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A Queen and Her Country



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By Victor Andersen

Denmark's Queen Margrethe

Denmark's Queen Margrethe is a monarch who scores top marks in domestic opinion polls when it comes to personal elegance, knowledge, intellectual and artistic abilities and not least her ability to communicate with her subjects in a way that captures their imagination.

In a country where political parties are legion – there are currently eight represented in the country's parliament, the Folketing – it is indicative of the support that the Queen enjoys, that at no time in the 30 years of her reign has there been the slightest movement towards the formation of a party whose declared aim is to introduce a republic. Even among those groups and citizens who in principle would prefer a republic, the response is clear: “Yes – but not in the reign of this queen.”

Queen Margrethe is the 54th in a direct line of Danish monarchs. Six hundred years separate her from her namesake Queen Margrete I, who at that time ruled over the entire Nordic region. The present-day Queen Margrethe also rules over territories beyond the Danish mainland, since Denmark forms a realm with the Faroe Islands and Greenland, both of which have been autonomous since 1948 and 1979 respectively.

During her lifetime, the Queen has seen her country develop from political bondage (the country was occupied from 1940 to 1945) to a nation with a high international profile steeped in the tra-

dition of democracy and human rights. Within its borders, Denmark has developed from mediocrity into a welfare state that other nations have been inspired to copy.

The backdrop to the birth of Queen Margrethe on April 16, 1940 could not have been more sinister. Denmark had been occupied the previous week by German troops. The birth of a princess to the then Crown Prince Frederik and the Swedish-born Princess Ingrid – was a ray of light in the darkness, upon which the population dwelt for many years.

At the time of her birth and early childhood, Denmark only had male succession to the throne. But popular sentiment had moved in a different direction, and when the end of the war brought about the need for a change in the constitution, the country's political masters felt the time was ripe to change this practice too.

It is a touching historical detail that Margrethe's father, Frederik IX (1899-1972) advised the then Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft that he did not believe that female succession to the throne should be introduced. This was not because he did not have confidence in his daughter, but because he wanted to spare his child the tribulations and hard life of a monarch.

Another historical dimension was that it was felt to be uncertain whether the other proposed constitutional changes would be able to bring people to

the polling booths in sufficient numbers. But at all events, with Margrethe at the centre of the referendum required by the Constitution, the necessary electoral participation was achieved.

Denmark's legal and traditional practice is that the royal family does not exert political influence. It is therefore a paradox that it was the personage of the successor that carried through one of the greatest political changes ever in Denmark.

Margrethe was meticulously prepared for her reign through a broad programme of study at universities in Copenhagen and Århus in Denmark, Cambridge and the London School of Economics in Britain and the Sorbonne in France. The main thrust of her education was political science, but out of her own interest she also went in for archaeology.

It was during one of her stays in London that she met her husband-to-be, Count Henri Laborde de Monpezat, who was six years her senior. When the couple were married in 1967, Henri took the Danish name of Henrik. The couple have had two children, Crown Prince Frederik (May 26, 1968) and Prince Joachim (June 7, 1969). The latter married Miss Alexandra Manley – now Princess Alexandra – from Hong Kong in 1995. The couple's first child, Nikolai, was born in 1999 and he has now been followed by a second son born in 2002, Felix.

The Queen's two sons have had the firm upbringing that befits their position and duties in the royal line of succession. HRH the Crown Prince has demonstrated his capabilities as a free-fall parachutist and graduate of the Danish military equivalent of the Seals. During the spring of 2000, he took part in a three-month expedition by dog sled in the Arctic wastes of Greenland.

The father of the two princes demonstrates his skills as a vintner when staying at the royal couple's château at Cahors in France, and has also proved himself as a translator (of, among other works, Simone de Beauvoir, whom he has translated in collaboration with the Queen), as well as a poet, autobiographer and writer on gastronomy.

As a newly-crowned monarch, Queen Margrethe adopted the motto "God's help. The people's love. Denmark's strength." These are words that the Danish population has helped her to provide with a con-

tent. She has won the unfailing love of her people.

Though he was more reserved, her grandfather Christian X (1870-1947) enjoyed similar popularity, not least because of his fearless habit of riding his horse through the streets of the capital during the wartime German occupation. Her father, Frederik IX was likewise much loved for his robust, sailor's image and his love of music.

"The Job," as Queen Margrethe frankly calls her regal position, is carried out with a devotion to duty and an energy that are equal to those required of demanding positions in the private sector. Long working hours seem not to prevent her from appearing calm, accommodating and dignified at events such as major ceremonies taking place in the evening.

She is able to engage in knowledgeable contributions to discussions with foreign heads of state, scientists, authors and artists alike. During state visits abroad, she and the Prince often head Danish commercial and cultural delegations.

On Wednesdays, the Queen is regularly briefed by the Prime and Foreign Ministers on issues of state. So in the long run, despite the fact that the royal family is by law not allowed to take part in political activities, the Queen is one of the best informed political observers in the country.

Nor is the monarch's position simply that of a figurehead. Her signature is required on all new parliamentary Acts, and throughout the parliamentary session, which lasts from October to June, she is kept abreast of developments at meetings of the Ministers of State which take place more or less every second Wednesday.

Apart from her many official and ceremonial functions such as state visits, openings of bridges and appearances at charitable events and much more in addition to her constitutional duties, Queen Margrethe is also an accomplished artist in her own right.

