can discern the tremors of agitation and the silence of acquiescence. HIA's mission is to resist both. Meeting this challenge, the organization has developed a strong reputation for facing urgent minority issues—for doing important work and attracting impressive

Fellows, lecturers and supporters. HIA has established a unique position through its core programs, internships, outreach projects and international networks. Enhanced recognition is due, in part, to the high quality of its programs and Fellows but also, in part, to the increasing dismay in Europe over the deteriorating relationships between the minority and majority populations. From last year to this, there is a palpable difference in attitudes—increased fears, suspicions and tensions among immigrants, their children and grandchildren and the host societies. Cornelia Schmalz Jacobsen, Chair of the German Executive Board, told the Fellows “the immigration process in Germany has been a story of misunderstanding, misjudgment and the denial of reality.” Ed van Thijn, Chair of the Dutch Program Board, spoke of the immense gulf between the Dutch and Muslims in the Netherlands. “It looks,” he reluctantly concluded, “as if the clash of civilizations...is overmastering us, based on stereotypes and prejudices from both sides.” No European country is immune from the pernicious intersection of xenophobia, Muslim challenges to European values and anti-Semitism.

HIA has assumed the responsibility of engaging American and European university students in these critical issues: to promote their knowledge, understanding and involvement in fighting prejudice and discrimination. It is an increasingly difficult and critical challenge as the tensions within the societies at large penetrate the diverse group of HIA Fellows. A particularly heavy burden, calling for fortitude and constant explanations, is placed upon the ethnic, racial and religious minorities in the programs. Within the HIA programs themselves, we must assume the responsibility of greater sensitivity and structural support to sustain those who have experienced the traumas of warfare, political violence and discrimination.

I believe that the minority issues in Europe—anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and Muslim and Arab hatred of Western societies—will get graver in the years ahead. Thus, the need for sustaining the high quality of the programs, enhancing the interaction of Fellows from many different backgrounds, HIA's vital network of board members, Fellows, Senior Fellows and financial supporters and enriching and expanding the programs in ambitious ways to meet the urgent challenges of our times. My gratitude to all of those who help us in these critical endeavours.

Judith S. Goldstein

## **Introductions: European Project Directors**

### **HIA Germany**

As a young and growing organization HIA Germany draws increasing attention, interest and support from various sides. Its intellectual growth is mainly due to ever-closer relations with first class experts and speakers in the field of human and minority rights as well as close links with institutions in the field.

This year's program was special, which was mainly due to 20 talented, ambitious and imaginative students, but also to a program that found the right mixture between various issues and institutions. The 2004 program was redesigned and reshaped in numerous ways: the strong historical focus which the program had in 2002 and 2003 was cut back to a certain extent. As a consequence, more contemporary issues were included in response to what Fellows had asked for in 2002 and 2003. The topics were also directed more towards questions of human rights whereas in the previous years minority rights had dominated the program.

Moreover, the framework of the program was modified to make it more interactive. For the first time, the Fellows themselves participated in the program as presenters and discussants: in the beginning of the program, the 10 German Fellows gave talks on German history, politics, society and culture. The American students were asked to comment on these presentations and moderate the following discussion. Thus, a common starting point was established which created a good platform for the series of lectures and site visits. Moreover, these initial presentations contributed right from the beginning to forging a cohesive group out of 20 individuals.

In conclusion we as project directors are inclined to say that an almost ideal mix in of the program was found in 2004. The program not only provided much stimulation for the students and their research projects, but also challenged the project directors in a very positive way. We owe great thanks to all the speakers and institutions which offered extensive support to the Fellows during the program, in particular during the research period.

Rainer Ohliger  
Antje Scheidler  
Project Directors, Germany

### **HIA The Netherlands**

What happens when you put a group together consisting of students with Hispanic roots, Asian, African, African-American, Caribbean, Turkish, Jewish, Canadian, Tibetan, Kosovar and Arab? Students who were brought up in the Netherlands, the Caribbean, North Africa, the Balkans, India and the United States? This was the challenge facing the Dutch program coordinators. The answer is: you create a learning environment that is even more intense than the already intense program as it was in former years. A learning environment that was characterized by respect for each other's opinions but where the participants in the experience were also confronted with their own preconceptions.

The Fellows were impressive, because in the course of five weeks they learned to work together, to respect each other and to appreciate each other. And doing so, they discussed crucial issues in Dutch society. However, the real challenge for these students has only just started. What will they do with everything they learned in those five weeks in June 2004? How will they apply their experiences in the rest of their lives? Many speakers emphasized the individual responsibility of the Fellows. Let's hope that the Fellows will carry with them the sense that an individual can make a difference. And let us hope they will eventually be in positions where their decisions affect the lives of other people in the most positive sense.

Anna Timmerman  
Marcel Oomen  
Project Directors, The Netherlands

## **HIA Denmark**

The Humanity In Action 2004 Copenhagen program sought to create a red line between the lessons of yesterday, the problems of today and the challenges of tomorrow. This was reflected in the lectures and discussions of the first three weeks. We asked this year's Fellows to be bold and imaginative in their own examinations of these issues, and when writing their reports. If some kind of answer presented itself in the course of their research, the Fellows were asked to pause and evaluate it. If no answers were to be found, they were asked to find out why, and perhaps come up with answers themselves.

The result, as you will find in the Danish reports, cover a wide span within these guidelines. In some instances, Fellows have ventured far and wide in an effort to understand the mechanisms and motivations of fundamentalist groups, Nazi-sympathizers or political extremists. In other cases, the travel was mainly inwards, searching within themselves or even the other Fellows on the program. Both directions have been fruitful in terms of asking questions in new ways or finding surprising answers to difficult long-term questions.

We hope reading these reports will be as rewarding an experience for anyone, as we witnessed them in the making.

Jesper Packert Pedersen  
Project Director , Denmark  
Michael Kunichika, HIA Intern



## Humanity in Action Protecting Minorities—Improving Human Rights

The Humanity In Action (HIA) Foundation sponsors an integrated set of educational programs for outstanding universities students and post-graduates in the United States, Denmark, Germany, and The Netherlands. Through its core education programs and internships, the Foundation works to fulfill its mission to engage student leaders in the study and work of human rights.

Working with a consortium of American and European universities and in cooperation with the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., HIA seeks to identify university students committed to the democratic goal of protecting vulnerable minorities, inspire these students to become leaders, fulfill their civic responsibilities and encourage their communities to do the same.

HIA believes that an important test of a genuine democracy is how it treats its racial, ethnic and religious minorities, and that the commitment to democratic values and the protection of minorities cannot be taken for granted in the United States and Europe.

HIA integrates current minority issues with the history of World War II and the Holocaust. The programs involve leaders of human rights organizations, politics, diplomacy, philanthropy, journalism, and science.

Specifically, HIA seeks to:

- Explore the relationship of minority/majority issues to human rights;
- Reinforce the commitment of the HIA Fellows to the improvement of human rights and especially the protection of vulnerable minorities;
- Encourage US and European students to become leaders in these areas;
- Strengthen their commitment to democratic values; and
- Foster a network of people with similar concerns and commitments.

HIA focuses on three interrelated areas of historic and contemporary importance:

- Examples of resistance to the Holocaust;
- development of international human rights institutions and doctrines through new standards, rules and procedures after World War II and the Holocaust; and
- current human rights and minority issues in Denmark, The Netherlands, Germany, and the United States.

The programs involve a total of 60 university students, 30

from the United States and ten each from Denmark, The Netherlands, and Germany. The six-week programs run simultaneously in Copenhagen, Amsterdam, and Berlin from late May until early July. They are intellectually and socially rigorous, intense and demanding. They do not duplicate the familiar format of a college course. They consist of lectures and seminars, site visits, fieldwork and written reports by teams of American and European Fellows. Upon completion of the programs in Europe, HIA presents them on the HIA website and in print.

Before heading to Europe, the American Fellows have already completed three days of seminars at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, while the European Fellows visit the Holocaust Museum and New York City in the fall each year, focusing on the study of American minority issues.

In addition to the core programs, HIA provides 10 annual internships for Danish, Dutch and German HIHA Fellows in Washington, D.C for four months through the Lantos/HIA Capitol Hill Internship Program. Since the summer of 2002, HIA Fellows have also served as interns in the office of the prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), at The Hague, the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, the Office of the High Representative, Sarajevo, the Danish Center for Human Rights, the German Association for Foreign Policy and Federal Agency for Political Education. Starting in the spring of 2005, HIA will organize 10 internships at the European Parliament in Brussels. HIA also provides internships to enhance its own organizational activities.

The success of HIA's programs is measured by the engagement of the Fellows, lecturers, board members, and associated institutions in the issues raised. It is also measured by the continuing involvement of the Fellows with each other and HIA, their outreach programs, the evidence of leadership roles and in their subsequent works in national and international organizations concerned with minority issues and human rights.

HIA assumes that effective models of leadership are crucial for students but that such models are not always easy to find. Student interaction with accomplished people is desirable but also not always easy to find. By its emphasis on mutual obligation, the interaction of students and older generations, and the mixing of history and present challenges, HIA is nurturing an international community of knowledgeable and committed people whose goal is to protect minorities and improve human rights.

HIA is guided by its New York-based Board of Directors and Advisory Board as well as the Planning and Executive Boards in Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands.

HIA pays most of the expenses of all the Fellows in the core programs to enable the Foundation to select its Fellows solely on the basis of merit.

In 2005 the core programs in Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands will include eight university students from Eastern Europe. In the summer of 2006, HIA will start a core program in France.

**In a departure from previous publications, HIA presents a selection of six reports among those written by the 2004 American, Danish, Dutch and German Fellows.**

**All reports, listed below, can be found in their entirety on the HIA website: [www.humanityinaction.org](http://www.humanityinaction.org)**

**Germany**

The Victim's Vicious Cycle: The Trauma of Torture and Seeking Asylum in Germany  
Marta Galecki and Ruth Streicher

Breaking the Silence: An Honest Discussion About Illegal Immigration to Germany  
Armin Huhn, Charles Lockwood and Kathleen Semanski

"I think I Know the Way!"  
A Closer Look at Berlin's Bilingual Education System for Children of Turkish Origin.  
Nilakshi Parndigamage and Ingo Schiermeyer

Integration Through Education?  
Limits and Possibilities of Education Policy Concerning Immigrants  
Kirsten Schüttler and Kan Yan

Fighting the Mainstream "88": Opposing Right-Wing Youth Culture  
Mihailis Diamantis and Franziska Exeler

Towards the 'Renationalization' of Historical Memory?  
Tendencies of Commemoration Practices in Contemporary Germany  
Jan Henrik Fahlbusch and Alissa King

Compensating Historical Injustice: More Than Just Money  
Julian Junk and Jonathan M. Miner

Intercultural Challenges for 'Citizens in Uniform'  
Elizabeth Breese and Marius Osswald

Facing the Past to Liberate the Future: Colonial Africa in the German Mind  
Elizabeth Diebold, Sandra Engelhardt and Dania Iskenius

**The Netherlands**

Making "Never Again" a Reality: Lessons from the Dutch Resistance in the Second World War  
Nailah Fernando and Samuel Walker

Western Mosques or Mosques in the West. Why Do We Believe Them?  
Aldo de Pape and Alexander Zevin

The Politicization of the Headscarf in The Netherlands  
Anass Bendrif and Matthew Haney

Silence Within a World of Words: Why it Took Almost Fifty Years After the Holocaust for 'Hidden Children' to Speak Out  
Josephine Ngo and Marije Roos

Too Much to Handle or Just Not Important Enough?  
Mental Health Care for War Refugees in Asylum Seeking Centres in The Netherlands  
Elias Fels and Ylber Kusari

Culture Clash: Designing Vaginas, FGM, and Dutch Policy  
Jacqueline Bouscher and Ali Rosof

What's in a Name: The Classification of Non-Native Dutch People  
Ebene Bishop and Kenza Tarqaat  
Turkish and Kurdish Identity and Nationalism in The Netherlands  
Demet Yazlita and Tenzin Wangmo

Black Pete: Analyzing a Racialized Dutch Tradition Through the History of Western Creations of Stereotypes of Black Peoples  
Julie Brown and Izalina Tavares

Lifting the Ban: The "Oldest Profession" Becomes the Newest Market Sector  
Linda Butt and Jesse Salazar

**Denmark**

Fighting for the Flag: Danish Identity and National Symbolism  
Katrina Feilberg, Gedeske Marie Bruun Messell and Brian Stout

Finding a Way Home: Mozhddeh's Story  
Nita Colaço and Mikaela von Freiesleben

Straight Outta Mjølnerparken?  
David Lau and Mads Aarøe Mathiesen

Alleged Best Intentions: A Drama!  
Lene Aggernaes and Fatmiah Mohammad

Beyond the Alienation Hypothesis: Muslim Minorities in/on the Danish Media  
Mozhddeh Ghasemiyani and Caitlin Scholl

The Religious/Secular Divide: The Danish Church as Mediator?  
Liza Anderson and Tine Munch Pedersen

Tolerance of Religious Absolutism in Secular Society: The Case of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark  
Martin Caver and Olga Ege

Integrating Turkey: The Danish Debate  
Nicholas Farrell and Kalle Kristensen

Love Thy Neighbor: Danish Society, Individual Responsibility, and the Presence of Neo-Nazism  
Solvej B. Berlau and Christopher Beck-Hanson

# Making “Never Again” a Reality: Lessons from the Dutch Resistance in the Second World War

Nailah Fernando and Samuel Walker

*“If we are not careful, our fear of the immigrant will result in massive racial aggression.”*

*“The plan to issue ‘vignettes,’ stickers, to all non-Dutch people residing in the Netherlands on which their level of ‘inburgering’ (naturalization) will be indicated looks suspiciously like the Star of David that the Nazis forced the Jews to wear in World War II.”*

*“The deportation of more than 25,000 asylum seekers who have been living in the Netherlands for years...”*

*“Every genocide starts with stigmatizing registration and expulsion in groups.”*

These are just a few lines coming out of the heated debate in the Dutch media concerning integration, immigration, and asylum policies in the Netherlands. We think that they reflect an alarming rise in xenophobia and racism in the Netherlands, a trend that is slowly turning into widespread intolerance fueled by assailing fear.

About seventy years ago a specific minority group in Europe was gradually experiencing increasing discrimination: the Jews. Unfortunately, we all know the fate that awaited them during the Second World War. In the aftermath of the war much has been written about the roles of different groups involved in the terrible tragedy of the Holocaust: the perpetrators, the collaborators, the victims, and the resistance fighters. The main question we have asked is: What makes people commit such horrible acts - how did it happen? In exploring this issue, we seem to have found a dark recess of human nature within all of us. In that vein, some people have also written about the largest group of all: the bystanders. As Elie Wiesel has put it:

“I’ve always believed this: the opposite of love is not hate but indifference. And I also believe that the opposite of knowledge is not ignorance but indifference. The opposite of hope is not hopelessness but indifference. The opposite of life is not death but indifference toward the killing of others... In this tragedy, there were three roles: the murderer, the victim, and the bystander. Without the bystander, the murderer could never have victimized so many people.”

Because the bystander plays such a crucial role in the development of hatred, discrimination, and genocide, it is also crucial to understand how indifference is transformed into action.

Bystanders must become members of a fourth group that Wiesel seems to omit, perhaps because there were too few of them: the resisters.

Why do or don’t people resist, and, more fundamentally, what is resistance in the first place? These questions have seemingly received little attention yet are perhaps more important to us now than they have been in many decades. Indeed, in recent years, it has become increasingly easy to compare the current societal attitudes regarding minorities with the prevalence of intolerance before the Second World War. We may not all agree on whether this comparison is just but, considering the fact that in 1932 few could have imagined the Holocaust, we think that in trying to make “never again” a reality we have to be on guard, always. The only way to halt the repetitive cycle of genocide that continues today, such as in Sudan as we are writing this article, is if bystanders stand up against injustice. To that end, we want to understand better resistance. This paper presents and analyzes the views of historians, former Dutch resistance members, and survivors of the Holocaust on defining and explaining resistance in the Second World War, and it applies this analysis towards understanding how to fight against the injustices of today.

