KAREN EGEDAL ANDREASEN & PALLE RASMUSSEN

EDUCATION AND DEMOCRATIC LEARNING IN REFUGEE CAMPS

German Refugees in Denmark After Second World War

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When the German forces occupying Denmark capitulated in May 1945 several hundred thousand German civilian refugees were staying in the country. They had come from the eastern regions of Germany and had fled west for fear of the Russian soldiers. The refugees were mostly women, children and elderly people because many German men were serving in the military. During the first years after the war, returning to Germany was not possible for these refugees, and for many of them their home region would no longer be part of Germany. So, most of the refugees had to stay in Denmark for several years after the end of the war. They lived in refugee camps around the country, and their everyday life was characterized by cramped conditions, uncertainty, missing family and home and isolation from Danish society. After recognizing the situation, the Danish authorities responded by establishing a refugee administration to ensure orderly and humane conditions in the camps. Among its many activities the refugee administration organized schooling, education and information, much of which was aimed at democratic learning. The refugees themselves had an active and an important role in this.

The education and information work in the refugee camps is the focus of this book. It describes and analyses goals and plans developed by Danish authorities, the activities initiated, the cultural and ideological basis for the effort, and the German refugees' experiences of the schooling and information activities.

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Content

Preface

This book is about the ideas, plans, and activities for education, information, and democratic learning in the camps for the German refugees, the hundreds of thousands of German citizens who came to Denmark towards the end of the Second World War and were interned in camps around the country.

The German refugees, as well as the camps and the Danish Refugee Administration[1] set up to organize the effort, have been the subject of interest from many sides and have been dealt with in various types of scientific and public publications, in radio, TV, and film, as well as at museums. The interest has been particularly focused on questions about how Denmark took the refugees in, what the conditions were for the refugees in the camps, and how the Danish authorities handled the challenges associated with the refugees' stay and repatriation.

In this book, we focus on a more limited part of the refugee camps' practice and everyday life, namely the educational and information activities that were planned and implemented. We seek to contribute to the documentation and research on these activities, which have so far only been dealt with to a limited extent.

This is an English language version of a book, which was originally published in Danish (Andreasen & Rasmussen, 2024). In addition to the change in language, new information has been added in some places and English language references have been included where relevant.

The book's descriptions and analyses also deal with the ideological and political prerequisites that characterized the approach and efforts of the Danish authorities, as well as with the German refugees' experience of this. This includes their memories and descriptions of the school, education, and educational activities in an everyday life characterized by cramped conditions in the

1 In Danish: Flygtningeadministration.

camps, insecurity, missing their families and homeland, and isolation from the Danish society.

Shortly after the end of the war in Europe, Johannes Kjærbøl, a Danish Social Democratic politician and former minister, was appointed head of the newly established Refugee Administration[2] in Denmark. During the same period, he gave several speeches dealing with, among other topics, education and information activities, and he ascribed these a special role in the efforts for the refugees. In a speech given in October 1945, he states, for example, that:

> ignorance is present among a population that has not only been repressed through a low level of information for a number of years but has also been exposed to misinformation for a long time. (Kjærbøl, 13 October 1945)[3]

The education and information effort should, as Kjærbøl also said, be Danish-led and under Danish control, "based on a democratic, but politically neutral basis" and have as its goal "spiritual influence in the camps" (ibid.). Something, as he says in the speech, could be done through this process that he refers to as "combing" the camps for people with Nazi sympathies, but he points out that "I place greater faith in the effect of the information work that I mentioned earlier" (ibid.).

These are just a few examples of formulations that form the background for this book's interest in the ideas and plans for education, information, and enlightenment in the refugee camps developed by the Danish authorities. How were such ideas and plans put into practice and unfolded in the everyday life of the camps? And how was the ambition to promote democracy realized within the framework of internment camps, guarded and isolated from Danish society?

We thus want to describe and analyse the Refugee Administration's plans for the education and information efforts, including the ideas behind them, the actors involved, and how the plans were implemented in the camps' everyday life and practice. The plans were extensive and involved issues of democracy. Essentially, we examine the plans, the guiding ideas, and the efforts to put the them into practice by the Danish authorities and the refugees themselves as a contribution to ensuring humane and peaceful living and social conditions in post-war Europe; however, we also maintain a critical eye on the efforts and the framework.

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2 Kjærbøl's background is described in more detail in Chapter 4.

3 Kjærbøl's speeches can be found among his records in the Danish National Archives. See the list of sources for more precise references.

The book is aimed at anyone who is interested in the German refugees who came to Denmark after the Second World War and in their time in Denmark. It will also be relevant for readers with a more general interest in refugee issues.

In the research on these historical events, we have received great help from employees at various Danish archives, for which we are grateful.

The book draws on and cites books, articles, and documents written in Danish and German. Where no reference is made to published translations, quotations have been translated by the authors. In quotations from documents in English, the original language form has been preserved.

One important aspect of the translation should be noted. In Danish language, the word 'oplysning' can mean 'information' as well as 'enlightenment'. In Danish educational tradition 'oplysning' has often meant enlightenment, for instance in the term 'folkeoplysning' – 'people's enlightenment' – which has been an established part of Danish adult education. In connection with the activities of the Refugee Administration 'oplysning' often had both meanings at the same time. We have tried to take account of this in the translation.

After this preface, Chapter 1 provides a brief introduction to the book's theme and issues. Chapter 2 presents the necessary background knowledge about the refugees, the camps, and the gradual repatriation of the refugees, which was completed in the spring of 1949. Next, Chapter 3 presents the book's analytical approach, including key concepts, methods used, and links to previous research. Chapter 4 highlights the basic pedagogical and political ideas, both in a Danish and international context, that characterized the plans for education and information in the camps. Then, Chapter 5 deals with the structure of the refugee administration, with a particular focus on its networks of actors that came to characterize the work and their underlying ideas and agendas. Chapter 6 deals with the leadership of the camps, where the Danish authorities sought to introduce an element of democratic self-government. Against this background, the plans developed for education and information and their implementation in practice are presented and discussed. This is done in Chapter 7 for school education and in Chapter 8 for information and cultural efforts. In both these chapters, a distinction is made between two levels: first, the principles and plans which was developed and formulated by the Danish authorities, and second, the activities carried out, in the way this is presented especially in the reports of the refugee administration inspectors. Chapter 9 includes a further level, highlighting refugees' own experiences of educational and information activities in the context of the broader life situation in the camps, as documented in contemporary and older texts. Chapter 10 is the conclusion of the book, where we summarize and discuss the results of the descriptions and analysis.

Introduction

Background

Thousands of German refugees came to Denmark towards the end of the Second World War. In January 1945, the Soviet Union and its troops had launched an offensive that led to the collapse of the German Eastern Front. Fear of the Soviet troops was great, and although the German authorities were reluctant to act, German citizens from threatened areas began to flee. Many moved westwards, and by doing so also created difficulties for the German troops. In February 1945, the German authorities issued an order for a forced evacuation of German citizens from these eastern parts of the German Reich (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1950, p. 33). The exact number is not known, but many millions, mainly women, children, and elderly people, fled or were forced to evacuate to other countries and places. The first part of the journeys often took place by horse-drawn carriage or on foot, the second part by train or – as was the case for many of those who came to Denmark – by ship from one of the ports on the Baltic Sea coast.

At the time when this was put into effect, Denmark was still occupied by Germany, and for this reason many of these forcibly evacuated German citizens came to Denmark. In May 1945, there were approximately 244,000 German refugees in Denmark (Refugee Administration, 1950). This corresponded to the total population of two of the largest cities in Denmark at that time, Aarhus (with some 137,000 citizens) and Odense (with some 103,000 citizens). After the liberation, some could be sent back to Germany, but more than 200,000 had to remain in Denmark. The Danish authorities pressed for repatriation, but it was ultimately the Allied High Command that decided this question, and repatriation was not an immediate possibility (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1950, p. 60).

The refugees who Denmark was to host came from the country that had occupied Denmark from 1940 until the spring of 1945, and which repre-

sented an ideology that was in opposition to Danish political tradition and culture. The majority of the German refugees who came to the country in connection with the end of the war thus found themselves in a very contradictory situation. On the one hand, they had been forced to come to Denmark as refugees, on the other Denmark was forced to house them by virtue of the agreements among the Allies. This put the Danish authorities in a situation characteristic of the administration of refugee camps, a situation that has been called "managing the undesirables" (Agier, 2011, p. 4; see also e.g. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1950, pp. 19, 23, 27; Jensen, 2020, p. 26).

Political and administrative management of refugee camps is challenging and contradictory. One of the challenges is that staying in a refugee camp is far more than just having a roof over one's head, food, and warmth. The stay is also a context for experiences that the refugees take with them when they can later leave the camp and return to a life as ordinary citizens, though not necessarily in the places they came from. The camps, like all other social places where people live and interact with others, form a context for socialization, and experiences from life in the camps leave significant traces that can play a role long after the stay has ended and leave their mark on the rest of the displaced people's lives.

Isolated islands in Denmark

After their arrival in Denmark, the refugees were at first housed in various temporary facilities all over the country, but actual camps were gradually established. In this connection, a set of camp regulations was also drawn up by the Danish authorities (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 1945). This stipulated that the refugees were not allowed to have contact with the surrounding Danish society; they had to be isolated in the camps until they could be sent home. Letter contact with family in Germany was not possible in the beginning; letters to Germany were forbidden until April 1946 and opportunities for informal contacts, for instance via relatives in other countries, were few and random (Mix, 2005, pp. 80–82). It is obvious that such internment, isolation, and restriction of freedom had to be experienced as frustrating and unfair by refugees who had been forcibly evacuated to Denmark or who themselves had had to choose to flee because of the war. And the experience of frustration would probably intensify the longer they had to be in such conditions: in uncertainty about their future lives and perhaps also uncertainty about those closest to them and their fate.

However, the war that had just ended contributed to creating a complicated situation, and the requirements of the camp regulations must be seen

as justified by several factors. After the Danish population had experienced five years of German occupation with gradually stronger military control, the presence of German citizens in Denmark was an issue associated with many conflicts and tensions (e.g. Jensen, 2013). Some Danes had experienced that family members had been deported to an uncertain fate in concentration camps, others had experienced oppression and violence during the occupation. There was a strong anti-German sentiment in the public, and for the many Danes it was difficult to distinguish between Nazism, German military, and German refugees. However, there were also Danes who questioned the authorities' treatment of the refugees. One example was the author Poul Henningsen, who in several speeches criticized the authorities for secrecy and the Danish population for a lack of interest in the conditions of the German refugees (e.g. see Henningsen, 1946; Kjærbøl, 1959, pp. 213ff).

Against this background, the provisions of the camp regulations on minimizing contact between Danish and German citizens should also be understood as a measure to prevent the development of conflicts. Denmark was responsible for the refugees; the state had to ensure their safety and daily necessities. In addition, authorities did not want any influence in Danish society from German citizens who might have Nazi sympathies and attitudes. In order to ensure a later repatriation, it was also important to know where the several hundred thousand German citizens were staying. On this basis, the camps for the German refugees became a form of isolated areas, located in Denmark but having their very own everyday life and culture behind the fence.

Ideas on education, information, and enlightenment in the refugee camps

States have a special monopoly on power and the exercise of it, and this can unfold in many forms and contexts, including through the institutions of the state (Foucault, 2020; Bourdieu, 2014). This also applies to public education and institutions established to care for different parts of the population, such as refugees. Both in contemporary and historical contexts, the exercise of power in camps for refugees has often included disempowerment as well as deprivation of opportunities for school and education; or in some cases requirements to attend special schools with primarily disciplinary purposes (e.g. see Agier, 2011; Bender, 2021). However, in the refugee camps for the German refugees in Denmark after the Second World War, the exercise of power partly unfolded in other forms. The Danish authorities aimed for a type of governance in which the refugees themselves also played a role and where ide-

as of democracy and enlightenment were important. And the education and information activities for the German residents of the camps – the activities that this book focuses on – played an important role.

The history of the education and information plans and activities in the refugee camps in Denmark is remarkable. Our aim with this book is to describe and analyse it further. It was an effort characterized by educational and pedagogical ideas and visions of enlightenment and democratization. From the establishment of the Refugee Administration a few months after the end of the war, these ideas were included in the plans that were developed and the attempt to implement the plans in the camps' everyday life and practice.

These were pedagogical ideas that had gained ground in the decades before the war, in parts of the Western World and also in many Danish educational and pedagogical contexts.

By virtue of the education and information effort and its conceptual basis, the story of the refugee camps in Denmark after the Second World War stands out from many other descriptions of life in refugee camps. This might be seen as an expression of a form of "Danish exceptionalism" (Tröhler, 2021; Andreasen, 2023), a political-cultural special case that differs from comparable countries and situations. However, such a special case has its preconditions. The practice that was planned for the Danish camps can be seen as a reflection of significant developments in education that were prevalent at the time, and these developments, due to the political conditions, had a special opportunity to influence the planning and practice of the camps. Opponents of Nazi ideology and supporters of democracy had had very difficult conditions under Germany's regime. For this reason, the Danish authorities considered it important to establish the framework for activities and practices in the camps and that these activities should support the voice represented by the advocates of democracy.

Pedagogical progressivism – or reform pedagogy, as it is often referred to in Danish – and democracy are ideas and practices that are not often associated with refugee camps. However, they were included as ideas and ideals and played a role in various ways in the plans for education and information activities that the Danish authorities and the actors involved developed for the camps for the German refugees. Both the plans and the process behind them drew on a certain view of the role of education in people's lives. This was true both from an academic perspective – related to the academic content of the educations – and seen in the perspective of socialization, understood as the side of education that is related to values, norms, and interaction with others (Jacobsen et al., 2004; Grundmann, 2021). This view of education reflected ideas that had been prevalent in the United States and Europe in the decades

before World War II, and which had education for democracy and citizenship in free societies as important focal points (Popkewitz, 2012).

Seen in this light, education, information, and learning in the camps for German refugees in Denmark after the Second World War are interesting and relevant to describe and analyse. This book is an extension of previous research on the refugee camps, but it also adds an analytical perspective from the history of education. We look at the processes through which the plans for education and information activities came into being and try to understand them in the context of history of education. In particular, we focus on the following questions:

- What pedagogical ideas and networks characterized the Danish authorities' plans for education and information efforts in the refugee camps?
- How and to what extent were the plans realized?
- How were the plans and efforts influenced by ideas of democracy?
- How did the German refugees in the camps, based on their situation, experience the education and information efforts?

The refugees and the camps

As a background for the education and information activities in the refugee camps, it is necessary to understand the extent and nature of the refugee problem that Danish society was confronted with in the spring and summer of 1945. Here, we provide an overall description of the context and conditions for the German citizens' stay in Denmark, the composition of the refugee group, and the refugees' return to Germany.

Refugees

The German refugees who came to Denmark in 1945 were in the first phase distributed to a large number of camps or accommodation sites all over the country. This started while Denmark was still occupied and continued in the period immediately after the liberation, until the Danish state recognized the need for an actual refugee administration and established it with effect from September 1945. In a count made on 5 May 1945, the number of refugees was stated to be 244,493 (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 26). Since the need for housing was massive and acute, the accommodation and the establishment of camps initially depended on where in the country this was possible. Not only barracks camps were used, but also places and facilities such as schools, folk high schools, hotels, inns, community halls, sanatoriums, recreation homes, sports halls, holiday camps, inns, boarding houses, mission houses, military camps, airfields, and other buildings that made it possible to house a group of people for a period of time (Refugee Administration, 1950, pp. 293–304). The count from May 1945 shows a distribution of 83 barracks camps (with 39,811 refugees) and 1,018 other buildings (with 204,682 refugees) (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 66).

However, an initiative was soon taken to establish larger barracks camps where the refugees could better be housed together, and after having been

accommodated in many different places, most of them were placed in actual camps of different sizes, and the number of camps was reduced considerably. Nevertheless, the report shows that there were still refugees accommodated in, for instance, schools right up until mid-1947, although the number was small (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 66).

In October 1946, the number of camps and their sizes was stated to include 14 large camps (camps with more than 3,000 refugees), 21 medium-sized camps (1,000–3,000 refugees), 19 smaller camps (500–1,000 refugees), 21 small camps and special camps (less than 500 refugees), 3 villages, and 2 transit camps (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 62). Transit camps were camps that were used for temporary stays in connection with repatriation (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 89). The camps thus differed from each other in size as well as in location, for example in rural or urban areas. A few, like the transit camps, had special purposes, and some existed for only a short time.

Among the 14 large camps mentioned in the report, six were particularly large (also referred to by the refugee administration as "major camps"). These six were Kløvermarken (in Copenhagen), the Oksbøl camp, the Rom camp at Lemvig, the Grove-Gedhus camp at Karup, the Bov camp in Southern Jutland, and the camp at Ry (Havrehed, 1987, p. 158). The Oksbøl camp, located in western Jutland, was the largest and also among those that existed for the longest time. In January 1946, this camp housed about 35,000 refugees. In comparison, Kløvermarken, also a major camp, housed a little more than half of this number. Among the 14 large camps were also the two camps in the Aalborg area, at the airfields west and east of the city.

The refugees were predominantly women, children, and young people, as shown in the statistics (see Table 1). There were many children and young people of school age, and the gender distribution, especially in the age group 25–64 years, showed a predominance of women, with about twice as many women as men (Havrehed, 1987, p. 335). Statistics from August 1946 show the following distribution of the younger age groups among the total of 196,518 refugees at that time (ibid., p. 335).

Table 1. Children and young people in the refugee camps

	Men	Women	Total
10–14 years	13,539	12,576	26,115
15–19 years	7,843	11,892	19,735
20–24 years	549	11,087	11,636

Overall, children and young people aged between 10 and 24 years at the time made up 57,486 people, equal to some 30% of the refugees. These were children and young people who had gone to school during the period when the National Socialists were in power in Germany, and some of them had been affiliated with and schooled in the Hitler Youth. We discuss the significance of this in Chapter 4.

It should be mentioned that there were also refugees that came from other countries than Germany, but their numbers were limited. The census on 31 December 1949 states that there were approximately 31,000 persons representing a wide range of nationalities, of whom approximately 1,950 still resided in Denmark (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 259). Most of them came from Poland and Russia, making up just over half, but some also came from France, Austria, Hungary, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Czechoslovakia (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 259). These refugees were housed in independent camps and under special conditions. That their situation differed from that of the German refugees is evident, for example, from descriptions of Polish refugees' conditions and experiences from their time in Denmark. Among other things, it appears that during their stay these refugees had, unlike the German refugees, the opportunity to work in agriculture (Kolstrup, 2010, p. 201). And in memoirs, it is described how the Danish camps were experienced as a "breathing space", where there was security, copious amounts of food and clothing, and where people were met with helpfulness (Kolstrup, 2010, pp. 176ff.). However, the situation of these refugees, who came from outside Germany, is not discussed in detail in this book.

Nazi officials in the camps

The registration of the German refugees, which was initiated soon after the liberation, was primarily concerned with establishing the number of refugees and the identity of the individual refugees and making it possible to search for the refugees' relatives. During 1945, a central refugee register was established, located at the Kløvermarken camp. The register gradually gained about 120 employees, all of them office-trained refugees. The office collected information from all the refugee camps in the country (Rowold, January 1947, p. 17ff[4]; Harder, 2020, p. 146).

4 Rowold's account is included in the archive material in Havrehed's archive. See the list of sources for a more precise reference.

One of the questions that characterized both the surveillance of the refugee camps and the public debate was whether the camps hid Nazi officials and war criminals among the German refugees. The registration was therefore also about identifying such persons. It could be expected that during the period when Germany's defeat was imminent, some officials would have tried in various ways to seek refuge, and the refugee camps could be seen as an opportunity for this. Among the refugees who arrived in Copenhagen, there were also Nazi functionaries who tried to hide. Ship's doctors on two of the refugee ships said that on arrival, the party officials suddenly appeared in civilian clothes, and there were many uniforms left behind in the cabins (Mix, 2005, p. 15). The hunt for war criminals and particularly suspected Nazis was initiated by the Resistance Movement immediately after the liberation; but after a few months, the task was taken over by the Refugee Administration's Police Department, which conducted approximately 4,000 interrogations and made some 200 arrests (Harder, 2020, p. 266). A number of former Nazi officials in the camps were arrested and placed in a penal camp at Mosede, south of Copenhagen. However, there were also examples of these officials continuing to play a role. According to Mix (2005, p. 58), there were several former Nazi functionaries in Aalborg who continued to hold posts in the camps until the autumn of 1946.

The British Military Commission in Copenhagen also received enquiries from some refugees complaining that there were Nazis in senior administrative positions in various camps. In the summer of 1946, the commission raised the issue with the Danish authorities, but these were not inclined to make much of the case, since the plan was that the refugees would soon return to Germany (Harder, 2020, p. 270). An example of the handling of Nazi officials is an East Prussian woman, Hildegaard Kowalkowsky, who was put in charge of the Refugee Commission's department for the search for children. She had previously held the same function under the German Red Cross and was recognized as very skilled. After a few months, it became known that she had been a relatively prominent Nazi in East Prussia, and Kjærbøl demanded that she be fired; but two senior German officials (one of them a communist) who knew her past managed to have her stay in the post (Harder, 2020, p. 269).

The search for former Nazi officials in the camps was an important part of placing responsibility for atrocities committed during the war, but in the heated atmosphere of the early days after the end of the war, it could also lead to excessive control and persecution of refugees. The reticence of the Danish authorities helped to dampen such reactions.

The repatriation

The repatriation of the German refugees proved to be a difficult process in which many factors played a complicating role (Havrehed, 1987, pp. 237ff; Jensen, 2013). Denmark was interested in pushing ahead with repatriation, among other things also to reduce the large costs associated with the refugees' stay in Denmark. This is clear from the communication between the Danish authorities and the occupying powers, which can be read in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' 1950 report on this subject: "Documents regarding the German Refugees in Denmark 1945–1949" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1950). The Danish authorities sent many letters requesting that they be allowed to start repatriation. However, parts of Germany were so heavily affected by the war that it was difficult. Jensen describes how, in preparation for repatriation, Johannes Kjærbøl was on a trip to parts of Germany where he saw for himself the bombed-out Berlin, houses destroyed by shelling, collapsed bridges and other destruction (Jensen, 2020, p. 76). In May 1946, the British military authorities also issued a message to the refugees that expressed understanding that the refugees wanted to go home but at the same time regretted that repatriation was not currently possible due to the food situation in Germany. Among other things, the message states: "We regret that nothing can be done at present to speed up the return journey. As long as the nutritional situation in Germany does not improve, no one can hope to be sent home" (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 312).