She has created costumes and scenery for the Royal Theatre, designed stamps to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Denmark's liberation, created her own and her sons' monograms as well as the stylised crown that adorns the entrances to the national forests among other things. She has also

designed robes for both ordinary clergy and bishops, and she has established herself as an abstract painter – though as time goes on with a tendency towards naturalistic painting.

It was as a fitting tribute to the Queen's profound artistic interest, that Danish commerce, the Danish trade unions and a large number of cultural foundations celebrated her 50th birthday by commissioning the artist Bjørn Nørgaard to create eleven monumental and six smaller tapestries illustrating the history of Denmark.

On the Queen's 60th birthday, the tapestries were hung in the Great Hall of Christiansborg Palace, which also houses the Parliament and where the Queen often gives audiences.

Ask Danes what memories they have of their Queen. They will all have some, and all will be clear and positive, not least those of the child who refuses to leave the Royal Square at Amalienborg on the Queen's birthday before the monarch has appeared to wave to her subjects and to call for three cheers for Denmark.

Television viewers also have fond memories of their Queen skiing in Norway or picking grapes in France or appearing with flowing hair together with the Prince Consort on the Palace balcony to listen to the band playing for them according to tradition on their silver wedding anniversary in 1992.

She is remembered from news conferences – a daring innovation in the history of the Danish monarchy – during which she has vividly expressed herself. She is also remembered in Faroese national costume dancing the local chain dance, or taking part in a traditional coffee morning in Greenland in Inuit dress embroidered with beads.

Similarly, memories spring to mind of the happy but modest queen standing on the stage of the Royal Theatre and thanking the audience for their acclaim for her set designs for the Royal Ballet's full-length performance of the ballet "A Folk Tale" – or of the monarch doubled up with laughter one evening in Tivoli after being caricatured by some of the country's best comedians. The Danes seldom do anyone a greater honour than such a caricature.

All of these memories are overshadowed by the eagerness with which the Danes watch the Queen's television and radio address on New Year's Eve. The only televised events to attract a larger number of viewers are football transmissions in years when Denmark has a chance of winning an international cup.

Transmitted just before Danes traditionally begin their New Year festivities, the speech betrays the Queen's unusual ability to touch the hearts of her people, and to speak their language, sometimes preempting them with introductions to moral and ethical issues that immediately gain their attention.

Everyone remembers New Years Eve 1984, when she warned her countrymen not to greet immigrants with silly comments, and equally people remember her appeals for solidarity with the developing world, environmental awareness and faith and trust among Danes themselves.

Without breaching the prohibition against political interference, Queen Margrethe manages on evenings such as these to move her people further than many politicians are able to do in an entire year.

Denmark – a welfare state

If you mention Denmark to foreigners, most will be able spontaneously to name a few well-known, charming features such as the fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen (1805-75), a well-functioning royal house, and the statue of the Little Mermaid at the seaward entrance to the country's capital, Copenhagen.

Those who are more business-minded might reply if asked about Denmark: "It's a country with a stable economy and a competitive industry". The infrastructure is impressive, too, thanks to the recently established bridge and tunnel links across the Great Belt and across the Sound between Denmark and Sweden, links that opened in 1997 and 2000 respectively.

Social observers of the more reflective type may remember Denmark as the birthplace of new and interesting ideas such as the folk high school movement, the co-operative movement and the welfare state.

The Danish welfare state is built on exhortations from the country's great hymn-writer, priest and politician, N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872). He formulated the model in the following way: "In terms of riches we shall have come a long way when few people have too much and even fewer have too little". It is exactly this model that Denmark has realised through its tax legislation and social policy and which has won it a world-wide reputation.

All of these things signal idyll and efficiency. But is Denmark such a land of contentment where everything is beautiful and nothing goes wrong? Reality is not like that, of course. But even the most sceptical Danes must admit that their native land has its strong points.

If you ask the Danish electorate what it most wants of its country, you will receive more or less the same answers. The Danes want to preserve Denmark's character of a welfare state and, if possible, to improve it.

But let us embark on a visit to the Danish welfare state. There is much to see – including details that might surprise you.

There are 5.3 million Danes, 85% of whom live

in towns and cities. Of the country's area, 64% is cultivated with farmland or forests. Denmark is an island kingdom consisting of the Jutland peninsula, connected to Germany, and 406 islands.

The Danes also love their country for its landscape values. Denmark is a low-lying, green land with rolling fields mingling with blue fjords and coves. Nowhere in the country is more than 32 miles from the sea. The first line of the national hymn goes: "There is a lovely land".

The climate is temperate and changeable, demanding a great deal of skill from those who earn their livelihood from farming – Denmark's thousand year-old source of income which since 1963 has seen its export values overtaken by a fully developed industrial sector.

With a life expectancy for new-born girls of 79 years and for boys of 74, most Danes agree that public health could be better. Public campaigns are now being carried out urging Danes to stop smoking, to eat less fatty food and to exercise more.

Heart disease is the cause of death for 23% of women and 25% of men, while cancer is responsible for the deaths of 25% of women and 26% of men. Despite a strong growth in traffic the number of people killed on the roads has been halved over the past 25 years. This is ascribed to the extensive construction of motorways and intensified checks on speed and drink-driving.

The Danes are a generally cheerful people with a sense of humour that often plays on the oddities of the language. But being married appears not always to be such fun. The divorce rate is eye-catching – two marriages out of three end in divorce.

