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Hans Kirchhoff, ed. *Nyt Lys over Oktober 1943.* Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2002. 98 pp. DKR 125.00 (paper), ISBN 978-87-7838-761-5.

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Based on a public conference held in 2001 initiated by the relatively new Holocaust Center in Copenhagen, a new book has been released containing slightly revised lecture contributions. The proclaimed aim as stated by the editor, Hans Kirchhoff, is to bridge the increasing gap between the public and history-science, when it comes to understanding the major events in connection with the German action against the Danish Jews in October 1943 and the following rescue-operation, allowing most of the Danish Jews an escape to Sweden. Apparently what has happened in recent years is that science has, if not revolutionized, then at least produced new and critical knowledge and in this way put the established consensus between the public and science, dating back to the 1960s, under pressure. The traditional consensus in relation to October 1943 was, among other elements, based on a perception of a unity not only between Danes and Danish Jews but also among Danes transcending the hitherto established division between resistance and cooperation, offering the whole of Denmark a renewed honourable identity and prestige as a result of the perceived almost heroic civilian rebellion against the Nazi perpetrators.

In the first chapter, Sofie Lene Bak deals with the German side, discussing the possible German motives for initiating the action. In the focus we find the supreme political representative of the German occupation power, Werner Best. His policy of cooperation had failed upon the August 1943 rebellion and the demise of the Danish government. Best accordingly faced the possibility of being ousted from office by Berlin or at least being forced into increased sharing of power. According to Bak, the theory of the Israeli historian Leni Yahil establishing a double play on the part of Best still stands the test of time: Best initiated as well as sabotaged the action against the Jews, thereby aiming at pleasing at the same time both his masters in Berlin (where he needed political-ideological credit) and his future co-players in the Danish administration, who more legitimately could continue the cooperation with Best, who deliberately had distanced himself from the action against the Jews and to some extent had been responsible for the German passivity during the rescue operation. Bak suggests that Denmark still stands out as a special case in the grim story of the Holocaust. On the other hand she also points out that the Danish example seems to suggest that the German occupation power throughout Europe cannot be treated as a solely ideologically run machine, equally determined everywhere. Local factors, including the interests of local German authorities and the power play between the occupier and the occupied, must be used as supplementary explanatory elements. Arthur Arnheim looks into the question of the running and reaction of the Jewish community. Based on a description of the divergence of the Jews in Denmark, not finding representation in the leadership of the community being dominated by the old well-to-do, integrated, and state-loyal and state-trusting section of the Jews, Arnheim picks a highly critical view on the attitudes and policy of this leadership to the effect of a display of fundamental passivity.

Next, Hans Kirchhoff discusses the forgotten plan of internment of the Danish Jews sought by the Danish civil administration. Knowing for sure at the end of September that a German action was close, the administration desperately tried to avoid a deportation. The administration found itself caught in the dilemma not unknown in the history of the Holocaust between right and justice and the need to help. Best turned the suggestion down.

If accepted, the history of the Holocaust in Denmark could have taken a quite different and very tragic course. Kirchhoff uses the term "forgotten," although it is questionable how forgotten the plan of internment was and is. The plan is treated and analysed in a number of studies through the years. Only by taking at face value the handling in the media, where the plan with interim often has been presented in sensational and compromising terms as news, can one talk of a plan forgotten. And Kirchhoffs own analysis suggests that as far as the context and motives are concerned, the plan needs no suppressing or hiding away.

Michael Mogensen points in his chapter at the usefulness of contemporary Swedish sources to be exploited in the future. His own preliminary investigation so far seems to show the distinct working of the market mechanism in the pricing of transport to Sweden during the rescue operation, apparently benefiting the more wealthy Jews, who were the first to escape, forcing poorer Jews to wait in hiding for the lowering of prices or the providing of money.

Hans Sode-Madsen gives an account of the existence in Theresienstadt, the camp to which the arrested Jews were sent upon the October pogrom. Not being a traditional concentration camp and not being a death camp, Theresienstadt functioned as a window in the German propaganda to show the world the German humanitarian treatment of Jews. As a camp for the older and prominent Jews, deemed unsuitable to kill right away, the camp in reality functioned as a transit camp on the way to destruction in the East. Only the Danish Jews were spared, also as a result of an agreement between Eichmann and Best. This account is followed by informative testimonies by two Jewish deportees in Theresienstadt, Hanka Friediger and Heinz E. Hess.

Finally, Therkel Strde delivers an excellent and inspiring overview of the latest tendencies in the international Holocaust research. The intentionalist and functionalist approaches having exhausted themselves, a new combining approach today has upgraded the role of ideology in connection with a focus on individuals, groups, and roles. In Hilberg's original distinction between perpetrators, victims, and bystanders the focus was in effect on the perpetrators. Today, a new focus on the victims and their patterns of reaction has opened up for studies of the interaction (however asymmetric) between the perpetrators and victims, leaving the perception of overall Jewish passivity and shedding new light on the behaviour of not only the victims but also the perpetrators. If the title "New light" is taken literally, then this represents an exaggeration and comes out a bit misleading. Not much of news is presented.

What the book does offer, however, is a qualified, relatively short and clear representation of the research in later years, offering the interested reader and the public an up-to-date version (or rather, versions) of the October 1943 events from different angles. Having these qualities, the book can be seen as a contribution to the effort of bridging the gap to the public. Having said this, it also seems as if this gap is not completely inevitable. This is partly due to the character of the newer research. The research of the later years and decades, indeed having produced new and critical knowledge, still has not fundamentally broken with the consensus of the earlier perceptions. For instance, new knowledge about the vital role of the German passivity for the success of the rescue operation does not change the rather documented impression of a wholeheartedly and broadly founded assistance from the Danish resistance movement and first-time helpers not knowing what we now know about the limited risks involved. An awareness among helpers and assistants of low risks has not been substantiated. Also an acknowledgment of the operating of the market mechanism in the pricing of ship-transport of Jewish refugees does not alter the impression that no poor Jews were left to their own devices. The weak and unpleasant spots, having been uncovered so far in the history of October 1943, should be conveyed in a balanced form, still leaving room for the magic and moral dimension and content of the moment. In this, historians and the media share responsibility. With the book *New Light*, a group of historians have done their bit in this respect.

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