Lengthy negotiations took place before agreements on the first repatriations were ready. Given the current conditions in many places in Germany, the refugees would return home under extremely difficult conditions, and for some the return meant staying in a new refugee camp, now only in Germany; but there was of course still great joy among the refugees when the repatriation finally began. This is also stated in the refugee camps' newspaper *Deutsche Nachrichten*, which had a major report on the first repatriation on 11 November 1946. The news filled the front page with the headline "The first refugee transports to Germany" as well as various posts and photos. It said, among other things:

> Last Saturday, a railway train of historical importance rolled across the Danish-German border. One thousand inhabitants of the zone occupied by the British have gone to their city of destination. (*Deutsche Nachrichten*, 1946c, p. 1)

As the refugees could be sent home, the number of camps was also gradually reduced in the following years. The table below shows the number of recep-

tion centres and refugees in the period from 1945 to 1949 as described by the Refugee Administration (1950, p. 66; Table 2).

Table 2. Development in the number of refugees

Date	Refugees	Camps
May 1945	244,493	1,101
1/10/1945	200,321	465
1/1/1946	199,028	335
1/7/1946	198,001	142
1/1/1947	179,205	90
1/7/1947	123,906	40
1/1/1948	66,518	23
1/7/1948	44,785	15
1/1/1949	2,365	7

During the 3 years from 1945 to January 1948, the number of refugees fell to 66,518, and on 1 January 1949 the number was 2,365. The number of camps fell correspondingly from 465 in October 1945 to 23 on 1 January 1948 and 7 on 1 January 1949. The last transport of refugees back to Germany took place February 1949 (Havrehed, 1987, pp. 250ff; Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 14, 92). For the refugees who had arrived in Denmark in the spring of 1945 and were among the last to be able to return home, the stay could have stretched over a period of almost 4 years. This was a period of everyday life that also included the education and information activities that the Refugee Administration had planned and which under difficult and varied conditions had been sought carried out. It is these activities, their background and form, as well as how they were experienced by the refugees themselves, that we focus on in the following.

Analytical approach and empirical basis

In its treatment of the camps for the German refugees, this book follows on from previous research but focuses on the education and information activities for the refugees that were initiated after the end of the war and analyses the plans for these and the associated practices in a contextual perspective.

Plans for these activities were made after the Danish state had established an actual refugee administration. The plans must be understood in the light of several factors, including political initiatives nationally and internationally, the actors who through their affiliation with the Refugee Administration had an influence on the plans, and the developments in the field of pedagogy and education at the time, in Denmark as well as in Germany. Understanding these developments must involve a transnational perspective capturing influences that take place through international interactions and their significance. The practices of the implementation of the plans must also be understood in light of the conditions in the refugee camps.

The analysis is thus unfolded in a perspective of educational history, where we look at how the ideas behind and plans for educational and information activities in the Danish refugee camps reflected educational developments, conditions, and trends at the time, nationally as well as internationally, and how these plans were implemented – or were sought to be implemented – in practice.

The refugees constituted a target group for education and information, where consideration for their difficult life circumstances and situation was important, and the refugee camps constituted an institutional framework characterized in every way by special conditions and challenges. The refugees were German citizens – children, young people, adults, and the elderly – who had had to leave their homes and communities because of the war, and who had often also left behind or lost members of their families. They had come

by dangerous escape routes to another country where they were gathered and lived in cramped and difficult conditions, separated from the surrounding society and its population, uncertain of when they would be able to return home. These conditions had to be taken into account by the Refugee Administration in its planning, and they must be taken into account when understanding the design of the Danish authorities' plans for the education and information activities and the management of these activities – and not least in attempting to understand the practical implementation of the activities and the refugees' experience of them.

This book's analytical approach is therefore based on two academic and conceptual bases: research on the special nature of refugee camps as institutions and social environments, and research on how ideas and practices regarding education and learning move and are translated across geographies and cultures.

Refugee camps as institutions and out-places

Within sociology and cultural analysis, different kinds of theoretical frameworks, concepts, and analyses of the special character of refugee camps as institutions and social environments have been developed.

The sociologist Erving Goffman addresses this with his concept of *total institutions* (Goffman, 1968; Jacobsen & Kristiansen, 2015; Brandmaier, 2022). The concept was developed on the basis of his studies in a psychiatric hospital but can also contribute to an understanding of refugee camps. Total institutions are characterized, among other things, by their isolation from the surrounding society in both a physical and social sense. The physical separation can take the form of walls or fences, the social separation means that the institutions have their own internal rules, which are not necessarily bound by the norms or laws of the surrounding society. Total institutions can also be characterized by sharp internal separation between certain groups, typically between the people who run institutions and those who inhabit them. This separation can be expressed in formal or less formal rules for the power distribution and relations between the two groups, including how and when residents are entitled to have contact with individuals in the management group (Goffman, 1968, p. 7). The seclusion from the surrounding society and special internal power relations usually also apply to refugee camps; however, in the Danish camps for German refugees, an internal structure was established that differed in some respects from Goffman's image of the total institution. Ideas of democracy were sought integrated through a limited form of local democracy, and this played a role in the social structures in the camps.

A more recent contribution to understanding the special nature of refugee camps has been given by Michel Agier (2011, 2022). He believes that refugee camps can be defined by three characteristics: extra-territoriality, exception, and exclusion. In the spatial dimension, the camps are extra-territorial or out-places; they are often located in secluded areas, and in many cases they are not marked on official maps, even though they may be some of the largest population centres in countries. In a legal sense, the camps are exceptional, because they are usually managed through other political-administrative tools than the surrounding areas. The camps are also an expression of social exclusion, because the residents are treated as not belonging to the culture and society of the country where the camp is located.

Agier agrees that refugee camps have the character of total institutions in Goffman's sense; like psychiatric hospitals, prisons, and retirement homes, they are designed for people who are passing through a temporary crisis situation; however, "by fixing them and gathering them collectively, these other spaces turn their occupants into permanent deviants, abnormals who are kept at a distance" (Agier, 2011, p. 182). And Agier elaborates on the camps' character as out-places in the following way:

> These out-places are initially constituted as outsides, placed on the edges or limits of the normal order of things - a 'normal' order that ultimately remains still today a national one.' They are characterized a priori by confinement and a certain 'extraterritoriality'. This is constructed for refugees and displaced persons in the experience of a double exclusion from locality: an exclusion from their place of origin, lost in the wake of violent displacement; and an exclusion from the space of the 'local population' where these camps and other transit zones are established. (Agier, 2011, p. 180)

The institutional features of refugee camps are strongly influenced by the fact that refugees are unwelcome elements that must be isolated in order to not pollute the national order. However, Turner (2015) points out that the refugees are also given the function of confirming the national order. The refugee camp exposes the refugee as a marginal and flawed person, and this confirms for the ordinary citizens the normal connection between citizen, nation, and state. "While the figure of the refugee threatens the nation state, it also stabilizes it by being the 'constitutive outside' of the national order of things" (Turner, 2015, p. 140; Turner & Whyte, 2022). This understanding is inspired by Michel Foucault's analyses of governmental rationality and discursive power (Foucault, 2000, 2020).

Gathering refugees in camps is not only a practical measure – it also aims to prevent outsiders from mixing with the ordinary citizens of the nation. Therefore, it is important to maintain the separation between inside and outside the camp. The camp's outer boundary is an essential defining characteristic that shapes the lives of those who live within the boundary. This characteristic was evident in the refugee camps in Denmark, where rules and controls aimed to cut off all contact between German refugees and Danish citizens.

An important aspect of the exceptional nature of refugee camps is that they are also defined by a specific timeframe. Like Agier, Turner emphasizes that refugee camps are in principle temporary, not intended as permanent residences, but in practice can become almost permanent because solutions in the form of repatriation to the country of origin or placement elsewhere do not materialize. The timeframe remains uncertain.

> Refugees in camps thus find themselves in a doubly paradoxical situation: first, they cannot settle where they are because they are supposedly "on the move", on their way home or somewhere else in the future; second, they cannot remain "on the move" as they possibly are not going anywhere, either now or in the near future. The result is that they experience living in a time pocket where time grinds to a halt inside the camp while normal time continues outside the camp. (Turner, 2015, p. 142)

The refugees' lives in the camps are invariably marked by this permanently temporary timeframe. Imagining a future, planning one's life, and taking steps to follow the plan become extremely difficult.

In his description of life in the refugee camps in Denmark, Karl-Georg Mix also emphasizes the sharp separation between the camps and the surrounding society, marked by wire fences and guards, as a condition that greatly influenced the refugees' situation. However, he also points to other factors (Mix, 2005, pp. 64–79). The cohabitation in the camps was close. According to the rules, each person should be allocated approximately 2.5 m2 of space, and this could mean that a family of four lived together in a room of 10 m2. In the large accommodation rooms with many refugees, the mental strain was great. The camps' barracks were often poorly insulated and there was limited access to firewood or other heating, which made life very hard, especially in the cold winter of 1945–1946. The refugees came mainly from the open landscapes in the eastern parts of Germany, and the confinement was particularly difficult for them because they could often see the open Danish landscape but did not have access to it. Especially in the first period after the liberation, when activists from the Danish wartime resistance were in charge of guarding

the camps and the Refugee Administration had not yet been established, the control could sometimes have an oppressive character. Mix recounts a refugee's description of raids being carried out in the camps, where the refugees experienced that their things – such as jewellery or electrical appliances – were taken without justification or registration (Mix, 2005, p. 41).

The special character of the camps as institutions, out-places, and social environments naturally influenced the refugees' situation, materially as well as psychologically. On the one hand, this meant difficult conditions for educational and enlightenment activities; on the other hand, it could make these activities welcome and meaningful, because they created activity in the camp's time warp and everyday life and could offer possible perspectives for a future life.

Ideas and practices crossing contexts

In recent years, researchers and theorists have drawn on the so-called "spatial turn" in historical and cultural theoretical analyses, among other things. This approach deals with how ideas, knowledge, and practices "move" across cultures and geographies and are translated into local contexts (Cowen, 2006; Larsen & Beech, 2014). Key concepts within this approach are *transfer*, *transformation*, and *translation*. The concepts refer to the processes through which ideas, knowledge, or forms of practice move across contexts (transfer), are adapted and translated into new conditions, local conditions, and personal interpretations (translation), whereby they also undergo a change (transformation).

Such a spread or movement of ideas and forms of practice can take place in many contexts and in many ways. This can be done, for example, through printed media such as books, newspapers, and journals, visual media such as film and photography, through exhibitions, through people's interactions with others in governmental or voluntary organizations, and today also through the wide range of digital forums and activities. There are many channels of communication and influence.

An important dimension in the movement of ideas and practices is networks of people who hold certain positions in a social field and are connected to other people inside or outside the field (cf. Fuchs, 2007). Such networks can arise and function in different ways; they can, for example, be based on common assumptions and experiences from educational institutions, professions, or political practice. Networks connect actors around joint activities or projects, but in a more open and non-committal way than formal organizations such as trade unions or political parties. This property of networks is often called loose coupling (Orton & Weick, 1990). However, exactly because

they are loosely coupled, networks can cut across more tightly structured organizations or institutions at the local, national, and international levels.

Whether and how an idea or practice manifests itself in a specific context will depend on the specific historical conditions of it. For an idea to be translated into a specific context, there must be a "fertile ground" for it. There must be receptivity and acceptance, and if this means the development of institutions or legislation, the political climate must support it. Without this fertile ground, the idea in question will have difficulty gaining traction and taking root in the context in question, although it will of course be possible at other times and under other conditions.

Drawing on this approach, we shed light on the ideas, movements, and conditions in the contemporary historical context that lay behind and led to the design of the educational and information activities in the Danish refugee camps. Among the most important elements were ideas about democracy, which gained particular importance in the light of the two world wars, and which contributed to fertile ground for focusing on democracy in social and educational initiatives. Another central element was a set of pedagogical ideas that had been developed in the United States, Germany, and other places, but which also had special Danish roots in the folk high school and independent school movements. In the United States and United Kingdom, these pedagogical ideas were most often referred to as progressivism, while in Germany and to some extent in the Nordic countries they were called reform pedagogy. They also emphasized education for democracy and sought to confront and reject authoritarian forms of education. This gave them strengthened actuality and impact in the post-war historical context and can be seen as an example of how a current historical context plays a role in translation and transformation processes.

Research on the Danish refugee camps

The German refugees after the end of the Second World War, their background, situation, and further fate is a theme explored predominantly by historians in various European countries. Refugees and refugee camps in Denmark are mainly considered in Danish research, but there are also contributions from researchers in other countries, especially Germany. The publications shed light on themes such as the refugees' path to Denmark, the political and administrative processes surrounding the refugees, as well as conditions and everyday life in the camps. The publications are of different types, ranging from established systematic academic research to broader or more experience-based presentations. Most studies and publications deal with the refu-

gees and the camps in a general perspective, but some focus on specific aspects such as health conditions. Trends can be traced in how researchers position themselves and their interpretations and analyses, which we discuss below. We will briefly discuss some of the key research publications in the field.

The Danish historian Henrik Havrehed's doctoral dissertation from 1987 is one of the well-known publications dealing with the German refugees in Denmark after the Second World War (Havrehed, 1987, Germen version Havrehed 1989). Havrehed examines many aspects of the subject and gives a detailed description of the education and information activities in the camps.

In a recent contribution author and journalist Thomas Harder gives a rather detailed description of the refugee camps and the political-administrative processes surrounding them (Harder, 2020). Harder also deals with education and enlightenment activities, but not as a central theme.

John V. Jensen, historian and curator at Varde Museums, which also includes the Museum FLUGT, has worked with the history of the refugee camps for several years. Among other things, he has published articles and books that focus on education and learning in the camps (Jensen, 2018; 2021, 2026). This theme is included in his book about the German refugees (Jensen, 2020), which has also been published in German language (Jensen, 2022).

Several other Danish authors have published books that shed light on the German refugees and refugee camps in Denmark. These include Arne Gammelgaard, former head of the Danish Local History Archive for Hammel and Favrskov, who authored three books on the topic (Gammelgaard, 1981, 1993 and 2005). One of the books is also available in a German language version (Gammelgaard, 1993a). Other contributions include a study of refugee camps by the town of Skanderborg (Mølgaard and de Vos, 2024; de Vos, 2025), the Rom refugee camp in Jutland (Knudsen, 2014), and a book about German soldiers and refugees in North Jutland in the years 1940–1949 by Wagner-Augustenborg (2012). A new book on the transition to peace in Denmark after the German occupation (Lundtofte, 2026) includes chapters on the handling of German refugees and the promotion of democracy among them.

A number of articles on the German refugees and the camps have been published in local history yearbooks for different regions in Denmark (e.g. Hansen, 1985; Mellerup, 1999; Nielsen, 2011). In a study of German Refugees in Southern Jutland, Nielsen (2013) has applied a history of administration approach.

A critical analysis of the health conditions in the refugee camps, and especially the conditions for children, is given by Kirsten Lylloff in her book about

unaccompanied German refugee children in Denmark 1945–1949 (Lylloff, 2006). The issue is important, but it falls outside the scope of this book.

As mentioned above, the Danish refugee camps after the Second World War have also been dealt with by German and other international authors and researchers. Karl-Georg Mix, who as a child stayed in the camps Grove and Gedhus, has published a book about German refugees in Denmark in the years 1945–1949 (Mix, 2005). The main emphasis in Mix's book is on the different aspects of life in the camps, including education and information activities, and he draws on accounts from German former refugees. A recent book by Herzig (2025) provides an informative overview of knowledge about the German refugees and the camps.

Like in Denmark, the German refugees have also been studied in German local history research and publications. For example, a book about escape and expulsion in 1945 from the former German town of Arnswalde (today located in Poland) includes an account from a woman, Traute Rühlmann, who fled to Denmark and stayed in camps near Aalborg until 1947 (Kölling & Neitmann, 2020).

The broader issues of refugees and displaced persons in Europe during and after the Second World War have been dealt with in international research publications such as Nasaw (2020) and Ericsson & Simonsen (2005). These publications give presentations of the refugee question and the refugees' situation, but the refugee camps in Denmark are understandably not a main theme, and not much attention is paid to education and information activities for the refugees.

The subject of this book – the education, information work, and democratic learning in the refugee camps in Denmark – is dealt with extensively in chapters in several of the mentioned publications, but as one theme among others. However, in recent years, especially John V. Jensen's research has made important contributions to researching and understanding this specific topic.

In summary, it can be said that even though the Danish refugee camps after the Second World War have been examined in historical research and publications, the contributions are mostly of a general nature. Educational and information activities in the camps have been discussed, but no specific educational history perspective, such as we apply in this book, has previously been pursued.

Some Danish publications on the subject have been criticized for presenting a one-sided and simplistic picture of the refugee camps and the Danish Refugee Administration's activities and efforts. The criticism has, for instance, been directed at research and presentations that are based too much on the information provided by the administrative authorities or make uncritical use

of contributions from the refugees themselves, whereby the picture presented may be one-sided and in some cases idealized regarding the efforts of the Danish authorities (e.g. Roslyng-Jensen, 2013, pp. 237ff). For example, it is problematized when examples included appear to be very positive and successful from the perspective of the administrative authorities, or when letters written by the refugees and sent from the camps are included as source material without critical assessment. The latter should be seen in light of the fact that there was censorship of letters, and letters drawn on may have been those allowed to go through by the censors (e.g. Lylloff, 2013). Letters collected by the censor have also been documented and analysed (Rasmussen, 2021). Both groups of letters are relevant sources, but each covers certain sections of reality.

Jensen has pointed out that in research and publications about the German refugees and the Danish state's handling of them there is a certain tendency towards conflicting interpretations or versions (Jensen, 2013, p. 161). This may to some degree be understood in light of the different types of source material that form the basis of an argument.

In this book, we draw on several types of sources, including different types of documentation from the Refugee Administration and from its actors – both Danish and German – as well as accounts from the refugees themselves. The analysis has taken the different character of these sources into account. Issues of research methodology in relation to the source material are discussed in the section below, since we neither claim nor seek to project one truth about the issues that are being focused on but rather their complexity.

Methods

This book is an analysis of the educational and information efforts in the Danish refugee camps, including the historical basis in Danish pedagogy and educational policy, the Danish Refugee Administration and its networks, the plans and activities for education, information, and enlightenment, and the refugees' experience of the efforts. We have used a combination of methods, including in particular:

- Documenting historical presentation based on both existing research and original source material.
- Qualitative content analysis of administrative documents, especially plans and guidelines for the education and information efforts, but also documents concerning the organization of the refugee camps.

- Qualitative analysis of texts in which former refugees describe their experiences from the camps, including experiences with teaching and information.
- Documentation and analysis of personal networks, especially in connection with the Refugee Administration.

The analysis draws on and is based on various types of empirical documentation (de Coninck-Smith & Appel, 2023). This includes executive orders and reports from ministries and other public bodies, descriptions drawn up by key actors in the Refugee Administration and in the management of camps, biographical information about participants in the various committees of the Refugee Administration, published accounts from former German refugees in the camps. In addition, we draw on unpublished materials from various Danish historical archives. A detailed overview of the scientific literature used, announcements and reports, published reports, and archival material can be found at the end of the book.

As can be seen, the empirical material mainly includes written sources. By having different senders and having been written for different purposes, these sources also contribute in different ways to the understanding of the refugee camps' educational and information activities. This book thus contributes to a field where history is presented and communicated in different types of documents by different actors, including presentations prepared by:

- The authorities and state actors; the "public history" conveyed in, for instance, the Refugee Administration's report prepared by its officials with the purpose of reporting on the administration's work primarily to ministries and politicians, but also to common citizens.
- Historians and other professionals; academic and scientific presentations in the form of books, dissertations, and articles (the "scientifically presented history").
- The news media, their journalists and editors ("the media's history").
- The refugees themselves; the "experienced history", conveyed in various forms of memory material.

The differences between these types of documentation should be considered in an analysis. This applies, for example, to the purpose and senders of texts (and images), the (presumed) primary recipients, the context in which the text is a part (e.g. the circumstances under which it was produced), the relation of the text producer to the events being conveyed, and the temporal

distance between events and text production. This gives rise to considerations in relation to the different types of texts and sources.

The documentation from the Refugee Administration has been produced relatively soon after the events discussed. The purpose has been to report to authorities and politicians (the primary recipients) on the administration's work and efforts. The people who produced this type of documentation themselves took on roles close to the events. They were also key players in the work and could be held accountable to the state, authorities, and citizens. This could potentially lead to bias in relation to excluding or downplaying problematic conditions. The report from the Refugee Administration appears generally matter-of-fact in its descriptions, although criticism has also been made, as we have previously mentioned. However, many difficult issues are addressed, and critical perspectives are also included. The education and information activities are to some extent described; however, seen in relation to the large number of camps and their differences, the descriptions of such activities are quite general. For example, the Oksbøl camp is mentioned in detail, and it is an interesting example, but like the other large camps it differs in important respects from the many smaller camps.

In this connection, we include empirical documentation in the form of the reports on the individual camps that the education inspectors prepared for the Refugee Administration. This documentation is primarily included in Chapter 7. We have chosen to include a number of different reports, since parts of this material are not so explicitly described in available research. As empirical documentation, the reports provide in some respects relatively specific information about school and educational conditions in the camps, and in some cases also about the information activities. The inspectors had to assess whether the plans for school and education had been implemented, as well as having to deal with challenges, shortcomings, and, not least, a lack of resources of various kinds too (facilities, teaching materials, teachers, etc.). The reports thus seem to give a relatively comprehensive description of these conditions in the camps, but on the other hand there may also have been reluctance to present information that could provoke criticism. These are open questions. The documentation about the camps, which was prepared by actors associated with the authorities, also includes reports on the development and nature of the information work from, for example, some of the cultural leaders (district managers) in the camps. This type of documentation is primarily included in Chapter 8. In most cases, the reports are drawn up in close connection with the events and provide relatively detailed descriptions of training and information activities and, in some cases, other matters. The reports constitute an important contribution to empirical documentation,

but here too it is necessary to be aware of the relationship that the cultural leaders had with the Refugee Administration. They were part of the management, and this could lead to bias when they reported on the conditions in the camps and their own efforts.