On the political front the Danes are individualistic and inquiring spirits. The tendency of former times to stay with one political party throughout life is declining. After having won the battle for their daily bread, the Danes apparently feel they can afford to choose their political stance using other criteria – perhaps on the basis of the burning topic of the day.

In the elections to the Danish parliament, the Folketing, on 20 November 2001, the centre left

government led by Poul Nyrup Rasmussen of the Social Democratic Party was replaced by a centre right government led by Anders Fogh Rasmussen from *Venstre*, the Danish Liberal Party, which received 31.2 per cent of the votes.

Venstre has traditionally been a farmers' party. With only 3.9 per cent of the working population now engaged on agriculture, it is clear that the Danes no longer vote on the basis of their profession or social status, but because of attitudes.

The government is a coalition between *Venstre* and *Det Konservative Folkeparti*, the Conservative People's Party, which received 9.1 per cent of the votes cast in the election.

The formation of the government was supported by *Dansk Folkeparti*, the Danish People's party (12.8 per cent of votes) and *Kristeligt Folkeparti*, the Christian People's party (2.3 per cent of votes), so that it has a parliamentary basis of 55.4 per cent of votes cast. This does not prevent the government from seeking a majority for bills by turning for instance to the Social Democrats, who received 29.1 per cent of votes in the election.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economics and Trade in the government is Bendt Bendtsen, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs is Per Stig Møller, both from the Conservative People's Party. The Minister of Defence is Svend Aage Jensby, Liberal. Similarly from the Danish Liberal Party is Bertel Haarder, who was summoned home from the European Parliament to head a newly established Ministry of Immigration and Integration. During the Danish EU presidency in the second half of 2002, he will also be Minister for Europe.

The Danish Liberal Party and the Conservative People's Party campaigned during the election on a programme of retaining and developing the welfare state, but also on greater freedom for the individual. Among concrete proposals were the provision of more money for hospitals in order to reduce waiting lists for operations, more money for the elderly and payments to families looking after their own children, freedom to use the hospitals and home helps of your choice, maternity leave extended to a year and more severe punishments for violence and rape.

An important provision was a more determined and restrictive treatment of asylum seekers and immigrants so as if possible to limit their flow into Denmark, where immigrants and their offspring already constitute 7.8 per cent of the population. The adoption of an active refugee policy was an obvious move, not least in the light of the considerable voter appeal exercised by the Danish People's Party.

In recognition of the fact that a very large proportion of asylum seekers and immigrants is without work – a rate of unemployment that is detrimental to the immigrants themselves – a major integration programme is being launched. This will include instruction in the Danish language at the workplace, where the motivation to acquire the language must be assumed to be considerable. Immigrants who are self-supporting will be able to look forward to being given permanent resident status more rapidly than otherwise.

All new rules observe the international refugee conventions etc. to which Denmark is a signatory.

Denmark has been a member of the United Nations since the organisation was founded in 1945 and of the European Union since 1973. In the EU, Denmark does not share the most far-reaching desires for integration. The country has special opt-outs from military co-operation, the euro, EU citizenship and legal and domestic affairs.

In a referendum held on 28 September 2000, 53.1 per cent said no to replacing the Danish currency the *kroner* with the euro.

Opinion polls, however, suggest that the Danes are on the point of being ready to abandon these opt-outs. For its part, the government will not call for a referendum on all the opt-outs – or several referenda on individual opt-outs – before it is sure of a yes vote.

Denmark is a kingdom, probably the oldest in the world. The monarch is Queen Margrethe II, who celebrated her 60th birthday on 16 April, 2000. She has won the hearts and the respect of the Danes with a new and open style and with her obvious television appeal and her artistic talent.

Denmark does not have nuclear power and is unlikely ever to acquire it. Its environmental policy

is comprehensive and is starting to work. 64% of all waste is being recycled – glass waste is being re-used at a rate of 108%. This is not a statistical error, but a result of the fact that the glass mass is re-used several times over.

Few countries in the world have as many women going out to work as Denmark – 9 women work for every 10 men. This requires a comprehensive, partly public system of day care facilities for children during working hours.

Danish women were given the vote in 1915, and equal pay was on the Danish agenda before it was ordered by the EU. Men have also been given the right to paternity leave.

Of Danish households, 61% own their own house or flat, 10% own a holiday cottage, 54% have a car, 76% a washing machine; 48% a dishwasher; 56% a microwave oven; 82% a video; 67% a PC; 73% a mobile phone; 23% a video camera, and 48% access to the Internet.

Since 1963, industry has been the country's main source of income (measured on the basis of exports). The sectors are distributed as follows: Industry 76%; agriculture and fisheries 14%; oil etc. 10%.

There are, however, other ways of measuring the relative importance of the various sectors – for instance the individual sectors' labour requirements. If we take these into account, the picture changes dramatically. Then the bird behind the farmer's plough and the smoke from the factory chimney fade in statistical significance in favour of the service sector.

The following statistics show the beginnings of a post-industrial society in which machines are in the process of taking over manual labour and people spend their time servicing each other and providing welfare and health care in hospitals, nursing homes and children's day care institutions.

The Danish workforce is distributed as follows: Public and personal service 35%; trade, restaurant business and financial services 31%; industry 17%; transport 6%; energy supply and construction 7%; agriculture, fisheries and raw materials extraction 4%.

The strategy regarding elderly citizens is that

they should remain in their own home for as long as possible. But if they can only cope in sheltered accommodation or nursing homes, they must be offered those possibilities.