## What is Resistance?

In order to talk about resistance, it is first of all important to define what it is. Scholars and former resistance members often seem to differ on this issue. Professor Doctor Johannes Houwink ten Cate, Director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the University of Amsterdam, offers the two most commonly held definitions among academics. In the case of a totalitarian government, such as the Nazi regime that occupied Holland in WWII, resistance can be defined as anything that is contrary to the declared aim of government policy, no matter how small, because the state purports to control all aspects of society including individual behavior. A second definition labels as resistance whatever the occupying force considers to be resistance. Both leave room for a wide variety of activities in the private and public spheres of society, from simply listening to Radio Oranje, a station transmitted by BBC and operated by the Dutch government-in-exile from London, to publishing an underground newspaper.

Former resistance fighters themselves, on the other hand, tend to use the word “resistance” sparingly. Bill Minco, a former member of the resistance group the Geuzen, sees resistance mainly as actively risking your life to fight the occupier in order to help others: “You risk your life for the good thing, to fight the enemy. That is resistance.” On the other hand, Rutger

Matthijssen, a member of the resistance group of Geert Lubberhuizen who tried to find hiding places for Jewish children, asserts, "You cannot say resistance is defined in a certain way. There are different intensities. It is more of a mentality."

### **Resistance with a Small 'r': The Degrees of Resistance**

The complexities of defining resistance become apparent when analyzing situations that question our ability to categorize activities easily. For example, early in the occupation the Germans, with help from the Dutch Nazi party (the Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging, or NSB), created a charitable organization called Winterhulp ("Winter Relief") ostensibly to offer help for 'needy Dutch citizens.' Despite the fact that outwardly the NSB made every effort to make Winterhulp appear as though it were an impartial organization, the Dutch people rightly saw it as a propaganda arm of the oppressor: it received very few contributions. The Verzetsmuseum (Resistance Museum) in Amsterdam presents this as a prominent act of "passive resistance."

Bill Minco says simply, though, "Passive is not resistance." Minco understands resistance as an undertaking that requires, at the very least, concrete action. Sabotage and espionage clearly fit this description. But simply not contributing to a Nazi charity, it seems, can hardly be called resistance. If such a choice is not resistance, then what is it? For example, how do we categorize people who knew of Jewish people in hiding but did not betray them? Mr. Matthijssen tells of his group's efforts to smuggle children onto trams and away to safety. Without the silence of the rest of the passengers, such rescues would not have been possible. "It was not Resistance with a big R, perhaps, but it helped. It is not nothing. We needed that help."

Indeed, the phenomenon of "not-betraying" blurs the line between resister and bystander. Mr. Matthijssen insists that without the tacit co-operation of many Dutch people, the active resistance work that he participated in would not have been possible. Frieda Menco, who was a hidden child until 1944 and an Auschwitz survivor, calls this tacit loyalty "decency" and not resistance.

To the authors, "not-betraying," however, is not always positive. To be sure, many who did not betray the resistance were loyal to the cause. But we should be aware that the Nazis also exploited the silence that resistance members relied upon. The same dynamic that may have kept the neighbor quiet about the hidden Jews next door may also have allowed him or her to sit and watch as that same family was taken away to be deported. In both cases, neither resistance nor oppression would have been possible without the lack of action on the part of the bystanders. To the authors, it seems that "passive resistance" can also be indifference.

### **Why Resist? The Problem of Motive**

Resistance is often spoken of in noble terms as a valiant fight

for the right cause. People resist for a variety of motives, though, sometimes clear but often murky. Often the cause itself is morally dubious. Terrorists in Iraq today, for example, could easily be labeled as resisters to the American occupation. More interesting than that debate academically is the fact that a large variety of motives may propel people to join the same righteous resistance movements. Resistance in Holland during the Second World War, for example, was not confined to any particular political or ideological group.

### **Ideological or Political Motives**

Dr. Houwink ten Cate explains how the pillarization of Dutch society led to a diversity of resistance motives. At the time, roughly 80% of Dutch society, he says, was organized as either Catholic or Protestant. It was a deeply religious society and the calls of various priests and ministers to resist were no doubt an important motivating factor. The Verzetsmuseum (Resistance Museum) in Amsterdam presents, in literal fashion, the four "pillars" of resistance (Socialists, Catholics, Liberals, and Protestants), which mirror the pillarization of Dutch society at the time. The Communists in particular represented an ideological group whose political goals differed greatly from the rest of the Dutch resistance. Despite ideological divisions such as these, though, there was extensive collaboration between all types of resisters. Mr. Matthijssen said his group worked with Communists and others but that they "didn't talk politics. There was only one enemy: the Germans." The differences between them, he says, were of "minor importance" when compared to the struggle at hand. Similarly, Ronnie Goldstein, a former resistance member who also helped to hide Jewish children, says that people rarely asked why someone chose to resist.

Bill Minco often advises young people that "being against something is not the same as fighting injustice... Keep in mind that you can only fight against something if you know what you are fighting for." Resisters ultimately band together because they share an ideology against something, and difficult times force them to set their differences aside. Still, in considering resistance today and in the past we should not forget what people are fighting for. In the aftermath of conflict, this can be especially important.

### **Psychological Motives**

Their personal ideological motives aside, people became resisters for various psychological reasons. Believing in a cause is a far cry from fighting for it, and the various reasons for which people joined the resistance shed light not only on the topic at hand but also human nature.

The first and most straightforward group who resisted were those who decided that they would stand up to Nazi oppression simply because they would not take it – they decided to fight injustice. These were the type of people, Bill Minco says, who simply "could not do it any other way." Minco had heard from his uncle, who lived in Germany until 1938, about the treatment of the Jews there. Moreover, on May 10, 1940 (the

day of the Dutch surrender), his hometown of Rotterdam was bombed and 800 people were killed. As he stood on a high building on his street watching the Luftwaffe fly low over the city center, "I decided that I had to do something. I was going to fight back." Mr. Matthijssen, on the other hand, admits that he may not have joined the resistance had he not been approached by someone who wanted his help hiding Jewish children because his apartment happened to be near the Utrecht train station. This simple request launched Matthijssen's five years of ardent resistance work. Indeed, according to Ronnie Goldstein, many joined the resistance for the simple reason that they had been approached and their assistance requested. If more had been asked, she contends, more would have resisted, though "not by much."

There were also those who were simply looking for adventure, who did not make a principled choice. Some, in the case of families hiding Jews, even resisted for money. A family who demanded payment for their aid hid Frieda Menco. "You didn't have to be nice to resist. When you do good things in life, it doesn't always mean that you have a good character," she says.

The status of the war also had much to do with resistance support. The Battle of Stalingrad, in August 1942, was a major turning point in the occupation of Holland. Those who had been watching from the sidelines, receiving only bad news about the Allies up until that point, suddenly began to realize that Germany might lose the war. In that period many joined the resistance. When Canadian forces finally liberated the south Netherlands in September 1944, all of a sudden everyone was in the resistance. Among some resistance members these people were called "the September artists."

So, while resistance was driven by a variety of motives, the resistance as a whole was celebrated after the war as a mass movement. As Frank Bovenkerk has written, after the war "the dominant moral classification was into two categories, good and bad or right and wrong." But, as has been demonstrated, there were a multitude of shades of gray in between these extremes. Even if one can define resistance activities themselves, one still has to grapple with the problem of motive. How should we view those who resisted for ulterior, perhaps selfish, perhaps unsavory, motives? As Bill Minco points out, the Communists at the time were ostensibly fighting against the Nazis for an "equally inhuman system," that of Josef Stalin. Should they be held in as high esteem as other resisters? Yet they did help to overthrow Nazism in oppressed countries all over Europe, and many did this out of a yearning for equality or better rights for workers.

Looking back on the family that hid her for money, Frieda Menco considers, "If we would have survived until the end of the war by staying in hiding, they would have been the first we thanked – we would have seen them as the ones who saved our lives. Yet in fact, they were terrible people." Though this may be one story out of many, it illustrates that resistance did

not always result out of noble motives. The word "resistance" cannot always be equated with morality, even if for the right cause. The actual doing of good things may be of the utmost importance, but we should not forget how and why people become resisters.

### **When to Resist?**

Particularly salient is the question of when one should begin to become a resister. It was a choice that many made too late – in regard to many Jews, it was a fatal mistake.

Mr. Matthijssen illustrates this difficult choice with an example. At the end of 1940, Jewish professors in universities all over Holland were fired. Students at Leiden and Delft went on strike, prompting the permanent closing of the former. Matthijssen says this was a good principled stand, but it was impractical. Those on strike immediately became unemployed and thus qualified for forced labor in Germany. Many of the strikers even ended up going to school at Utrecht rather than staying unemployed. Matthijssen says many decided to wait for the right moment to make an outright stand. As he says, "One of the lessons we can learn from this early period is that it is very difficult to be principled because you have to pay for it. The future is very uncertain and so you are always postponing decisions. It is a difficult balance."

Bill Minco's group was one of the earliest to resist the Germans actively, conducting sabotage and espionage throughout 1940, particularly in Rotterdam and nearby towns, and publishing the first illegal pamphlets. In January 1941, though, the Geuzen was betrayed and the Germans arrested Minco and 18 of his group. Fifteen Geuzen were shot on March 13, 1941, but Minco and two others had their death sentences commuted because they were minors. He spent the rest of the war in several prisons and camps, including Mauthausen, Auschwitz, and finally Dachau. "What the Geuzen did in 1940 had no effect on the enemy," Minco says. "What's important is that they did it, and early on." To Minco, the Geuzen's valiant early stand laid the moral foundation for resistance work later in the war.

Both Minco's and Matthijssen's stories demonstrate the difficult balancing act involved in resistance work. Do too much too early and you may be caught – wait too long, and it may be too little, too late. The Jews, for example, registered themselves in droves and held out hope that "labor in the East" meant just that. They did not resist the request of the occupier to register themselves. Being an illegal (unregistered) Jew could mean severe punishment. Perhaps compromising by registering, they may have thought, could ease the burden of oppression. In the end, though, as Minco says, "The Dutch people let the Jews go. But the Jews also let themselves go."

Indeed, in general it would seem that most people chose to resist too late. Minco speaks of the "September artists," those who resisted only when Holland was on the verge of liberation, and Matthijssen refers to those who were constantly cal-

culating the Allies' chances of victory, most of them choosing sides only after Stalingrad. Minco and Mathijssen, who had both joined the resistance early on, realize the complexity and at the same time the importance of resisting "on time." Who knows how many lives could have been saved if individuals had refused to be bystanders a year or perhaps even a few weeks or days earlier? Thus, when it comes to the question, "When should I resist?" the answer would seem to be, "The earlier, the better."

### **Resistance Today**

Richard von Weizsäcker, former federal president of Germany, once said, "We learn out of our own history what the human being is capable of doing," and "The one who closes his or her eyes to the past becomes blind to the future." So when faced with the Dutch history concerning the Holocaust, particularly the role of resistance fighters and bystanders, what do we choose? Do we learn, or do we close our eyes?

According to a report by the Landelijk Bureau ter bestrijding van Rassendiscriminatie (National Office to Combat Racial Discrimination), "Rapportage Racisme in Nederland (Report on Racism in the Netherlands)," after Pim Fortuyn's campaign in 2001 many political parties struck a harsher tone concerning immigration and integration. The present cabinet is continuing the trend that began in the 1990's of a more rigid alien integration policy. In the political arena, the debate has become increasingly heated and controversial.

In recent years two forms of racism have become particularly visible, namely anti-Semitism and anti-Islamism. According to the Centrum Informatie en Documentatie Israël (Center for Information and Documentation Israël) (CIDI), in 2002 the number of anti-Semitic incidents increased in comparison to previous years. In addition, the incidents tended to be of a more serious nature than in the past.

In addition, events that have caused great international turmoil, especially 9/11, have reinforced anti-Islamism in the Western World. Recent incidents have included public humiliation, graffiti, threats, violence, and even arson. Compared with the relative infrequency of such incidents in the years preceding 9/11 the level of anti-Islamism in the Netherlands is on the rise. These are only two examples of problems minority groups are confronted with in the Netherlands. It is important to remember that minorities like the Moroccans, Turks, Antilleans, asylum seekers, Roma, and Sinti all experience their own difficulties.

As the lines taken out of the media at the beginning of this article have shown, some boldly say that the same thing that happened to the Jews prior to and during World War II is happening again: gradual separation, registration, and stigmatization of certain groups. This brings us to the analysis of the question concerning resistance today. What does resistance mean now? Is "resistance" per se even possible, or required, in a democratic country? And how do the dynamics that we

have studied concerning resisters and bystanders apply in the present?

Everyone with whom we spoke suggested that "resistance" is not the appropriate word to use when referring to efforts to end today's discrimination. Bill Minco has qualified resistance as fighting against the enemy, specifically with risk to your life. This danger is not normally present in a democracy. Speaking out against racists or using politics to end intolerance are perhaps better characterized as "protest." Yet as Mathijssen tells us, resistance is also a matter of mentality—a comment echoed by almost everyone we interviewed. The resistance mentality, according to Minco, "is underpinned by knowledge. You have to remain informed about what is happening around you. You have to get an education. You need to learn from history. And you must decide that you will never be a passive bystander."

In Holland and in other Western countries, we may not face material occupiers, yet many of our inhabitants experience some form of discrimination, injustice, or oppression. The resistance ideal espoused by those we interviewed means that to be involved in "resistance" one must make sacrifice. Speaking out is certainly important, but the words of those who have witnessed the Holocaust remind us that to "resist" injustice we must take it a step further. In the Second World War, this sacrifice meant lives — now, it might cost one status, money, or time. The realization that sacrifice is necessary is even more important in these relatively peaceful domestic times, as, unlike during the Second World War, one is not forcefully confronted with injustice or danger. As Frieda Menco says, "War brings out the worst and the best in human beings. Yet in a given society the majority of people are normally indifferent. If you live in a country where lives consist of work, sleep, eat, and work again, why would the extremes of good and bad be brought out of people?"

Without being forced to deal with injustice on a daily basis, we see the prevalence of a phenomenon called "bystander apathy." During the Second World War a vast majority of the population took an attitude that can best be described as that of accommodation, while only very small groups either resisted or collaborated. In several studies conducted in this field it is estimated that 2% of the population was involved in active resistance and 3% in collaboration — the rest were bystanders. This indicates a distribution of moral behavior in any population, with good and bad at the two extremes and a vast majority in the neutral range somewhere in between. While we do not have similar statistics for today, the problem of indifference is perhaps even greater, considering the fact that in Dutch society in everyday life, generally, people are not confronted with circumstances that force them to choose. This is an important point because without the majority settled in a neutral middle ground, many forms of injustice would be virtually inconceivable.

According to Scheleff, a criminologist, there are three condi-

tions that prevent people from intervening to stop a crime from occurring. The first is diffuse responsibility. ("There are so many people around who also see it happening—why should I be the one to intervene? It's not my business anyway.") The second condition concerns problems in identifying with the victim. (We are more likely to help our relatives and friends, people within the bounds of our moral universe. For all we know, those who fall outside of these bounds may deserve what they get.) The third condition involves the difficulty of imagining being able to intervene effectively. ("What can we do nowadays to help the victims of terror in distant countries?")

Lou de Jong, a Dutch historian, states in his series "De Koninkrijk der Nederlanden" (the Dutch Kingdom) that "what happened to the Jews had one important aspect in common with the activities of the illegal groups: Most Dutchmen didn't notice much of it in their daily lives." De Jong is noting here that one is often able to dismiss easily the disturbing images of war or genocide because they are from another country in a distant land. Even when injustice is taking place in our own land, the information is easily dismissed when it does not touch, interfere with, or harm our own small worlds. Unless it affects us noticeably, it tends to leave us neutral—indifferent at the core.