Most of the documentation produced by researchers and other professionals has been produced at a considerable distance from the events, in the period from about 1980 to the present day. The target group includes others in the scientific field as well as readers with a general interest in the subject. In some recent publications on the refugee camps, there is an intention to shed light on actions that have historically been either under-reported or outright concealed (Marfleet, 2025), for instance by elucidating the more conflict-ridden aspects of the refugee camps' history. Of course, the temporal distance presents challenges for such attempts, for instance in obtaining new source material, but the distance can also provide an opportunity to see developments and events in a broader perspective than the original context.

Documentation originating from various forms of news media is predominantly produced during the years that the events took place and over the years that followed. The texts in the news media are generally characterized by the consideration of describing the latest developments and capturing the readers' attention. For Danish newspapers, especially in the period in question, texts also often placed themselves in positions more or less affiliated with the political parties.

Documentation produced by the refugees themselves, primarily included in Chapter 9, is characterized by diversity in both form and length of time to the events. Some texts were written during the stay, others shortly after, others again considerably later. These are various forms, including diaries, personal accounts written down for the use of the person and his or her loved ones, essays written in a school context, and memoirs written down at the request of professionals in connection with the collection of documentation or written on their own initiative. This type of documentation has thus been prepared by refugees of different age groups, in different contexts, and with different motives. The texts are also characterized by differences in the roles and positions the refugees have had in the camps. For example, some have been involved in various ways in the management of the camps, some have been teachers, some have held special positions of trust. Experiences and developments from the time after the people's stay in the refugee camps may also have influenced the individual's view, experience, understanding, and presentation of specific events and situations.

Such factors must of course be considered in the assessment of the individual text (cf. Warring, 2011). Finally, this type of documentation clearly

prioritizes statements from refugees who have been able to formulate themselves coherently in writing about their experiences and situation, and this has required education or experience that far from all refugees have had. As empirical documentation, the refugees' texts must be assessed in light of the above-mentioned and other factors that could have played a role in memory and "storytelling".

When we create memory, we create, so to speak, an image in which some things are included while others are not, and where a certain narrative unfolds (Warring, 2011; Olden-Jørgensen, 2001). A well-known example of this in a Danish context is the years of the German occupation and the associated narratives about Danes and Danish history, as well as the contradictions of these narratives (Bryld & Warring, 1998, p. 338). Regardless of the difficulties associated with memoirs as source material, they are valuable as empirical data in this book's analyses. They contribute by virtue of being able to shed light on how the education and information activities were experienced by the people who were included and targeted. The memoir material is significant in relation to the book's purpose and general philosophy of science approach, which does not claim the existence of a single "truth" about these conditions but rather different perceptions and experiences depending on, for example, whether you were part of the Danish refugee administration or were a refugee yourself.

The book's chapters on practices in the refugee camps are deliberately structured in a way that reflects the different sources of knowledge. The chapters on the management of the camps, on school and education, and on information and cultural activities draw on documentation from the refugee administration and its actors, including refugee inspectors and teachers, and a distinction is made between principles and plans and implemented activities. The chapter (Chapter 9) on the refugees' experiences with education and information in the camps is based on the refugees' own descriptions. The different types of documentation each have their own strengths and weaknesses. They complement each other, and each type contributes in its own way to the description of the subject.

Contemporary ideas and developments in pedagogy and education

The repatriation of the refugees who had been evacuated from Germany to Denmark was difficult. Although it had initially been expected that their stay in Denmark would be for a very limited time, it soon had to be realized that the return to Germany was not without complications. At the Potsdam Conference in July 1945, the United Kingdom, United States, and Soviet Union had, among other issues, agreed on guidelines for the repatriation of Germans whose original home areas in Eastern Europe would no longer be part of Germany. However, these guidelines primarily applied to Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, and the consequences for German refugees in Denmark were not clear. It thus had to be realized that the refugees' presence in Denmark would be quite long (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 11). This also made it necessary to make a long-term plan for their stay and to establish an actual refugee administration and refugee welfare service. This took place formally with effect from 6 September 1945, and the Danish Social Democrat Johannes Kjærbøl (1885–1973) was appointed leader and thus responsible for the efforts for the German refugees. Kjærbøl was originally trained as a blacksmith and had held a number of positions in trade unions, including secretary, vice-chairman, and finally chairman of the Danish Smiths' and Machine Workers' Union (Kjærbøl. 1959, pp. 39, 101). He thus had some management and administration experience when he was elected to the Danish Parliament for the Social Democrats in 1935 and was given a post as Minister of Trade (1935–1940). During the occupation, he was Minister of Labour and Social Affairs (1940 – 1942) and later Minister of Labour (1942 – 1945). However, he did not join the government that was in charge right after the end of the war in 1945 (the so called "liberation government") but

was appointed head of the Refugee Administration (Elberling, 1950, p. 133; Dybdahl, 2016; Kjærbøl, 1959).

Among the Refugee Administration's areas of responsibility were also the education and information activities in the camps, and planning was started for this.

In order to understand the context in which this work took place, this chapter will shed light on pedagogical and political ideas and developments that prevailed in the years leading up to and during the war. In the next chapter, we will examine the committees under the Refugee Administration that worked with education and information activities and take a closer look at the members of the committees and the networks, ideas, and policy initiatives with which they were associated.

Society, school, and pedagogy in change

The years around the Second World War and its end were characterized by important changes in politics, education, business, and other areas in many contexts and in large parts of the world (Kaspersen, 2003; Mikkelsen, 2018).

The experience with Nazism and fascism had significantly sharpened the Western world's gaze on the importance of democracy as a form of government (Korsgaard & Kristensen, 2017, p. 310). School and education systems were undergoing strong development. The social developments associated with the transition from agricultural to industrial society had created a need to strengthen the general education of the population. The experiences of the war and the years leading up to it had led to greater awareness of school, education, and enlightenment, but also of propaganda, and the strong role of these factors in socialization and influencing the attitudes of citizens, not least the youth (Popkewitz, 2012). This had sharpened the awareness of the issues that authoritarian forms of government and pedagogies represented and were associated with. The ideas of educational progressivism, which put people's development and experiences at the centre and addressed questions of education for democracy, had played an important role in educational thinking in Denmark in the interwar period. In several places in the school sector in Denmark and abroad, attempts had been made to put these ideas into practice, for example in connection with a number of pedagogical experiments and development projects (e.g. see Nørgaard, 1977). In the context of the war, these ideas seemed to have acquired a special topicality and legitimacy (Korsgaard & Kristensen, 2017, p. 310).

When it was recognized that the German refugees' stay in the camps in Denmark could be long, it also meant that the plans for the camps' practices

had to include education and information activities for the refugees. In this context, it seemed relevant to consider questions of education for democracy and citizenship.

Several educators with a progressivist pedagogical orientation or with roots in the Danish folk high school environment – which in Denmark represents a special preoccupation with popular enlightenment and "school for life" – had also been active in resistance activity during the war. At the same time, some of them had been involved in the planning and implementation of educational policy initiatives in education for young people a few years earlier. Against this background, and as a result of the political situation in post-war Denmark in general, some of these actors were also involved in the work on education and information activities in the refugee camps. Certain German emigrants also came to play an important role. These were German citizens who had been strongly engaged in democracy and education issues, some of them at the political level, but who had had to emigrate after the Nazi seizure of power and now resided in Denmark, where they had also been involved in resistance activity.

An important external factor was that shortly after the end of the war several important decisions were made in the international arena – decisions that also came to have an impact on the understanding of education and information in the refugee camps.

To illuminate the context and ideas behind the Refugee Administration's plans for the education and information activities for the German refugees, we describe in the following sections selected significant events and trends of the time that to varying degrees and different forms influenced the processes. We do this in relation to the following themes:

- The Potsdam Conference and the development of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which had education on the agenda
- Developments in public education and educational progressivism
- Persecution of Social Democrats and Communists under Nazism

Democratization in a new Europe – the Potsdam Conference and UNESCO

Once the war was over, its winning nations faced significant challenges and urgent questions, including the many refugees and the material and political reconstruction of Germany. From 17 July to 2 August 1945, the United

States, United Kingdom, and Soviet Union met in Potsdam, near Berlin, to clarify such issues. The conference was intended to negotiate a settlement for peace, and the key participants were the then President of the United States Harry S. Truman, British Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill and his successor Clement Attlee, and the leader of the Soviet Union Joseph Stalin. The conference discussed, among other things, the repatriation of the many refugees from East Prussia and other areas that would not be part of Germany in the future. It was a topic of great importance to the German refugees who had come to Denmark, among other places.

Another key point of the conference was agreements on a policy for the now occupied Germany, including issues of democratization and the establishment of a democratic tradition in the country. In the final document that resulted from the conference, this ambition and objective can be seen expressed in several places under the theme "Political principles" (Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations, 1985, p. 3031). It can be clearly seen in the following parts of the political mission statements, which formulate intentions to:

> (iv) To prepare for the eventual reconstruction of German political life on a democratic basis and for eventual peaceful cooperation in international life by Germany.
>
> (…)
>
> 8. The judicial system will be reorganized in accordance with the principles of democracy, of justice under law, and of equal rights for all citizens without distinction of race, nationality or religion.
>
> 9. The administration in Germany should be directed towards the decentralization of the political structure and the development of local responsibility. To this end:
>
> – (i) local self-government shall be restored throughout Germany on democratic principles and in particular through elective councils as rapidly as is consistent with military security and the purposes of military occupation;
>
> – (ii) all democratic political parties with rights of assembly and of public discussion shall be allowed and encouraged throughout Germany;

– (iii) representative and elective principles shall be introduced into regional, provincial and state (Land) administration as rapidly as may be justified by the successful application of these principles in local self-government.

Formulations such as these, which emphasize democracy, should be understood as an expression of the fact that they were facing the task of rebuilding a Germany where many citizens' experience of democratic governance and culture was very limited. The Weimar Republic (1919–1933), with a constitution based on pluralistic democracy that had been introduced by the defeat of the Empire in World War I, had been functioning in few years before the Nazi takeover in 1933 (Berman, 1997). Some German citizens had grown up under the Nazi autocracy and knew nothing else. In the development of the plans and in the decisions on the content of education and information in the refugee camps – which could be seen as a contribution to the reconstruction of war-torn Germany – the dissemination of knowledge about and support for the construction of a democratic practice appeared to be very important.

Shortly after the Potsdam Conference, on 16 November 1945, the important and influential organization from the post-war years, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was established, and the same ideas that characterize the formulations of the final document of the Potsdam Conference were reflected in the foundations and manifesto of this new organization. The organization's founding document included formulations that emphasized the importance of democracy and citizens' rights to, as the treaty states: "full and equal opportunities for education for all", which was considered an important way to create democratic and peaceful societies (UNESCO, 1945, 1). This was expressed in formulations such as:

> The great and terrible war which has now ended was a war made possible by the denial of the democratic principles of the dignity, equality and mutual respect of men, and by the propagation, in their place, through ignorance and prejudice, of the doctrine of the inequality of men and races. (UNESCO, 1945, 1)

In the realization of the organization's purpose, education played a central role, as expressed in intentions to:

> collaborate in the work of advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples, through all means of mass communication and to

> that end recommend such international agreements as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image. (UNESCO, 1945, 2)

Popular education and pedagogical progressivism

During that period, the ideas of progressivism and popular education had in some ways made their presence felt in Danish education policy, and in certain circles there was great interest in the development of schools and education based on this (Kristensen & Korsgaard, 2017, p. 267). The Danish folk high school and independent school environment were strongly inspired by the ideas of education based on popular education, enlightenment, communities, and participation formulated by N.F.S. Grundtvig (Broadbridge et al., 2011; Korsgaard, 2019), which had gained a significant foothold in Denmark, for example also in the education of teachers for primary and lower secondary schools. Grundtvig's ideas about school and learning reflected in some ways the Romantic thinking that characterized the beginning of the 20th century, but they also anticipated later progressivism and its emphasis on the individual child's prerequisites, needs, and motivations. An anti-authoritarian pedagogy and education for democracy were central to progressivism, as expressed in the following formulation by one of its central figures, the philosopher John Dewey:

> Since a democratic society repudiates the principle of external authority, it must find a substitute in voluntary disposition and interest; these can be created only by education. (Dewey, 2001, p. 91)

Progressivism thus represented a criticism of authoritarian practices in school and education, and it emphasized the education for democracy and the school's important role in this. In Denmark, such ideas mainly found support among actors affiliated with the Social Democratic Party, the Social Liberal Party, and the Communist Party of Denmark, but also in the Grundtvigian socio-cultural environment. The war and the occupation gave rise to a strengthened interest, and when a group of teachers affiliated with the Danish resistance group Free Denmark (Frit Danmark) formulated plans for a new Danish primary school after the war, exactly such ideas were expressed (Andreasen & Ydesen, 2015). A leading player in Danish school politics at the time, Inger Merete Nordentoft, who was associated with this tradition, wrote and argued for such thoughts, for instance:

> The goal of education must be the democratic citizen, the human being, who can think freely and independently. (Nordentoft, 1946, p. 323)

Such pedagogical ideas came to play a certain role in the basis for the education and information activities in the Danish refugee camps. This is clear when you look at the questions that applicants for the positions as teachers in refugee camps were asked – questions set out in a document entitled: "Examples of Political and Historical Subjects That Can Form the Basis for Investigating the Usefulness of Teachers" (Refugee Administration, 1946a).[5] In one of the questions, it was asked: "What can the school do to promote democracy?" And acceptable answers were also listed:

> 1. By teaching social studies about forms of government, democracy, parliaments, etc., 2. By the Teaching Method: Activation of the Pupils, Cultivation of Initiative and Creative Powers. Development of the Free Class Conversation and the Free Essay, 3. By awakening a sense of community and responsibility for class and camp life, 4. By seeking to limit the external authority of the teachers, the lecturing. The teacher should be regarded by the children as a friend and co-worker who is not himself infallible and should be susceptible to criticism. (Refugee Administration, app. 1946a, 1).

From the first part of the 20th century, progressivist or reform pedagogical ideas had, as mentioned, spread in the Western world and played a role in school development and other educational initiatives. This was also true in Denmark, where the inspiration from such currents was reflected in publications and debate in journals and books, the establishment of associations, and the implementation of several pedagogical experiments (e.g. see Nørgaard, 1977, 1991).

Internationally, the ideas spread through journals and books, as well as schools and other institutions. Educators, teachers, politicians, and others with an interest in and influence on school and education could thus seek

5 The two-page note is an appendix and undated. It was probably prepared in in the months shortly after the refugee administration was established during the period when it was decided through interviews which of the German refugees could be included in connection with, for example, education and the information work, and who were excluded because of their disposition, as described by the Refugee Administration (1950, p. 171). The document is part of Henrik Havrehed's archive in the Danish National Archives. See the source list for an exact reference.

inspiration through activities such as school visits and experiencing the ideas brought into practice, or through lectures and presentations, conferences and exhibitions, as well as activity in national branches of the international organizations where ideas were exchanged and developed.

An important international organization or network in this connection was the New Education Fellowship (NEF), which was established in 1921 and whose members were concerned with the development and implementation of progressivist ideas in educational contexts. NEF published the journal *The New Era* and held conferences in countries around the world. In 1929, Denmark hosted such an international conference, which was one of the largest to date. It was held at Kronborg Castle in Elsinore and had many internationally renowned names as speakers and participants, including for instance Jean Piaget and Maria Montesorri (Andreasen & Ydesen, 2015).

The conference at Kronborg was organized by NEF's Danish branch, The Free School (Den Frie Skole), which was established in 1926 and in 1940 changed its name to the Social Pedagogical Association for New Education (Socialpædagogisk Forening for Ny Opdragelse). Many of the members were well-known and influential players in the field of education and school policy in Denmark, including for instance rector of the Danish School of Education and former headmaster in Frederiksberg Georg Julius Arvin, teacher and master's degree holder in psychology Sofie Rifbjerg, and the previously mentioned Inger Merete Nordentoft.

The ideas of reform pedagogy were expressed in many forms at that time (Øland, 2009). However, the different forms all emphasized taking children's resources, interests, and needs as a starting point, education for democracy, rejected traditional authority-based pedagogy, and emphasized the interaction between learning and practical activity. It was a pedagogy under development and, where applied, was reflected and implemented in schools in different practices.

For example, the so-called work-school pedagogy developed by Georg Michael Kerschensteiner became very well known (Koerrenz, Blichmann & Engelmann, 2018). Kerschensteiner was school director in Munich in the years before and during the First World War and implemented a reform of the so-called continuation schools. It was a kind of boarding school for boys aged 13–18 years, and Kerschensteiner organized the schools as divided according to the professions that the students were aiming at. The idea was that through the division in occupations, it was possible to take as a starting point the students' specific vocational interest, and through this gain their trust and gradually give them a broader citizenship education. Kerschensteiner saw society as built up of different communities of values, including family

and business. The state was the most comprehensive community of values, which was to hold the others together and support their spiritual qualities; but values had to build on material foundations, and everyone had to make their contribution to the social division of labour. The ideas of work-school pedagogy gained wide support in many countries throughout the world as a contribution to school systems that were developing, also in regard to classes for the oldest pupils. In Denmark, Kerschensteiner gave three well-attended lectures in Copenhagen in 1925 (Kristensen & Korsgaard, 2017, p. 187), and Danish progressivism drew some inspiration from his ideas.

Other pedagogical ideas and forms of practice also inspired the pedagogical debate and practice in Denmark (Nørgaard, 1977). Among these were John Dewey's ideas about experience, learning, and project pedagogy; the Winnetka Plan in the United States, which was inspired by Dewey and sought to establish education that gave more space to the individual abilities and possibilities of the students; and Celestin Freinet's pedagogy, which also emphasized the practical participation of the students in the school and in the design and production of teaching materials.

These and similar inspirations contributed to an environment activated by pedagogical discussion and development, an environment that probably did not fundamentally change the teaching in the Danish public school during that period, but which involved many experienced and educated actors in the effort to bring school, education, and teaching more into line with modern and democratic ideas.

The association mentioned above, the Social Pedagogical Association for New Education, held annual pedagogical weeks, where pedagogical visions and developments were discussed. One of these events, held in the last year of the war, led to the development of the so-called Emdrup Plan, a plan for the development of a modern primary school in Denmark inspired by the ideas of progressivism (Nørgaard, 2005; Øland, 2010).

During the Second World War, Inger Merete Nordentoft was active in the resistance activities in the mentioned group Free Denmark, including in its teachers' division. In this connection, she prepared a pamphlet that described the ideas behind a modernized and changed primary school, with a pedagogy that was very much based on progressivist ideas and thoughts about education for peace, freedom, and democracy. Since her work and such ideas were of interest in contemporary pedagogical circles, Nordentoft was invited to give lectures on them, for instance in February 1945 at the Pedagogical Society (Hilden, 2009, p. 161). The ideas also won support in The Association of Social Pedagogy and were discussed at the annual pedagogical week in the spring of 1945. It was decided to add further comments and forward the pro-

posal to the Danish government, and this was done in July 1945 in the form of a text beginning with the following wording:

> In connection with the plans that are currently under consideration regarding the use of the former German private school in Emdrup, we take the liberty of proposing that the building be taken over by the Ministry of Education, and that space be set up for the Danish Teachers' College, an experimental school with an after-school centre, a state seminary for both sexes and a young children's seminary with a nursery and kindergarten. (Nordentoft, 1944, p. 28)

The proposal included considerations about the content and organization of the individual subjects and, for example, also about a youth school, where the use of the study group form, also referred to as study circles, is proposed:

> The youth school must, in the form of study groups, give all pupils an orientation in the common cultural subject. (Nordentoft, 1944, p. 29)

Regarding the democratic pedagogical ideals, it says the following:

> We want to create a school that works purposefully for democracy in the sense that each individual's independence and initiative are given the most favourable possible conditions, and that at the same time throughout the life of the school and in the relationship between teachers and children the laws of cooperation and community permeate the character. (Nordentoft, 1944, p. 30)

The actors who supported the plans, some of whom were also the senders of the plans, were a group of 42 people, most of them politically either liberals or social democrats. They included, among others, the previously mentioned Georg Julius Arvin, Sofie Rifbjerg, Anne-Marie Nørvig, J. Th. Arnfred, Frode Jakobsen, Jens Rosenkjær, and Hal Koch (Hilden, 2009, p. 163). Some of these were later directly involved in the Refugee Administration's development of the plans for education and information activities in the refugee camps, and as we will discuss later, the ideas behind the Emdrup Plan were also reflected in several ways in the plans for the education and information activities for the German refugees.

One of the people who supported the Emdrup Plan was the Danish Professor of Church History Hal Koch, and he can be seen as an important player who, through his writings, was given a special role in the education

and learning activities in the refugee camps. In his publications, Koch dealt with among other things the subject of democracy. During the occupation, he was chairman of the Danish Youth Association, which was formed in 1940 on the initiative of people associated with the folk high schools and politicians from the government parties as a unifying organization for youth associations during the war (Møller, 2017; Petersen, Lundtofte & Rasmussen, 2026). The organization was intended to play a role in communicating the Danish democratic tradition, and it was in continuation of this initiative that Hal Koch wrote his book *What is democracy?* immediately after the end of the war (Koch, 2023). In Denmark, this became a well-known and widespread presentation of the idea and practice of democracy.

Education, information, and enlightenment for the youth

In the years around 1940, new laws had been developed in Denmark for youth education, information and enlightenment work (Ministry of Education, 1941). The laws were made under Minister of Education Jørgen Jørgensen, who represented the Social Liberal Party in a government led by the Social Democrats. On 24 November 1938, in connection with a debate on the Finance Act in the Danish Parliament, Jørgensen had stated that he considered it necessary to appoint a committee with the purpose of "discussing the expansion of the folk high school and possibly new forms of schooling for youth" (Ministry of Education, 1941, p. 5). When he set up a "Youth Committee" in 1939, the initiative must be seen in light of the events that took place in Europe in the late 1930s in connection with the gradual increase in power of Nazism (Novrup, 1946, p. 103). As pointed out by Ehlers (2010, p. 33), Jørgensen put forward the idea very shortly after the Kristallnacht, 9–10 November 1938. In the committee's report, which was published in 1941, it is stated on the background of the work that:

> The development in our country has given the individual more and more influence as a citizen. An appeal is made to each individual's ability to think and exercise judgment, and the individual's ability to think and approach the problems of the time may be of decisive importance for the development and fate of the country in an incalculable future. (Ministry of Education, 1941, p. 6)

They further write about this that "from a social point of view, our time requires the education of a responsible and capable young person with the abili-

ty to form an independent and objective opinion, a youth with a sense of community and a clear understanding that freedom obliges" (ibid., 1941, p. 6).