The Danes are major consumers of culture ranging from public libraries and extensive daily newspaper reading to a large number of television channels.

Although it has never been anything like a major power, Denmark has over the centuries been the starting point for a rather impressive array of names in science, literature, music and the visual arts. At the moment, the profile is mainly defined by a group of young film directors. With their demands for handheld cameras and other unpretentious means they have created the Dogme concept, which has created more than a ripple in the international film world.

As a sports nation Denmark has often taken gold medals. This is mainly in sports such as sailing, swimming, curling and women's handball at the Olympics, in the European football championships and in the Tour de France. A sports organisation for the disabled has 29,000 members and has won several world championships in wheelchair racing.

But the medal that we have generously awarded to the Danish welfare state in this article also has its flip side. Not everything is successful and perfect. The strong social security network is expensive and has pushed Danish tax rates – about 50 per cent – up to be among the highest in the world. This makes moonlighting a temptation in a nation that is otherwise officially honest.

The government that came into power on 27 November 2001 has ordered an end to tax increases so that progress in one field – e.g. the improvement of conditions in hospitals or in care for the mentally ill – will presuppose savings elsewhere in the public sector.

Denmark has also had its share of drug problems among young people and wars between biker gangs. At the moment, however, gang warfare seems to have given way to peace.

Apart from this, the Danes are keenly interested in their own living conditions – both those of the moment and future prospects. Despite the

highly developed social services and a free medical system, there is criticism of examples of reductions in domestic help for the aged and sick, of waiting lists for hospital treatment and of poor care of the mentally ill.

In addition, the future prospects look somewhat threatening for the state-financed pension for all citizens over 65. Fluctuations in birth rates over the years have had the effect that within a decade the population will consist of relatively large numbers of very young and elderly people, but relatively fewer in those age groups that provide for the others.

While at present there are four people of working age for everyone needing support, there will only be three in ten years time. Some believe that the traditionally stable growth in industrial production will solve the problem. Others are more pessimistic.

So is Denmark the problem-free land of happiness? No, not entirely. On the other hand, the history of Denmark has often shown that new problems inspire new solutions. Perhaps the Little Mermaid will witness this once more from the wet rock on which she is sitting.

Denmark – a green factory

It may not be the kind of mystery Sherlock Holmes would have been called in to solve. Nevertheless, it is a mystery how an old agricultural country like Denmark has been able to transform itself into one of the most highly respected industrial nations in the world.

Denmark's agricultural sector is still large and productive, as it has been for centuries, with exports of foodstuffs sufficient to feed the populations of New York and Tokyo.

However, the balance shifted in 1963 and industrial exports have exceeded agricultural exports ever since.

The transition is puzzling because, even with his biggest magnifying glass, Sherlock Holmes would have been unable to trace the exploitable amounts of iron, coal and other raw materials upon which the industrial growth of a nation is normally built. Oil and natural gas were not found in Denmark until the 1960s, at a time when industry was already taking the lead over agriculture.

But don't worry! There is a good, solid explanation for Denmark as an industrial mystery. And it is so built on logic that Sherlock Holmes would have loved it!

For it all adds up.

Let's start with stone-age man. Once he had emptied an oyster bank, he had to find a new one. In Denmark, an island kingdom with 406 islands, he was forced to sail. The Vikings who came later had to do the same if they were to satisfy their urge for adventure and conquest.

So they had to build ships and develop them. The navigational instruments had to be refined as they ventured out into ever more distant seas. If we move forward quickly in time, we see how the Danes were exposed to a logical sequence of incentives to produce and innovate.

They had to produce ropes and paints for the ships, not to mention engines, at first driven by steam, later by diesel turbines. And when they had invented automatic bridges for their ships, they might just as well go on to invent automatic landing systems for aircraft as well.

These logical lines of development can be traced everywhere in modern Danish industry. Together they have created an industrial sector with a full range of products. Among the few things not produced in Denmark are nuclear missiles, aircraft and ball bearings.

Let's mention a few other logical lines of development. Stone Age woman ground corn between two millstones. The method was replaced by windmills. Today Denmark exports wind farms to places as far away as California.

The Danes learnt to refine raw materials. Grain was used for brewing beer, potatoes for distilling schnapps; sugar beet was refined into sugar, and wool from the sheep was turned into fabrics and clothes. In addition came a talent for fashion design and making luxurious fur coats. Danish designers are currently found in top jobs in several internationally known fashion houses.

They also made the machines they needed – centrifuges for churning butter, diffusers for leaching sugar, chocolate machines for grounding imported cocoa beans.

Of course, all this required imports of raw materials such as steel and the foreign currency to pay for it. The money originally came from agricultural exports, now to an increasing extent organic, and later from industry's own earnings as it obtained a firm footing on the world market.

Consequently, Denmark has statistically speaking one of the world's most impressive foreign turnovers, both imports and exports corresponding to about one third of GDP.

We can take a look at another chain of developments: Butter exports needed to be transported safely to the Tropics and also to the Danes' own dining tables. This required a whole series of cold storage facilities – refrigerated trucks, refrigerator ships, cold counters in shops and household refrigerators. The Danes learned to produce all of these themselves. Automatic controls for refrigerating plants also formed the basis for a global industry.

Beer needed to be bottled. That called for a glass industry. Draught beer was in demand in pubs all

over the world. Danish draught beer equipment is now used in restaurants, bars and pubs all over the world.