Some people today have attempted to bridge this emotional and physical distance. Martijn Engelbrecht, an Amsterdam artist, performed an art experiment in 2003 whereby he distributed thousands of forms asking people whether they would be willing to report any illegal asylum seekers in their neighborhood. Engelbrecht said it was a "pleasant surprise" to receive only three responses from people willing to report their illegal neighbors, although he comments, "three is already too much." He did, however, inflame debate about the issue of illegal asylum seekers, as he received hundreds of complaints from various groups, including those who felt it reminded them of the occupation during the Second World War. "I think very often people don't think so hard about issues that are far away from home," Engelbrecht explains. "There is an imbalance between letting the government do what it does and how it is if you are asked to betray your own neighbor. I wanted to bring this issue directly to them."

While we can offer no concrete solutions, it is clear that one important step towards ending indifference is to make people aware that problems that seem distant are in fact urgent and personal.

## **Conclusion**

Resistance in the Second World War offers us invaluable lessons of how we can begin to approach living up to the rhetoric of "never again." Small groups of malefactors will always attempt to perpetrate evil on a wide scale – this, history has shown, is not something that can be made to disappear. As such, the responsibility for preventing genocide or war will depend on each one of us, on our willingness to resist. To that end, we have attempted to understand what resistance is. It

can arise from a multitude of motives, and can be carried out in many different ways. But true resistance, we believe, involves sacrifice. If the Holocaust has taught us anything, it is that to stop injustice society desperately needs people who are willing to risk everything to stop it from the moment that it begins. Resistance begins within each one of us. As Bill Minco said, "I believe that every human being can choose between good and bad. If you want the world to become a better place, then it has to start with yourself." So, as he added when we parted, "Don't forget to look in the mirror."

## **Interviews (in the capacity of)**

Bill Minco, former resistance member.

Rutger Matthijssen, former resistance member.

Frieda Menco, hidden as a child and survivor of the Holocaust.

Ronnie Goldstein, former resistance member.

Prof. dr. Johannes Houwink ten Cate, historian, Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

Dr. Dienke Hondius, historian, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Martijn Engelbrecht, artist.

## **Articles and Publications**

Maas, Walter B., *The Netherlands at War*

Presser, J., *Ashes in the Wind*

Minco, Bill, *Daarom*

Bovenkerk, Frank, *The Other Side of the Anne Frank Story: The Dutch Role in the Persecution of the Jews in World War Two.*

Landelijk Bureau ter bestrijding van Rassendiscriminatie, *Rapportage Racisme in Nederland.*

Wertheim, Anne-Ruth, *Als we niet oppassen zal onze angst voor de immigrant uitmonden in massale raciale agressie / If we are not careful, our fear of the immigrant will result in massive racial aggression, NRC Handelsblad, 19 June 2004.*

A lecture given by Bill Minco during *Humanity in Action 2004.*

A lecture given by Ronnie Goldstein.



# Intercultural Challenges for 'Citizens in Uniform'

Elizabeth Breese and Marius Osswald

## Introduction

At the NATO summit in Istanbul in June 2004, Germany pledged an increased military presence in Afghanistan and agreed to train Iraqi police officers in German police academies. This is just the latest of several examples of Germany's growing commitment in the realms of law enforcement and military protection and intervention. In fact, the Bundeswehr, the German army, has supplied equipment and provided transportation services for United Nations peace missions since 1973. A groundbreaking decision of the Federal Constitutional Court in 1994 found it possible for German armed forces to be deployed abroad. Some 9,000 soldiers are currently deployed on peace missions under the framework of either the United Nations (UN) or NATO. In addition to the Bundeswehr, the Federal Border Police and the police forces of the Länder (the German states) have participated in UN peacekeeping missions since 1989. The police officers in the service of the UN make key contributions to the development of rule-of-law structures in the countries concerned. Since 1991, a total of approximately 145,000 Bundeswehr personnel and 3,100 police officers have been deployed to troubled areas including the Balkans, the Horn of Africa, and Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup>

These missions are undertaken as 'nation building' or 'peacekeeping operations' which shows the great responsibility that Germany and its partners have to the respective countries. Good behavior of troops and police and respectful treatment of the population are key to the missions' success and can only be achieved through professional personnel who are sensitive towards the culture and the people of the countries in which they are stationed.

In this paper we want to focus on the education of German military and police forces, especially in the field of human rights and intercultural competence. We first examine the education that is currently provided to soldiers and officers. We will then assess these findings and give recommendations for improvement.

## History

The importance of and commitment to human rights education in the Bundeswehr and police forces must be understood in the context of German history. According to Member of Parliament Jörg van Essen of the Free Democratic Party (FDP), one of the most important lessons of the Third Reich and the blind faith in authority of that period is that the military should be strictly bound by the law. When the Bundeswehr was created in 1955, the main idea was to build a military

consisting of 'citizens in uniform' who were integrated into society. It was the intention in the 1950's to avoid the creation of an overly powerful army that could become a 'state within the state.' To that end, transparency and the exchange between the Bundeswehr and the German society were of great importance, an emphasis that still survives and is most visible today in the fact that Germany still has a conscription army.

The integration of the Bundeswehr into German society and the transparency of military action are also reflected by the system of parliamentary control of the military. In addition, as Klaus Michael Spiess, a legal lecturer for the Bundeswehr, explains, the Bundeswehr never established a court martial system, meaning that members of the military are bound by the same laws and fall under the same judicial system as the rest of the German population. The gross human rights violations of the Nazi era were a motivation for this society and government to turn to strong legal frameworks and international law both for the military and for the broader governing of Germany to prevent such horrors from ever happening again.

## International Standards

In the last fifty years, Germany has committed itself to many international agreements concerning human rights, including the landmark United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the European Convention of Human Rights of 1950, and the more recent statute for the International Criminal Court (ICC). A number of other agreements specify in greater detail international standards for troops or policemen such as the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and the Convention against Torture. International laws and conventions are incorporated into the German legal framework, and Germany has ratified all of the major conventions and agreements regarding human rights. Germany also cooperates with various international actors concerning specifically the education in human rights for the Bundeswehr and the police. Mr. Ekkehard Strauss, Human Rights Officer at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), explains that the OHCHR together with the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) developed training material that defines a certain international standard for human rights education.

## Human Rights Education in the Military

"International human rights law is binding on all States and their agents..."<sup>2</sup>

The Bundeswehr is strictly bound to the German Constitution, or the Basic Law, which guarantees the most fundamental human rights. The education of every soldier in these basic rights is part of the philosophic concept of the 'Zentrum für Innere Führung' (Center for Internal Leadership), the institution responsible for setting the general principles of the Bundeswehr. According to Mr. Spiess, the idea was to have an army of well-educated and self-reflective individuals unlikely to practice "unconditional obedience." Article 11 of the Soldiers' Law explicitly states that a soldier must not follow an illegal order. According to Mr. van Essen the Bundeswehr's mission is to produce soldiers with "brains over brawn" and to give the lower ranks a comparatively high degree of education and responsibility. René Grigat, a company commander at the Julius-Leber Barracks in Berlin, asserts that it is the extensive education for the lower ranks that distinguishes the Bundeswehr from other armies. Based on his experience in a German-U.S. joint unit in Büchel, Grigat contrasts the Bundeswehr education with that of the U.S. armed forces, believing the latter to concentrate on the education of officers and leading personnel while neglecting the lower ranks.

Human rights are part of the general education for every soldier with seven hours of basic training directly relating to human rights for all conscripts. Human rights education clearly plays a more crucial role for troops sent on missions abroad. Mr. van Essen explains that in addition to a more intense legal education, especially in the field of international law, soldiers going abroad are educated about the political background and trained in the culture, religion, and basic language skills of the country. According to Mr. Spiess the training for troops going on missions abroad includes one week of training at the army barracks and one or two weeks on a special training compound such as the UN education center of the Bundeswehr in Hammelburg. In addition, there is one week of training for officers and so-called multipliers (e.g., soldiers in the media section) in Koblenz at the headquarters of the 'Zentrum für Innere Führung'.

### **Human Rights Education for the Police**

"Law enforcement officials are obliged to know, and to apply, international standards for human rights."<sup>3</sup>

Human rights education of the German police cannot be generally assessed because education falls under the jurisdiction of the Länder, the German states. In some of the states, human rights education is part of the training of police officers and reflects the commitment to international laws which mandate certain behavior and legal knowledge by law enforcement officials. For instance, Claudia Lohrenscheit of the German Institute for Human Rights is working with the Landespolizeidirektion (State Police) of Berlin on a pilot program for human rights education which started in 2003. Ms. Lohrenscheit leads daylong workshops with another non-police trainer and two members of the Polizei on the topics of international human rights standards, Islam and human rights, and terrorism and human rights. These voluntary workshops

use an experiential approach that encourages participants to reflect on their own experiences of either witnessing or taking part in human rights violations while serving in the police and then pushes them to think of alternative approaches to these situations. The participants also learn international and national human rights law.

Despite differences on the state level when it comes to domestic policing, the human rights education for police forces sent on missions abroad is the same throughout the country, according to Mr. Zimmermann, Head of the Commissioner's Mission Implementation Strategy Planning Unit of the UNMIK (UN Mission in Kosovo) Police in Pristina. Police officers who volunteer to serve abroad must have worked for at least eight years, ensuring a certain level of experience and professionalism. The leading personnel are required to attend an additional 'Police Commander Course on Non-Military Crisis Management' at CEPOL (the European police academy). The course includes lectures in 'Human Rights' and in 'Leadership in a Multicultural Environment,' both conducted in the English language.

The education and build up of police forces became a special area of German expertise, as former Ambassador and special envoy of Germany to Afghanistan Hajo Vergau explains. Germany was called upon by the Interim Administration of Afghanistan in 2002 to serve as the lead government to assist in the reconstruction of the Afghan police force. Gunnar Theissen and Irene Plank of the Federal Foreign Office explained that in the past two years, German police have been instrumental in reestablishing the Police Academy for new recruits in Kabul and have served a 'coordinating role' with trainers from other countries on curriculum development and teaching at the Academy. Human rights are a key topic in the curriculum at the Police Academy. Currently about 35 German police officers are serving in advisory positions in Afghanistan. In situations like the reconstruction of Afghanistan, the education of the German police is exported and put into practice elsewhere, underlining both the importance and the reach of human rights education for all police officers in Germany.

### **General Assessment of Human Rights Education**

In the course of numerous interviews, site visits, and correspondences with representatives from a broad range of government and non-government agencies, the general picture of concern and practice of human rights education in Germany's military and police operations is encouraging at the least. We were welcomed by a Member of Parliament, members of the Federal Foreign Office, several people working for the Bundeswehr, and numerous other influential individuals in the field of human rights education, and each person was eager to communicate with us.

Germany is an international leader as a nation that has ratified international conventions and takes practical steps to implement those standards. The firm dedication to human rights in

Germany and to educating members of the military and police on those standards is exceptional and therefore offers a case study for improvements. Furthermore, it tests what can be achieved in a strong nation with a strong commitment to human rights.

While it is tempting to compare Germany to other countries, one should be careful in doing so, particularly with respect to the United States. Until now, the German military was virtually never deployed to the front line for involvement in major combat operations. Rather, German troops enter countries such as Afghanistan when violent military combat, killing, and open conflict is largely done, and therefore the Bundeswehr finds itself in a far more comfortable position to emphasize human rights and intercultural awareness.

### **Intercultural Component**

“Intercultural conflicts will be the main challenge to the world in the 21st century. The dialogue between the cultures will become the ‘strategy for peace in the 21st century.’”<sup>4</sup>

Training in intercultural competence and communication should be seen as an indispensable part of the human rights education. The following section will briefly explain the concept of intercultural education and its link to human rights. We will then provide an overview of the current education in intercultural competence and communication, problems that are linked to what we call the ‘manual mentality,’ and recommendations for future improvements.

Andreas Berns, who is involved in a project on intercultural communication called ‘Marco Polo’ at the Bundeswehr academy, clarifies that concept as follows: Intercultural relations include communicative processes that are of great importance in the phases leading to violent conflicts and can be a crucial element in the prevention of conflicts. Productive intercultural communication is only possible on the basis of intercultural competence.

According to Mr. Berns, the prejudices and hostilities which arise from interactions of two cultures that define themselves as different are not necessarily unavoidable; they only exist where people feel uneasy and threatened by a culture defined as ‘other.’ The simplistic solution that people should simply be more open and talk to each other will not suffice. Different cultural backgrounds are very likely to produce conflicts and misunderstandings and that is why soldiers and police forces have to be professionally trained in the field of intercultural understanding. Intercultural competence has to be based on a strong self-identity and a clear idea about one’s own values. One crucial aspect of intercultural competence is to accept that no culture is inherently superior to others and that the intercultural dialogue has to be conducted on the basis of equality.

For the German Bundeswehr and police these topics are rather recent ones. As noted, German participation in mis-

sions abroad only became possible in the mid-1990 under the umbrella of the UN or NATO. Hence, for the first time in more recent history German troops are confronted with very different cultural backgrounds and environments in places like Afghanistan, the horn of Africa, or the Balkans. For all these missions the clear policy of the German government is not missionary work or to demonstrate any sociopolitical, economic, or cultural superiority. Rather, missions are undertaken as ‘nation building’ or ‘peacekeeping.’ Given this reasoning, Germany and its partners have a great responsibility to the respective countries. German troops and police forces do not want to be seen as occupying forces but rather be welcomed by the population. This demands a high degree of professionalism and sensitivity towards the culture and the people—which, in turn, depends on intercultural competence.

### **Current intercultural competence education**

According to Oskar Matthias Freiherr von Lepel from the ‘Zentrum für Innere Führung’ headquarters in Koblenz, training in intercultural competence is part of the one-week education for higher ranks that takes place in Koblenz. In order to stimulate a greater sensitivity towards other cultures, lectures are given by experts who are mostly German officers with experiences in the various countries and their cultural backgrounds. All members of the Bundeswehr are given certain manuals during their training which cover basic language and certain codes of behavior to follow when encountering people of other cultures.

As with human rights education, it is hard to make a general statement concerning education in intercultural competence for police forces due to the federal structure of Germany. In some states the police have started to include intercultural awareness in their training programs. For instance, in the state of Brandenburg, freelance police adviser Carl Chung was part of a program funded by the European Union (EU) to train people of immigrant backgrounds to become trainers of the police on intercultural issues. Norman Weiss, research fellow at Potsdam University, assessed that the program is a good start but that the four-day training during a three-year education is far too short and needs to be further developed.

All police officers who are sent on missions abroad attend a two- to three-week training in the political and cultural background of the country. Ms. Plank explains that this is mainly done by teachers from the German police academy and police officers who have returned from serving abroad. According to Mr. Zimmermann, intercultural competence is part of this training program—through a two-hour lecture or a role-play, for instance—but it is not a major topic relative to the total amount of training time.

### **Recommendations**

The intercultural component in the training of German military and police is currently of a high standard. According to Jörg van Essen, the intercultural sensitivity in the Bundeswehr is

one of the strongest among the world's national militaries. However, we think that improvements are still necessary and would like to offer some suggestions.

Firstly, we think that intercultural competence should not be taught separately from human rights education. The two fields are linked to each other and often lead to contradictory solutions which must be acknowledged and discussed during the education process. For instance gender equality and the rights of women are not necessarily part of every culture, yet they are central tenets of international human rights standards. In order to make the right decisions and to find compromises, soldiers and police forces have to be aware of such potential contradictions.

Secondly, we strongly recommend including intercultural awareness education in the basic curricula for all conscripts and not only teaching it to higher ranks sent on missions abroad. Soldiers in lower ranks are the ones that are frequently in touch with the population. The horrible pictures from the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq illustrate, through depicting the actions of some U.S. military personnel, the dangers inherent when lower-ranking soldiers lack the training and perhaps even the intellect and understanding necessary to uphold morals, values, and human rights even in the most trying of circumstances abroad. We believe that practical and intensive intercultural education arms personnel, regardless of rank, with the personal understanding and intercultural sensitivity to maintain their own values when confronted with threatening situations.

