

Summary

Denmark occupied and Denmark liberated caused more history to be written than any other period in Danish history. It is unlikely that the 50th anniversary of Denmark's Liberation in May 1945 will mean an end to this interest among historians, authors, and participants, although the ranks of this latter group are dwindling. Nor shall we see the demise of the controversies concerning the politically correct line that arose as early as during the Occupation. Issues related to those five years constitute a component of such vital importance to our national identity that future generations, too, irrespective of the historical distance from which they observe events, will perceive of these conflicts as existential because, like any interpretation of history, they are as much about our understanding of the present and our expectations of the future as they are about events in the past.

By virtue of the political and general social positions of strength, the Labour Movement had fought for and won in previous decades, the attitudes and actions of the Movement during the Occupation had a major influence on the political stance vis-à-vis the occupying power as well as on the stance of the general public. To be sure, the line of co-operation with the Germans taken by the Social Democratic Party has been the focal point of much heated debate in recent years, in which **Hans Kirchhoff** has been the main protagonist among historians. In a widely conceived synthesis, - "Our struggle for survival is identical with the struggle of the nation - On the survival strategy of the Social Democratic Party during the Occupation", Kirchhoff exposes and discusses the Social Democratic labour movement's dilemmas and traumatic experience involved in "collaborating" with the Germans, characterising the Social Democratic Party as the party among all the large democratic parties most willing to reach an accommodation - despite the movement's anti-fascism and ideological preparedness during the 1930s. The objective of the policy of accommodation and the concomitant disciplining of the trade unions was "the welfare of the entire nation," the preservation of democratic institutions and the organisations of the Labour Movement. A broken Labour Movement would, as it was put by the deputy secretary general of the Federation of Trade Unions in Denmark, Eiler Jensen, be tantamount to a broken democracy. Taking these objectives as the benchmark,

the strategy chosen by the Social Democratic Party and the trade unions was a success. However, there was a high price to be paid: Pronounced weakening of positions in the ongoing class-struggle during the early years of the Occupation, complete alienation from the resistance movement, deeply rooted in the confirmed anti-Communism of the movement, and isolation from the fundamental clash with Nazism that had to be the *raison d'être* of a social and democratic party.

As Hans Kirchhoff writes in his introduction, in Social Democratic historiography the time of the Occupation was "a time between brackets, preferably to be forgotten," while for the Communists it was "a never-to-be-surpassed political and national triumph." This asymmetry of historiography is the theme of an article by **Niels Finn Christiansen** and **Morten Thing** called, "Social Democrats and Communists looking at themselves in the mirror," and when they do so against the backdrop of the Occupation, what they see is each other. The unbridgeable gulf between the two during the inter-war years was deepened during the Occupation, for one thing because the Danish Communist party could not, because of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, pass the acid test during the early years of occupation, and because later the party became the moving force of the resistance movement that defied the sort of responsible behaviour represented by the Social Democratic effort for national survival. Whereas the line of criticism levelled against Communists is a constant factor in Social Democratic historiography and polemic, the interpretations of the Communist Party have to some extent been governed by tactics and cyclical trends in the nuances of Communist perceptions of the Social Democratic Party as the ruling force in the Labour Movement.

In his article "DAF and the trade union movement in the countries occupied by the Germans," the German historian **Fritz Petrick** makes a comparative analysis of Nazi strategy vis-à-vis the trade unions of the incorporated or occupied countries. To some extent the article is based on new German source material. The German Labour Front (DAF), was a mammoth organisation in the Third Reich, and with a few variations it became the model for organising the labour market in those countries that were to form part of the New Europe - except Denmark. Here, like in other respects, we became a special case, in which the trade union movement, to some extent voluntarily, to some extent compulsorily, did indeed collaborate with the DAF. The crucial difference was, however, German acceptance of the continued existence of Danish trade unions as independent players in the labour market. Petrick also takes a more

faceted view of Lauritz Hansen, the often censured Secretary General of the Federation of Trade Unions in Denmark.

Norway's situation during the Occupation was completely different from Denmark's. Norway took up an armed struggle against being occupied. The Government went into exile in Great Britain, and the country enriched international politics with the concept of Quisling. In his article "The Labour Movement in the Resistance Movement," the Norwegian historian **Tore Pryser** describes how a few trade union leaders allowed themselves to be captured by the Nazis' reorganisation of the labour market, and how in Norway, too, the trade union movement embarked upon a course of collaboration with the Germans, a situation that lasted until the autumn of 1941 when the trade union movement went underground. Subsequently, the general trend was for the Labour Movement to involve itself in the Resistance. Many trade union leaders were convicted of illegal work, a few were executed or murdered in concentration camps. But even in Norway it could not be avoided that the conflict between the Labour Party and the Communists concerning the tactics of the struggle became so acrimonious that they threatened to tear apart the Resistance Movement.

The traditional resistance concept, and consequently also research into the Resistance Movement has marginalised women from its history. In her article "The underground den. The function of the home in the Resistance," **Anette Warring** argues in favour of including the role of women and home as a central component in the resistance struggle. In material and emotional terms they formed a reservoir, which was an absolute condition for the pursuit of resistance in all its forms. In the accounts so far made, women have been given their traditional role. Sabotage activities were visible, taking place as they did in the urban spaces, in an external front line, while the home front was invisible. If future research is to be adequate, it is necessary that a gender perspective be applied to the workers' struggle for freedom.