Field products needed protection against insects and plant diseases. That developed into a chemical industry.

The medieval monks brewed medicine from wild plants. The pharmaceutical industry and the bio-chemical industry are now so advanced that regional researchers expect that the new city to be built near the Sound will become a “Medicon Valley” after the opening of the fixed link between Denmark and Sweden in 2000.

To the monks’ medicinal plants could be added another product deriving from agriculture – the pancreas from livestock. On the basis of this, insulin products were developed which are now used world-wide. So is Danish psychopharmacological medicine.

There is a broad range of highly developed metal goods, including measuring instruments for the first moon rockets from Cape Canaveral, medical equipment capable of taking blood samples without perforating the skin, invisible digital hearing aids enjoying a 60% share of the world market, equipment for the purification of waste water and other environmental care, and parcel sorting systems that are controlled simply by the human voice.

A new rocketing production that is counted as part of the metal industry in Denmark is software for an IT industry that is growing with explosive force. Danish software exports are huge.

The Danes like to live comfortably. The country was capable of supplying the building components itself. Cement production – completely in accordance with the general pattern – prompted the manufacture of cement machines, which now constitute a world-wide export.

Industry also contributed to the furnishing of the home, including furniture of such superior design and quality as also to impress the United Nations Security Council, which has furnished its premises with Danish products. The Museum of Modern Art in New York has incorporated television design from Bang & Olufsen in its permanent exhibition.

Danish homes were similarly equipped with textiles, china, glass and silverware, and the lady of the house was provided with jewellery. All these products, of which Georg Jensen Silver is one, have become names known throughout the world.

In addition to innovative and well-functioning single-family homes, Danish architects also took care of more imposing projects, including bridges in Denmark itself, the Sydney Opera House and the new Grande Arche in Paris.

The Danish manufacturing industry has a number of large companies with many employees. These include Danfoss (refrigeration technology), Grundfos (pumps), Novo Nordisk (pharmaceuticals), Lego (toy building blocks of plastic and computer-programmed toy robots), ISS (cleaning and services), Carlsberg and Tuborg (beer), and Danisco (sugar and packaging) and lots more.

Generally, however, Danish companies are medium-sized. Nevertheless, they can often very effectively conquer and retain a corner of the world market – for instance as parts suppliers to the car industry, or as suppliers of special packaging for the food industry or meters for measuring the water content in corn and much more.

This so-called niche philosophy has proved itself to be a useful strategy for Danish industry.

The companies have often emerged as the result of a single person’s good idea or invention. That was the case with the owner of a small village carpenter’s workshop out in Jutland. He carved wooden toys and went around selling them on his bicycle. Today that has developed into the world-famous firm of Lego. And it still has its headquarters in the same town as the original workshop.

This tendency has spared Denmark the concentrations of smoke-producing industry. The landscape has been able to retain its green features despite the fact that Denmark is a fully-fledged industrial country. And so there stands Denmark as a kind of green factory.

We cannot really yet maintain that we have solved the industrialisation puzzle entirely. It has not been sufficient that farming and fishing have produced raw materials for processing. Human skills were required and a willingness to take a risk if

the challenges of industrialisation were to be met. These human qualities have been fostered throughout history, for instance through the early abolition, in 1788, of the yoke that the landowners had hitherto placed on the peasantry.

Then the priest and hymn-writer N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872) created the folk high school – adult education for the rural population, which encouraged young people to think freely and boldly. The co-operative movement derived from the folk high school as collaboration on an equal footing by farmers irrespective of the size of their farms, encompassing production and export and resulting in products of high and uniform quality.

Urban crafts and industries also benefited from the introduction of compulsory education in 1814 and a four- or five-year apprenticeship emphasising

high professional quality and an elegant finish.

On a higher level, Denmark had outstanding technical talents including Ole Rømer (1644-1710), who discovered the speed of light, and H.C. Ørsted (1777-1851), who discovered electromagnetism. In addition the country has given birth to a number of Danish Nobel Prize winners in chemistry, physics and medicine.

If we extend the traditional raw material concept – steel, oil, coal etc. – to include intellectual curiosity, manual skills and personal courage, Denmark will qualify for a place in the recognised ranks of industrial nations.

So – even without enlisting the help of Sherlock Holmes – we have solved the mystery we set out to unravel.

Denmark – small country, great names

Denmark may not appear very impressive if you look at a traditional map of the world. Compared with other powers it is tiny in size.

But you could draw a map of the world based in another way. If the criterion were not the number of square kilometres, but the number of Olympic gold medals won in solo yachtmanship, Denmark would emerge as the actual superpower. The same would be the case if you counted the number of children the world over who listen attentively and happily to fairytales from any individual country.

As a country of origin for individuals accorded international recognition – not to say international fame – Denmark need have no inferiority complex. The signs appeared early – and the Danes set themselves great goals.

They wanted to contribute to solving the mysteries of the universe. Tycho Brahe (1546-1601) went right to the core of the problem by asking how the earth and the sun moved in relation to each other. He didn't hit bull's eye, but was one of a famous group of names such as Copernicus, Kepler and Newton. Together, these scientists established the rules of both the solar system and the law of gravity.

Ole Rømer (1644-1710) wondered how it was that Jupiter's moons in their elliptical course around the planet did not appear at the exact times he had calculated. From this he concluded that light "hesitated", in other words that it had speed. He then calculated it, and since then the speed of light has been termed the most fundamental constant in physics. Rømer also established the freezing point and boiling point of water as the most important temperatures on a thermometer – long before Celsius had the same idea.