Thirdly, in the long run we would like to overcome the 'manual mentality' for matters of intercultural competence. Members of the military and police are accustomed to conducting themselves according to manuals, but the level of intercultural awareness that Mr. Berns advocates cannot be found in a manual. A member of the military cannot easily check a manual or pamphlet to determine how to conduct himself when confronting a situation, culture, or religion that is quite different from his own. Human rights guidelines have been enumerated in manuals for military and law enforcement officials, most notably in the United Nations Professional Training Series, to which both the Bundeswehr and German police refer, but intercultural competence cannot be fully summed up in such a way. Intercultural competence is therefore much more difficult to teach or engender in a person, but this sort of competence is shown to be absolutely necessary.

## **Conclusion**

We have found that the history, composition, and current trends of the German military and police provide a very good basis for the implementation of the above recommendations. As the military is concerned, first, the structure and philosophy of the Bundeswehr is strongly based on the lessons of German history of the Nazi era. In the 1950's the Bundeswehr was strictly limited to serving as a defensive force, but the internal values and structures instilled in that time prove helpful today

for human rights education and intercultural competence in the German army. The 'citizens in uniform' concept has always emphasized a comparatively high basic education and abstract thinking which is of practical use on missions abroad. Second, the Bundeswehr has also been familiar with other cultures and backgrounds through regular maneuvers with the American, British, and French forces based in Germany. Under the umbrella of NATO, German troops were also in touch with a number of other cultural backgrounds—for instance, through military training with Turkish troops in a joint NATO force. A third and more recent development is the growing number of foreign-born people within the ranks of the Bundeswehr and the police, especially so-called ethnic Germans from the former Soviet Union that came to Germany in the 1990's.

Policemen, for their part, are in touch with citizens from many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds in their everyday work in Germany. The social complexity of Germany with its increasingly multicultural population demands greater intercultural awareness and sensitivity on the part of the police. With migration to Germany for jobs since the 1960's, the fact cannot be doubted now that Germany is an 'immigration country.' In addition, the police, like the Bundeswehr, have more and more people from different ethnic and cultural origins within their own ranks. A good education in intercultural competence and communication for everyday German police work would also facilitate officers' training for missions abroad. Few policemen are currently deployed on missions abroad compared to members of the military, but the status of Germany as a leading nation in police and security issues makes it likely that these numbers will rise in the near future.

## **Looking Ahead**

While the mission in Afghanistan is far from being accomplished, there are already new tasks and challenges waiting for the German military and the police in different parts of the world. For one, after the United States government turned over sovereignty to an interim Iraqi government on June 28, 2004, both President George W. Bush and Interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi asked for NATO to help in training the Iraqi military and police. Germany stands as a logical candidate to take a leading role in police training and rebuilding security forces in Iraq.

Despite short-term pressures weighing on the Bundeswehr and Polizei, we see our recommendations in this paper as a long-term plan to improve the education and hence the work of military and police forces abroad. We do not suggest the creation of one more international standard or guidebook but rather a new focus on the general education and personality of every individual soldier and police officer.

## Interviews

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## Footnotes

1. [http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/en/aussenpolitik/vn/vereinte\\_nationen/d-in-de-vn/pdf/12.pdf](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/en/aussenpolitik/vn/vereinte_nationen/d-in-de-vn/pdf/12.pdf)
2. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 2(3).
3. UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, article 2.
4. Bassam Tibi in a presentation given to German broadcast service Bayern 2 on November 11, 2001, in Munich.

# Finding a Way Home: Mozhdeh's Story

Nita Colaço and Mikaela von Freiesleben

*Maybe I'm actually trying to flee from...from the feeling that—I don't know—'of being home.' Maybe I actually have found my home but I'm afraid of admitting it. I'm afraid of saying, well yeah, that's it, because if that's it, so then, what am I gonna fight for? It's like my journey is finished."*

—Mozhdeh.

Mozhdeh Ghasemiyani is a 25-year-old Kurdish woman from Iran who came to Denmark nine years ago as a political refugee. When we first met this young, attractive, cultivated woman, we found it difficult to imagine that she would have any troubles as a newcomer in Denmark. We soon learned otherwise, which provoked us to explore Mozhdeh's experience as a refugee in a new country. When we interviewed Mozhdeh, it became apparent that her relationship to Denmark is filled with mixed emotions. She has received, in Denmark, an education and the opportunities for a successful future; however, she has also experienced discrimination based on her background and her name. We wanted to discuss with her the probability of Denmark ever feeling like a "home" because over the course of the interviews we could sense her frustration with, as she put it, always feeling like an outsider. Oftentimes, she seemed set upon leaving Denmark to continue her journey to a place where she would be just another face in the crowd.

In Denmark there exists an idea of what it means to be Danish, a so-called "Danishness." This concept can be explained as a common frame of reference that influences the mentality of many Danes. An unfortunate consequence of this line of thinking is that many times immigrants \*are bunched together in a large, homogenous group of kiosk owners and taxi drivers. When people choose to talk broadly about "immigrant populations" and when politicians advocate policies to curtail immigration, they add to this broad, exclusive idea of Danishness. There is a danger that they do not consider the effect of this rhetoric on the individual and that this may, in turn, further polarize society into two factions: Danes and Immigrants. Through our interviews with Mozhdeh a picture began to emerge, and we saw how these abstract concepts of Danishness, integration, and assimilation play a significant role in the formation of one person's identity.

\*We use the term "immigrant" loosely to cover immigrants who are former guest workers, their descendents, and refugees. As in colloquial speech, we do not include people from Western countries like Europe or the United States in the term "immigrant," but only those from developing countries, Turkey, and the Middle East.

## The Beginning

Mozhdeh's story begins in 1979 in Iran, where she was born to Kurdish parents and was given a name that means "good news." During the Iranian Revolution, Mozhdeh's parents were active in the fight for the political and religious rights denied to the Kurdish people under the Shah. When they gained no influence in the new government, they were forced to flee to Iraq. There, her family encountered another struggle, the war between the Kurds and the Iraqi government, and they were forced constantly to relocate, to hide, and to change identities. After the first Gulf War, Mozhdeh's family waited in a refugee camp in the northern part of Iraq for three years before being granted asylum by a Western country. In 1995, they arrived in Denmark.

"I didn't get the best impression," Mozhdeh recalls with a bittersweet smile. "Before I came to Denmark, I had an idea that when you come to a Western country it will be like a paradise, a place where human beings are respected just for being human beings and not because they have a specific nationality or a specific way of looking. And this image was totally damaged from my first meeting with the Danish community. It was my first day at school actually, when, you know, the first comment, instead of saying 'welcome to Denmark' was like, 'oh, you black pig, go home, you smell, you take all our tax money.' "

Today Mozhdeh speaks Danish fluently and studies psychology at the University of Aarhus in Denmark, but when she first arrived she did not know anything about the Danish language or culture. Everything was new to her, from the brightly colored houses that made her feel like she was living in a cartoon to the way she could not tell the difference between boys and girls because they looked alike to her—blond and white, with the same clothing. "It was very difficult, it was like being born again, totally," she says. In a world where she was treated like an outsider and, at the same time, was faced with the confusion of being a teenage girl, she felt like she was being forced to cement her identity: "people pushing you to make a decision about who you are... Are you an immigrant? Are you a Muslim? Are you a Dane? What are you? It was impossible for us to make those decisions."

## Decisions

Yet Mozhdeh, essentially, did make a decision, especially during the first five years, which she describes as the hardest. When she first arrived in Denmark, she slowly began assimilating into Danish culture out of the simple desire to be accepted and loved. She struggled to understand what it

meant to be a Dane and how she could become one, using copious energy to convince people that she was “okay.” After the first five years in Denmark, Mozhdeh adopted assimilation for a shrewder purpose. Mozhdeh is an ambitious woman, and as she puts it, “I wouldn’t be able to live if I didn’t have opportunities or couldn’t do the things in my life that I wanted to... If you are not accepted, if you are an ambitious person, you don’t have any life.” To Mozhdeh, there was no choice; she was forced to assimilate, and she admits that it has opened a lot of doors for her. She describes assimilation and being Danish as a way of interacting, a particular self-deprecating sense of humour—one that she quickly adopted to fit into the society. She used this humour a lot, making light of her own situation as a political refugee from the Middle East in the hopes that it would make her more approachable and less mysterious in the eyes of other Danes. During the course of the interviews she still acted this way, often laughing at her own recollections and always speaking with a bemused smile on her face.

In order to understand these concepts of assimilation and of being Danish more fully, we spoke to former civil servant Frederik Wiedemann, as well as the Vice President of the Danish People’s Party’s Youth Department, Morten Messerschmidt. According to Wiedemann, Muslim immigration and the challenges it has brought have made more Danes aware of what it is to be Danish, to formulate, however broadly, their concept of “Danishness.” This Danishness, he explains, is typically linked to speaking Danish, to understanding the Danish culture, and to knowing history’s influence on Danish society. Today, Danes are more accepting of conservative symbols as being representative of Danish culture and are more aware of the country’s Christian traditions than they were 30 years ago. Often, this has led to an idea that Christianity is an essential part of being Danish, even though many Danes are not religious at all. Muslims, then, tend to be excluded and immediately classified as non-Danish.

Messerschmidt agrees that being Danish is primarily about an understanding of the history of Denmark and how it has shaped the Danish people; however, he believes that debating the concept of Danishness is less important than understanding the values of the West. “In basics, it’s a question about human rights, respect of the individual, law and democracy, freedom of speech, the equality of the sexes, and all these general matters,” he contends. In his eyes, Muslim immigrants are a threat if they do not accept these ideals, and to ensure that they do, he promotes full assimilation of immigrants into Danish culture. “The objective for me is to get them so integrated that every time they go out of the door they behave Danishly, so to speak. So in the end of the day, they will not shift over when they go back into their homes. So they maintain Danishness.”

In Mozhdeh’s opinion, the type of assimilation that Messerschmidt advocates is overbearing and unnecessary, because

respect for Western values, such as human rights, can be combined with non-Western traditions. She says, “It should be possible to come to Denmark and be able to combine your own culture, your own identity, with the Danish culture somehow, without getting the feeling that everything you stand for is wrong or the way you live is just the wrong way of living.” In reality, though, it was difficult for Mozhdeh to combine being “Danish” with her own cultural and religious traditions. By assimilating, she felt that she actually began to lose part of her identity. Before coming to Denmark, Islam was Mozhdeh’s foundation. In the tumultuous environment around her, God was the one consistently stable factor in her life. “I needed God, I needed my religion when I lived in Iraq, because I was a refugee, because it was so extreme, because when I was five, six years old I saw my mom being shot 12 times in her face, I saw my brother being shot, I never knew if my dad came home or not.” When Mozhdeh came to Denmark, she had a more comfortable life and, therefore, did not rely so heavily on God. “When I came to Denmark, I felt like God was moving away from me somehow, and it felt terrible, really. I had a feeling like a little child afraid that she’s doing something terribly wrong.”

### **Culture**

Only now, she says, can she begin to go back to this part of herself, the part she was forced to abandon. Although she doubts that she will ever be as religious as she was growing up in the Middle East, she wants to discover her culture again, to see and read the news in her own language, to be in contact with some Iranian, Kurdish, or Middle Eastern people, because she primarily has Danish friends, none of whom are Kurdish. Mozhdeh wants to learn to cook like her mother and to ensure that her future children can eat the same food she ate and can have the same traditions she had as a child. While she wants to pass on these experiences, she also gives us the impression that there is another reason behind her desire to return to her culture, a reason that stems from her frustration with Danish society. Mozhdeh says that she feels Danish, but this hardly matters, because in Danish society she will never be accepted as a Dane. “You have to be born Dane, you have to look Dane, you have to think Dane, you have to feel Dane, you have to eat and act and you have to be Dane in every and each way.” She adds, both defiantly and defensively, “You have to be a copy of a blond, tall girl, and I’m not. And I’m glad that I’m not.”

Now is the time in her life when she has the confidence to voice such a statement. Because she has the self-assurance that she is “good enough” as a person, she no longer fights so hard to be accepted and no longer wants to receive sympathy from others simply because she is a refugee. She does not want her glowing list of accomplishments tainted by the fact that she has had a hard life; rather, she wants her resume to speak for itself. When Mozhdeh looks at her friends in Denmark, she feels that she has had more achievements, the attitude of a decidedly proud person. Paradoxically, she sometimes still chooses to remain silent in face of Danes who

are strangers, something that she often later regrets. She is afraid of being labelled an immigrant and afraid that people will take her personal opinions as being representative of the opinions of a larger immigrant population. Mozhdeh is also afraid of offending Danish people, because she still has a nagging feeling that she owes them something after receiving a somewhat good life and education in Denmark. This is a feeling that she is actively trying to leave behind. Up until only recently, she felt that she owed Denmark a lot. Mozhdeh says that when Danish people used to discriminate against her, she would not complain, precisely because she was in their country, using their money to receive an education. Now she is more resistant. As she puts it, "I have been here and working hard. They haven't given me more than they would any other Dane. I don't need to have the feeling that I owe them anything."

### Home

When discussing with Mozhdeh the likelihood of making Denmark her permanent home, she seems torn on the issue. Part of her wants to go to Canada, where she, as an exchange student, felt that she was not constantly stigmatized as an outsider. Mozhdeh relates to us that in Canada, she actually chose to identify herself as Danish, which we found incongruous with her statements earlier in the interview, where she made it clear that she would always consider herself first and foremost Kurdish, then Iranian, and, finally, Danish. For the first time, being in a different country, she felt Danish. It was, moreover, easier to say she was Danish and to end the story there.

Ambition also plays a role in Mozhdeh's decision of whether or not to stay in Denmark. She feels that she has taken advantage of all Denmark has to offer and fears that staying in the country would lead to her oppression and would prevent the realization of her goals, such as becoming a successful practicing psychologist. This feeling is strengthened when she thinks of her children. Mozhdeh admits that Denmark is a country with copious opportunities, but she does not want her children to face the prejudice and hatred that she has felt here. She says that she refuses to make the same mistake her parents made, who chose to fight for something they believed in, the Kurdish people, at the expense of their own family. "They didn't think about us, the children," she says, "nobody heard our voices or asked us what we thought." Mozhdeh contends that her children will be the decisive factor in her life and that she will live where they can have the best future. It is ironic, because many might see Mozhdeh's personal fight to achieve her own dreams as a victory for all minority women, but this is not how Mozhdeh views the situation at all. She still feels that she must choose between fighting for what she believes in and having what she wants—a comfortable, successful life. To add to this irony further, while Mozhdeh does not want to follow the same path as her parents, their decisions allowed her to be in this position today—to be able to weigh her options for the future.

When we ask her, "By leaving Denmark, are you not just doing what you always do, fleeing, being a refugee?" Mozhdeh is unsure how to respond. The truth is, maybe Denmark is the best there is in terms of a haven, but this is an idea that Mozhdeh seems unwilling to accept, and thus she looks to Canada for the future. On one hand, Mozhdeh is attracted to the idea of leading a "normal" life, leaving her refugee identity behind and being just another face in the crowd. This life might be possible in Canada. On the other hand, we see her holding onto the refugee identity because it is all she has ever known. Mozhdeh admits that she will have nothing left to fight for if she finishes being a refugee and becomes a "normal" person. Her whole life has been a struggle in one way or another, and this sense of struggle has been embedded into her identity; the thought of being "normal" terrifies her. In the end, however, it is not only a personal choice for Mozhdeh as to whether she will put the refugee identity behind her; her surroundings define her as well. She often feels that Danes force the refugee identity upon her, from sincere comments inquiring into her background to outright discrimination based on her appearance or her name. "People are pushing me to maintain my identity of a refugee when part of me just wants to move on," she tells us. Simultaneously, she feels obligated to inform other people, especially Danes, of a refugee's life, so that when they meet a refugee in the future they might act differently. Perhaps there is no choice for Mozhdeh to make. Her older sister, Mozhgan, seems more rational when she puts in the following terms: "No matter where we go, we will always be refugees; we will never be 100 percent at home anywhere."