The report later brought out by the youth committee contained proposals for a law on "Folk High Schools and Other Similar Schools for the Adult Youth" and a proposal for a law on "Youth School for Young People Between 16 and 18 Years", as well as a "Proposal for an Act on Continuation Schools" and on "Subsidies for Evening Schools" (Ministry of Education, 1941, p. 3).

Jørgen Jørgensen had roots in the Danish folk high school movement, and the laws proposed were largely influenced by its thoughts and ideas of popular enlightenment. This was also reflected in the composition of the committee set up in 1939 to be responsible for the work. At least 11 of the 26 members of the committee held positions as folk high school principals or similar affiliations with folk high schools and continuation schools. Among them was the principal of Askov Folk High School, Jens Th. Arnfred; Member of Parliament and former principal of Esbjerg Workers' High School, Julius Bomholt, and chairman of the Workers' Enlightenment Association, Governor Carl V. Bramsnæs; former principal of Ollerup Folk High School, Lars Bækhøj; principal of Roskilde Folk High School, Hjalmar Gammelgaard; teacher at Kerteminde Folk High School, later principal of Krabbesholm Folk High School, Marinus J. Gravsholt; principal of Vallekilde Folk High School, Uffe Grosen; chairman of the Danish Evening School Association, County School Consultant, Ole Hessilt; principal of Rødding Folk High School, Hans Lund; and the State Supervisor of Folk High Schools and Agricultural Schools, Dr theol. Laust Moltesen (Ministry of Education, 1941, p. 5).

The fact that actors with ties to the Danish folk high school environment made up a significant proportion of the committee's members must be seen as an expression of the thoughts and agendas that lay behind its work. In addition, two more important points should be mentioned. Firstly, several of the committee members also participated in the development of the previously described plan for the renewal of the school, the Emdrup Plan. This includes Jens Rosenkjær, who was a co-signatory of the plans as a representative of the Social Pedagogical Association for New Education, and Th. Arnfred, who was also a member of this association. Secondly, several of the committee members soon afterwards became part of the committee set up under the Refugee Administration to develop education and information activities for the German refugees. This applies to Rosenkjær and Arnfred, as well as Barfod and Thorkild-Hansen – and it also applies to Johannes Novrup, who was appointed to lead the implementation of the above-mentioned laws developed shortly before for the youth school.

The fact that several of the key people participated in both these committees has provided a good opportunity for important ideas from the youth school committee work to also make their way through the committees for refugee education and information activities. A closer look at laws developed during the Refugee Administration – which we will discuss later in the book – also makes it reasonable to assume that there has been such influence.

In 1942, Johannes Novrup was hired as a state consultant for youth education to be responsible for implementing the information work for the Danish youth on the basis of the new laws. Up until then, Novrup had himself been engaged in folk high school work, among other things as a teacher at Askov Folk High School. He had his roots in the folk high school movement and throughout his life was very much interested in the movement's ideas about issues such as public education and democracy. He was a very active writer, and his many publications testify to the fact that he was also engaged in and subscribed to the new pedagogical developments and ideas of the time. This includes a large number of articles in Askov Folk High School's journal, *Dansk Udsyn [Danish Outlook]*, and several articles published in *Dansk Pædagogisk Tidsskrift [Danish Journal of Education]*, which also reflect his adherence to the reform pedagogical ideas. He also participated in the New Education Fellowship congress in 1932, from which he made a report that was published in the journal *Den Frie Skole [The Free School]*, the mouthpiece for the Danish section of the New Education Fellowship. We deal further with Novrup in the chapter on the members of the refugee administration.

Developments in Germany and the emigration of socialists to Denmark

In Germany, too, the ideas of progressivism or reform pedagogy played a role in the work on public education and adult education up to and after the First World War. Where previously adult education had primarily been handled under the auspices of private providers, the Weimar Republic's Constitution of 1919 in its Article 148 now stipulated that the state should offer public adult education (Baker, 2019). A wide range of offerings soon developed, and so-called "Volkshochschulen" (also called "Heimvolkshochschulen" or "Volksheim") were established. These were intended as a framework for adult education where a student community during stays of shorter or longer duration was to be included as part of the teaching. An important inspiration for this was the ideas and pedagogical practices of the Danish folk high schools (Hake, 1992). Whereas German adult education had previously been dominated by teacher-led communication, the so-called "Neue Richtung" now emerged,

which was based on the idea that public education should be centred on personal development, and which argued for a pedagogy based on teaching in small groups, for example at folk high schools (Glaser, 1994; Reimers, 2000). Such schools were to provide a framework for the students to live and learn together, and the offers were to some extent aimed at the working class and its education (Tøsse, 2009). To implement these principles a considerable effort was made to train the teachers of adult education. However, this development was halted when the National Socialists came to dominate German politics and won government power in 1933.

In the years of the Weimar Republic, schooling experiments based on reformist and democratic pedagogical ideas also took place in German primary education. As an example, we can mention a number of free school experiments with "freie Landerziehungsheime", which had developed since the beginning of the 1900s as private boarding schools inspired by reform pedagogy. Some of these also supported socialist ideas, which meant that some had to leave Germany and seek exile in other countries. Such a school thus came to Denmark, where it established itself on the island of Funen during the exile period (Nielsen, 1986, p. 231; Sørensen, 2014).

Political support for such developments and movements in the field of education disappeared with the new political regime in Germany. In the period around 1945, younger German citizens who came to Denmark as refugees would therefore only have experience of the school as it appeared under National Socialism, while slightly older German citizens – not least those who had been involved in educational activities – were also familiar with the educational climate and initiatives of the Weimar era. The reformist or progressivist ideas, which at some points manifested themselves in the plans for educational and information activities in the Danish refugee camps, have thus been quite familiar to some of the German refugees, but foreign to others.

School and education were important in the National Socialist agenda, even though Nazism did not formulate a coherent policy or ideology for this field. Much was based on earlier pedagogical ideas and practices, but in terms of content, the school was oriented towards National Socialist values and ideas. In these, subjects such as genetics and racial science played a role, and they were incorporated into school and teacher training in the years 1933–1935 (Patel, 2018, p. 184). The ideology also defined gender and the role of women, and in 1933 a new law reduced the admission of women to universities to 10% (Patel, 2018, p. 187).

Among the many children and young people in the refugee camps, a large number must also have had experience from the National Socialist youth movement, the Hitler Youth, which had been established in 1926. The Hitler

Youth celebrated and educated young people according to the National Socialist ideology; together with its sub-organizations, it was made the only legal youth organization in Germany from 1933, and from 1939 all German children aged 10–18 years were obliged to be members of the organization unless they had Jewish roots or had committed crimes. Thus, in September 1939 the Hitler Youth had 8,700,000 members (Nolzen, 2018, p. 99). Weekly meetings were held in the organization with singing, activities such as sports, and ideological training. This played a considerable role in the everyday life and upbringing of German children and young people in these years.

Among the refugees who came to Denmark, the children and young people had thus attended primary school under Nazism, and those of them who in 1945 were in the age group 10–20 years would in various ways have been subject to the compulsory membership of the Hitler Youth or its sub-organizations.

It also played a role that some of the German citizens who emigrated to Denmark before the Second World War did so for political reasons. These were citizens who had to leave Germany because of their active adherence to democratic ideals, often including educational ideas and initiatives such as those described above. Some of these people had themselves contributed to the realization of such ideas through political work or as teachers for children, young people, or adults. After the Nazis had taken over political power, they began a persecution of citizens who had shown social democratic and communist sympathies. Many active Social Democrats and Communists chose or were forced to emigrate to safer countries, and some came to Denmark and Sweden (e.g. see Uwe Petersen, 1985; Steffensen, 1986). Many of the emigrants already had Danish contacts through their political network, and they would also be able to continue their political activity.

The German Social Democrat Karl Raloff was one of these German citizens who chose for political reasons to emigrate to Denmark together with his wife. In his memoirs, he recounts how, through his activity in the Social Democratic Youth League and its congresses, he met with young Social Democrats from all over Europe (Jacobsen, 1945). Of his flight to Denmark and his life as a refugee, he says, "we Social Democratic refugees had almost no contact with the other refugees" (Raloff, 1969, p. 126; see also Raloff, 1995). He mentions several other prominent German Social Democrats who had emigrated to Denmark as political refugees, including politicians such as the former Reich Chancellor Philip Scheidemann, several members of the Reichstag, and two former ministers in the Free State of Braunschweig. One of these was Hans Sievers. He and another émigré, Walter Schulze, had both been involved in education in Germany as politicians. During the Weimar era, Sievers was

for a time Minister of Public Education and later for some years Minister of Justice and Education, and Schulze, who was also a Social Democrat, worked on school reforms in Germany before he had to flee. Other emigrants were Hans Winkler and Karl Rowold, who had led the Social Democratic labour youth movement and worked as editor of various news media, including the anti-Nazi newspaper *Der Rote Harzbote* (Steffensen, 1986, p. 577). We return to how some of these Social Democratic and Communist emigrants became involved in the work of organizing and carrying out various tasks in the refugee camps and in the Refugee Administration's Education and Information Committee.

Contemporary pedagogical ideas and developments

In the years between the two world wars, the 1920s and the 1930s, several new ideas about pedagogy and education grew strong in many places in the Western world and made their mark through organizations, school experiments, and educational policy initiatives. The educational currents that made themselves known during the Weimar Republic are an example of this. These ideas, which in Germany and the Nordic countries were often called reform pedagogy, or progressivism in the United Kingdom and United States, placed the learner – the child, the young person, the adult – at the centre of the pedagogy and demanded that education and teaching should first and foremost contribute to the learner's development of independent insights, feelings, and skills. International initiatives such as the establishment of the New Education Fellowship contributed to the dissemination of such ideas. In Denmark, the new pedagogical currents could also be linked to the understanding of popular education and ideas of enlightenment developed by Grundtvig and others and institutionalized in folk high schools across the country.

However, these ideas did not dominate pedagogy and education in Denmark, and their influence in practice was still limited. The prevailing understanding of teaching and schooling remained traditional; students were mainly perceived as recipients of knowledge written down in curricula and schoolbooks, flowing to the students through the teachers. But the reformist pedagogical ideas gradually gained support among some of the actors in the field of schooling and teaching. This also applied to actors within political parties, especially the Social Democrats and the Social Liberal Party, who were often part of governments during the period. The ideas were also translated into educational policy initiatives, such as new laws for education and enlightenment in the youth area.

The pedagogical ideas, initiatives, and experiences of the interwar period constituted an important background for and influence on the development of education and information in the Danish refugee camps. The war that had just ended, and the fact that it had been able to break out so relatively soon after the previous world war had sharpened the attention to the connection between education, enlightenment, and democracy, which was also emphasized in reform pedagogy. There was an increased understanding that citizens had to be socialized to the democratic form of government and that schools and educational activities had a central role to play in this context. Internationally, the Potsdam Declaration pointed to the importance of promoting and strengthening democracy, and the UNESCO Treaty emphasized the importance of education and its role in building democratic societies.

The interaction between actors in the school world, the public, and political life who worked for or supported the new pedagogical ideas can in a certain sense be said to have constituted a reformist pedagogical environment; and it came to play a role in the work of the Refugee Administration, not least in the committees that were to develop plans for education and information activities in the camps. In the next chapter, we will discuss the composition of these committees, with a focus also on the background and orientation of the individual members as well as on other actors who played an important role in the design of the plans and the efforts to try to implement them in practice.

The Refugee Administration and its actors in the field of education, information, and enlightenment

Phases of the education and information activities

The refugee camps' educational and information activities developed gradually in the period after the fleeing and forcibly evacuated German citizens came to Denmark and after the end of the war. In his dissertation, Havrehed (1987, p. 156) divides the education of the German refugee children of the compulsory school age of 7–14 years in Denmark into three phases, depending on how it was organized during these periods.

The first phase covers the period before the end of the war on 5 May 1945. During that period, teaching was carried out to a very limited extent and under very challenging conditions by, for example, German refugee teachers, the Red Cross, and the Wehrmacht.

However, students and teachers from entire German schools (e.g. upper secondary schools) had also been evacuated, and some of these were housed in Denmark. One of these groups of pupils was first housed in a beach pavilion at Skamlingsbanken near Kolding and later moved to Wehrmacht barracks on Tvedvej in Kolding (Dedenroth-Schou, 1982, p. 4). Later, some of these came to a special camp set up in Vingsted with students from a total of three Berlin schools. Student teachers from a teacher training school, Pasewalk near Stettin, were apparently also evacuated together to Denmark (Mix, 2005, p. 152). In their exile in Denmark, these schools continued their teaching activities but were of course significantly impacted by circumstances, such as having very few teaching materials available (Havrehed, 1987, pp. 165ff).

The second phase covers the period between 5 May 1945 and the time of the establishment of the Refugee Administration with Johannes Kjærbøl as leader, on 6 September 1945. During that period, action was taken on the basis of a code of conduct for the refugee camps drawn up by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which stipulated that the children should be engaged in education or play for at least 6 hours a day, and that this should be taken care of by the refugees themselves (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 1945). German refugee teachers and educators were, for instance, encouraged by Danish resistance activists to be in charge of such activities. The central leadership of the Allies had announced that the refugees would remain in Denmark for the time being, and it was considered necessary to implement an education that was planned from the Danish side but carried out by the Germans themselves. In the latter half of this period, the Potsdam Conference of the Allies took place; its final document, as mentioned, emphasized support for the development of democracy and democratic culture in Germany, and this played a role in the subsequent third phase.

The third phase is the period after the establishment of the Refugee Administration and the appointment of Kjærbøl. The teaching activities were now placed in a more stable administrative framework, and new regulations for the camps had also been issued in November 1945 (Harder, 2020, p. 235). It is primarily the design of the content and framework for the education and information activities in this third phase, as well as the key actors in this process, that are discussed below.

The Education and Information Committees

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, in cooperation with the Danish Civil Air Defence, had drawn up regulations for the German refugees in the camps in July 1945. As mentioned, this required the refugees to organize education for the school-age children. After the Refugee Administration was established in September 1945, an education committee was set up to ensure that this requirement for education was carried out. The committee was established on 25 October 1945 and consisted of Danes and a few Germans with competences in the field of school and education (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 167). The following persons were members:

- Johannes Kjærbøl (Chairman) (Social Democratic Party)
- Permanent Secretary Aage Barfod, Ministry of Education
- Professor Louis Leonor Hammerich
- Chief of Police Academy Mads Hvid

- Associate Professor Einar Matthiesen (general manager of the committee's work), after 2 September 1946 replaced by Christian Warncke (Havrehed, 1987, p. 159)
- State Consultant Johannes Novrup, Ministry of Education
- Former Minister of Justice and Education Hans Sievers (German)
- Teacher Walter Schulze (German)
- Mrs E. Thorkild-Hansen, Ministry of Education
- Two German emigrants: Dr Hans Winkler and MSc in agriculture Kurt Vieweg

Immediately after the establishment of the Education Committee, an information committee was also established on 2 November 1945. Some of the members of this committee were also members of the Education Committee, such as State Consultant Johs. Novrup. The Information Committee included (Havrehed, 1987, p. 170):

- Johannes Kjærbøl (Chairman) (Social Democratic Party)
- Headmaster Poul Hansen (head of the committee's work) (Social democracy)
- Jens Th. Arnfred, Principal of the Folk High School, Askov
- Member of Parliament Christian Christiansen, Workers' Educational Association (AOF) (Social democracy)
- Associate Professor Carsten L. Henrichsen
- Chief of Police Academy Mads Hvid
- Miss Gerda Mundt (The Conservative People's Party)
- State Consultant Johannes Novrup, Ministry of Education
- Jens Rosenkjær, MSc, Danish National Broadcasting Service
- Former Minister of Justice and Education Hans Sievers (German)
- Head of Division at the Ministry of Education Mrs E. Thorkild-Hansen
- Secretary Karl Rowold (German)
- Mrs Ellen Hersdorf

The members were chosen on the basis of their competences, experience, and of course their position in relation to the ideology that they had sought to fight during the war. The Social Democrats were in government during the period in question, and many of the appointees were active Social Democrats. In the years before, several had been involved in various ways in the preparation and implementation of the previously described new laws that had established a framework for the school for young people in Denmark (Ministry of Education, 1941, p. 5). Some had been involved in various ways in

resistance activity during the war (including the German members Rowold, Winkler, and Vieweg), and some had played a role in the production of the magazine *Deutsche Nachrichten* (e.g. Sievers and Rowold), which during the war had disseminated anti-Nazi propaganda. Several of the German members had been active in the German Social Democracy and had been forced to emigrate when the Nazis began persecuting them and other groups of citizens in Germany after the seizure of power in 1933. Some of these emigrants had been prominent players in German politics, some of them also in school and education.

A group of competent and, in some cases, relatively well-known actors were thus appointed to the committees: persons who had considerable experience in teaching and information activities both pedagogically, in terms of management, and through work in educational legislation. This reflects that this was a task taken seriously and given importance by the Refugee Administration. The appointed members could be expected to engage in the work on the basis of an active interest in the matter.

Education and information activities on a democratic basis

From the beginning, Kjærbøl emphasized the importance of education and information work in the camps and that this should be based on a democratic but politically neutral basis. This is clearly reflected in several of his speeches from the period just after taking up the position of head of the Refugee Administration (e.g. Kjærbøl, 29 September 1945).[6] In these, he argues for and justifies this view. However, he also points out the challenges he believes there will be in this regard. This includes the very important task of finding enough teachers who will be able to carry out the task, but also of having the right textbooks and materials available (Kjærbøl, 13 October 1945, p. 30). In addition, he emphasizes that care must be taken to proceed with caution in the education and information activities, avoiding that the refugees perceive the activities as propaganda. He justifies this caution by saying that for many of the German refugees, democracy will be ideals that are – as he puts it – alien to them. The task is considered a moral obligation, as he explains in a speech given on the Danish National Broadcasting Service on 11 December 1945:

6 Kjærbøl's speeches can be found among his archives in the Danish National Archives, archive series: "Manuscripts for articles, speeches, etc.". See the list of sources for a more precise reference.

> It has still been clear to us, however, that we had a moral duty to initiate such educational and information work based on a democratic, but politically neutral basis. (Kjærbøl, 11 December 1945, p. 26)

He adds to this that "after 5 years of Nazi occupation, we all have the goal of eliminating all forms of Nazi sentiment and beliefs" (same place) In another speech, the thoughts behind the education and information work are elaborated as follows:

> But we must go further, thirteen years of Nazism have made the Germans completely unfamiliar with the social conditions that otherwise dominate the world. We must endeavour to bring about further information work, for example in the field of education. Lectures, distribution of pamphlets, establishment of libraries and the like. (Kjærbøl, 11 December 1945, p. 26)

Kjærbøl further points out that the activities also have the purpose of contributing to creating activity among the refugees in order to support well-being (Kjærbøl, 11 December 1945, p. 27).

When Kjærbøl emphasized the neutrality of the education and information efforts, it can be seen as an expression of several factors. As mentioned earlier, he pointed out that an experience of being exposed to propaganda might create resistance among the refugees. There were also some political disagreements in connection with the handling of the refugees, and, finally, the experience of the war had created an awareness of the role of schools in the socialization of children and young people and, not least, the consequences of this in autocratic regimes. Thus, the avoidance of any form of indoctrination was emphasized in the plans for education and enlightenment in the camps. The same goals were also formulated by Novrup when, in connection with the implementation of the new school laws for young people, he published a book entitled *School Forms and School Thoughts* in 1947.[7] In it, he wrote, for example:

> Instead of a school which for centuries has taught to serve an ideal, we must have a school which seeks to teach men to stand on their own two feet. People must be made impervious to any form of propaganda. (Novrup, 1947, p. 179)

7 In Danish: *Skoleformer og Skoletanker*.

It is very clear that the ideas of educating for democracy were an important objective of the education and information activities. Despite the great practical challenges, "democracy" thus appears as a key word. This was also strongly expressed when the Refugee Administration's Central Information Committee on 10 April 1946 issued "Plan for a Youth School in the German Refugee Camps" (Refugee Administration, 1946). The contents of this are described in more detail in Chapter 7.

Appointment of inspectors, heads of education, and cultural leaders

In order for the Education Committee to be able to supervise the teaching activities, it was decided to appoint six teaching inspectors with effect from 1 January 1946. The inspectors were responsible for directing the educational activities in the camps located within their territory.

The appointed inspectors for the various districts were for West Jutland, Associate Professor Dr Felix Arndt; for East Southern Jutland, Kolding area, and Funen, headteacher Chr. Warncke; for Central Jutland, Deputy Inspector Peter Clausen; for the area of North Jutland and Aalborg, municipal teacher Mørk-Petersen; for Zealand and Lolland-Falster, translator Jørgen Ketelsen; for Greater Copenhagen, municipal teacher Johannes Fosmark (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 169). The inspectors were all found among South Jutland teachers and were also chosen based on several criteria, including their knowledge of the German language and culture. For example, Ketelsen was a translator in German, and Fosmark had been a teacher in Schleswig for the Danish minority (Hansen, 1985, p. 92; Københavns Translatørskole [Copenhagen School of Translation and Language], 1950–51, p. 24). Among other things, they were to supervise the teaching, provide pedagogical guidance, hire or dismiss German teachers, and ensure the provision of teaching materials.