Other forces of nature have been described or tamed by Danes. H.C. Ørsted (1777-1851) noticed how an electrical current affected a magnet. In this way he discovered electromagnetism, which was later the foundation for a billion-dollar industry.

Niels Steensen (1638-86) studied fossils and crystals and fathered no less than two sciences – geology and crystallography. He converted to Ca-

tholicism and was beatified in 1986 as Nicolaus Steno.

The Nobel Prize winner Niels Bohr (1885-1962) has unanimously and internationally been recognised as one of the greatest personalities in the natural sciences. He explained the composition of the elements, the so-called periodical system. His analysis of the hydrogen atom was a quantum leap in nuclear physics. During the occupation of Denmark during the Second World War he fled to the United States and worked alongside the physicists who developed the atomic bomb.

Danes have also made an impact on human health. Thomas Bartholin (1616-1680) discovered the lymph system. Niels Finsen (1860-1914) found that the infrared rays of light can have a healing effect on skin diseases and was rewarded with the Nobel Prize.

Johannes Fibiger (1867-1928) was the first person to demonstrate that cancer can be caused by factors outside the body itself, for instance as the result of handling tar. He was the first to receive the Nobel Prize for cancer research.

Henrik Dam (1895-1976) was awarded the Nobel Prize for his discovery of Vitamin K.

Jens Christian Skou, born 1924, won the Nobel Prize in 1997 for mapping the passage through cell walls of chemical substances, a discovery that has had far-reaching effects on the treatment of heart disease, asthma and allergic illnesses.

A map of Denmark solely dedicated to philosophers and authors would almost be pretentious.

N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872), the priest and hymn-writer, was the spiritual father of the folk high school movement – adult education that rejected academic snobbishness and not least provided young people from the rural areas with useful knowledge.

The co-operative movement was a continuation of the folk high schools. It manifested itself in practical terms in a large, homogenous and stable agricultural production that became a huge success on the world market and for many years formed the basis of the Danish standard of living.

Grundtvig also gave the Danes the recipe for their society: Anybody should be allowed to develop freely on the condition of not harming anyone else. And those who earn high incomes should – through taxation – give to those who make little or are ill or old. This is the welfare model that is practised in Denmark today.

Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) was an exclusive thinker who was preoccupied with the relationship between the individual and the group. His philosophy pointed the way forward to the later existentialist movement, and Kierkegaard is currently one of the world's most widely read philosophers.

Under the innocent guise of fairy tales, Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) wrote his humorous stories with their deep insight into human nature, giving pleasure to both children and adults. He is still one of the world's most widely read writers.

Denmark has won several Nobel Prizes for literature. In "The Fall of the King" Johannes V. Jensen (1873-1950) described the Dane as a natural born dreamer. At the start of the new millennium, readers across the country voted this book the best Danish novel of the 20th century.

Among other works, Karen Blixen (1885-1962), also known under the pen name of Isak Dinesen, wrote "Babette's Feast" and "Out of Africa". The latter was an autobiographical account of her 18 years as a coffee farmer in Kenya. Both stories turned out to be outstanding film material.

The same can be said of "Miss Smilla's Feeling of Snow" by Peter Høeg, born 1957, who together with, for instance, Henrik Stangerup (1937-1998) and Klaus Rifbjerg, born 1931, constitute a new and frequently translated generation of successful Danish authors.

Carl Nielsen (1865-1931) got to know the world of musical sounds when as a child he tended the cattle and banged logs of wood together, wondering at the variety in the tones he produced. His symphonies and the operas "Saul and David" and "Masquerade" still grow in popularity with music audiences around the world.

Danish visual artists create their own, richly faceted universe.

Working in Rome for many years, Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770-1844) was one of the most celebrated sculptors of his day, with works in places such as Saint Peter's Church in Rome.

Painters sometimes gathered in groups. The Skagen painters found their motifs among fishermen and peasants in northern Jutland where light and water from two seas meet above the northernmost tip of the country. Others found their motifs in the more southern idyllic landscapes of the island of Funen.

The non-figurative painter Asger Jorn (1914-1973) achieved world fame. He was a co-founder of the European Cobra group of painters (Cobra = Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam).

New international names include Per Kirkeby, born 1938, and the multi-artist Bjørn Nørgaard, born 1947. Nørgaard's representation of Denmark's history in wall tapestries was unveiled when they were finally hung in Christiansborg Palace, the seat of the Danish parliament, on the occasion of Queen Margrethe II's 60th birthday on April 16, 2000.

Danish stage artists have made an impression on stages of all kinds. August Bournonville (1805-1879) created the choreography for 50 ballets and a style of ballet that has gained the Royal Danish Ballet a reputation throughout the world.

In our own time, Victor Borge, 1909-2000, a bundle of humour and musicality, was also of Danish origin.

Danish cinema had a period of international glory in the days of the silent film. The entrancing film star Asta Nielsen (1881-1972) was seen in cinemas around the world. Carl Th. Dreyer (1889-1968) directed the black and white "La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc", one of the gems of film history. His contemporary, Benjamin Christensen (1879-1959), was similarly hailed by international audiences for his unrivalled mastery of the film medium.

Danish cinema has been riding high for a number of years – with the Oscar-winning "Babette's Feast", directed by Gabriel Axel (born 1918), and "Pelle the Conqueror", directed by Bille August (born 1948). This latter is based on a novel by Martin Andersen Nexø (1869-1954).