Mozhdeh's struggle with identity is hardly a simple subject. After speaking with her for several hours, it became clear that she is both confused and self-aware, most likely a product of being forced to think about complex identity issues from a young age. She has been confronted with the majority's rhetoric about immigrants in the West, rhetoric that is often negative, and with the choices, or lack thereof, of integration and assimilation. While Mozhdeh's story is unimaginable to many of us, it is also the more familiar story of a person wanting control over his or her own life. Mozhdeh wants to be able to redefine her identity if and when she wants in order to achieve her own goals. She wants to be more than a face in the crowd; she wants to be unique, yet at the same time she is tired of standing out. In this way she is similar to other people intelligent and aware enough to play with social constructs in order to take advantage of opportunities that come their way. Mozhdeh's future is uncertain, but, judging from her cleverness and cognizance, she is beginning to find herself.



**Interviews**

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# Breaking the Silence: An Honest Discussion About Illegal Immigration to Germany

Armin Huhn, Charles Lockwood and Kathleen Semanski

Today, the shimmering glass cupola and crisply modern corridors of the renovated German Reichstag attract the admiration of Germans and international visitors alike. The profusion of glass in the building, from the cupola down to the central Bundestag chamber, has been read as a sign of transparency, or honesty, in the workings of the German government. Yet in a capital where frenetic new construction is the rule rather than the exception, many marvel at the cost of such initiatives without considering that it is often illegal workers whose labor has allowed the Reichstag, along with so much of Berlin, to rise again.

## The Nature of the Problem

The gap between rhetoric and reality is wider on the issue of illegal immigration than it is on almost any other in Germany today. Through policies passed into law in this same Reichstag, the country has taken an official zero-tolerance policy toward illegal immigration, emphasizing the need to deport current illegal residents and illegal workers as well as criminalizing aid to such illegal persons, estimated unofficially at upwards of one million. Nonetheless, enforcement against illegal entry and residence is generally weak, and authorities often look the other way as illegal workers continue to make crucial contributions to Germany's overall economy, especially in informal or low-profit margin sectors such as domestic care and agriculture. Although enforcement against illegal labor has increased among the sorts of large-scale construction firms that completed the Reichstag, illegal immigration continues to occupy something of a "non-presence" in public debate, according to Veysel Özcan, a researcher on migration at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin. Aside from claims that illegality cannot be tolerated, the presence of illegal persons, either as workers or residents, is barely acknowledged.

In the end, it is the illegal persons themselves who are caught in this perilous gap. Many employers can still easily defy the law by relying heavily, if not exclusively, on illegal workers, thereby keeping the demand for this type of labor high. Nevertheless, the constant risk of being detected—however small—means that illegal workers and residents, in practice, have no access to the legal protections guaranteed them under either German law or the European Charter of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms: no rights to schooling, emergency health care, or minimum safety standards in the workplace. For a person who crosses the border into Germany from, say, the Czech Republic, as a temporary illegal worker, the possibility of returning home may not make this scenario a troubling one, but for an immigrant from Lebanon or Ecuador, it is a very different matter indeed.

Although the 2001 report of the Süssmuth Commission, an independent body charged with suggesting immigration reforms, made a move toward closing this gap between rhetoric and reality by advocating liberalization in a variety of policy areas, neither it nor the more conservative new Immigration Law, or *Zuwanderungsgesetz*, passed in July 2004, fully takes stock of how to balance two goals: (1) incorporating the wide range of immigrants who aim to contribute beneficially to Germany as workers and residents, and (2) stiffening enforcement measures against persons who intend to engage in crime or corruption rather than productive contributions. This failure can be attributed to relatively obvious factors, including Germany's fairly new understanding of itself as a country of immigration and renewed fears of foreign terrorists, as well as less apparent factors, including the satisfaction of some Germans with the unfavorable position of illegal workers and residents in the status quo. To consider these factors while seeking to strike a balance between the goals of incorporation and enforcement would be a step in the right direction.

## Illegal Migrants: Characteristics and Motivations

In Germany, as in most countries with substantial immigration, illegal immigrants fall into four general categories: (1) "over-stayers" who have entered legally on temporary visas and have not sought, or were not granted, a legal extension of stay; (2) persons, including many seasonal workers and commuters, who have permission to be in the country but are breaching their conditions of stay by working illegally; (3) asylum seekers whose applications and appeals for reconsideration have been rejected; and, finally, (4) persons who have not been granted permission to enter and have, therefore, entered clandestinely by evading inspection or using means of deception, such as false papers.<sup>1</sup> It is estimated that approximately 80 percent of illegal immigrants in the European Union enter by means of tourist visas.<sup>2</sup>

So why do immigrants come? For the last few decades, studies of immigration have spoken of the relationship between the factors that "push" migrants from their home countries and the factors that "pull" them to a particular receiving country. While it is obvious that people migrate for different reasons, it is plausible that people will search, in the countries to which they immigrate, for certain "pull" characteristics that are the converse of those that "push" them from their homes. However, the tendency of this model to consider negative pushes and positive pulls in terms of general circumstances—economic prosperity, political stability—is undermined by strong evidence that migrants' decisions within

large-scale migration flows are often more individual. It has become clearer that family, friends, or community ties, as well as cultural affinity and languages spoken, can be just as important as prospects for finding work or anticipated access to public services. The British migration expert Philip Anderson, who has done extensive research on illegal immigration in Munich, Germany, notes the important role played by “bridgeheads”: persons who are often well-connected in the immigrant communities of receiving countries and help to coordinate the immigration plans of prospective migrants.

Nevertheless, Anderson points out that among those who are now illegal in Germany, few have come with the intention of having, or keeping, this status: “The vast majority of undocumented immigrants don’t envision this as a way of life. They want out, not because they are seeking after social benefits, usually, but because they are ambitious and pioneering. They want to contribute.”

### **Admitting Advantages, Decrying Disadvantages**

In undertaking this analysis, it would be a mistake to assume that what is “illegal” is bad and thereby handcuff ourselves to a position of unqualified condemnation. At some point, reality compels us to examine the situation in terms of its practical consequences—for the migrants themselves, for the citizens of the destination country, and for the state apparatus ostensibly charged with upholding the rule of law. Legal regulations and restrictions exist for a variety of objectives, and pragmatism—as has already been suggested—is often given more weight than moral considerations. Ironically, observes researcher Holk Stobbe, formerly with the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, “Undocumented migrants are just the opposite of what the term ‘illegal alien’ tries to imply—i.e. they are the most law abiding residents and try to become virtually invisible in order to evade detection by the authorities.”<sup>3</sup> Frank discussion about the advantages and disadvantages—economic, moral, or otherwise—associated with illegal migration should not be taboo.

### **Cheap Labor or Exploited Labor?**

The debate over the use of illegal migrant labor is organized around several assumptions, the first being that undocumented migrants will agree to work for wages below the standard market rate. One can imagine why this would be true: wages that are considered intolerably low for a German worker might be very attractive to an undocumented migrant when compared to those he would receive in his country of origin, assuming work was even available there. The second assumption is that the employer will benefit from the use of illegal labor, leaving aside for the moment his disinclination to break the law. Obviously, he will save money on production if wages are lower, and in some cases he will be able to expand his workforce and increase his overall production.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, he will not have to pay social security for his employees, which in Germany can amount to as much as half of total wages. On the down side, employers who do not use illegal labor may find themselves at a competitive disadvan-

tage, the ironic downside of respecting the rule of law.

Some argue that the use of undocumented labor is a form of exploitation. Employers are essentially profiting from the precarious situation of undocumented migrants and their de facto lack of negotiating leverage by compelling them to accept wages that are “unfair” in the sense that they tend to be far below those a German worker would expect to receive. In making such a case, though, one would have to apply standards that the undocumented workers do not apply to themselves when entering into contracts with employers. Aside from instances of actual slavery, undocumented workers enter into contracts freely with their employers in the hope that they are getting a better deal than would be available at home. It is thus hard to argue from an ethical standpoint for the return of these workers to their home countries, even to prevent their “exploitation.”

On the other hand, it would be rather difficult to say that because undocumented migrants choose to leave their countries and join the illegal workforce, both they themselves and the receiving country should be satisfied with their abject lack of legal and social rights. In theory, any worker has the right to complain about working conditions or sue for lost wages. But practically speaking, to do so in Germany would mean almost sure detection and subsequent deportation, as courts routinely check on the immigration status of the plaintiff. Some employers take advantage of this situation by either not paying the agreed wage or withholding wages altogether.<sup>5</sup> This lack of basic legal rights should be considered separately from the issue of wage exploitation, as it underlines the inadequacies of a “free contract” when one of the negotiating parties is in an undocumented status.

### **The Unemployment Question**

In a time of high unemployment such as the present, there is a tendency to recast the problem of undocumented migration as one of “illegals” taking jobs away from German citizens. However, this claim fails to take into account the complexity of the unemployment problem in Germany, one that exists in the context of a very inflexible labor market and a generous social welfare program that can act as a substitute for workforce participation. The extent to which undocumented workers cause unemployment is linked to their effect on the equilibrium wage—by increasing the labor supply, they provoke a downward shift in the market wage, leading to an increase in official unemployment, even though total employment—legal and illegal—increases in absolute terms.

The impact of this phenomenon, however, is limited to the unskilled, low-wage sector of the economy, which is very small in Germany as in most advanced industrialized economies. Moreover, German nationals employed in this sector are already facing competition from abroad as labor-intensive production is being shifted to developing countries. Yet in many cases, German unemployment has more to do with employees’ lack of mobility between economic sectors

or geographic regions. Studies conducted in the United States indicate that illegal migrants, even more so than their legal counterparts, actually fulfill endogenous labor shortages in certain sectors. The doubtful relationship between illegal immigration and unemployment is also described by Thomas Strobl, Christian Democratic Union member of the Bundestag: “We are dealing here with often poorly-paid jobs for which, in part, Germans would be hard to find. Therefore, the correlation between illegal immigration and high unemployment in Germany does not have to be exaggerated.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Other Humanitarian Considerations**

If we acknowledge the positive economic contributions undocumented migrants make, the precariousness of their position appears all the more problematic. Living conditions are often deplorable, with as many as ten immigrants crammed into a two-bedroom apartment. Undocumented migrants live under constant threat of being discovered and deported. This fear opens them up to all kinds of abuse—financial, physical, and even sexual—without any possibility of legal recourse. Neither are these people well informed about the difficulty of the situation they will be confronting in the country of destination, nor can they possibly anticipate the challenges they might face along the way. The increase in human trafficking over recent years is indicative of a certain naïveté among illegal migrants, such that they will pay enormous sums to smuggle themselves into the EU, enduring the most appalling conditions imaginable along the way. Although it may be their illegal status that gives these migrants their particular economic value, one cannot accept ethically the subhuman means by which they are compelled to enter.

### **Current Policy Initiatives**

#### **Pre-entry Measures**

Short of dissolving national borders completely, the question will remain: How do we deal with those who enter or reside in the country illegally? Making a general distinction between pre- and post-entry measures, it appears that strengthening the needle sifter is more efficient than later hunting down a needle in the haystack. As Strobl observes, “Everything that can be done before people enter the country facilitates the control of immigration, whereas everything becomes more difficult once people are in the country.”

#### **Stage 1: Visas**

The national strategy for combating illegal immigration begins with controlling inflows—limiting the number of potential migrants who can enter the country through visa requirements and restrictions. People outside of the European Union are eligible to enter for a period of three months, but only citizens of perceived “sending countries” (or other countries considered “security threats”) are required to apply for and possess a visa upon entry. Eligibility requirements are meant to safeguard against overstays and may include possession of a return ticket and/or proof of a certain amount of money. The effectiveness of this policy is obviously limited. It is difficult to identify potential illegal migrants without unfairly dis-

criminating against individuals with the legitimate intention of visiting or studying in Europe, especially since countries that are popular destinations for undocumented migrants also tend to be popular destinations for tourists and students. There is also evidence that the visa application system has become corrupt at the embassy level in some countries, such as the Ukraine, allowing many migrant workers to enter Germany on tourist visas.<sup>8</sup> That is not to say that visa restrictions are not an important tool in combating illegal immigration; it continues to be the case that nationals of countries who, due to bilateral arrangements, are not required to hold visas upon entry (especially Poland) constitute a large percentage of the undocumented seasonal labor force in Germany.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Stage 2: Tightening the Borders**

Of course, withholding a visa does not mean that potential immigrants will cease efforts to get into the desired receiving country. Rather, they embark upon the much more uncertain strategy of illegal border crossing. Over the 1990s, the German Border Patrol increased personnel at Eastern borders more than threefold, militarizing the borders to Poland and the Czech Republic. Still, the German approach to border control has been relatively “low-tech”, relying on phoned-in denunciations from residents living in the border corridor for almost 70 percent of all apprehensions.

Coordination of border control efforts, moreover, is increasingly taking place at the European level, given that there is more or less unrestricted movement once within the territory of the EU. Approximately 140 million euros have been earmarked in this direction until 2006, including 45 million euros towards a new Border Management Agency to “coordinate monitoring of land, air and sea borders, especially in the Mediterranean, where boatloads of illegal immigrants are said to wash up on the shores of Italy and Spain on a near-daily basis.”<sup>9</sup>

Although little statistical evidence on the rate of border apprehension exists for Europe, the U.S., which spends nearly \$1 billion annually on border security, only apprehends approximately 30 percent of attempted illegal crossers.<sup>10</sup> But the importance of border control is also in its deterrent effect: “Even though border control policies are often merely symbolic, they are wanted by the public and do affect some migrants whose passage becomes more dangerous with every step taken to militarize the borders.”<sup>11</sup> In light of increasing fear of terrorism, citizens want to see that the government is doing something to keep dangerous individuals out of their country.

#### **Stage 3: Combating Human Trafficking**

Despite the different political backgrounds and the conflicting interests at stake, there is a general consensus about the need to combat organized crime. Already, a multibillion-dollar industry has developed around clandestine travel agencies. Moreover, there is evidence that there is a fair amount of corruption among border patrols and that immigration officers can be bought.

Much like the drug industry (and in fact human traffickers and smugglers of other valuable goods are already collaborating) worldwide criminal networks can only be effectively eliminated with international cooperation. Individual countries will have to share intelligence, information, judicial tasks, and financial responsibilities. The establishment of Europol<sup>12</sup> and Eurojust<sup>13</sup> indicates that this necessity is taken seriously by EU member states. However, they have yet to prove their efficacy.

### **Post-entry Measures**

One might describe the approach to dealing with illegal immigrants post-entry as one of “carrots and sticks.” However, the only carrot widely advocated is a program of “voluntary” return subsidies, intended to encourage illegal immigrants to reveal themselves to the authorities by offering them in exchange a free return flight in addition to a certain amount of financial assistance to facilitate their reintegration. While this policy has proven to be very effective with civil war refugees returning home following an armistice, it is unlikely to be attractive to illegals who have come to Germany to escape economic hardship in their home countries.<sup>14</sup> In practice, the only beneficiaries of such a policy are migrants already contemplating voluntary return. It does little to reduce the number of illegal immigrants already in the country, while potentially inviting abuse.

The “sticks,” or more aggressive and punitive measures, can together be summarized as the “3 Ds”: detection, detention, and deportation. It is obvious that permanent illegal residence or work in a country undermines both national and European immigration and asylum policy and challenges the rule of law. However, given the considerable economic advantages of illegal immigration to an overregulated and inflexible labor market such as Germany’s, the practice of enforcement is somewhat different. In fact, the Süßmuth Commission finds the lack of tough 3D enforcement to be a major reason for certain groups of asylum seekers without legitimate claim and other illegal immigrants to choose Germany as their country of destination.