An important and difficult task for the inspectors was linked to the previously mentioned fact that in the camps were also people who had been part of the occupying forces and Nazi organizations. Because of this, an extensive investigation of the individual's past was conducted among potential teachers in order to prevent anyone with Nazi sympathies or affiliations from being hired. For this, the previously mentioned interviews with potential teachers were used (Jensen, 2026). With the interview, the education inspector sought to assess the person's personal circumstances and life seen in a broader political and pedagogical context. They did not want an actual interrogation, but rather "calm conversations about Nazi ideology and about education for

democracy, etc." (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 171; Jensen, 2025). As a basis for the dialogues or conversations, a short note was prepared with questions regarding ideology, German history, and the war. Examples of questions give an impression of how broad the conversations could be. Below are a few examples of the questions mentioned above, which take up two A4 pages:

> What do you think of the Hitler Youth?
> What do you think of the H.Y. Leaders?
> What do you say about the Leader Principle?
> What do you say to Democracy in the camp? What is your position on the Nazis?
> What is your position on democratic parties?"
> How do you view the Weimar Republic?
> (Refugee Administration, c. 1946)[8]

Based on the interviews, the inspectors formulated brief assessments of the potential teachers, such as the following, given by Claus Moldt in September 1946:

> Political organizations: NSDAP 1936, no functions, NSLB, Frauenschaft. Verdict: Is a Catholic and therefore hesitantly joined the party. But it did not deliver on what it promised the church. Also saw how the Poles were treated. Therefore, regretted his membership. Seems sincere. Use: Primary school. (Havrehed, 1987, p. 159).

The tasks and the number of refugee inspectors changed over time as the number of camps was reduced, and when a new circular was issued on 2 September 1946, there were only four inspectors: Chr. Warncke (Funen and Haderslev counties), Claus Moldt (Camps east of the Great Belt), Peter Clausen (the Central Jutland counties), and J. Aa. Jensen (North Jutland counties) (Havrehed, 1987, p. 159).

In addition, leaders of the teaching were appointed in the six major camps. These included: teacher Claus Moldt (Kløvermarken), the German municipal

8 The two-page document is an appendix and undated, but probably prepared in later parts of 1945 during the period when it was decided to use interviews to assess which of the German refugees could be included in connection with, for example, education and the information work, and who was deselected because of their disposition, as described by the Refugee Administration (1950, p. 171). The document is part of Henrik Havrehed's archive in the Danish National Archives. See the list of sources for an exact reference.

teacher and Social Democrat Walter Schultze (Oksbøl camp), teacher Peter Tegewaldt (Grove-Gedhus), first teacher Peter Hansen (Rom), headteacher Jørgen Krogh (Ry-Silkeborg), and municipal teacher Knud Hansen (Aalborg) (Havrehed, 1987, p. 158).

Peter Hansen, who had been installed as head of education in the Rom camp, kept a diary of his work there. He also describes the introduction of the heads of education to the post in Copenhagen. He recounts how he met several of his future colleagues in this context, as well as several well-known names in connection with the Refugee Administration (Hansen, 1985, p. 92). Parts of this introduction he describes as follows:

> After a thorough instruction, we were all invited to attend a parents' evening at Rysensteensgade's school, where there were 250 German refugees. Here Walther Schulze, a well-known German educator with ties to the Danish resistance movement, spoke about the situation for the German refugees today. Dazzling and poignant was his appeal to all thinking countrymen. They should strive to be able to think independently and be critical in the German politics of the future, in short, to do away with Nazism and their own self. A choir sang polyphonic German songs, and we looked at the teaching of children in all its primitiveness. (Hansen, 1985, p. 92)

In addition, "cultural leaders" were employed in the larger camps. They were also called "district leaders", since their responsibilities included several camps (Havrehed, 1987, p. 171). They were recruited from among German refugees and emigrants and were to act as the daily leaders of the information work, which was very extensive. These leaders are listed in a document from the Refugee Administration concerning the initiation of the work (Refugee Administration, 1 July 1946, pp. 2–5).[9] Among these can be mentioned: Karl Raloff and Dr Erich Kunze (Kløvermarken), Dr Wilhelm Krämer (Aarhus), Karl Blutau (Esbjerg), Dr Erich Kunze (Kløvermarken), Hans Winkler (Lemvig), W. Riepekohl (Oksbøl camp), Wilhelm Georg (Grove-Gedhus camp), Heini Müller (Randers and Silkeborg), and Peter Beck and Willi Harder (Aalborg). Not least among actors such as those mentioned, democratic ideals and ways of thinking were actively represented. Raloff, Winkler, and Riepekohl exemplify this. From 1920, Riepekohl had worked as a reporter for the Social Democratic daily newspaper *Volksstimme* in Magdeburg and ran an SPD bookshop. From 1925, he was editor of the Social Democratic newspaper

9 The document can be found among the archives in Odense City Archives. See the source list for an exact reference.

Fränkische Tagespost in Nuremberg. When the Nazis came to power, he was present when they occupied the newspaper in Nuremberg on the night of 9–10 March 1933. Riepekohl was arrested and ill-treated, and then fled to Czechoslovakia where he worked for the Social Democratic exile organization Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands im Exil (SoPaDe) (Röder et al., 1980, p. 603; Rowold & Bøggild, 2002, p. 12). SoPaDe operated from Prague from 1933 to 1938, then in Paris for a few years, and until 1945 from London. Around 1938, Riepekohl went on to Denmark and in April 1940 participated in a conference convened by the emigrant Fritz Tarnow, where a memorandum was prepared: "Tasks for the reconstruction of a democratic Germany after the fall of Hitler" (Röder et al., 1980, p. 603). The backgrounds of Raloff and Winkler are discussed later in this chapter.

In the following section, we provide further biographical descriptions of the individuals who were actively involved in the planning of the education and information activities.

Key actors and ideas of education and pedagogy

The people who were selected to lead and manage the education and information activities represented educational ideas that had left their mark on the development of school and pedagogy during the interwar period. These were thoughts inspired by progressivism and its criticism of authoritarian pedagogy and by the Danish folk high school movement's ideas of popular education and democracy. Overall, these were ideas that both internationally and nationally established a context for the understanding of school and enlightenment during the period, and which could also influence the plans for such activities for the refugees, not least via the actors who contributed to the design of the plans. In order to assess this influence, we take a closer look at the members of the Education Committee and the Information Committee. Among them are key players who represented the above-mentioned educational ideas in different ways. We describe these actors in the following.

State Consultant Johannes Novrup (1904–1960), Ministry of Education. In 1942, Novrup was employed as a state consultant for Danish youth education with the special task of implementing the previously mentioned new laws for youth education and being responsible for the development of information work for young people. His approach to this reflected the ideas of Danish folk high school and ideas about popular education and enlightenment (Skovmand, 1962). This is evident in several books he published on the Danish Youth School Acts and related subjects (including Novrup,1943 and Novrup, 1947). Here, he expressed his view of pedagogy in which – in addition to the

previously mentioned Grundtvigian school ideas – concepts such as democracy and citizenship were essential (Novrup et al., 1943; Novrup, 1947).

The Danish legislation for the lower secondary school area included laws for folk high schools, for a youth school for young people between the ages of 16 and 18 years, and laws for continuation schools and for evening schools (Ministry of Education, 1941). In Novrup's description of the background for these laws, ideas are found that also manifested themselves in the plans for the education and information activities for the refugee camps, which Novrup had been involved in the development of.

That he was preoccupied with and subscribed to the ideas of progressivism is reflected in many places in his publications. After participating in the 6th World Congress for New Education, organized by the previously mentioned New Education Fellowship and with the main theme "Education and Changing Society", he wrote the following in the journal *Vor Ungdom* (Our Youth), a Danish journal that dealt with school and pedagogy and was also a mouthpiece for progressivism:

> If the new school has hitherto spoken mostly about the child, its self-activity, its education through individual work, then the congress here bore the stronger stamp of a confrontation with the times themselves, Western Europe after the war. … As educators, we must help to create a generation that is able to live in a world that no longer consists of free-floating nations, but where the nations must be responsible members of a world based on solidarity. … Creating world citizens is no less crucial to the future of modern culture than creating national citizens in the individual country. (Novrup, 1933, p. 174)

Permanent Secretary Aage Barfod (1878–1956), Ministry of Education. Barfod graduated as a lawyer in 1902 and was for some time after his education employed by the Ministry of Culture, the ministry that at that time dealt with church and educational affairs. Later, as an legal assistant and permanent secretary in the Ministry of Education and head of department at the same place, he had had influence on the drafting of many laws in the field of primary and lower secondary schools and teacher training colleges and had a thorough knowledge of them. He had also – together with Mrs E. Thorkild-Hansen, who was also employed by the Ministry of Education and a member of the committee – been heavily involved in the preparation of a new Danish Folk High School Act, which was passed on 4 July 1942 and represented support for the folk high schools and a strengthening of their activities (Arnfred, 1944, p. 330).

Associate Professor Einar Matthiesen (1902–1992), general manager of the committee's work. During the war, Matthiesen had been involved and played a leading role in resistance activity in the organization Danish Study Association (Dansk Studiering, later Ringen) and its information activities (Andersen, 1984, p. 186; Havrehed, 1987, p. 104). The Danish Study Association was originally formed for the purpose of disseminating information, and implementing study group work was a central activity in this context. Matthiesen became involved in this, among other things, through his relationship with Frode Jakobsen – chairman of the Danish Freedom Council (Frihedsrådet) from 1943. The two knew each other from their employment in the upper secondary school area (Jakobsen, 2018).

Teacher Claus Moldt (1899–1986). Moldt was trained as a teacher in 1921 and employed as a headmaster at Holsteinsgade School in Copenhagen when he became involved in the planning of the education and information activities for the German refugees. In the years 1924–1929, he was editor of the magazine *Læreren* (The Teacher), for which he had written a number of articles (Larsen, 1933). The articles show his interest in reform pedagogy with titles such as "The Labour School Movement in Belgium" (1925a), "Experimental Pedagogy – A Retrospective" (1925b), and "La Nouvelle Education" (1925c). Moldt was appointed head of the refugee camp at Kløvermarken.

Moldt also contributed a chapter to an anthology published shortly after the end of the war (Nordentoft & Svendstorp, 1946). This was published by two well-known actors in school and education, Inger Merete Nordentoft and Aage Svendstorp, who had both been active in resistance activity. As previously described, Nordentoft also contributed to the preparation of the Emdrup Plan. In 1945, she became headmaster of a Copenhagen school (Katrinedalskolen), and was preoccupied with school development inspired by, among other things, the ideas of reform pedagogy. In the previously mentioned anthology, various authors deal with the school and its conditions during the occupation. In his contribution, Moldt discusses the school and the refugees and describes the thoughts and ideas behind the education and information plans as well as the activities in the refugee camps (Moldt, 1946). From 1946, he was head of education in the camps east of the Great Belt and head of education in Kløvermarken. The anthology was published in 1946, in the middle of the planning, development, and implementation of the plans for education and information. Moldt writes about this in the following formulations, which are often referred to in discussions on the subject, that:

> For the information activities it generally applies that it must be done with ease; but then you have the opportunity to make these people co-workers

> in a democratic Europe. If this succeeds, the school's people have their great share of the credit ... . Through and among the refugees we can and must, drawing on our many years of political education under democracy, make our small contribution to the creation of a healthy and democratic Europe. (Moldt, 1946, p. 165)

Such formulations and views were completely in line with and corresponded to Kjærbøl's, as seen in his speeches we have previously quoted.

Principal of the folk high school, Member of Parliament Poul Hansen (1897–1974), head of the committee's work (S). Hansen had a strong connection to the folk high school movement. Already as a young man, he had several folk high school stays, and from 1924 to 1929 he was a teacher at the International Folk High School in Elsinore. In 1929, he became principal of Esbjerg Workers' High School, where he replaced Julius Bomholt, and held this post until 1945, when he was elected for the Danish Parliament (Folketing), representing the Social Democratic Party. Later, he was, among other things, business manager of the Workers' Information Committee in Copenhagen and principal of Borups Folk High School (Koch-Olsen, 1944, pp. 295ff).

Headmaster Jens Th. Arnfred (1882–1977), Askov. Arnfred was born in Askov and after his education became a civil engineering teacher at Askov Folk High School in 1910 (Borup, 1944, p. 166). Here, he later became co-manager and from 1928 principal, a post he held until 1953. His upbringing was characterized by a Grundtvigian environment, where people were concerned with enlightenment and democracy. He himself went to an independent school with a pupil of famous Danish educator Chresten Kold. Arnfred was – like Rosenkjær – a member of the committee that was responsible for drafting the new laws for the youth school area. He was a co-sender of the Emdrup Plan and thus actively subscribed to the ideas of progressivism.

Member of Parliament Christian Christiansen (1895–1963), Workers' Enlightenment Union (Arbejdernes Oplysningsforbund, AOF; Social Democracy). Christiansen was a very active Social Democrat and had great interest in public education. He was a co-founder of the Social Democratic Youth, of which he was also chairman for several years. His interest in public education was expressed in the fact that he was a co-founder of the Workers' Educational Association in 1924 and was from 1930 the business manager of the association. From 1930, he was a member of the Executive Committee of the Workers' Radio Association and Chairman of Roskilde Folk High School. He was also vice-chairman of the Association of Danish University Extensions 1931–32, a member of the editorial board of the journals *Socialisten* (The Socialist) and *Arbejderhøjskolen* (The Worker's Folk High School), and co-publisher of

Haandbog i socialdemokratisk ungdomsarbeide (Handbook of Social Democratic Youth Work) and *10 Aars Arbejderoplysning 1924–1934* (10 Years of Worker's Information and Learning) (Elberling, 1950, p. 38).

Associate Professor Carsten L. Henrichsen (1897–1974). Henrichsen had a master's degree and worked as an associate professor in upper secondary school, but also as a secretary at the University of Copenhagen's Faculty of Philosophy. He also held positions in the Danish University Extension Committee and the Danish University Extension Association (Henrichsen et al., 1944, p. 93).

Miss Gerda Mundt (1874–1956) (K). Mundt had a master's degree in philosophy (1897), was also very interested in Christianity, and was a student after graduating from the Martin-Luther University in Halle (Germany). She was a very active conservative politician and the first female city councillor in Denmark. As a politician, she was preoccupied with school issues (Christensen, 2023).

Jens Rosenkjær (1883–1973), Danish National Radio. Rosenkjær was associated with the folk high school movement and was also a member of the committee that drew up the new laws for a youth school, which Novrup was to implement. Rosenkjær became interested in information and enlightenment work at an early age. After taking his master's degree in chemistry in 1908, he was employed at Askov Folk High School, being responsible – in collaboration with J. Th. Arnfred – for teaching natural sciences, and he remained at Askov Folk High School for many years. He later became co-principal of Roskilde Folk High School and subsequently principal of Borups Folk High School (Borup, 1944). In 1929, he became a member of a committee for the promotion of public education and – together with a doctor, Georg Moltved – set up a course for German emigrants when Hitler came to power. He also became involved in the field of kindergarten pedagogy when – together with Sofie Rifbjerg, one of the leading figures in progressivism in Denmark – he established a kindergarten teacher training course. From 1926, he was a member of the first Radio Council and in 1937 became head of a department for "lectures and cultural broadcasts" (Borup, 1944; Rosenblad, 2014).

Head of Division at the Ministry of Education Mrs E. Torkild-Hansen (1891 – 1982) (Haastrup, 2023). She had participated in the committee that worked on new laws for the youth education area and thus had a good knowledge of the background, discussions, and design of this legislation.

Professor Louis L. Hammerich (1892–1975). Hammerich received his master's degree in Germanic philology (1915) and became professor in the same field in 1922. He thus had special knowledge of German conditions. He had

been secretary at the Danish Red Cross' office in Germany in 1919–1920 (Bricka, 1936, p. 40).

The Education and Information Committee also included several German emigrants:

Former Minister of Justice and Education Hans Sievers (1893–1965). Sievers had fled Germany in 1933 and was very active in the German anti-Nazi activity in Denmark. Sievers was educated as a teacher and before he came to Denmark had been a prominent Social Democratic (SPD) politician. He was a member of the state parliament for Braunschweig from 1920 to 1933, including a period as Minister of Education. He was active in school reforms, including the introduction of the possibility of 9 years of schooling and reforms in the vocational school area (Rasmussen & Wul, 1999, p. 105, 110). Sievers became the head of the refugee camp in Odense and was responsible for the organization of the educational activities there.

Teacher Walter Schulze. Schulze was among the German emigrants who were active in a Danish resistance group and in the German anti-Nazi activity in Denmark, and after the end of the war he was given the status of a political refugee in Denmark. He was trained as a teacher and became the head of teaching activities in the Oksbøl camp (Steffensen, 1993).

Dr Hans Winkler. In the early 1930s, Winkler was employed at the University of Copenhagen as a temporary teacher of German literature. Winkler was married to a Danish woman who was a school principal, and he became involved in the educational activities in the Rom camp (Hansen, 1985; Petersen, 1932).

Student of agriculture Kurt Vieweg. During the war, Vieweg had fled from Germany to Denmark because of his political convictions as a communist. When the magazine *Deutsche Nachrichten* was published from 1942, produced by German communist refugees as a contribution to the resistance, he was involved in this. Vieweg became the head of the agricultural school in the Oksbøl camp (Scholz, 2016; Fritzbøger, 2015, p. 94).

In addition, the secretaries *Karl Rowold (1911–1993)* and *Mrs Ellen Hersdorf* were included. *Karl Rowold* was a German emigrant. For political reasons, he had fled Germany before the war and had been active in resistance activity (Steffensen, 1986, p. 577; Mellerup, 1999, p. 9, 15). He had been the leader of the Social Democratic Labour Youth Movement and co-editor of the illegal anti-Nazi newspaper *Der Rote Harzbote* (Steffensen, 1986, p. 577).

Together, the members of the two committees formed a social network that brought together a range of people with relevant skills, experience, and positions, and oriented them towards the task of developing education and information activities for the internees in the refugee camps. The network can

be called loosely coupled because its task and existence were time-limited, and its members had other primary affiliations. However, as can be seen, most of the network's members had overlapping experiences and attitudes, developed through involvement in reform work and pedagogical development in youth and adult education, as well as affiliations with social liberal or socialist organizations. By virtue of the committee members' positions in other contexts – in ministries, schools, research institutions, information associations, in other voluntary organizations, and in the management of education in the camps – the committees were able to promote a broader, often informal, coordination of efforts.

Within this larger group of actors, some were linked to separate networks through cooperation on current or past activities or through their political engagement. For example, several of the German emigrants collaborated on the magazine *Deutsche Nachrichten* and through their activities and common purpose formed a network that for some resulted in continued cooperation after returning to Germany. Together with Schulze, Raloff and Rowold thus founded "Haus Sonnenberg" in the Harz Mountains, which later became "Internationales Haus Sonnenberg", a kind of international folk high school (Mellerup, 1999, p. 3; Rowold & Bøggild, 2002, p. 9; Raloff, 1969, p. 183). The purpose of this was to create a community and activities that, inspired by Grundtvigian ideas and ideas about democracy, could bring German and Danish citizens together to support mutual understanding through dialogue (Mellerup, 1999, p. 16). Claus Moldt was also involved in this (Havrehed, 1987, p. 158).

Other network relations emerged between the Danish actors who were now in the Refugee Administration and who had recently collaborated for a long time in connection with the Youth Commission's drafting of laws for a new school for the youth. Several also knew each other from the political work that led to the preparation of the Emdrup Plan.

Seen in relation to the committee members' individual employment backgrounds, experiences, and political interests and standpoints, it must be assumed that among them there has generally been great support for the views expressed by Kjærbøl for the camps' education and information activities.

The Refugee Administration's education and school policy environment

The newly established Danish government acted relatively quickly when it recognized the urgent problem posed by the many German civilian refugees. Four months after the end of the German occupation of Denmark, the Ref-

ugee Administration was established with Johannes Kjærbøl as its leader, and short-term measures were gradually replaced by more elaborate plans and principles for the effort. At the same time, it had to be realized that the refugees could not be immediately repatriated but had to remain in Denmark until the Allies' joint command gave permission for repatriation. The refugees were to remain in camps, separated from the surrounding Danish society, for a considerable time, and on this basis it became important to build up education and information activities in the camps.

The two committees set up by the Refugee Administration to draw up plans for the education and information efforts were, as described above, composed of people who had important experience of school and education, and many of them represented adherence to the ideas of progressivism or reform pedagogy and were engaged in information education and enlightenment work. These were actors who had experience with pedagogical development and practice, several of them also with the management of educational institutions and information initiatives as well as with the development and implementation of a new school for the youth in Denmark. A large part of the actors had their roots in the folk high school movement and in the field of public education. To implement the plans and ensure that they were followed, inspectors, teaching leaders, and cultural managers were hired.

The committees for education and information efforts and a number of associated persons formed a loosely coupled social network that connected people with significant overlap in experiences, positions, and attitudes. Against this background, it is not surprising that the ideas of progressivism and the ideas of enlightenment from the Danish folk high school tradition were reflected in the plans that were formulated for education, information, and enlightenment in the refugee camps.

However, there is no doubt that the conditions for implementing the plans in practice were contradictory and difficult, with many and major challenges. We shed light on this especially in the last chapters of the book.

Governance in the camps and ideas of democracy

Soon after the refugee administration had been established and had begun its work, it prepared principles for the management and organization of the camps. In the "Regulations for the German refugees" from November 1945, it was stipulated that each camp should have a Danish camp manager as "the supreme authority in all the internal affairs of the camp" (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 1945, paragraph 2; Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 305). Also, it was described that a number of posts should be filled by refugees elected democratically. One of the highest positions was the post of trustee ("vertrauensmann"), whose election and role were formulated as follows: "The German refugees elect a trustee by free election and by a simple majority of votes; the choice must be approved by the Chief of the Danish Air Defence" (Ibid., paragraph 3). With regard to the role of the trustee, he or she can be used as an assistant in the board of the camp: "As an assistant in the board of the camp, the camp leader may use the trustee chosen by the refugees or other persons chosen by the refugees" (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 1945; Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 311).

The Danish camp leader, appointed and employed by the Refugee Administration, thus had the overall authority and responsibility, but democratically elected representatives of the refugees could and should have different responsible roles in the leadership. In addition to the post of trustee, this applied to posts such as mayor, camp inspector, court chairman, magistrates, and chief of police (Havrehed, 1987, p. 186).

Self-government in the camps

The form of self-government laid down in the regulation can be described as limited local democracy. The overall institutional, material, and economic

framework for life in the camps was not up for discussion, it was determined by the Danish state and the Refugee Administration. The self-government must be seen against the background of the overall policy that the refugee camps should be kept separate from Danish society. Until the refugees were to be repatriated, they were to take care of the practical organization of life in the camps as far as possible. Having Danes in all lower administrative positions could potentially also give rise to conflicts.

However, self-government was also seen as an opportunity for the German refugees to acquire a democratic culture. Many of the refugees had no knowledge or experience of free elections, or of concepts such as the right to vote, nomination of candidates, and voter meetings. For reasons such as these, the elections held were often in fact a form of confirmation of a candidate proposed by the camp management (Havrehed, 1987, p. 186).