Emerging from the Danish Film School in Copenhagen, a new breed of directors includes, among others, Lars von Trier (born 1956), Thomas Vinterberg (born 1969), Søren Kragh-Jacobsen (born 1949) and Kristian Levring (born 1957). With their demands for handheld cameras and their rejection of artificial lighting they have created a new minimalist film style, the Dogme films, which have caught the attention of film-makers in many countries.

A large, international audience has been captured by a series of humorous films about the "Olsen Gang", three small-time criminals whose dream of the million-kroner haul is always doomed to fail. International interest has also been directed to the television series "Matador" about life in a Danish provincial town. Erik Balling (born 1924) directed both series.

In Denmark, 61 houses out of 100 are owner-occupied. That makes Denmark a land of milk and honey for architects. In addition to designing suitable private houses they have also undertaken major international assignments: Arne Jacobsen (1902-1971) was responsible for Saint Catherine's College in Oxford, Jørn Utzon (born 1918) designed the Sydney Opera House, Henning Larsen (born 1925) the Foreign Ministry in Riyadh and Johan Otto von Spreckelsen (1929-1987) the new Arc de Triomphe, the Grande Arche in Paris.

Denmark also boasts of thousands of partici-

pants in many branches of sport and naturally has a profound admiration for the sports elite such as the yachtsman Poul Elvstrøm (born 1928), who has won four Olympic gold medals, 13 world championships and seven European championships. Then there are the Tour de France winner Bjarne Riis (born 1964) and the football heroes Michael Laudrup (born 1964), his younger brother Brian (born 1969) and the phenomenal goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel (born 1963).

But a sound financial basis has been needed for all this. Both the welfare state and cultural developments have depended for their finances on a healthy gross domestic product, which in turn requires industrial entrepreneurs. Denmark has had several world class figures of this kind.

The brewer J.C. Jacobsen (1811-1887) founded the Carlsberg brewery. H.N. Andersen (1852-1937) created the East Asiatic Company through shipping, plantation operations and world trade. The company was for a long time the biggest in Denmark. A.P. Møller (1876-1965), the son of a skipper sailing in Danish waters, established Northern Europe's largest shipping company, Mærsk, with ships sailing the oceans around the globe.

Denmark is a flat country with the highest point reaching a modest 173 metres above sea level. Not all its citizens have kept their heads down correspondingly in the course of their careers.

Denmark – in the world

Denmark's coat of arms encompasses hearts and lions and two wild men armed with clubs. The viewer has a choice, since he is apparently dealing with a country that can behave both with both kindness and warmth, but also harshness and beligerence.

Which is one to believe?? And what is the true interpretation in the year 2002?

We can help you by explaining that it would have been much easier to understand if the odd dove of peace had been allowed to poke its beak into the national coat of arms.

Modern Denmark has no reservations when it comes to serving peace. For instance, no international organisation has yet appealed in vain to Denmark to make forces available for peacekeeping missions. On dozens of occasions they have been dispatched to areas stretching from Cyprus via the Gaza strip, Abkhasia and Tajikistan to Bosnia.

In relation to the size of its population, Denmark is the country that has sent the greatest number of soldiers on United Nations missions – more than 50,000 since 1948. In 2000, Denmark took part in peacekeeping missions in the Balkans with 245 soldiers per million inhabitants and with a group of military police in the hottest spot of Kosovo – the city of Mitrovica. On the same scale, the next EU country made 123 soldiers available.

During the wars in the Balkans, Denmark contributed military aircraft and naval vessels, and after 11 September 2001 she spontaneously supported the international campaign against terrorism by providing special forces (commando troops and frogmen), naval support, transport aircraft, mine-sweepers, engineers, intelligence services and the offer of military aircraft.

As one of the oldest monarchies, Denmark has over the years both displayed a desire for peace and demonstrated that she can show her claws. In the period between 850 and 1050, the Danish Vikings were far from welcome when they “visited” foreign shores. Today things are different. The main effort of Danish foreign policy is to contribute to the battle against terror, to the prevention of conflict

and to détente in the hot spots of the world.

To start with, Denmark put its peaceful intentions into practice in its own geographical area – i.e. vis-à-vis the other Nordic countries. If you ask the “man in the street” he may spontaneously point to Nordic co-operation as the constant driving force in Denmark's foreign policy.

However, the reality is different in both political and economic terms. As a member of the European Union since 1973, Denmark increasingly looks towards Brussels. Membership of NATO since its foundation in 1949 has also been an important and palpable element of foreign policy. The third place is shared by Nordic co-operation and the UN.

Denmark has joined the EU to stay, but ever since accession the Danish people have distanced themselves from the most enthusiastic ideas of an accelerating European integration. In a 1992 referendum on the Maastricht Treaty, a 50.7% majority of the Danes voted against. But the majority shifted in 1993 when 56.8% accepted the Treaty after the so-called Edinburgh Agreements resulting from renegotiations with Denmark's EU partners and a renewed public debate.

This happened after Denmark had been allowed by the EU to take a step back in certain areas of European co-operation. The opt-outs – of which there are four – exempt Denmark from participation in the third stage of European Monetary Union and the euro, from the common defence policy, union citizenship and legal and domestic affairs.

These opt-outs can only be renounced following another referendum.