Regarding detection, arbitrary identity checks by the German border patrol have proven to be extremely inefficient. Out of 80,000 checks conducted in Germany between August and December 1998, only 500 led to immigration-related apprehensions. Moreover, they led to numerous instances of discrimination, since officers were only instructed to verify the identity of individuals appearing “suspicious” or “un-German.” Visa over-stayers can be identified relatively easily through cooperation with carriers and airports by obliging them to share their information on unused return tickets. At the same time, shifting the burden of detection to other state agencies, especially schools and hospitals, is unacceptable, as is the prosecution of individuals and/or charities who offer humanitarian assistance to illegal migrants.<sup>15</sup>

Detection is not the only problem; enforcing deportation orders has also proven to be particularly challenging. Many illegal residents have destroyed their passports and ID cards,

and even if their identity can be established, their countries of origin are not always willing to allow their readmission or repatriation. This is in addition to the numerous other legal obstacles to deportation, such as the threat of torture or the unlikelihood of receiving a fair trial in the home country. The problem of repatriation has become severe enough that the EU, with Germany’s full support, is considering imposing severe sanctions on countries that are uncooperative with respect to the readmission of their citizens.

Nevertheless, if in the end the only thing illegal immigrants have to fear is being sent back to where they came from, the increased probability of deportation is not going to serve as a significant deterrent during the initial decision-making process. As important as the rule of law is, restrictive measures are only reasonable insofar as they can have an effect. And the effectiveness of the 3Ds in Germany is, relative to the resources currently expended in this direction, not very great.

### **Other Measures**

To Regularize or Not to Regularize

Given the enormous difficulties of detecting and deporting illegal migrants, the simplest though most controversial means of addressing the current illegal population is to offer them the opportunity to “regularize” (legalize) their status. Numerous European countries have introduced regularization programs since the 1980s, including France, Belgium, Italy and Spain. Usually the migrant must meet certain criteria in order to be eligible, such as entry before a certain date and proof of self-sufficiency or an offer of employment. The host country will then grant authorization, either on a temporary or permanent basis. Although the argument is often made that regularization programs encourage future illegal immigration, there is little evidence to support this claim: If potential migrants chose their destination country based on the likelihood of a future amnesty, there would be far fewer illegal residents in Germany!

Although regularization does not appear to have an impact on future illegal migration, it does solve the immediate problem of their illegal status. Most workers will choose to participate in regularization programs, given that wages generally rise and social benefits may become available. But it is important to recognize that some of the economic advantages offered by undocumented migrant workers will be lost once they have achieved legal status. Given Germany’s constitutional obligation to provide social security to all legal residents, much of their contribution to GDP will be swallowed up in the form of social benefits. Also, they will cease to provide a source of cheap labor as a significant portion of their wages will be deducted in the form of taxes and social security benefits.<sup>16</sup> In the case that certain EU countries with economies structured differently than that of Germany should want to absorb these workers into the formal sector, it is unlikely that this will be tolerated in the future by other member states.<sup>17</sup>

## **Employer Sanctions: Targeting Labor Market Demand**

While many aspects of illegal immigration policy target the supply of undocumented migrant labor, it is also possible to target the demand. Implementing sanctions against employers of undocumented migrants, as well as nationals working illegally, adds a risk premium to their wage, thus reducing the financial advantages of hiring this type of worker and also damaging the firm's public image. As demand for illegal labor decreases, so do job availability and wages in the informal sector, two of the largest pull factors for potential migrants. Although targeting employers is not much talked about in the German context, a report by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography for the Council of Europe stated quite boldly "it is not possible to curb the phenomenon of clandestine migration unless appropriate sanctions are foreseen and implemented against those who employ clandestine migrants." (Section 2.34) These measures have the additional benefit of eliminating the unfair competitive advantage that results from the employment of undocumented labor.<sup>18</sup>

Where these sanctions have been implemented in Europe and the United States, though, they have proved to be of limited effectiveness. From an economic perspective, it is clear that sanctions can only work if the risk premium associated with hiring unauthorized workers exceeds the amount saved by employing them rather than legal workers. Fines that amount to little more than a slap on the wrist, as in the current case, cannot hope to act as a deterrent. Christian Klos, an official in the Justice and Home Affairs department of the European Commission, admits as much: "Companies do think in economic terms, and it is more attractive from a calculation point-of-view to take a little fine of several hundred euros [than to stop employing illegal labor]".<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the political feasibility of the implementation of sanctions has much to do with society's general attitude towards combating clandestine employment of nationals and migrants alike, especially since the government organ responsible for conducting controls and raids at the workplace is the Labor Office. In Germany, there does not seem to be much political initiative to clamp down on the informal sector, although fines have been on the rise in recent years and can range anywhere from 4,000 to as much as 200,000 . A last obstacle to the effective implementation of employer sanctions has to do with the technical and legal difficulties of compelling employers to check up on the work authorization of their employees, given the numerous forms of identification that can be used. This does not seem to be as much of a problem in Germany where the labor market is so carefully regulated. However, one runs the risk that employers will discriminate against authorized foreign workers to avoid bureaucratic hassle.

## **From Analysis to Policy Making: Where to Go?**

In considering the enforcement measures that are taken against illegal immigration, it has become clear that the borders and the 3D policies of destination countries, such as Germany, can barely act as more than a semi-permeable

membrane for global migration flows. They are simply not strong enough to resist the diffusion of desperate persons whose desire to migrate is often caused by enormous disparities in economic conditions, political stability, and environmental catastrophe. People will always find the means, even if illegal and dangerous, to enter their perceived promised land. Any realistic policy of prevention will have to take that into account. In the end, this analysis of illegal immigration's role in Germany today suggests that a two-part policy strategy is necessary.

First, it is beneficial to offer the possibility of legal status to low-skilled immigrants whose goal is to reside and work in Germany but who do not necessarily meet the requirements laid out in the new immigration law still awaiting ratification. Strobl of the CDU maintains that the policy currently under debate goes far enough,<sup>20</sup> but it is crucial to go beyond it. The most feasible way of doing this is to offer low-skilled immigrants a form of renewable temporary residence and work permit rather than permanent residence. Hans-Christian Strobele, a member of the Bundestag and vice chairman of the parliamentary faction Alliance 90/The Greens, remarks that this kind of further liberalization was his party's goal for the recent Immigration Law: "Due to harsh resistance from the conservative opposition we have not opened the German labor market for qualified labor migrants from third countries, nor have we implemented instruments for the so-called demographic immigration. We just liberalized access for highly qualified personnel, for entrepreneurs, and for students who want to work in Germany after they have taken their final exams. Usually, labor migrants will get temporary work permits. This can be changed into a permanent status after the migrant has worked here for five years—and when she or he has attended one of the new integration courses successfully."

Klos, of the EU Commission Office for Justice and Home Affairs, states that the Commission is generally in favor of seeing EU member states create legal channels for labor migration wherever shortages of workers exist, especially in the service sector. Yet he acknowledges that the Commission does not see itself issuing an EU-wide directive specifying what legal channels should be created: "Ultimately, it is left up to the member states to decide where the demand for workers exists. The Commission only asks that states have clear procedures and transparency in the process of applying for legal status." It seems, then, that Germany must use its prerogative to offer the opportunity for current illegal immigrants of working age, along with prospective future immigrants who might seek work in Germany, to apply for temporary residence and work permits, regardless of whether they are skilled or unskilled. In this way, such immigrants will—regardless of income level— both contribute fiscally to a welfare state that is facing increasing pressure due to Germany's aging population and draw benefits that are more proportional to their inputs.

Importantly, such a strategy would not constitute the radical

and ultimately unsustainable move of granting asylum on grounds of economic hardship, because persons applying for this legal status would not immediately receive state benefits without contributing anything in return. Rather, they would have to demonstrate that a job offer is already available in order to qualify for this status. At the same time, gaining temporary status—for, say, twenty-four months, with the possibility of renewal—would not immediately make one eligible to receive permanent status, with its many privileges, after a time. Instead, one must demonstrate a certain degree of financial solvency and knowledge of the German language somehow comparable to the level required for obtaining German citizenship. In the end, this strategy could yield a two-tier welfare state, similar to the one that is developing in Denmark, with the possibility of mobility between the two tiers. Moreover, it would serve to recognize the contributions of labor migrants to Germany while also helping to reduce the pressure currently placed on the German asylum system: Many of the applicants who currently apply for asylum out of economic hardship rather than “fear of persecution” would not have to pursue the asylum route (only to have their applications rejected) but could instead gain temporary legal status.

Additionally, however, Germany must back up its rhetorical commitment to the rule of law by acting more consistently on 3D enforcement. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind the factor limiting the liberal state’s capacity to deter immigration via coercive measures. Democratic societies and free market economies are built on individual freedom and the right to privacy and, consequently, there will always be a certain element of illegality that remains invisible and goes unpunished. If our ultimate goal is to prevent immigration outside of either the proposed legal channels or the asylum system, enforcing sanctions against employers who continue to use illegal labor can be successfully combined with 3D enforcement in a fair application of the rule of law. In sum, it is both morally unacceptable and economically undesirable to maintain a system that is loose enough to allow a sizable sector of illegal labor to flourish, without being loose enough to give such laborers any of the protections guaranteed to legal workers.

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### Footnotes

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2. Georges Tapinos, “Clandestine Immigration: Economic and Political Issues (Part III)” in Trends in International Migration: Continuous Reporting System on Migration, Annual Report, OECD, 1999 Edition.
3. Holk Stobbe, “Undocumented Migration in the USA and Germany: An Analysis of the German Case with Cross-references to the U.S. Situation”, The Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, University of California-San Diego: La Jolla, February 2000, 2.
4. Consider the two inputs of production: Capital and labor. If the cost of one (labor) decreases, the marginal product of the other (capital) will increase. Assuming that market prices stay the same, the employer will hire new labor until the marginal product of capital and of labor are equal and their marginal revenue product is equal to price.
5. In this respect, the situation of undocumented workers in Germany is even worse than that in other countries such as the United States, where the Occupational Safety and Health Administration will not check the immigration status of complaining workers, thus offering them a degree of legal protection.
6. Interview, Strobl.
7. “[The] scandal around the German embassy in the Ukraine shows how corruption and mismanagement have made their way into the system... Furthermore, the distribution of tourist visas was later found out to be given into the hands of criminals. Together with the corrupt staff at the embassy, they managed to smuggle millions of people to Germany through the Ukrainian embassy.” Stoble, interview.
8. Poles who are caught working illegally do get a stamp on their passport preventing them from re-entering for a period of five years.
9. “EU leaders to tackle immigration into enlarged bloc,” EU Business, October 15, 2003.

10. J. Bustamante, "Undocumented migration from Mexico to the United States: Preliminary Findings of the Zapata Canyon Project" in: Undocumented Migration to the United States. IRCA and the Experience of the 1980s, Santa Monica, Calif., Rand Corporation, Washington, D.C., The Urban Institute (1990).
11. Stobbe, p. 9.
12. Europol is the European Law Enforcement Organization which aims at improving the effectiveness and co-operation of the competent authorities in the EU's member states in preventing and combating terrorism, unlawful drug trafficking and other serious forms of international organized crime.
13. Eurojust is a European Union body which supports investigations and prosecution by the member states into serious cross-border or transnational crime.
14. Strobl, interview.
15. Bericht der Unabhängigen Kommission "Zuwanderung" (Report of the Independent Commission on Immigration). Available at [http://www.bmi.bund.de/dokumente/Artikel/ix\\_46876.htm?nodeID=.](http://www.bmi.bund.de/dokumente/Artikel/ix_46876.htm?nodeID=)
16. "The main advantage of illegal immigration is the illegality, in that you do not spend taxes or make contributions to social security... If you simply convert such jobs into legal jobs, you have to count on top all these contributions to social security and to taxes." Christian Klos, interview.
17. Italy's decision in 1998 to grant amnesty to 250,000 illegal immigrants attracted criticism from other member states, fearing "that Italian generosity could undermine EU efforts to deter would-be immigrants and refugees from entering Europe." "Tackling "Illegal" Immigration," Fortress Europe? Circular Letter, March 1999, available at <http://www.fecl.org/circular/5708.htm>.
18. In France, for example, combating employment of illegal migrants is part of a wider campaign against clandestine employment, aiming "above all to secure compliance with employment legislation with a view to preventing the unfair competition that would result from hiring clandestine labor. The penalties are directed at employers, not at workers." Tapinos, p. 244.
19. Klos, interview.
20. "With the new immigration law, we have basically facilitated the so-called workers' migration. Especially in areas for highly-qualified and specialized people, where we already have a shortage in labor supply today, the way for foreigners to get working and residence permits has been facilitated." Strobl, interview.



# Western Mosques or Mosques in the West. Why Do We Believe Them?

Aldo de Pape and Alexander Zevin

This article aims to explore the attitudes and views of practising Muslims towards Dutch society vis-à-vis two mosques in Amsterdam, the capital of the Netherlands. We consider two apparently different mosques, Al Tahweed and the Milli Gorus mosque, Hagya Sophia. The reason for our narrow focus—on two mosques in Amsterdam with relatively diverse membership bases—is both practical and theoretical. Time constraints, travelling distances and limited access to mosques all played a role in determining the scope and breadth of our research terrain. More importantly, by comparing two different groups of practicing Muslims and their perceptions of Dutch society—on issues of integration, social status, media coverage and Western values—we hope to undo some of the all too easy West-and-the-Rest polarizations common in Dutch news and academic debates. As one Muslim scholar put it, “the Dutch like speaking to themselves” about Muslims. About Muslims but without Muslims. This article attempts to redress this oft-repeated refrain—uttered by Muslim worshipers frustrated at their sense of being mischaracterized—by examining the place not merely of mosques in Dutch society, but of Dutch society within these mosques.

## Occidentalism

To this end, scholars such as Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit have explored the term “Occidentalism”: put roughly, a certain way of viewing—of writing, imaging, and thinking about—the West which reoccurs throughout the so-called Islamic world. Occidentalism was coined as a direct response to Edward Said’s widely influential work, “Orientalism,” which, in brief, exposes the stereotypes of the “Oriental,” the Eastern, which lie, according to Said, at the heart of Western scholarly tradition. Occidentalism, like Orientalism, divides the world into East and West and, according to the Israeli philosopher Avishai Margalit, into two Manichean spheres of good and evil. In a recent lecture at the University of Tilburg, Margalit elaborated on this point by linking the image of the West as evil to the Occidentalist trope of the “Mega City”—an immoral, highly and openly sexual, indecent, and unclean place: a “big whore.” The inhabitants of this city, this ‘invention’ of the West, are contaminated by sinful material concerns. Islam, a religion dictating the importance of purity and cleanliness, is thus set against the filthiness and decay of the Western city—the city as a symbol of the West.

Occidentalism, according to Margalit, is as old as the existence of religion itself. Its origins can be found in the rubble of the tower of Babylon which, in Arabic, shares a root with the word Balar, or polluted, mixed—a hybrid of peoples and languages. The Tower of Babylon is a seminal point of reference

in Occidental thought for it is responsible for the dispersion of humanity, for incurring the wrath of God by presuming to reach to heaven. As Margalit argues, the city, Babylon, combines a total lack of morality with a seductive materiality and freedom. A Muslim must be vigilant to maintain his or her faith in such a climate.

To what extent is this viewpoint, explicitly or not, shared by Muslims living in a large Western city like Amsterdam? If Occidentalism does hold sway to some degree, does the trope of Babylon as a sinful place to be avoided by “good Muslims” preclude a meaningful integration of Muslims into Dutch society at large?

Armed with pen and pad we made our way to the Al Tahweed Mosque in Amsterdam-West and the Hagya Sofia Mosque in the Baarsjes to examine the presence of Margalit’s theories. This is what we saw:

## Al Tahweed

Afternoon prayers have finished. Worshipers stream out of the Al Tahweed Mosque in Amsterdam-West; some stop to chat, others reach for cell phones, and still others dash off on the bicycles lining the sidewalk outside. They are mostly men in their thirties and above; some wear traditional clothing, others are in dress shirts and slacks and some are in casual garb. Egyptian, Moroccan, some native Dutch. After a little cajoling, M. Khojja, leaving the Mosque with briefcase in tow, agrees to speak with us. Khojja, a senior member of Al Tahweed, dressed in a traditional dishdasha and head cap, has a broad smile surrounded by a scraggly black beard. He tends to swoosh his arms in grand arcs as he speaks.