In a relatively comprehensive and detailed account of the camps, Karl Rowold, who was a member of the Refugee Administration, wrote among other things on the self-government in the camps and its purpose and difficulties (Rowold, January 1947, p. 10):[10] "In order to put an end to nepotism, corruption and the 'Führergeist' and to inculcate democratic habits among the refugees, extensive self-administration has been carried out in the camps today" (ibid., p. 10). He goes on to explain how, for example, bodies such as municipal councils, mayors' offices and various types of commissions, the judiciary and the police, almost everywhere in the camp, have "been established through free and secret elections" (ibid., p. 10).

The fact that there might be an interest among the refugees in getting involved in the managerial work is reflected in reports on the election of trustees in the camps. Based on such reports, the historian Søren W. K. Rasmussen (2021, p. 93) finds a voter turnout of 80% of those entitled to vote. As another example, a mayoral election in the Grove camp is described in *Deutsche Nachrichten*. Here, the elected "Müller" had an opposing candidate, but received a large majority in the vote, where the turnout was 94% – sick people in the hospital could not participate (Havrehed, 1987, p. 186). In a similar example from the Grove camp, Mix describes how the first German camp trustee in the camp was elected in October 1945. Two lists of candidates had been drawn up in connection with the election, "The Anti-Nazi Association" and "The Anti-Nazi Bloc"; of 2,248 eligible voters, just under half voted, and the former list received the most votes. In the election the following year, the majority switched to the second list. Later, a youth council was also elected in

10 Rowold's account is included among Henrik Havrehed's archive materials in the Danish National Archives. See the list of sources for precise references to the material.

Grove (Mix, 2005, pp. 129–130). The principle of self-government – within a limited framework and in a limited form – was thus sought to be implemented, despite challenges, and there are a number of examples in preserved local camp newspapers with descriptions of elections to the post of trustee ("Vetrauensmann") and also for instance mayor, in the camps where such a person was elected.

On 8 October 1945, the chief of air defence sent forms to all camps to be used for reporting the elected trustee. In addition to the name of the person elected, the following question was also to be answered: "Was he elected by free, secret ballot? (See Regulations for German Refugees, July 1945, §3). Here the answer is to be yes or no:___."[11] If the election of a trustee had not yet taken place, the reason for this had to be stated. The election of a trustee played a role, among other things, in enabling the overall Danish camp management to put the principles of limited democracy into practice and also in connection with the educational activities and information work.

From the Oksbøl camp, there is a description of how leadership in this camp was constituted. Due to its size, it differed from many of the other camps, and although the example is regularly referenced in the literature about the refugee camps it cannot be seen as typical. The size of the camp made it possible, and perhaps also to some extent necessary, to have a differentiated managerial organization. Until mid-1946, officer Harry Lorenz Bjørnholm, who had previously been active in the Danish resistance movement, was the head of this camp (Jensen, 2017, p. 125). In a description from the camp, written by the refugees, it is shown how Bjørnholm sought to integrate democracy into the guidelines laid down for the management of the camp (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 29):

> On August 18, 1945, "Guidelines for the administrative construction of the camp according to democratic principles" were adopted for the camp:
> §1. The refugee camp is administered according to democratic principles, as far as it is possible in a German refugee camp under Danish leadership.
> …
> §2. In order to create a representation that can safeguard the interests of refugees vis-à-vis the administration, a German city council is established. The city council is elected by the refugees so that each block has at least one representative. If a block has more than 1500 inhabitants, 2 representatives are elected. The City Council is the legislative and advisory control

11 The form is included in archive material located in Odense City Archives. See the list of sources for further reference.

body of the German administration. Decisions are made according to the general majority principle in all important administrative matters where the City Council itself believes to have decision-making authority. The Council shall set up working and inquiry committees as appropriate. All members of the city council are entitled to inform themselves at any time about the progress of the administration.
§3. In addition to the city council, a magistrate is formed, which consists of the mayor as chairman and the district chairmen. …
§4. … The following senior administrative posts are filled by elections held either by the refugees or by the City Council:
The mayor is elected by the city council and approved by the Danish camp manager,
The deputy mayor is elected by the city council,
The head of the German police is elected by the city council and approved by the Danish camp commander,
Barracks presidents are elected by the refugees by direct election
§5. … All senior positions in the refugee camp may be filled only by such refugees as have been approved by the De-Nazification Committee.

Through the formulation of such rules, the framework was laid in the camp for what could be called a limited democratic city government or local democracy, and this "was valid until the dissolution of the camp" (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 234). However, it must be emphasized that the example cannot be seen as typical of how limited democracy was generally implemented in the camps.

The efforts to implement democratic principles certainly had very different conditions in practice between the camps and have not turned out uniformly, but the ideas were nevertheless sought to be realized. Pragmatically, as mentioned, the limited local democracy could also contribute to solving some of the challenges that might otherwise arise in connection with the management of the camps (Jensen, 2017, p. 132). It should be mentioned that the posts of leaders of education and information in the camps were not up for election; however, in several places German emigrants or refugees were appointed to these posts.

Information, enlightenment, and democracy

The limited autonomy could promote the acquisition of a democratic culture, and at the same time the information work emphasized democratic ideas and principles. In the reports from the camps that the Refugee Administration

employees prepared, there are also descriptions of information work specifically linked to the theme of democracy. Examples of this are mentioned, for instance, in reports from smaller camps in Stabrand and Tirstrup, which describe study group work on the basis of Hal Koch's work *What is democracy?*, translated into German. It appears from the descriptions in one report that "all young people participate in the study group 'What is democracy' two hours a week" (Report from the camp in Stabrand and Tirstrup, 1 May 1946).[12]

Hal Koch's writings and ideas on democracy played, as mentioned earlier, an important role in the dissemination of the ideas about democracy and democratic practice in general during the period. In 1945, he published the book *What is democracy?* (Koch, 2023), and in the spring of 1946, in the period 11 March to 8 April, *Deutsche Nachrichten* published a series of five texts under the title "Was ist Demokratie?" based on chapters from the book. Koch emphasized and argued for an understanding of democracy as a practice based on dialogue and conversation. For his texts in *Deutsche Nachrichten*, a list of questions were formulated that were intended for the camps' study groups or for general debate and discussion (Havrehed, 1987, p. 135). For example, for a text entitled "Freedom", there were questions such as:

> 1) Can democracy be guaranteed by a constitution? 2) Can democracy offer absolute and unrestricted freedom? (3) If not, what restrictions on liberty may be performed? (*Deutsche Nachrichten*, No. 12, March 1946a, p. 5)

The texts also led to discussion in the magazine. Among other things, a refugee wrote the following, which is an excerpt from an opinion piece:

> In the series of articles: study group by Hal Koch: "What is democracy?" it is emphasized that voting is not the essential thing about democracy. But the vote must reflect the will of the people. Again, the question is asked: "Is the majority always right?" Generally speaking, this question can only be answered with a yes because the majority also bears the consequences, i.e. in reality the responsibility. (*Deutsche Nachrichten*, No. 16 1946b, 29 April 1946)

12 Reports such as these from the camps are included in the Refugee Administration's archive material in the Danish National Archives under "Reports on the camps' schools and on the teachers". See the list of sources for further reference.

The contributions by Hal Koch were used in various forms of education and information activities, where they were meant to form the basis for discussions, and the texts could subsequently be obtained as special prints through the authorities (Havrehed, 1987, p. 185).

The Danish state and the Refugee Administration thus sought to convey the value of democracy and democratic culture to the German refugees, both by incorporating an element of local democracy into the camps' management and organization and by emphasizing democracy in the information work.

Democracy in limited forms

As can be seen, actors with a significant influence on the design of the framework and practice of the education and information activities shared many of the ideas formulated by Kjærbøl, Moldt, and others. It was an approach where democracy and ideas about education and upbringing for citizens in a free society were central. These thoughts and ideas were particularly strong and had a great deal of support in the years after the war, and pedagogical progressivism was to some extent representative of them.

The thinking and ideas expressed in the development of plans for the education and information activities also reflect an awareness of the socializing role and importance of the camps. The ideas came to have a significant influence on the plans for the organization of the camps and not least the plans for education and information. In the individual camps, these ideas would be put into practice under very different conditions, and in interpreted forms they would perhaps be passed on when the refugees ended their stay in Denmark and returned to their home country or elsewhere. The ideas and experiences could then "follow" the refugees in their further lives.

Among the actors who were responsible for the establishment, administration, and management of the camps, there seems to have been an understanding that the refugees' unwelcome and unwanted stay in Denmark also entailed experiences that they would carry with them in the repatriation that followed. This understanding was reflected in the framework formulated for the camp leadership. Seeking to ensure peaceful conditions in the future in Germany – and between countries in Europe and elsewhere in the world – was considered important, just as the reconstruction of Germany, both in general and culturally, was also perceived as of great importance, also for Denmark. The winners of the war all played, each in their own way, a role in this reconstruction, together with the efforts of refugees themselves. The objectives of the reconstruction reflected certain ideals, expressed in particular in the decisions of the Potsdam Conference, which we discussed earlier.

School and education in the camps

This chapter deals with school education for children and young people in the camps. We first look at the plans for this that the Danish authorities drew up, and the pedagogical ideas behind the plans. Next, we examine the implementation of the plans in practice, drawing on reports from the various camps. Initially, we highlight Kjærbøl's formulation of the main points and purpose of the initiative.

Kjærbøl on the main points of the initiative

From Kjærbøl's speeches, it is evident that as early as September and October 1945, at the time of the establishment of the Refugee Administration, a decision had been taken on the main points of the camps' practices in several areas, including education and information activities. From the speeches, we have chosen a few shorter parts that highlight the planned activities and efforts in education and information. In a key speech, Kjærbøl touches on this after first having dealt with a number of practical questions.

Kjærbøl points out that because it has now been recognized that the refugees' stay will be long, it will be important to initiate education and information activities; and there is a great need for this "among a population that has not only been kept down to a low level of information for a number of years, but has also received heresy for a long time" (Kjærbøl, 13 October 1945, p. 29).[13] Regarding the form and content of this task, he states that:

13 Kjærbøl's speeches are included in Kjærbøl's archives in the Danish National Archives under "Manuscripts for articles, speeches, etc. (1929 – 1964)". See the list of sources for an exact reference.

> It is – of course – agreed that the education and information work should be under Danish leadership and control, based on a democratic, but politically neutral basis, and with the elimination of all forms of Nazi and militaristic spiritual influence in the camps as its goal. (ibid., p. 30)

He says that for this purpose the administration has initiated the printing and organization of materials that are free of Nazi propaganda, including "A Songbook with 50 German Songs, an ABC, an Arithmetic Booklet and 3 Reading Booklets for 3 Age Groups" (Kjærbøl, 13 October 1945, pp. 28–31). From his visits to the camps, Kjærbøl was aware of the differences in conditions that characterized them and the fact that the individual camp leader's competencies were decisive for how the effort turned out. In his speech about the people carrying out inspections, he says that they "should be socially educated people of a certain maturity", and also that supervision of the teaching may be necessary (Kjærbøl, 13 October 1945, p. 35).

He also touches on the issue of refugees with Nazi sympathies in the camps, saying that:

> Of course, we will not tolerate this influence under any circumstances ... Some of the Nazi influence could be eradicated by combing the camps, but I place greater faith in the effect of the information work that I mentioned earlier. (Kjærbøl, 13 October 1945, p. 37)

Regarding the information efforts in the camps, he stated in a radio lecture a few weeks later that it could help the refugees out of idleness, and that it was also important to create work opportunities for those of the refugees who could participate in such activities (Kjærbøl, 11 December 1945, p. 31).[14] Thus, at this early stage in the Refugee Administration's work, general plans had been made for the activities and initiatives to be implemented, and a decision had been made on their purpose and background.

Plans and guidelines for teaching

The preparation and more specific planning of the education and information activities took place in the two committees previously described: the Education Committee, whose area of responsibility was the education of children aged 7–13 years, and the Information Committee, which was responsible for young people aged 14–20 years. As mentioned, the camp regulations stip-

14 Ibid.

ulated that the refugees themselves should be responsible for the education of the children in the camps. In February 1946, the Education Committee issued a curriculum for children aged 7–13 years: "Lehr- und Stoffplan für den Volksschulunterricht in den Flüchtningslagern" (Refugee Administration Education Committee, 1946). Also in the spring of 1946, the Information Committee issued a general plan for a "youth school" – the plan applicable to the school for young people aged 14–20 years – which also described the framework for various forms of information activities.

School for children

When the teaching took shape, reports from the education inspectors as well as documents from the Refugee Administration show that in most camps it included approximately 12–15 hours of teaching per week in the youngest grades, for the middle school approximately 18–20 hours, and for the oldest children up to 24 hours per week. In the curriculum, the subjects were German and arithmetic as well as, for example, "religion, natural history, natural science, geography, singing, drawing and gymnastics", while history was generally avoided (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 175; Refugee Administration's Education Committee, 1946a; Reports on the camps' schools and on the teachers).[15]

When the Refugee Administration's Education Committee in 1946 formulated and issued a more detailed plan for the teaching in schools for children, this also included a description of the principles of pedagogy. Among other things, it was emphasized that the teaching should be adapted to the child's level of development and prerequisites, and that the activities should leave room for the imagination and basic pedagogical principles related to this (Refugee Administration's Education Committee, 1946a). The guidelines also addressed democracy and democratic learning in formulations such as this:

> The word "freedom" is written over all education in the democratic state. In the field of knowledge (perception of reality) freedom means independence in research, one's own goal and observation, judgement and reasoning; in the field of action, it means free self-determination (moral freedom). (Refugee Administration's Education Committee, 1946b, p. 4)

15 Reports from the camps are included in the Refugee Administration's archive material in the Danish National Archives under "Reports on the camps' schools and on the teachers". See the list of sources.

In connection with the inspection of the teaching, reports have been made that account for the conditions and teaching in each of the individual camps. In addition to general descriptions of, for example, the number of refugees and conditions for the teaching in the individual camps, the reports also contribute with overviews of the number of pupils at each grade level, as well as the teaching hours in the individual subjects.

An example of the number of hours for the various subjects can be seen in the table below, which shows the distribution of hours in the camp at Emdrup as stated in the report from 9 January 1947 (Moldt, 9 January 1947).[16]

Table 3. Distribution of teaching hours in the camp at Emdrup

	Hours							
Grade:	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
Overall teaching	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Religion	-	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
German+Writing	-	9	9	9	9	8	7	7
History	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Geography	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1
Natural science	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Arithmetic+Spatial Theory	-	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Drawing	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Song	-	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
Gymnastics	-	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
Total hours	15	18	19	20	22	22	21	21

In some camps there was only a single class at each grade level, but in the larger camps there were considerable numbers of students and several parallel classes. In Kløvermarken, for example, on 1 April 1946 3,810 pupils are re-

16 Reports from the camps are included in the Refugee Administration's archive material in the Danish National Archives under "Reports on the camps' schools and on the teachers". See the list of sources.

ported (cf. Fosmark, 1 April 1946),[17] and in the report from the Oksbøl camp on 23 January 1946, the number is given as 8,000 pupils. Such numbers also gave rise to serious local challenges, especially in the beginning (Arndt, 25 January 1946).[18] We will return to these challenges later in the chapter.

The Danish authorities insisted that Danish language was not to be taught. The premise was that the refugees should return to Germany, and that "through such teaching [in the Danish language] false hopes could be created among the refugees of an imminent incorporation into the Danish people" (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 169).

The timetable included only a few hours for the subject history. This subject was most often avoided because it was perceived as controversial. The schooling that the children and young people had received in their homeland before the end of the war had, as we have described earlier, been strongly influenced by Nazi ideology and the notion of the Germans as superior masters, and even though the refugees who came to teach in the camps' schools did not support the Nazi ideology, they did not necessarily have the professional basis for communicating other understandings. Kjærbøl also addressed this problem in his previously mentioned speeches. Furthermore, no relevant German-language teaching materials were available for teaching history. The German emigrants who were part of the Education Committee had reviewed German history textbooks from the period after 1933 and did not find them suitable for democratically oriented education (Mix, 2005, p. 143). Nevertheless, work was done to develop the teaching of history and social studies. Among other things, study groups for history teachers were also formed in various places.

> The main emphasis here was not so much on the method as on the material, e.g. the constitutional struggles, Bismarck, the Weimar period and National Socialism. (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 173).

It was also noted how newer books that could be obtained on this subject "were met with much interest" (Ibid., p. 173). It is worth noting that it was precisely the study group model – which was a tradition in adult education in

17 This is stated in a document sent on 1 April 1946 by Johannes Fosmark to the Chief of Air Defence, "Addition to Report on the Kløvermarken Camp". The document is included in the archive material from the Refugee Administration's Education Committee. See the source list for a more precise reference.

18 Reports from the camps are included in the Refugee Administration's archive material in the Danish National Archives under "Reports on the camps' schools and on the teachers". See the list of sources.

Denmark and certain other European countries such as Sweden – that could contribute to develop and qualify history teaching despite the difficult practical and political conditions. As described below, this form of activity was also taken up in the work with young refugees.

The presence of teachers was a crucial prerequisite for being able to initiate education in the camps. Therefore, as early as October 1945, the Education Committee sent out questionnaires in which the leaders of all existing camps were asked to state the number of teachers and their training in each camp. It turned out that there were a little more than 2,000 teachers available, and this was considered satisfactory in relation to the approximately 50,000 children who were to be taught (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 168). To supplement this initial mapping, everyone involved in teaching was, as previously mentioned, interviewed to verify their political-ideological attitudes and to weed out Nazis (Jensen, 2026). More than 100 professional teachers were excluded on this basis (Havrehed, 1987, p. 159). As mentioned earlier, Kjærbøl also stated in one of his speeches on the subject in the autumn of 1945 that one of the goals of the education and information work was "the removal of all forms of Nazi and militaristic influence in the camps" (Kjærbøl, 13 October 1945, p. 30).

Education and information for young people

There were many reasons why education, information, and enlightenment for the youth in the camps were considered very important. The young people needed a good basis for being able to make a life for themselves after repatriation, and at the same time they could – and would – contribute to the reconstruction of Germany in all respects, including culturally.

The Information Committee therefore developed a plan for education and information activities for young people aged 14–20 years, and in April 1946 this "Plan for a Youth School in the German Refugee Camps" was published (Refugee Administration, 1946). Such a plan should on the one hand formulate the expectations as well as the frameworks for the teaching, and on the other hand it should clarify the ideas and principles that formed the basis for the activities and pedagogy. However, the committee was also aware of the challenges this entailed because of the conditions in the camps in general and the great differences that also existed between them. Reservations were therefore formulated in relation to whether the plans could be realized in all respects in all the camps. As an introduction to the plan, the committee writes as follows:

> It is quite clear to the Refugee Administration's Information Committee that the construction of a youth school in the German refugee camps in Denmark will encounter many difficulties. It may be very difficult, for example, to find a enough number of qualified teachers among the refugees. (Refugee Administration, 1946, p. 2)

Reference is also made to the lack of paper and the limited space in many camps, and it is pointed out that "In the details, it must therefore be left to the committees in connection with the camp management to assess the possibilities of the proposed measures for full or partial implementation in each individual camp" (Refugee Administration, 1946, p. 2).

At the local level, the information activities were to be led by the Danish supervisor, the camp commander, and "an elected German trustee for the information work" (Refugee Administration, 1946, pp. 3ff).

According to the plan, the school for the 14–20-year-olds was to include the subjects German, arithmetic, technical subjects, vocational training, home economics, and an optional part that included instruction in, for example, "shorthand, drawing, natural science, geography and the like, as well as in foreign languages such as English, French, Polish and Russian" (Refugee Administration, 1946. p. 7). The proposed teaching hours were 36 hours per week, of which "physical work" made up 24 hours, while German, arithmetic, and technical subjects made up the other 12 hours (Refugee Administration, 1946, p. 11).

The ideas of teaching methods and pedagogy

The ideas of the teaching methods and pedagogy were clearly expressed in the Refugee Administration's plan for information activities and youth school in the camps, and not least in the section dealing with study group activities (Refugee Administration, 1946). We elaborate on this below. In the plan that deals with the school, the ideas about this are not so explicitly formulated, but knowledge on them can be gained from other sources, such as descriptions from former teachers in the camps. A female refugee in the Oksbøl camp was employed as a teacher in the vocational school department. She wrote a comprehensive description of the teaching and in this she also touches on pedagogy, which is described in formulations such as these: "All teachers were free to choose in what form they wanted to bring the material to the young

people, be it in the form of a lecture or a question ... . After all, each teacher had his or her own method" (Teacher's report, 1983, pp. 25–26).[19]

The teachers were thus free in terms of teaching methods, all had their own, she says. She describes her own teaching as characterized by an emphasis on student activity and independent work, and says that she "sometimes even used the students to give lectures in order to have them talk longer about a topic and thereby also lead them to independence through such a free form of work" (ibid., 1983, pp. 25–26).

The ideals endorsed by the committees are evident, for example, in the questions that were asked when candidates for the teaching assignments were interviewed, as described earlier. And the attitude to the teaching activities that was desired from the teachers is also illustrated by the South Jutland teacher Peter Hansen, who had been hired to establish a school and teaching in the Rom Camp.

Peter Hansen came from Southern Jutland and was proficient in German. In discussing his employment, he explains that it was key actors in the teaching and information activities – Einar Matthiesen and Poul Hansen, acting on instructions from Kjærbøl – who personally took care of the task of hiring him as a teacher in the camps. Several factors made the task challenging (Hansen, 1985, p. 92). Hansen describes, for example, how the group of children and young people for whom education was to be established experienced much uncertainty about the future. Many had had dramatic experiences during the war and the evacuation to Denmark – some had lost parents, siblings, and other relatives, and, in addition, many had only experienced German schooling under Nazism, which had influenced their worldview. At the same time, the teachers themselves had to be responsible for developing the teaching in all respects with only limited resources available. Peter Hansen wrote a diary during the time he was involved in these activities, and here he recounts views on such matters, which emerged in the following dialogue between German teachers during a meeting:

> "Now we in Germany have lived under Nazism for 12 years. That means 12 years of propaganda, systematic extermination of religion, disrespect for parents and schools, etc. ... . We teachers have much to build up after the war", to which another replied: "Good that we did not win the war"

19 The teacher's report of 35 pages, written in 1983, is included in the documents about the Oksbøl camp in the Blåvandshuk Local History Archive. See the source list for a more precise reference.

and added: "Die ganze Jugend ist verwahrlost (the whole youth is neglected)." (Hansen, 1985, p. 97)

The employed teachers could thus find themselves faced with the task of teaching children and young people who were affected by a schooling characterized by many years of propaganda. When the quoted teacher speaks about "the whole youth", it was with reference to the special influence that children and young people were exposed to under Nazism, as we have described above.