The reactions in the rest of the EU to Denmark's voluntarily placing itself on the sidelines in certain areas of European collaboration have not been all negative. Many expressed recognition of the firm Danish stance on the country's democratic rights and its use of the emergency brake to slow down a development it found too fast, too closed and too heavily controlled from Brussels.

Following the Danish rejection of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, France staged its own referendum, and in Germany the Constitutional

Court in Karlsruhe scrutinised the Maastricht Treaty process.

There is general agreement in the EU that the Danish action has led to more openness in the union. Apart from this, the activities of the EU have been unaffected and have progressed as planned. Denmark is left with its opt-outs. In 1993 it was not very heroic to say no to the EMU and the euro, which at that time were only vague concepts.

Nor had there been any military action against Milosevic in 1993. There has been since, and as a NATO-member, Denmark has taken part in direct action with fighter planes.

If we asked the "man in the street" again, perhaps he would not now mind exchanging the krone for the euro, and perhaps he might not care whether the marching orders are signed by NATO or the EU when Danish soldiers go into action in the service of peace.

So, although Denmark is not the fastest ship in the EU convoy and although, measured by population, it is fourth from the bottom, it is not without influence and has several good marks in its report book.

When the Single Market was implemented, Denmark was in the forefront together with Britain in introducing the new rules.

Secondly, Denmark has inspired several other EU countries to new parliamentary practices. A dedicated Europe Committee in the Danish parliament, the Folketing, has full control of Danish EU policy. Danish ministers have matters clarified before going to meetings in the EU and receive a mandate to give their definitive and instant consent or disapproval to matters discussed.

There is agreement in the EU that Denmark has been no less than the standard bearer in opening up the Union to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe since the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. It has been important for Denmark to show that the EU is not only a rich men's club, and that the inclusion of new members could be motivated by other than economic criteria.

During its presidency of the EU during the second half of 2002, Denmark has this very task of completing negotiations for entry into the EU with

10 new countries as the first point on the agenda. Among other objectives is a common EU stance on terrorism and the improvement of food hygiene standards and the environment in the EU. Prior to taking over the presidency, there were numerous meetings between the Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Per Stig Møller, and leading politicians from both the present EU members and the applicant countries.

As a NATO member, Denmark has played a similar role in opening doors to new countries.

Denmark has been described by one of its national poets as "the diminutive nation that secretly keeps snug while the world is burning around its cradle". Like the wild men in the coat of arms, this line is slightly out of date. Diminutive nation? Yes! But secretly snug? No!

On the contrary, in the year 2002 Denmark is undisputedly playing a leading international role in efforts to provide better conditions for the millions of sick, poor, hungry and oppressed in the Third World.

Parallel with classic developmental aid to the Third World, Denmark also helps by warding off and solving conflicts in some of the world's hot spots.

This is done on the basis of very carefully considered strategies and is based on a genuine willingness to sacrifice on the part of the Danish people.

Of the development aid that Denmark itself administers, 51.5% goes to Africa, 26.6% to Asia, 9.4% to Central America and 3.2% to the Balkans, while 9.3% is not distributed by country. The main contribution goes to the 15 so-called programme co-operation countries.

For many years Denmark trod carefully as a donor in order not to arouse suspicions that it wanted to colonise other countries. The Danes stepped in with specific projects such as water supply and health stations and then pulled out again as soon as the construction and installation were completed and local staff was instructed. But this method proved a disappointment in the many cases when nothing came of the project.

So during the 1990s Denmark changed its policy on development aid. Posted staff can now

stay on for up to 15 years, and Denmark has switched to so-called sector programmes where a development plan for a whole sector, for instance farming, health or education, is prepared by Denmark, the receiving country and other donor countries.

A common denominator for all Danish development aid is that it must benefit the poorest section of the population. Another important principle in all programmes is that they should benefit women and the environment.

However, the Danish demands do not end there. Based on bitter experience that strife and conflicts can put an end to any aid activity, Denmark is now increasing the demands it makes on the receiving countries. If they stubbornly continue as dictatorships, resulting in the oppression of political opposition, violations of human rights and the maintenance of bad government (corruption), Denmark downgrades or stops its aid.

Danish aid to the Third World must be seen in conjunction with its refugee policy. People fleeing from persecution are admitted to the country in

large numbers, but the Danes would naturally prefer – particularly for the sake of the refugees themselves – for them to remain in their own countries. If the refugee problem is to be solved, it is vital to combat civil war, violence, political persecution, poverty and disease in the countries themselves.

That is exactly what Denmark is trying to do with its generous aid to development, democratisation and conflict prevention. The ideal is to create a world where nobody need flee from war, persecution, hunger or misery in his or her own country. As the Danish government says: the greatest successes in the refugee policy are the refugees who never came.

As we have seen, Denmark willingly and generously helps the world's weakest. At the same time the country is increasingly tough with those who do not treat their poor and oppressed in a decent way. The hearts in the coat of arms are the dominant symbol for the country's foreign policy and development aid, but the lions can also show their claws when necessary.

Front cover photo:

Queen Margrethe arriving at the Custom House in Copenhagen to board the royal yacht the "Dannebrog" at the start of her summer visit 2000 to Danish ports. (Photo: Jørgen Jessen, Scarpix Nordfoto.)

A Queen and Her Country

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Back cover photo:

Queen Margrethe is received with flowers by the
8-year-old Sabine Schönberg in the port of Marstal
on the island of Ærø in July 2000. (Photo: Erik
Luntang.)



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