He first brings us to a small food shop owned by one of the imams of Al Tahweed. Imam Sami, a short bespectacled man, also in dishdasha, gives us a gentle smile but asks that we keep it short. When asked about the differences between Mosques, for example, Milli Gorus and Al Tahweed, he replies: “We are all preaching the same religion, which is Islam. And we all have the same function: to be a house of prayer.”

Khojja then guides us to a small teashop in a bazaar just off of the Ten Katemarkt, a vast outdoor market of vendors in a diverse neighbourhood in Amsterdam. On the way, Khojja waves his hands at the sheer variety of foodstuffs and clothing being sold in the market. No better proof is needed, he says, that Al Tahweed exists harmoniously in a multicultural community in Amsterdam. As we sit down, he jokes with

some friends and points to the colorful murals on the wall depicting sandy landscapes and ancient cities. “They’re mine,” he says with a proud grin. After a round of mint tea, we put our questions to Khojja.

Khojja tells us, interestingly, that his donning of the traditional dishdasha and cap is relatively new. It is a reaction, he says, to a feeling of marginalization in the Netherlands since the attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. “Before 9/11,” he says, “attitudes towards Muslims and integration were on the right track.” He connects what he sees as a rise in anti-Muslim sentiment, or Islamophobia, to the political saliency of such attitudes. Pim Fortuyn and Ayaan Hirschi Ali come up. Fortuyn, a recently assassinated politician, and Ali, a current member of parliament, are both known for their controversial stances regarding immigration and minorities. These two people, he believes, utilized for their own ends a fear of Muslims. “When you fight the Muslims,” he says of Hirschi Ali, “you only make them stronger.” His defiant tone is later muted when he says, incredulously, “Some people call me Osama Bin Laden!” He points outside. “But that’s not me!” Cooling off a little, he adds wryly, “He’s American.”

On the subject of integration—to what degree Muslims must strike a compromise between their religious edicts and culture (e.g. dress, sexual divisions, places of residence)—Khojja is equally passionate. “I have been living here for thirty-four years,” he laughingly shouts. “I am Dutch.” While he agreed with some of Pim Fortuyn’s policies on limiting integration, policies that are now commonplace, Khojja says he ultimately felt excluded by the politician. “If I am in Greece and I see a Greek man whistle at a Dutch girl as she walks by, I will be offended, and defend her...because I am a proud Dutchman. But according to Fortuyn I am not Dutch because my skin color, religion, and dress are different.”

Khojja returns to Fortuyn again and again. Fortuyn, an openly gay politician, for him, represents the gay rights movement that, in turn, serves as a stand in for the way in which Dutch society has sought to demonize and modify Islam. He sights the uproar over a mosque in Rotterdam early last year in which Imam El Mundi compared homosexuals to pigs. Khojja never denied the accuracy of the quotation; he does stress that the event in question occurred inside the mosque after two journalists baited El Mundi. “Muslims don’t want to make the Netherlands into a Muslim state; they just want to practice their religion,” he says. “Gays can do what they want, but respect our customs as well.”

Rhetorically, his argument makes sense. But, as Khojja points out, he is Dutch. Is it acceptable, on the basis of religious difference, to preach intolerance of homosexuals in the Netherlands? Khojja raises this question in the course of our interview; he also illustrates its logical consequence. Khojja’s elaborate discussion of the different types of homosexuality, of the sexual revolution, of “hippie days,” and of the “decadence” and “corruptive” powers of gay men all sound like

stereotypical (read “Occidental”) images of the West. Here the seductive chaos of the Western city takes the form of a city projecting the threat of homosexuality.

### **Milli Gorus**

In the Baarsjes neighborhood, an inhabitant of Amsterdam will not easily recognize the Hagya Sofia Mosque. An old Opel factory, painted in chipped blue paint, a line of industrial-grey windows lining its façade, greets worshipers as they file into this religious and social complex created primarily for the Turkish community of Amsterdam.

The vice-president of Milli Gorus, Uzeyir Kabaktepe, who guided us through the Mosque on an earlier visit, describes his organization as a federation of some 107 different groups. These include mosques, students’ and women’s groups, and youth groups for girls and boys. According to Kabaktepe, Milli Gorus has around 5000 paying members and about 30,000 adherents. Unlike Diyanet, a sister organization in the Netherlands which receives support from the Turkish government, Milli Gorus is politically and financially independent.

The Turkish government is not the only organization from which Kabaktepe wishes to keep his distance. When asked about the relationship between Milli Gorus and Al Tahweed, the vice-president is adamant: “Al Tahweed is totally different. It practices a form of political Islam.” In contrast to Imam Sami of Al Tahweed, Kabaktepe does not believe that all Mosques are “preaching the same religion” or “have the same function.” Kabaktepe describes the members of the Al Tahweed Mosque as very much connected to the political situation in their home countries and strongly devoted to spreading their identity. He refers to Al Tahweed’s alleged links to terrorist training camps in Saudi Arabia committed to the creation of a global Islamic society. Al Tahweed is accused of collecting money for this sort of Jihad—to foster a religious state, Islamic nationalism, in the Netherlands and wider Europe. “Ten years ago, Milli Gorus had the same problem,” Kabaktepe explains. They were also seen as a terrorist organization, “...while in reality, and in contrast to Al Tahweed, we were giving political support to Turkey.” With the change in government from a military dictatorship in Turkey to a non-military, secular democracy, this is no longer an issue.

Kabaktepe cites what he calls the radical pan-Arabism of Al Tahweed to distinguish the mission of Milli Gorus. His organization is committed to political and social integration into Dutch society. Though it consists mainly of Turkish Muslims, its members, he says, consider themselves to be Dutch and have no interest in Turkish nationalism. The way Islam is practiced in Hagya Sofia is a private, individual experience that varies from one person to the other and does not imply any isolation from society. A member of the Turkish Mosque can live and integrate in Dutch society and be a decent Muslim at the same time.

Contrary to M. Khojja, Kabaktepe does not think that atti-

tudes towards Muslims in Dutch society at-large have significantly radicalized since 9/11. He does agree that, particularly in Rotterdam, there was an increase in prejudicial treatment of Islamic minorities, which took the form of postponing the construction of a Mosque by the local government. According to him this was the exception and not the rule. Especially when it comes to his plans for the construction of the new Hagya Sofia Mosque that is due in 2008, Kabaktepe is very optimistic. "Only the banks are giving me some problems with interest rates," he jokes.

To explain the religiosity and conservatism of many younger Muslims, most of whom are third or second generation Dutch, Kabaktepe speaks about the simultaneous attraction and repulsion of Dutch society. "The police," for example, "are much more lenient—more concerned with talking than with beating people up." This is extremely different from Turkey. There are fewer consequences for breaking the law and fewer incentives not to. This creates an atmosphere of self-regulation: Freedom is a temptation that can grow too large, which invites younger people in big cities to become more religious by imposing self-discipline. According to Kabaktepe, this partly explains the fact that a more religious Turkish society can be found in the Netherlands than in Turkey.

### **Islam and the West**

In our search for a proper definition of Occidentalism as it exists in the attitudes of Muslims in the Netherlands we met with Dr. M. Parvizi Amineh, senior research fellow at the International Institute for Asian Studies. He felt that the question, as we had posed it to Kabaktepe, Khojja and others, should be formulated differently. The term Occidentalism, he said, implies that there is, in fact, a clash of two different civilizations, two different histories, going on in the Netherlands and Europe. The supposed "Eastern" and "Western" civilizations have actually been part of the same historical trajectory for hundreds of years. With the rise and spread of capitalism in the 17th century and the exclusion from that system of many Islamic countries, there has been a socio-economic marginalization of Muslims which has given rise to the many radical sects of Islam. From this time on, he states, there has been one global history, one integrated economic system, moving ever closer together. It is thus wrong to think about two distinct and unique Islamic and Christian civilizations.

Dr. Markha Valenta, a professor at the Free University in Amsterdam who focuses on the interactions of Muslims in Western societies, echoed Dr. Amineh's comments regarding the perceived clash of Islam and the West. To our surprise, she described the common portrayals of both Milli Gorus and Al Tahweed as fairly conservative. "They are mentioned mainly when they offer some resistance to integrating pressures," she says. In this respect she reiterates the concerns of both M. Khojja and a Muslim-convert at Al Tahweed we interviewed named Josef Stevens, who bemoan the misrepresentation in the Dutch media of their organizations and of Muslims generally. Valenta, like Khojja, cites a shift in Dutch

public opinion beginning with the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. "9/11 was responsible for the explosion of prejudices which were there all the time but were not discussed." In some ways she sees this as a healthy development; currently, though, she finds the tone of the major newspapers—Ayaan Hirschi Ali is again mentioned – as hysterical. "The discussion," she says, "is getting destructive, and it feeds the defensiveness of Muslims." When asked about Khojja's sentiment—of being unrepresented—she agrees: "There is no one who stands up for Muslims in a way that makes it into the news."

Like Amineh, Dr. Valenta also discusses the misconception that there is one Islam. "Islam is increasingly a form of social identity, and it is becoming more individualized in Europe and in the Netherlands." The notion that there is one Islam, she continues, is actually being foisted on the Muslim community by the Dutch government. "There is pressure for a central Muslim organization to make it easy for the Dutch government to distribute funds and to carry on dialogue." This, she adds, is typically Dutch: the desire to place people in groups, to categorize them, and to use government powers to regulate and finance them. Ironically, it is precisely this notion of a monolithic Muslim identity that many politicians fear. The difference in opinion between Milli Gorus and Al Tahweed—"the difficulty these religious groups have in working together"—is, she suggests, a testament to the fact that there are many Islams within the Netherlands.

### **Conclusion**

Dr. Amineh earlier stated: "The marginalization of minorities is nowhere as strong as in the Netherlands; even in France the situation is better." This is a startling statement, if it's true. The fact that Amineh proffers it at all suggests some link with Valenta's discussion of the "typically or historically Dutch policies of 'putting people in boxes.'" In other words, perhaps the process of marginalization—economic, social, political – that many of the Muslims we spoke to feel is actually a consequence of the Dutch attempt at integrating these religious minorities. A history of dealing with the Catholics and the Protestants—of assigning to these groups a central representative body to which the government could disperse funds and with which it could meet and coordinate—may have worked in the past, but it ignores the non-hierarchical nature of Islam and the many different sects present in the Netherlands. Lumping them together—the Muslims— even while attempting to "integrate" them into Dutch society is a symptom of the same rhetoric that stokes fear of Islam as a monolithic and foreign threat.

In this sense, the title of our article—"Mosques in the West, or Western Mosques"—is also a kind of mistake, a symptom of the terminology of "badly integrated" or "well integrated," Occidentalism or pro-Western. In reality, the notion of creating an ideal Western mosque is impossible for it implies that there is some kind of non-Western mosque in Europe.

In a Time Magazine article of December 24, 2001, on “Islam in Europe,” the author, Nicholas Le Quesne, contends that there is a new form of “Euro-Islam” that depends on “the adoption of a form of Islam that embraces Western political values, such as pluralism, tolerance, the separation of church and state, democratic civil society and individual human rights.”

Whether we are speaking about a mosque like Al Tahweed—apparently conservative with links to Saudi Arabia—or about Milli Gorus—steeped, as it is, in the language of pro-Dutch integration and constructing a new “WesterMosque”—there is no such thing as a Mosque in Europe which is not shaped by its environment. As Kabaktepe’s example of the reaction to the freedoms of a big city like Amsterdam suggest, the freedom, particularly of young people in the Netherlands, is responsible for the attitudes of both Mosques. “The process is European, but the content seems foreign to many,” says Valenta. In other words, Al Tahweed and Milli Gorus, and the many different forms of Islam practiced within the Netherlands, are a consequence of the very freedom—of the “Western political values”—found in Europe.

It is fair to say that without acknowledging the variegated nature of worshipping Dutch Muslims and leaving aside the terms “Western” or “European” to describe and interact with the Muslim minorities, little progress can be made in easing their feelings of misrepresentation and marginalization. The attempt to make Islam into a foreign agent struggling to adapt to Europe is a denial of the fact that most of the 800,000 Muslims in the Netherlands (Time Magazine, December 2001) have a faith that is exclusively and particularly Dutch.

A new policy is needed—one which departs from the tradition of recognizing and positing religious authority in one place, as has been the precedent for dealing with religious minorities in the Netherlands. This policy should speak to individual Muslims, not to mention the many non-practicing Muslims, in Dutch society. “The Dutch government would like to see the mosque as a church,” says Valenta. But, she warns, the two are different and require different responses—not because Islam is exceptional but because there are genuine differences in the way this religion is practiced and observed. Real engagement means acknowledging and responding to this fact.

### **Lectures and Interviews**

Lecture of Avishai Margalit on ‘Occidentalism’ organized by the Nexus Institute at the auditorium of Tilburg University, 20 June 2004.

Al Tahweed 22 June 2004.

Interview with Josef Stevens.

Interview with M. Khojja.

Interview with Imam Sami 22 June 2004.

Interview with Uzeyir Kabaktepe, vice-president of Milli Gorus, in his office, 23 June 2004.

Interview with Doctor of Islamic Studies M. Parvizi Amineh of

the University of Amsterdam, in his office, 25 June 2004.

Interview with Dr. M. Valenta of the Free University of Amsterdam, in her office, 29 June 2004.

### **Articles**

Nicholas Le Quesne, “Islam in Europe: A Changing Faith,” Time Magazine. 24 December 2001.

Janny Groen en Lidy Nicolassen, “Griezelen uit onbegrip,” de Volkskrant. 20 June 2004.

# Fighting for the Flag: Danish Identity and National Symbolism

Katrina Feilberg, Gedske Marie Bruun Messell and Brian Stout

The flag is the best symbol of Denmark—it defines our society.” This statement by an elderly Danish man captures the prevailing sentiment toward Dannebrog—“the cloth of the Danes.” In numerous interviews with Danes we heard echoed a familiar refrain: “I am proud of our flag,” said one 34-year-old man. “It is a beautiful flag,” concurred a 21-year-old woman. A comprehensive national mythology surrounds the long history of the Danish flag, proclaimed by some to be the oldest flag in the world. According to legend, Dannebrog fell from heaven on June 15, 1219, during a battle in Estonia, enabling King Valdemar II to lead the Danes to victory.

The use of the Danish national flag historically had been restricted to the King and the Royal Navy. Not until 1854 were private citizens allowed to use the flag. Contemporary understandings of the flag cannot be divorced from this crucial historical context, because for many Danes it is the mythology surrounding the flag that makes it such a popular symbol. In the words of one young Danish woman, “The story about the flag is a wonderful story.” Perhaps due to this unusual history, the flag enjoys a much more prominent presence in Denmark than in most other countries. The Royal Danish Embassy in Washington, D.C. reports: “The Danish people love their flag and are very proud to use it whenever it is possible, this being as a tiny paper version for the Christmas tree or as facial make-up at a football match.” Though undeniably a national symbol, most Danes do not see the Dannebrog in political terms. Several stated outright, “The flag is not political.” When pressed, 34-year-old Kristian admitted, “Yes, it may be political—I suppose it has to be. But most people just use it for personal celebrations.” Even foreigners seem to recognize the popularization of the flag in Denmark. Two Italian university students studying in Denmark reported being well acquainted with the mythology of the flag, and they laughingly reported their first encounter with Dannebrog on a birthday cake. Yes, they agreed it was primarily a celebration symbol, and no, it was not political. Sociologist Peter Gundelach explains, “Flying the flag is regarded as quite natural in Denmark, compared to Sweden, where continual acclamation of the country is seen as perverse.”