School and education in practice and the involved actors

In this section, we present the structure and activities in the school for the children and youth, as described in reports prepared partly by the education inspectors and partly by various employees associated with the schools, teaching, and administration. These reports are thus descriptions prepared by actors who took on different roles in the work, but who had in common that they were affiliated with the Refugee Administration. The descriptions must be seen in the light that we also pointed out in the chapter discussing methodological issues (Chapter 3). The descriptions include a number of names of officials such as refugee inspectors and school principals. We have kept these names, since they already appear elsewhere, and in order to provide an authentic picture of the reports and conditions. On the other hand, we have anonymized the names of refugees who were only involved in roles such as teachers for a limited period, and who are otherwise not known from other contexts.

We focus here primarily on primary school from 1st to 9th grade, which is presented and discussed based on the education inspectors' reports from selected camps. However, the upper secondary school is also mentioned. In the selection of reports, we have emphasized that they represent both the larger and the smaller refugee camps and that these are located geographically in different parts of the country. The reports are supplemented with descriptions from key employees in connection with the teaching. Training activities for young people are included to a certain extent when they are part of the selected reports.

Descriptions in the reports submitted to the Refugee Administration by education inspectors and others responsible for education and information activities reflect how the plans for these activities were implemented in ways and at a pace that show great variation. In some places implementation proceeded a little faster, a little more developed, or to a lesser extent characterized by challenges than in others.

We provide examples that illustrate this. These examples are not intended to give an overall picture of the situation and process in the camps – the number of camps was large, and some camps only existed for a short time, while others for a long period; some were merged; there was considerable turnover in the teacher groups, partly due to those returning home – and many other factors also affected the work. The purpose here is to exemplify processes, conditions, and challenges in camps of different sizes, with different geographical locations, and challenges. Schools aimed at activities for groups of children with special needs are also mentioned, such as schools for sick children, children requiring special education, and orphans.

An examination of the reports on the school for children shows that these reports primarily provide information on developments in the more practical framework for education, as well as its content and organization, books and teaching materials, teachers, and the number of pupils in classes. The pedagogy, or information that can shed light on it, is generally not very explicitly presented. For such purpose, however, descriptions from the teachers themselves can contribute.

The group of teachers who came to be responsible for the teaching included refugees who were trained professional teachers as well as refugees who were employed as assistant teachers and had a wide range of educational and practical qualifications. The assistant teachers made up the vast majority, and there were many young people among them. The Refugee Administration therefore initiated a practical-pedagogical training of the assistant teachers; alongside their own teaching, they were to observe the teaching of various more experienced teachers and also have courses in psychology and pedagogy as well as in the school's subjects (Refugee Administration, 1950, pp. 172–73).

Like other duties carried out by the refugees themselves, the work as a teacher was unpaid. However, the question of some form of remuneration for the effort was discussed and dealt with in the Refugee Administration. This happened, for instance, at a meeting in February 1946, where Einar Matthiesen presented an account of the teaching situation (Jensen, 2021, p. 83). In this connection, he pointed out that it could improve the efforts of some teachers if the work they did could be rewarded, for instance, in the form of food supplements or access to a private room. The chairman of the meeting objected that food supplements would be perceived as a luxury by the other refugees, but that one could consider allocating a single room to the teacher and his family when there was room for it. Priests and doctors had also been given access to single rooms (Havrehed, 1987, pp. 59–60). A document entitled "Considerations concerning the remuneration of German refugees" deals with precisely such questions. Here, it is stated that "in the long run it is

untenable that the individual's work effort does not have an impact on his or her standard of living" (Refugee Administration, c. 1947).[20]

The education inspectors visited all camps in their districts and subsequently submitted reports to the Refugee Administration. When one reads the reports from 1946, the impression is that the school and parts of the planned education for young people and adults in general had been set in motion, although a number of reports also document significant challenges in the process. The 1947 reports generally seem to reflect the fact that activities had taken shape, although many challenges of various kinds remained. A first example is the following report from a teaching inspector's visit to the camp St. Magleby in November 1946.

Report on the education inspector's visit to the camp in St. Magleby on 7 November 1946[21]

St. Magleby municipality included a total of six camps, and the St. Magleby camp was one of the smaller ones. The reporting from there is brief but gives a sense of the challenges that could be found in the construction of the school. It is reported that at the time of the visit there are 199 children in the school with 7 classes. Moldt writes in the report that "the children's school is still doing well", but also that "the departure of teachers will be about 50%. I hope that the camp will be able to provide compensation. The individual teachers are willing to take more lessons. But the number of lessons for the children is too low and cannot be raised until more space is provided". The lack of space also means that the teachers have no teachers' room. The distribution of classes and hours looked like this:

Table 4. Classes and number of hours in the camp St. Magleby

School year:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7–8
Number of classes	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Children	38	32	25	22	30	30	22
Hours	12	13	14	14	16	16	16

20 The document is included in Kjærbøl's archive in the Danish National Archives in "Correspondence, objectively ordered (1908–1972)". See the list of sources for an exact reference.

21 This and other reports from the camps are included in the Refugee Administration's archive material in the Danish National Archives under "Reports on the camps' schools and on the teachers". All quotes in this section are from these reports. See the list of sources for further reference.

As the report shows, there is a shortage of teaching rooms as well as of teachers. There was a high turnover among teachers due to illness, some teachers' relocation, and other circumstances. This means that the number of weekly teaching hours had not been as high as desired. The problems of the teaching rooms are mentioned again in a report from 21 January 1947, when Moldt visits the camp (Moldt, 21 January 1947).[22] In the reports from this rather small camp, an "oberschule" (upper secondary school) is not mentioned. The absence of this information may indicate that there was no such school in this camp, at least not at this time.

Descriptions like these just show some of the challenges that had to be dealt with. The examples described below show both the challenges and what was assessed to be successful within the given framework of finances, time, personnel, materials, etc.

In an appendix to the report from the St. Magleby camp, dated 20 May 1946, Johannes Fosmark tells that a parents' evening was held on 15 May 1946, where "all parents, young people and children had turned up in the great hall" (Fosmark, 20 May 1946).[23] He further tells that "The school's classes had rehearsed choir singing, speech cards and folk dances. I gave a lecture on: The School's and Parents' Cooperative Tasks in a Democratic Country". He goes on to say that "The lecture was very well received. There were no demonstrations of any kind, but cheerfulness in the right places and normal applause at the end."

In the following, we include examples that are somewhat more elaborate and that have been selected according to the previously mentioned criteria.

Camps in the Frederikshavn area

In North Jutland and the area around Aalborg, there were a number of camps – some smaller and others large. In a statement from 1 July 1946 providing an overview of which camps were at that time expected to be maintained as permanent, a total of 10 camps are shown in the Aalborg area and three at Frederikshavn (Refugee Administration Information Committee, 1 July 1946, p. 2). The smallest of these housed 787 refugees (Jægerspris camp) and the largest 9,967 (Airfield East). In the following, we present excerpts from the refugee inspector's reports on school and education from some of these camps in the years 1946 and 1947, so that both larger and smaller camps and camps in urban and rural areas are represented.

22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.

Report on the Inspector's visit to the Knivholt camp in 1946 and 1947[24]
The Knivholt camp (formerly called Røntved Camp, Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 47) was located at Knivholt airfield just outside Frederikshavn and was one of the smaller camps. In a report of 18 March 1946, the number of refugees in this camp is given as 3,887 (Report, 18 March 1946).[25] The inspector's report names the camp leader and details that a trustee has been elected from among the refugees. The number of children is 855. There is a German school principal. Regarding the school, it is stated that it has:

> 8 grades (several parallel classes) with about 40 per grade; The teaching is common to boys and girls, and the school has good and skilled teachers under the leadership of an experienced and skilled teacher. (Jensen, 18 March 1946, p. 2)

At the visit by the Inspectorate of Education on 28 June 1947, about a year after the aforementioned visit, the school is now described in an A4 page addressed to the Education Committee of the Refugee Administration. The school for children is organized, but the activities are challenged by the winter weather. There is a school for young people and training for assistant teachers. As noted above, the report from the March 1946 visit did not mention the Oberschule (upper secondary school), but such a school is mentioned in the report from 1947 and must be assumed to have been established in the intervening period. This is evident in the report, which begins with a description of the school's conditions and framework:

> At present, the school system comprises about 1300 pupils, of which 1100 are in the primary school and 200 in the "Oberschule" (upper secondary school). The primary school has 30 and Oberschule 7 classes (upper secondary school). Since the teaching is now carried out from 8.00 to 16.30 without a lunch break and a total of 14 good classrooms are at our disposal, the weekly hours for the individual grades are satisfactory. (Jensen, 28 June 1947)

Even if there was teaching planned with fixed rooms, classes, and teaching hours, conditions such as the weather could mean that the teaching could not

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24 Jensen, 18 March 1946 and 28 June 1947.

25 This and other reports from the camps are included in the Refugee Administration's archive material in the Danish National Archives under "Reports on the camps' schools and on the teachers". See the list of sources for further reference.

be carried out as planned. The report thus describes a long cold period that had an impact on school life:

> Due to the long cold period, serious gaps have arisen – purely from a knowledge point of view. The teachers try to remedy this by increased hours and diligent work. The school's tables and benches are in good order. In all the classrooms there are good blackboards. (Jensen, 28 June 1947)

The teachers' conditions are also addressed in the reports. In this report from Knivholt, it is reported as follows: "On the part of the teaching staff, a wish was put forward for a larger allocation of bread rations and an opportunity to be able to move outside the barbed wire once a month". Due to the food situation, the request for larger bread rations could not be met by the camp manager, but he did "look very favourably on opportunities outside camp. We agreed on a practice like the one in Vestre–Allé: Excursions with teacher accompaniment" (Jensen, 28 June 1947).

The teachers' housing conditions are stated in the report as "unsatisfactory, as the teachers live in rooms with an occupancy of up to 20". The report states that in connection with a reduction of 300 refugees in the camp, the teachers' housing conditions will be considered.

In this relatively small camp, training for assistant teachers had now also been initiated, which is described as follows in the report: "The training of assistant teachers has been given a fixed framework. Pattern Lessons, Trial Lectures, Observation of Practice, Conversation Hours" (Report, 28 June 1947).

The education inspector also participated in a meeting of the "Culture Committee" ("Kulturausschuss") but raises the problem to the camp manager that the school was not represented in this particular committee. The camp manager approved the inspector's "Proposal that the school elects 2 representatives". The inspector goes on to say: "Then I summoned the teachers' college (about 60 people) to an election meeting, where the head of the Oberschule Mrs [A] and the head of the primary school Mr [B] were unanimously elected" (Jensen, 28 June 1947). Regarding the youth school, the report states that it "is attended by some 146 boys and 220 girls, divided into 4 classes each. Classes are taught daily from 16.30 to 19.00, and the teaching includes German, arithmetic, toolmaking, geography, health education (sex education), childcare and sports" (Jensen, 28 June 1947).

The issues touched upon in this report thus include the food situation, problems with the cold affecting teaching, teachers' conditions, and the implementation of democratic practice, including democratic bodies.

Report from the Educational Inspectorate's visit to the Jægerspris camp at Frejlev on 30 April 1946[26]

The Jægerspris camp was one of the smaller camps in the Aalborg area. From the report, it appears that at the time of the 1946 inspection there were a total of 143 pupils in grades 1–5. The weekly number of hours is stated as follows: grade 1: 22 hours, grade 2: 24 hours, grade 3: 28 hours, grade 4: 28 hours, grade 5: 30 hours. At that time, a kindergarten had not yet been established, but this was about to be done and would be led by a trained kindergarten teacher. It is also reported that:

> For the 14–18-year-old young men and women, a Berufsschule (a combination of technical school and business school) was started with the following teaching subjects: Commercial Correspondence, Commercial Economics, Accounting, Shorthand, Technical Drawing with Calculation, German and Daily Arithmetic. The students were divided into four classes and had 24 hours a week.

In this relatively small camp, a structured system of schooling for the young people seems to be under development. Problems with classrooms are not mentioned, in contrast to many reports from other camps.

Report on the Educational Inspectorate's visit to Aalborg East II on 2 August 1947[27]

Aalborg East II belonged to the large camps. This is also stated in the report written for the Refugee Administration's Education Committee in connection with the inspection's visit to the camp on 2 August 1947. Here, it is reported: "The refugee camp East II has the largest school system in the area, the primary school comprises approximately 1760 pupils in 61 classes and the Oberschule some 370 pupils in 8th grade". The teaching as well as the teaching staff are assessed positively, and a training course for assistant teachers has also been organized. Regarding the head of the primary school, it is stated that he "is diligent and conscientious and, in addition to the school's organizational work, teaches 8th grade, and heads the training of assistant teachers. The

26 Jensen, 30 April 1946, this and other reports from the camps are included in the Refugee Administration's archive material in the Danish National Archives under "Reports on the camps' schools and on the teachers". See the list of sources for further reference.

27 Jensen, 2 August 1947, this and other reports from the camps are included in the Refugee Administration's archive material in the Danish National Archives under "Reports on the camps' schools and on the teachers". See the list of sources for further reference.

teaching is satisfactory at all grade levels, and work is done with diligence and interest". This report also highlights the challenges of obtaining classrooms. It is described as follows:

> As there are only 16 classrooms available, teaching is held continuously from 8.00 am to 7.30 pm – without a lunch break. Due to the constant change with the departure and influx of pupils and teachers, a class system has been introduced instead of the subject teacher system. – The classrooms need restoration (glue dyeing).

The school's older classes (Oberschule, grades 6–8) are described as follows:

> The Oberschule [upper secondary school] has about 370 pupils. Through transfer from other camps that have had no Oberschule, several pupils are enrolled, who are suitable for the Oberschule due to their abilities and age. These pupils are provisionally taught in special classes with an increased number of hours, so that they can be transferred to one of the existing classes at a later date.

In the refugee inspector's report, all the types of school in this camp are assessed positively and as being characterized by "good order, the students are diligent, polite and there has been no reason for special complaints". An arrangement had been made in this camp so that the refugee teachers and students would be able to move outside the camp within a specified framework. The report describes:

> In East II, the same excursion arrangement as in East III has been implemented, so that teachers and pupils have the opportunity to move outside the barbed wire for encouragement, joy, variety and stimulation for both parties.

In the autumn of 1945, a camp newspaper had been set up in this camp, and in the first issue on 2 November 1945 it reported on the results of the election of trustees to the barracks under the headline "Election of trustee 26.10.1945". The election was carried out by a vote, and two had been elected to each barracks. Both the total number of votes cast in each barracks and the number of votes for each of the elected trustees are stated in the newspaper.

In a report about the school in Aalborg East, the school principal says that of the approximately 13,000 refugees in the camp, about 4,000 were schoolchildren and 185 were teachers. He further tells that in the area he became

head of, "two primary schools were established with 1300 and 1500 pupils respectively, a secondary school with 400 pupils, two vocational schools and a kindergarten. In addition to this also a series of lectures with the character of a folk high school" (Report from the headmaster, undated, p. 4).[28]

Of the 185 teachers, about half were experienced in a wide range of areas. The biggest challenge was described as obtaining textbooks, since books from the Nazi era were not allowed to be used. Regarding the city library, he says that he "had the opportunity to visit [and there] was a large selection of German works, and the librarians were very helpful" (Report from the school principal, undated, p. 5). He also tells of the de-Nazification and how a personal record was created for each refugee, in which "name, birthday, occupation, etc. were recorded. The most important question was: did they belong to the NSDAP? When did they join the party? What office did they have?" (Report from the school principal, undated, p. 2). He himself was of course also questioned and was approved.

The Inspector of Education's report from the Aalborg Seaplane Camp 6 August 1947[29]

Some of the reports mentioned illustrate a school for children and young people that, under the given conditions and challenges, seems to be relatively organized in 1947, in so far as the reports can be considered to document this. However, the report from the camp at the Seaplane site in Aalborg shows how difficult this work could be, for instance because of the changes in the teaching staff that in different ways made themselves felt in all camps. In this camp, the primary school appears in 1947 to have had 1,560 pupils divided into 9 grades, and there was an Oberschule. Teaching was held in the period 8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m., and 45 teachers were attached to the primary school. It is reported that "the various forms of school at the Seaplane camp have in recent times often changed heads, which has had a disruptive effect on the teaching" and that "a merger of the Oberschule in the west (about 240 pupils) and at the Seaplane possibly will become a necessity".

The changes in the teaching staff were extensive due to the fact that some refugees had either gone back to Germany or moved to another camp. For

28 The report was prepared by the headmaster Dr Adolf Poshmann. It is part of the documents in Arne Gammelgaard's archive in the Danish National Archives and is undated.

29 Jensen, J. Aa., 6 August 1947. This and other reports from the camps are included in the Refugee Administration's archive material in the Danish National Archives under "Reports on the camps' schools and on the teachers". See the list of sources for further reference.

example, the head of the primary school had travelled to Germany. A successor has been found, but "it always takes some time before the leader and the teaching staff find each other in a good harmonious cooperation", as the teaching inspector writes.

Despite such personnel challenges, it is reported that "the work is steady and calm, and the assistant teachers provide satisfactory teaching". Regarding the vocational school, it is described that this "includes students aged 15–18. Both boys and girls attend classes diligently and their conduct is impeccable".

Camps in South Jutland

On 1 July 1946, there were seven camps in Southern Jutland. The number of refugees was between 1,290 and 1,851 in each camp, and there was also a children's camp with 122 refugee children (Hansen for the Refugee Administration's Information Committee, 1 July 1946, p. 5).[30] In a comprehensive report, the district manager for teaching in South Jutland camps describes the conditions in four camps that belong to his district and which he visited in the period 5–31 August 1946. The visits described in the report are part of the preparation for youth education, and initiatives taken in this connection are also described, including the establishment of an upper secondary school. The report on the four camps – Skrydstrup I and II, Barsmark Beach, and Hørup Cliff – is interesting because it sheds light on the great differences that could exist between the camps, both in terms of the school and in terms of the conditions of the children and young people in general. Regarding this, the introduction to the report states:

> The general conditions in the four camps visited are quite different, both in terms of the external conditions and the mood of the internees ... . Where the refugees are crowded into the smallest space, mental depression and especially the fear of winter are strongly felt. (Blutau, 1946. p. 1)[31]

However, the problems regarding premises are described as being considerable:

30 The document is included in Odense City Archives under Archive number Æ3026. See the source list for more precise source information.

31 This and other reports from the camps are included in the Refugee Administration's archive material in the Danish National Archives under "Reports on the camps' schools and on the teachers". See the list of sources for further reference.

> The decisive problem for the success of youth education in all camps is the question of premises. This is particularly the case in Baarsmark Beach, where approx. 300 pupils in 8 classes must be taught in 4 completely inadequate classrooms, which are also very poorly insulated. (Ibid, p. 1)

However, it is estimated that a youth school can be implemented in all four camps but that this is dependent on obtaining suitable premises and facilities for it. The district manager has some considerations in relation to how to carry out educational activities related to democracy. He writes:

> As regards the establishment of the Hal Koch Study Groups, I can refer to my earlier report from the Esbjerg Group. As in this case, I have also come to the opinion that there is no interest on the part of any of the camp residents in discussing the problems of democracy behind barbed wire under the guard of machine guns. (ibid., p. 2)

He then describes that there is a great interest in knowing what is happening out in the world.

Regarding the youth school, it is, according to the report, expected to open in all four camps during September 1946. In one camp, however, only during the month of October since:

> all able-bodied young people without exception must be employed to salvage the harvest (potatoes, vegetables and fruit). The young people work on state properties outside the camp and on the airfield by herding sheep. (Blutau, 1946, p. 4)[32]

On the activities in the youth school, he describes that:

> 7 male students are apprenticed to carpenters. … The girls work until autumn in the garden, in agriculture (partly sheep herding), apprenticeship training is given in the hairdressing profession …, it is intended to carry out group instruction in the school kitchen, childcare, sewing and cleaning. (Blutau, 1946, p. 5, RA)

In addition, elective subjects such as Russian, English, shorthand, accounting, drawing, and several others are mentioned. In one of the camps, a choir and a theatre troupe are also mentioned as leisure activities.

32 Ibid.

Rom camp

In the area of Lemvig in West Jutland in July 1946 were the camps Rom I and II with 8,753 refugees and Lodbjerg Heath with 498 refugees (Hansen for the Refugee Administration's Information Committee, 1 July 1946, p. 4).[33] The district leader was Hans Winkler. The Rom camp was one of the so-called large camps. In all six of these large camps, a head of education had been appointed; in the Rom camp, Peter Hansen had been employed as such from December 1945 (Hansen, 1985, p. 92). He had an in-depth knowledge of the German language and culture, which he also describes in parts of his personal diary from his time in the Rom camp. From the beginning of 1946, a vocational school for the young men had already been established in this camp. This is also stated in the report about the teaching conditions that Hansen writes in 1946 for the Refugee Administration's Education Committee:

> We have established a Berufschule [vocational education] for all young men aged 14–20 years and would now like to ask if material can be obtained for this. There will be about 400 young men in total; drafts, notebooks, pencils and drawing material are the most important things. (Hansen, 11 March 1946).[34]

He goes on to ask: "Can we take the risk of starting with the many young girls who want to be educated? This is about Shorthand, English and Bookkeeping" (ibid.). That they received the permission is evident from a report of 1 June 1946; that is, only about 3 months later (Winkler, 22 July 1946).[35] By this time, Hans Winkler had taken over the duties of head of education in the camp. Winkler describes that:

> For the time being, the following vocational school classes are in progress: 1 construction craftsman, 2 metalworkers and electricians, 1 gardener, 1 commercial and clerical worker, 2 unskilled workers, each with about 40 pupils, a total of 260 boys from 15–20 in addition to a number of 21-year-olds (invalids) and a few elderly people who want to be "retrained". (Winkler, 1 June 1946)

33 The document is included in Odense City Archives under Archive number Æ3026. See the source list for more precise source information.