The well over 125,000 Danish trips to Germany for work during the War is another factor on which insufficient light has been shed until recently. In his article "The Labour Movement and the Workers Going to Germany," one of the pioneering researchers into this traffic, **Therkel Stræde**, points out the dilemmas facing Danish workers and the trade unions when the Germans demanded that Danish labour be sent to Germany. During the early war years, the trade unions withdrew into a "defensive minimumprogramme" aimed at ensuring the survival of the organisa-

tions as the last protective shield for the workers against German mistreatment. It was imperative to increase employment to prevent the creation of a sub-proletariat, which might become radicalised in a Communist or Nazi direction. By means of carrot-and-stick methods some unemployment could be exported into German jobs, thus simultaneously accommodating the Germans and reducing the rate of unemployment. In his article Stræde shows how, quite concretely, the trade unions and the unemployment insurance funds handled the problems involved, such as the many instances of breach of contract and emigration back to Denmark.

The Danish seamen, who were cut off abroad at the time of the Occupation, were a completely different labour force. In his article "The Danes had to start at rock-bottom," **Christian Tortzen** presents an analysis of the exile organisation established by Danish seamen in Great Britain during the War. In keeping with Danish traditions, the seamen abroad created a strong and viable trade union, organising three quarters of the ordinary seamen, sailing out of Great Britain. The Amalgamated Danish Seamen's Unions was remarkable in that it was a unified organisation for seamen who back in Denmark had been organised by several different unions of divergent political persuasions. Obviously this was not a simple matter, but the DSDS, as the organisation was called, was kept together by the dynamic organiser, Børge Møller, who also made a good name for himself in the London-based Danish Council. The DSDS had to take up a position on innumerable trivial and important issues, dictated by the war, but also by its "ungovernable" membership, and the continued political rift between Social Democrats and Communists. A few months after the Liberation, DSDS discontinued its activity, and the old unions took over the members and the problems. The dream entertained by the exile trade union organisers of a permanent unified organisation turned out to be impossible.

The last four articles of the yearbook are dedicated to the domestic scene. In his article "Production and labour market during the Occupation: Normality and Abnormality in the Engine and Shipbuilding Industries," **Jan Pedersen** looks at the way in which labour market institutions operated under the abnormal conditions created by the Occupation. Generally, the period was a "low intensity" one in terms of industrial action, one reason for this being the fact that a statutory provision to maintain labour market peace had been enacted. The iron and metal industry, including shipyards, has always set the standard in the Danish labour

market. Jan Pedersen, therefore, examines labour market and productivity trends in this sector, using the most advanced company, Burmeister & Wain as a case in point. Normality was largely maintained, and long-term shifts in productivity were caused by investment and raw material supplies rather than by sabotage or obstruction. However, the short-term effects of sabotage were occasionally considerable, particularly if compared to the rather modest effort required to carry out a successful sabotage operation.

Among sabotage groups, BOPA has achieved a special status in the literature. It is perceived as the most formidable, as dominated by Communists, as featuring a high degree of assurance in its actions and relatively few casualties, a high level of professionalism and a high number of actions. In 1991-92, **Morten Thing** made a detailed study of the BOPA membership, and he accounts for his findings in the article, "Portrait of a Sabotage Group. The BOPA Survey 1992." On the basis of a detailed questionnaire, covering sociological ground as well as the attitudes of the respondents, he maps out nearly all aspects of the lives of BOPA-members. The findings of this survey allow far more shades to be added to existing favourite perceptions both inside the organisation itself and in the general public. For one thing, there were relatively few Communists, although the leadership was linked to the underground leadership of the Communist Party in Denmark. Most of the members were born in Copenhagen, they were youngsters between 19 and 21 years of age, and in class terms they were divided between skilled workers and university students. According to Morten Thing, this "clash of cultures" between workers and students was what gave BOPA its special dynamism.

With the childhood memoirs "Great inventiveness was called for," collected by **Ove Nielsen** we move far away from the 'big' history and into the everyday life of a girl in a working-class family in a hutment outside Næstved, a provincial town on Sealand. Here we are literally brought very close to the skin of a family consisting of two adults and five children in a two-room flat. Both mother and father work for a living, and the children, too, as soon as they could, or else they looked after their smaller siblings. What with rationing, insufficient supplies, and modest incomes people had to be creative and inventive to put food in the mouths and clothes on the bodies of a family. With a wealth of detail these memoirs depict a working-class family life, which was shared by tens of thousands of families in Denmark during those years.

We conclude this yearbook with an account of Esbjerg, one of the hot-

spots of the Occupation years. As **Søren Federspiel** and **Claus Jensen** tell us, the town was characterised by a high level of activity, both in terms of business earnings and of local resistance actions. The town was teeming with German soldiers and foreign workers. Traditionally Communists had a strong position and dominated the local Resistance, also in connection with the crucial role played by the town in the Revolt of August 1943. The article reveals the local conflict between the collaboration policy and resistance struggle.

From 1995 The Society for the Study of Working Class History will change its publishing policy. The separate publications, viz. the periodical *Arbejderhistorie* (Labour History) and *Årbog for arbejderbevægelsens historie* (The Yearbook) will be published as one under the title of **Arbejderhistorie. Tidsskrift for politik, kultur og historie** (Labour History. Periodical for Politics, Culture, and History), which will be published four times a year. It is our intention to unify all the virtues of the old publications in the new one: Scholarly quality, debate, useful information, reviews and being a good read - all of this in an up-to-date and inviting layout. The editors of this year's yearbook invite readers and contributors to work with us in the new periodical with the same kind of enthusiasm that we have enjoyed for so many years.

The Editors