## A Divided Population?

Despite the ease with which many Danes display the flag, in 2001, renowned Danish filmmaker Lars von Trier (*Breaking the Waves*, *Dancer in the Dark*) declared, “The Dannebrog is the Danish swastika—it should be burnt.” Other Danes express a similar dissociation with regard to the flag. Though using much less inflammatory language, 27-year-old Olga nonetheless remarked, “I no longer use the flag on my

Christmas tree.” Again, in the words of one 24-year-old man: “It makes me sick.” These reactions, diametrically opposed to those expressed previously, prompt two questions: What explains the antipathy toward the flag expressed by some Danes, and how can we understand the dramatic chasm separating these two groups?

By most accounts, opposition to the flag is not opposition to the flag as such but rather a statement against what it has come to represent. For some Danes, the flag has come to be associated with Dansk Folkeparti - the Danish People’s Party (DPP), a neo-conservative party that Martin Burcharth, U.S. Correspondent with the Danish daily Information, describes as “xenophobic” and “anti-immigrant.” Author and historian Georg Metz asserts, “The Danish People’s Party has conquered the flag.” Bashy Quraishy, President of the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), agrees: “The Danish People’s Party has taken a monopoly on using the flag.”

The DPP came to power in the 2001 elections, earning 12% of the vote to place it in a right-wing coalition with Venstre - the Liberal Party (understood in the classical economic sense)—and Det Konservative Folkeparti—the Conservative party. The DPP, led by Pia Kjaersgaard, campaigned on a vigorously anti-immigration platform, combining nationalistic rhetoric with flagrantly xenophobic statements. As the official party website unequivocally declares, “Denmark is not an immigrant country and has never been so. Therefore, we will not accept a transformation to a multiethnic society.” The DPP uses the flag in every political speech and in all official press releases, and it has even incorporated the Dannebrog in the party logo.

Morten Messerschmidt, Vice-President of the youth organization of the DPP, defends his party’s use of the flag as a perfectly legitimate use of a national symbol. “I love my flag—it’s only a symbol of the Danish country.” He went on to point out that anyone could use the flag, and that other parties indeed continue to do so. “I don’t really see a problem,” he insisted. Amalie Lyhne Larsen, a representative of the Social Liberal Party’s youth organization, disagreed. “The flag is always a strong symbol,” she contended. In explaining her opposition to the DPP and its use of the Dannebrog, she suggested, “the Danish People’s Party uses feelings...instead of arguing in a rational manner.” Maintaining that she does not see it as a political symbol, Caroline, a 21-year-old native Dane, declares, “To use the flag in a debate about immigration is to put symbols on it that don’t belong.” She quickly appends that she still uses the flag for her own celebrations and sees

the DPP's use of the flag as aberrant but inconsequential.

### **Much Ado About Nothing?**

If it is true, as Metz, Larsen, and Quraishy believe, that the DPP has monopolized the flag as a political symbol associated with xenophobia and intolerance, how can we explain the seemingly innocuous sentiments many Danes express regarding the flag? One way to approach that question is by posing another: Who are the people articulating these divergent viewpoints? To the far right stands the DPP, using the flag as a national symbol connected to their political platform. Opposite this is what we will call the liberal (understood in the American political sense) intellectuals, composed of academics like Metz, highly visible liberal media figures like von Trier, and the educated youth who feel threatened by the DPP's use of the flag and reject it accordingly. Somewhere between these poles the Danish public continues to use their flag as always, celebrating birthdays and football games with almost cavalier disregard for the heated debate over the proper role of the Dannebrog in Danish society. This admittedly simplistic rendering of the dilemma nonetheless reveals a fascinating divide between the intellectuals and the greater part of the public, both of whom recognize the DPP's usage of the flag but who reach differing conclusions regarding the significance of that use.

### **The Identity Debate**

At the heart of the immigration debate and the fight for the flag is a much deeper and more complex issue: the future of Danish identity. As Sasha Polakow-Suransky, senior correspondent to the American Prospect, astutely notes, "It is a debate, ultimately, about what it means to be Danish." BBC correspondent Angus Roxburgh agrees, writing in *Preachers of Hate: The Rise of the Far Right*: "The [immigration] debate brought to the fore the question of what it meant to be Danish, and indeed European, in this age of mass migration." Much of the anxiety surrounding the issue of immigration stems from an underlying uncertainty about the status and future of Danish identity. Many Danes experience genuine difficulty when attempting to pinpoint precisely what it means to be Danish in a globalizing world. When asked what it meant to be Danish, Kristian, a 34-year-old native Dane, pondered for a moment before finally replying, "I don't know." Theology professor Johannes Sløk explains, "There is really no such thing as Danish identity. Our roots lie in Ancient Greece, Rome, and in France... Danish identity is rye bread, boiled potatoes and thick brown gravy." Fatma, a Pakistani immigrant, spoke in similarly dismissive terms. "The fact is the Danes have little national culture left."

The inability to define Danish identity clearly has spawned what New York Times foreign affairs editor Roger Cohen describes as "an acute case of the identity crisis now afflicting several European states." A recent article in the Copenhagen Post echoes Cohen's assessment, suggesting that "Denmark has experienced a crisis of national identity." This anxiety-ridden environment conditions people toward a

defensive response. As Cohen notes, "That very erosion of national distinctions, occurring throughout Europe, provides fertile ground for nationalist or anti-immigrant outbursts that pay politically." Thus, in response to this perceived lack of national unity and identity, the DPP has identified the enemy: anything not "Danish." Rallying around an anti-immigration platform, much of the DPP's propaganda plays powerfully on the symbolism associated with "Danish" images - the Dannebrog, the Krone, the Royal Family, and traditional Danish songs. It has attempted to stake a claim to authentic "Danishness" in an effort to exclude those who do not identify with these symbols. The DPP published a book leading up to the 2001 electoral campaign, entitled "Denmark's Future: Your Country, Your Choice," featuring a cover photo of an Arab man armed with a gun, while the back cover displays the Dannebrog juxtaposed against a background of Muslim women wearing headscarves. The implication is clear. In the words of Mogens Camre, the DPP's European Parliament representative, "All Western countries have been infiltrated by Muslims, some of whom are polite to us while waiting until there's enough of them to get rid of us."

### **Your Identity—Your Choice**

The Right—particularly the DPP—has embraced a narrow, group-oriented, nationalistic and exclusionary view of Danish identity, using the Danish flag as a national unifying symbol. This symbol is both inclusive—it encompasses all Danes—but also exclusive: the definition of Danish according to the DPP explicitly excludes immigrants. The liberal intellectuals imagine something quite different: a fluid, dynamic, individual-oriented identity founded not on national boundaries but on membership in a global world. The role of the flag in defining this identity is less concrete. Quraishy articulates the extreme position in this regard, asserting, "I am against using the flag as a symbol—it has always been used for nationalistic feelings." Although referring generically to flags, he believes the Dannebrog is no exception. He admits that it is "sometimes innocent" but goes on to say that in the present political climate it is "used as a unifying symbol for an ethnic people." He rejects the notion of national identity in its entirety, arguing that, "We have to change our idea of identity." For Quraishy, the identity of the future is humanistic and entirely subject to the autonomous decisions of the individual. Identity does not depend on accident of birth—geographic or ethnic—but rather on individual choices about who one wishes to be. Commonality of interest, not skin color or country of origin should be the cohesive feature of identity.

Other liberal intellectuals, Georg Metz prominent among them, espouse a more moderate position regarding the future of identity but one nonetheless opposed to the narrow nationalist vision of the DPP. Polakow-Suransky describes the distinction: "In one direction [the DPP's] lies a regressive policy of isolationism—one that idealizes a nostalgic image of an innocent Danish past. The other [the liberals'] envisages a multi-cultural society, enriched by the benefits of cosmopolitanism." While Metz does not see the flag as a necessarily dangerous

symbol, he maintains, like Quraishy, “national sentiment must change.” He sees Denmark’s acceptance of the Euro and the Europeanization that act symbolically entails as inevitable, believing that the higher rates of education among Danish youth will translate naturally into a more global perspective. Based on experiences from periods of nationalism in Danish history, in his mind, the DPP is temporary—a passing wave of paranoia that will recede when more rational minds prevail. Though Metz resents what he sees as the DPP’s monopolization of the flag, his optimistic attitude tempers that resentment and leads him to a less militant response than that expressed by von Trier: The popularity of the DPP, according to Metz, is indicative of a willful ignorance toward the realities of a globalizing world. As the Danish people become better educated, they will recognize the impracticality of the stance taken by the DPP, thus depriving it of its influence.

Others are not so optimistic. Reviewing *Preachers of Hate*, David Lammy writes for *The Guardian* that, “Roxburgh convincingly demonstrates that the trends he is documenting are not as new, contained, nor transient as some commentators have optimistically suggested.” Dismissing supporters of the DPP as merely uninformed runs the risk of alienating them in future elections as well as failing to face the real concerns accompanying the DPP’s rise to power. Political commentator Erik Meier Carlsen explains, “You could conclude that these people [DPP supporters] are basically stupid, but their seemingly xenophobic reluctance about immigration is to some degree a very rational fight for substantial economic and political interests.” Crucial among these interests is one that defies classification in “economic” or “political” terms: a concern over the future of Danish identity. The refusal of the liberal intellectuals to take this concern seriously poses a dilemma for the future of Denmark: denying the existence of a problem does not aid in its solution. The fact that Denmark has voted twice against the Euro indicates a much broader support for nationalistic tendencies than Metz and others would like to believe. Indeed, Pia Kjærsgaard claimed credit for the defeat of the Euro, crediting the DPP campaign “Vote Danish—Vote No” (to the Euro) as representative of the Danish national sentiment. While only 12% of the populace voted for the DPP in the last election, it seems evident that the DPP has been more effective in communicating with the general public than the pro-European liberals.

### **Danish “Exceptionalism”**

Research by sociologist Peter Gundelach suggests that people like Metz and Quraishy underestimate the degree to which Danes will cling to their national identity. Even if “Europeanization” seems inevitable to the liberal intellectuals, for many Danes the concept of Danishness still contains intuitive appeal. Summing up the results of a 2001 study, Gundelach concludes, “Denmark is the most jingoistic country in Europe. Danes are simply proud to be Danish.” He elaborates, “We do see ourselves as a chosen people.” Jesper Hoffmeyer, writing for the Danish daily *Politiken*, explains, “Danes are convinced that, deep down, they really

are superior to other bigger nations... We Danes hide our sense of greatness behind a Lilliputian façade.” By equating nationalism with ignorance, the liberal intellectuals do not give credence to the Danes’ attachment to their sense of Danishness. When Danish actress Paprika Steen declares that “The term Danishness reflects the Danish People’s Party’s growing importance; it is the ugliest word I have ever heard,” she implicitly attacks those members of the population who, while perhaps not agreeing with the DPP, nonetheless feel that the concept of Danishness contains intrinsic value.

At the same time, though, the liberal intellectuals do acknowledge a potentially nationalistic impulse in the Danish population. Indeed, the liberal intellectuals’ opposition to the DPP’s use of the flag arises primarily out of the concern that the DPP could successfully manipulate Danes’ positive conception of themselves into an exclusionary nationalism. Moreover, the DPP’s association of the flag with a closed and clearly defined national border conflicts with the liberal vision for the future of Danish identity as one united with Europe and predicated on a global understanding. The liberal intellectuals fear that by appropriating a beloved symbol, the DPP could sway the populace away from the European project. Peter Gundelach argues that many of these fears are unfounded: “Despite the prevalence of the national flag, a Dane would never accept it as an expression of nationalism. Nationalism is something found in strange foreign countries, not here.” That said, the fight for the flag nonetheless provides a crucial testing ground for the subsequent battle for the future of Danish identity.

### **Bridging the Gap—The Future of National Identity**

The Danes need to confront certain realities. Neither Quraishy’s idealistic vision of a humanistic identity based solely on the individual nor Kjærsgaard’s nostalgic image of a Danish national identity centered on ethnic homogeneity will satisfy the Danish people. Where the first is too extreme for a country clinging desperately to its Danish roots, the latter is too reactionary for a diversifying country in the 21st century. The European project, to a certain extent, is inevitable. While the outcome of the vote on the European Constitution is debatable, and Turkey’s entrance into the EU remains uncertain, the future of Denmark unquestionably parallels that of Europe as a whole. With increasingly few truly distinguishing characteristics, Danes, like many other Europeans, face the task of constructing a new identity. This is more complicated than it may seem, precisely because of the pervasive love of Danishness that seems to unite Danes. As Gundelach notes, “We have an extremely high estimation of ourselves and of being Danish as something unique.” Unfortunately, when that “uniqueness” is threatened, the defensive reaction can be exclusionary. Gundelach points to Denmark’s tortured history to suggest, “We lost those wars in the nineteenth century, and we are still trying to compensate by a strong belief in national values. We know we are Danes only because others are not. It’s all cultural.”

Here Gundelach hits the proverbial nail on the head: When facing the difficulty of defining what is Danish, Danes have instead chosen the easier option of identifying what is not Danish. What has thus far been ignored by the mainstream in the policy-oriented discussion of integration versus assimilation is the much less concrete, and therefore much more difficult, question of the future of Danish identity. Polakow-Suransky suggests that this debate will be about “whether Denmark’s is an ethnic community or a civic one, an exclusionary body politic or an inclusive one.” Given that there are these diverging viewpoints towards defining the individual’s group affiliation, it seems to be of utmost importance that we secure an inclusive framework within which each individual has the opportunity to define herself according to her understanding of the role of tradition and values, without limiting the ability of others to do the same. The debate must revolve around common values, admit the importance of certain critical components of Danish national identity, and work to incorporate these values into the new “Danish” identity. Sociologist Frederik Wiedemann identifies three quintessential aspects of the “Danish mentality” around which this new identity might take form—dialogue and compromise, tolerance, and solidarity. However, the liberal intellectuals must also acknowledge that the question of Danish identity for the Danish people can never be a strictly academic debate – feelings too can and do play a powerful role in shaping the discussion. To this end the dialogue cannot start until the liberal intellectuals can undermine the fear mongering of the reactionary Right. Fear inhibits critical thought; and self-reflection is crucial to progress in this discussion.

Dialogue here is the critical element. Neither the Right—by excluding “damn experts” from public debate—nor the liberal intellectuals—by adhering only to academic high-brow exchanges among themselves—has had success in bridging the increasing gap separating them from each other. The liberal intellectuals in particular have had severe difficulty reaching the broader public due to unwillingness to “descend” to the realm of the popular. Liberal intellectuals have a tendency to dismiss views contrary to their own as uninformed opinions and therefore not worthy of a response. This sense of superiority only exacerbates the gap between the intellectuals and the rest of the public, a resistance manifested in the recent calls to remove “experts” from politics.

We take heart from the Danish people’s resistance to the DPP’s attempt to co-opt the Dannebrog as a symbol of exclusion. Perhaps the liberal intellectuals can learn from the people’s example: the flag is for everyone, the DPP included. The Danes we interviewed objected to the notion that the DPP could monopolize the flag. In the words of one young Danish man, “It belongs to everyone.” The liberal intellectuals condescend to the people by fearing that the DPP’s appeals to base emotion would sway the public, who are, in Metz’s formulation, “incapable of seeing the meaning behind the symbols.” Meanwhile, the public hears comments like von Trier’s and reacts with disdain: Why all the fuss? The task for the future

is arriving at a common ground where the intellectuals and the public can communicate as equals. This might involve using visual media instead of written in order to reach a broader audience, following the example of movie directors like von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg (*The Celebration*). Had the liberal intellectuals bothered to look out of the Ivory Tower, they would have found no cause to worry about the DPP’s use of the flag. The public, necessarily schooled in the art of interpreting imagery by virtue of living in a media-dominated world, had already reached their own conclusions regarding the flag: It is still our symbol of celebration. Likewise, despite the assertions of Metz and others, the fate of Danish identity ultimately rests with the people. We would do well to talk with them.

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