34 This and other reports from the camps are included in the Refugee Administration's archive material in the Danish National Archives under "Reports on the camps' schools and on the teachers". See the list of sources for further reference.

35 Ibid.

Winkler discusses the training initiatives further, saying that: "In addition, training for kindergarten teachers has begun with about 35 pupils. After Pentecost, a few girls' teams were to get started ... . In total, there are approx. 650 young girls who were about to start a certain education" (ibid.).

It can also be seen from these descriptions that differentiation in relation to the pupils' prerequisites has been handled in different ways, for instance with offers for orphans. A slightly later account from 1946 shows that it has been possible to find a leader for the established vocational school for boys (Winkler, 22 July 1946, p. 6). However, there are challenges:

> School begins these days. It has been shown that it is not so easy to make compulsory education for all boys. … A new class must be started for those who have finished their school. Drawing and model building evokes great interest (an entire half-timbered house has been built 1:10; it is the pride of the whole camp). (Winkler, 22 July 1946, p. 6)[36]

He touches on the question of the refugees' ability to acquire special benefits when they take on assignments, writing about this: "The fact that the teachers are to be given additional food has made it a little easier to get candidates for new teachers. There is still a shortage of booklets and schoolbooks" (ibid., p. 6).

The camp is in the process of establishing a youth school and a vocational school for girls in a special building, and Winkler writes that they hope to be able to open on 1 September (1946). But here too, there are problems procuring the materials that are needed. For example, it is mentioned that the acquisition of two stoves in particular causes problems but also obtaining benches. However, it has been possible to "procure an excellent little cookbook for use in the vocational school. It is completely adapted to the conditions of the camp and is based on the rations and quantities and goods that can be expected in Germany after returning home" (ibid., p. 6). Teachers had also been found:

> About 30 ladies between 25 and 50, who have been civil servants and cashiers etc., in addition to a number of skilled tailors and seamstresses. They are currently receiving a small course in teaching in the primary school (only arithmetic and German). (ibid., p. 6)

The report gives the impression that the establishment of a school for young people is on its way, barely a year after the establishment of the Refugee Ad-

36 Ibid.

ministration and the Education and Information Committees, but also that it occurs under challenging conditions.

Camps in the Greater Copenhagen area

The Greater Copenhagen area was divided into Copenhagen I and II. The record from 1 July 1946 shows that Copenhagen I contained seven camps with 419 refugees in the smallest and 1,578 in the largest. The area also contained some special camps, such as for orphans. Poul Neue was the district manager. Copenhagen II included the major camp Kløvermarken, which had Karl Raloff as district leader and on 1 July 1946 housed 17,460 refugees (Hansen for the Refugee Administration's Information Committee, 1 July 1946, p. 2).[37]

In the district of Copenhagen I, the emigration camp in Dragør was the largest, while the camp on Emdrupvej was a little smaller. In reports from these camps, made in early 1947, a lack of premises does not appear to play a significant role. In the emigration camp in Dragør, where the Oberschule (upper secondary school) has also been established, it is described that a room is used as a teacher's room, although the inspector expresses some dissatisfaction with this particular room and considers whether there is some resistance from the German camp management to allocating a room for this use. It is stated that there is no shortage of teachers in the camp and that the teachers participate in further education in the form of study group work. The report describes it as follows: "The teachers' further education takes place in a study group ... . All the teachers participate in Neue's political study groups" (Moldt, report from the visit to the camp on 23 January 1947).[38]

The report of 9 January 1947 about the school in the camp on Emdrupvej does not indicate urgent problems regarding the physical premises, and it is reported that there are sufficient teachers, even though several have gone to Germany. However, it is mentioned that the current conditions do not allow for an increase in the number of teaching hours, but this is in fact not considered necessary; the number of hours is assessed as "not bad". There are reports of a youth school and advanced class, but the Oberschule is not mentioned in this report. In a general observation about the camp, Claus Moldt writes:

37 The document is part of Odense City Archives. See the source list for a more precise source attribution.

38 This and other reports from the camps are included in the Refugee Administration's archive material in the Danish National Archives under "Reports on the camps' schools and on the teachers". See the list of sources for further reference.

> The leader is skilled; but like most smaller camps, one lacks the incentive that teachers otherwise get from journals and the company of colleagues. Perhaps an opportunity should be found for the latter, as there are other camps in the vicinity. I attended the teaching one morning and was well satisfied. (Moldt, report from the visit to the camp on 23 January 1947).[39]

Report from the camp at Kastrup Fort 4 November 1946[40]
In the camp at Kastrup Fort, which was a small camp (601 refugees as of 1 July 1946),[41] an Oberschule is not indicated, but a middle school has been established. In addition, it is reported by Claus Moldt in a report from 28 November 1946 that training is being established for "Nurses, Kindergarten Teachers and Assistant Teachers".[42] The plan is that the employees will be taught 6 hours a week in topics such as child psychology, history of pedagogy, health theory, etc. Moldt further says that "there will be about 20 participants aged 16–30 years" (Moldt, 4 November 1946).[43]

The Oksbøl camp
The major camps, to which the Oksbøl camp in West Jutland belonged as the largest, faced special challenges. The report from this camp of 23 January 1946 shows that there were 35,165 refugees. There were about 8,000 children and about 172 school classes. Felix Arndt, who was the education inspector for the educational activities in the camps in the West Jutland district, described in an appendix to the Educational Inspectorate's report from the camp in January 1946 the following major challenges in connection with the school:

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39 Ibid.

40 Moldt, 4 November 1946, this and other reports from the camps are included in the Refugee Administration's archive material in the Danish National Archives under "Reports on the camps' schools and on the teachers". See the list of sources for further reference.

41 Hansen for the Refugee Administration's Information Committee 1 July 1946, p. 2. The document "Overview of German refugee camps, which are expected to be maintained as permanent" is included in Odense City Archives. See the source list for more precise source information.

42 Moldt, 28 November 1946, this and other reports from the camps are included in the Refugee Administration's archive material in the Danish National Archives under "Reports on the camps' schools and on the teachers". See the list of sources for further reference.

43 Ibid.

> Due to the catastrophic conditions concerning classrooms, the school has not really come into operation yet. … The camp leader (Ritmester Bjørnholm) has a full understanding of the importance of the matter but is powerless when refugees are constantly being sent into the camp, for whom a place must be found at the shortest notice. (Arndt, 25 January 1946, p. 1)[44]

Arndt also provides a list of items needed for teaching, including notebooks, pencils, triangles, protractors, blackboard cloths, wall maps, and copies of the New Testament in German. Textbooks are also desired, and Arndt writes that one copy of each will suffice "as there is a large workshop for reproducing texts (taken over from the 'Wehrmacht'), which is used with great diligence". He further writes: "Teacher copies of books for arithmetic, geometry and geography are wanted" (ibid., p. 2). Regarding the possibility of translating into German, he writes: "There are people in the camp who already are fluent in the Danish language. They are willing to translate certain passages" (ibid., p. 2).

As a result of the size of the Oksbøl camp, there were many children in the camp. In a statement prepared by refugees from the camp, it is described that "on March 1, 1946, a German political emigrant was employed as head of the entire school system in Oksbøl. The school conditions in the camp could gradually measure up to the school system in a similar German town with 35,000 inhabitants under normal conditions" (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 237).[45] In addition, in 1946, a youth school was established in the Oksbøl camp with a total of four main lines. This had many pupils; for instance, it is stated that on 1 October 1948 726 pupils were taught in the section for male youth and 509 in the section for female youth. Here, the highest number of classes was 32 with 30 teachers (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 238). Furthermore, it appears that "the school workshops employed 15 people in the production of teaching materials" (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 239). There was also training for the refugees who handled pedagogical tasks, in the form of a 4-week course for future kindergarten teachers in the camps' kindergartens, where the refugees were taught pedagogy, health education, sports, etc.; and there were, as mentioned, short pedagogical courses for assistant teachers and study group leaders (Havrehed, 1987, p. 185).

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44 Ibid.

45 The quote is from a 233-page camp account written by German refugees from the Oksbøl camp, parts of which are included in the Refugee Administration's account (Refugee Administration, 1950, pp. 229–256).

The school system was thus expanded over time and included a vocational and business school. One of its employees has later made a detailed description of this school, where she worked as a teacher (Teacher's Report, 1983).[46] With regard to the barracks town in the Oksbøl camp, she says that it was organized with a city administration according to German principles. The school where she became a teacher started in August 1945. In her account, one can read how the school gradually developed and found a stable organizational framework. She also mentioned room problems, especially in the early days, about the necessity of teaching late in the day in order to use the rooms, and about difficulties with heating the rooms and being able to keep warm during the cold months. The problems of the premises were not solved until the latter part of 1946. Regarding the teachers, she says that they "partly consisted of primary school teachers who were to teach German and arithmetic, or of skilled teachers" (Teacher's Report, 1983, p. 12). She goes on to talk about the difficulties of obtaining textbooks and other materials for teaching. Generally, not many copies of the non-fiction books were available. Pedagogically, she herself placed great emphasis on principles of experience-based teaching and refers here to, for example, Pestalozzi. She also tells how she had to carry out classes very provisionally with the few materials that were available. She writes that "it is actually obvious that we followed the general pedagogical principle of progressing slowly from the easier to the more difficult" (Teacher's Report, 1983, p. 15). Regarding the socializing role of teaching, which she was very aware of, she formulates the following approach:

> The school's teaching is the most important educational factor. It is the most important foundation for building a person of character. In addition to the special vocational training our vocational school saw it as its task not to forget to strengthen the general education that makes people bearers of culture. (Teacher's Report, 1983, p. 14)

She also writes about the general experience she had during that time: "Experience taught me that in a properly managed urban household, everything had to be done to meet the needs of all members of society. This also included the education and training of young people" (Teacher's Report, 1983, p. 7).

46 The 35-page report written by the female refugee in 1983 is included in the documents about the Oksbøl camp in the Blåvandshuk Local History Archive. See this for a more precise reference.

Books and teaching materials in educational activities

The reports of the education inspectors also address the issue of books and teaching materials. From the end of 1945, the Refugee Administration attempted to handle this major challenge, which contained many practical elements, as an independent task. In one of his speeches from the autumn of 1945, Kjærbøl describes how the development of teaching materials had been initiated in the form of, among other things:

> a songbook with 50 German ballads, an ABC, an arithmetic booklet and 3 reading books for 3 age groups of the children is now being printed, and work is being done on the organization of a history book, covering the period 1789 to 1945, as well as an elementary geography book covering all continents. (Kjærbøl, 13 October 1945, pp. 30ff)[47]

Shortly afterwards, on 20 November 1945, the Refugee Administration sends out a letter with the information that the materials Kjærbøl has referred to are being prepared and will be sent out as soon as they are finished, but that "until then the teaching must take place with the available material" (The Chief of Air Defences, Odense, 20 November 1945, pp. 1–2).[48]
The letter also mentions that various paper materials and pencils have been sent out for distribution between the camps, and information is given about the establishment of an educational inspectorate.

The fact that there was a lack of teaching materials is evident in several contexts. On 5 December 1945, the Refugee Administration's Education Committee writes to the camp leaders that:

> to remedy as far as possible the lack of teaching material in the refugee camps, an arrangement has been made for the Greater Copenhagen Air Protection Area that the staff of the social services submit requisitions of missing material to the Refugee Administration's Education Committee. (The Chief of Air Defence, Odense, 7 December 1945)

The committee further writes that the Refugee Administration's Education Committee will subsequently take care of "the delivery of what is necessary"

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47 Kjærbøl's speeches are included in his archive in the Danish National Archives, "Kjærbøl, Johannes and wife Gerda Astrid Kjærbøl, née Poulsen". See the list of sources for more precise references.

48 The document is included in Odense City Archives under Archive number Æ3026. See the source list for more precise source attribution.

(ibid.). Teachers are therefore asked to write and apply for the materials they want. In one such application, written on 8 January 1946, a camp commander asks for: 300 arithmetic books, 150 history books, 150 geography books, 250 reading books (for older children), 50 adventure books (for small children), 50 ABC books, 300 writing books, 50 writing books with precepts, 150 songbooks, 150 erasers, 200 pen handles, 500 pens, 100 inkwells, and ink (The Camp Manager, Allesø Camp, 8 January 1946).[49] Early in 1946, certain types of schoolbooks were sent to the camps, including, for example, arithmetic books, ABC books, Reading Books I, II, and III, songbooks and "large packages of blank paper" (Refugee Administration's Education Committee, 1 January 1946).[50] A little later that year, the Danish Civil Air Defence sent a letter to all camps demanding that they submit statements of the number of children in compulsory school at different grade levels. This information was to be used to obtain schoolbooks from the British authorities (Air Defence Commander, Air Protection Area Odense, 12 March 1946).[51]

Later documentation shows which materials have been sent to the individual camps.

Plans and practices

After the establishment of the Refugee Administration in September 1945, the development of school and information work for the German citizens in the refugee camps was soon initiated. Committees were set up for the development of school education and wider information activities, and the registration of children and young people in the camps was carried out, as well as of teachers who would be able to provide education in the camps, and the production of teaching materials was initiated. In the spring of 1946, education inspectors were appointed and plans for the education and information work were drawn up.

In addition to describing and analysing the plans, in this chapter we have sought to shed light on the practice that was established. As a basis for this, we have mainly used reports sent to the Refugee Administration about the establishment of schools and education in the camps; and even though these reports vary greatly in scope and detail, and many topics (e.g. pedagogical issues) are rarely mentioned in them, much information can still be gained.

49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.

In relation to the establishment and development of schools, it generally appears that this – according to the reports – was set in motion in the camps in the spring of 1946 so that there is a school for the children up to and including the 9th grade. In reports from 1947, it is possible to read about further expansion, and in many camps it is reported that a vocational school has been established.

However, this process was certainly not without difficulties and serious challenges. Although it varied between the camps, there were generally issues with facilities and a lack of space. It was also difficult to keep schoolrooms warm during the cold winter months, and in some cases teaching could not be carried out at all. There was a shortage of teaching materials; even though the production of books in German for educational use was quickly set in motion and were distributed during 1946, these materials were scarce in the camps. In the vocational school, teaching material also seems to have been a major challenge, and there were limited opportunities for young people in this type of school to have internships. In some camps, the children's schooling could be interrupted, for example, by duties of herding sheep in nearby areas.

Many of the inspectors' reports also include the name of the elected trustee. Even if the election of a trustee was to be reported on an independent form, the reports thus also provide documentation that such a representative had been elected.

The educational and some of the managerial tasks in connection with the construction and management of the school education were mainly carried out by the refugees themselves. Since the teaching was to take place in German, and the camps were to be kept isolated, this can be seen as a necessity. It also saved the Danish state from the cost of teachers' salaries. However, it can also be seen as part of the desired self-governance and the democratic dimension of it. This is reflected in an article in June 1946 about "Youth School in the Refugee Camps" in *Lager-Zeitung* for the Rom camp – a camp newspaper that the refugees themselves published. Commenting on the Refugee Administration's Education Committee, the article says that when you ask the refugees themselves to contribute to the educational effort:

> is it because it is considered incompatible with democratic thinking to leave the employment of the many young people as well as their theoretical and practical education to chance – if one also has a desire to give these young people – as far as circumstances permit – such an education that they can later become good and useful citizens in their own countries.

(*Lager-Zeitung für die Flüchtlingslager Rom I und II*, No. 30, Rom, 9 June 1946, p. 6)[52]

In the same issue of the camp newspaper from the Rom camp, one can read about the opening of a college for kindergarten teachers – an initiative taken by the refugees themselves (*Lager-Zeitung für die Flüchlingslager Rom I und II*, No. 30, Rom, 9 June 1946, p. 5).

Thus, the picture emerges that school and educational activities gradually became relatively extensive and differentiated. However, part of the picture is that there were large differences between the camps and that the inspectors' reports generally focus on what is present rather than what is not, unless it concerns conditions that are directly required to be fulfilled.

The lack of teaching materials was great and could only gradually be remedied. In particular, books, notebooks, and arithmetic books were in short supply. A report from one of the Refugee Administration's camp inspectors illustrates the difficulties and the efforts of the teachers:

> A great deal of good will and "teacher idealism" was needed to do the work required of the teachers under extremely difficult conditions. Even in the best camps, the conditions could not bear comparison with the work in a normal school. The teachers had to do without most of the aids that are otherwise available in a schoolroom. (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 180)

The camp inspector in question writes further that "it naturally required a lot of homework from the teachers. I have met several teachers who made ABCs [basic reading books] for their class themselves" (ibid.).

52 The newspaper is included among the archives in Lomborg-Rom Local History Archive. See the source list for a more precise reference.

Information and cultural activities in the camps

The Refugee Administration's plans also included the task of "information activities". The committee that was to take care of this, the Refugee Administration's Information Committee, had been established on 2 November 1945 with Johannes Kjærbøl as chairman and Social Democrat Poul Hansen, who was former principal of Esbjerg Workers' High School, as its leader. The committee's members and their backgrounds are described in Chapter 5; its field was more complex than that of the Education Committee, including not only education and information for young people and adults but also a wide range of cultural activities.

The Information Committee's plans

In January 1946, the Information Committee prepared a lengthy account of planned initiatives and their background in the form of a "Memorandum concerning the information work in the German refugee camps" to the camp leaders (Hansen, 1946).[53] This memorandum, which was dated 16 January 1946 and was sent by Poul Hansen and the Refugee Administration, described the main lines of the committee's activities, their background, and some of the challenges associated with the task. The document starts with an account of the challenges of this effort, describing the work as very extensive and time-consuming (Hansen, 16 January 1946, p. 1). It is pointed out that it is difficult to obtain the many resources that are needed. The initiative had the following two main tasks:

53 The document is found among the records in Odense City Archives. See the source list for an exact reference.

> a) To counteract the general lethargy often found in the camps as a natural consequence of confinement under mostly very cramped conditions.
>
> …
>
> b) That the refugees recognize the true nature of Nazism and adjust to the democratic Europe in which they will live in the future. (Hansen, 1946, p. 1)

However, the committee also recommends that the first task (a) should be given priority and that this should first include music and singing, the screening of films, and other such activities, while the second point (b) "must be kept somewhat in the background until the committee and the task force acquire sufficient knowledge of the conditions in the individual camps and of German refugees who can be used as reliable employees" (Hansen, 1946, p. 1).

The two aforementioned elements in the Information Committee's plans thus aimed at creating opportunities for activity and supporting the well-being of the refugees, but they also aimed at providing information, enlightenment, and the recognition of, as the document put it, "the true nature of Nazism", as well as preparation for a life in a democratic Europe when the refugees could return to Germany. In terms of organization, it was decided that this task should be solved:

> in connection with the central libraries of the country and a few large public libraries. In connection with the mentioned libraries, committees of 5–7 members are established, each of which in relation to the camps that exist within the library's area. [Each committee was expected to] organize and supervise the cultural work in the refugee camps within the area and to stand as a guarantee to the public that the work is in line with the democratic ideals of life. (Hansen, 1946, p. 2)

In addition, a local information committee was to be established in each refugee camp, consisting of "A Danish Supervisor (preferably German-speaking)", "a German trustee chosen from among the refugees with this special task in mind", and the Danish camp leader. In each refugee camp, a camp librarian was also to be appointed from among the refugees (Hansen, 1946, p. 2).

The committee then outlines a number of points or tasks that the information activities were to include and for which the committee were thus responsible. The items included German literature, the newspaper *Deutsche Nachrichten*, song and music evenings, radio, films, slideshows, the German

youth in the camps, lectures, the refugees' own efforts, as well as the committee members' visits to the camps and the finances (Hansen, 1946, pp. 3–8). This plan, which included some key points, was further developed (Havrehed, 1987, p. 170).

Secondary school and knowledge about democracy

The plan for schooling for the young people, which was issued a few months later on 10 April 1946 ("Plan for a School for the Youth in the German Refugee Camps", 10 April 1946), further clarifies the aspect of the information work that deals with the German youth in the camps (Refugee Administration's Information Committee, 1946). The youth school activities were thus placed under the information activities, linked among other things to study groups and lectures. Special attention was paid to the activities for the young people. In light of their background and the experiences that most German children and young people had from their schooling in the framework of the Hitler Youth, which was based on an ideology in sharp opposition to democracy, the information work for the youth was essential. In a letter sent by the State Civil Air Force, it was requested "that the camp leaders will assist the deployed district leaders and refugee inspectors in the best possible development of the youth school" (The State Civil Air Force, 2 July 1946).[54] In this circular, the Refugee Administration's Information Committee describes in detail the prepared plan for lectures, youth school, and study group activity; and it is emphasized that it must be implemented as soon as possible to be realized by 15 September of the same year. The following procedure is described:

> (1) The first task must consist in finding a sufficient number of assistants for the youth school by carrying out the Hal Koch study groups for leaders and teachers. At the same time, however, it must be emphasized that a study group in a democratic spirit can only be carried out if the participants have volunteered. (Hansen for the Refugee Administration Information Committee, 1 July 1946)[55]

The committee continues with a point (2) that further elaborates on the structure of the youth school by stating that "this study group activity for teaching

54 The document is included in the archive material in Odense City Archives. See the source list for a more precise reference.

55 The document is written by Poul Hansen on behalf of the Information Committee and is included in the archive materials in Odense City Archives. See the list of sources for a more precise reference.

subjects is sought to be carried out at 2 or 3 double hours a week", and at the same time "material conditions in the camp which relate to the construction of the youth school (premises, etc.), are carefully examined" (ibid.).

Thus, there was specific planning in relation to the initial teaching and the study group activities, their implementation, and order. There was also a plan for training the teachers to be in charge of the study groups. This training was aimed at refugees who were considered suitable as teachers and leaders of activities, and these were to complete Hal Koch study groups.

In the same letter, the committee points out that textbooks for use in teaching are on their way: textbooks in German grammar, in childcare, and in health education, which are all finished, and in health theory and history, which will be completed by 15 July 1946.

Details of the information work

Here, we describe in more detail the individual elements of the information and cultural activities. Although the two types of activities were to serve different purposes in some respects, the potential for developing knowledge and experience of democracy and democratic practice was considered in both contexts. We first look at the information work with special reference to study groups and lectures, books and libraries, radio, film and slideshows, folk high school, and the magazine *Deutsche Nachrichten*. Next, we take a closer look at the cultural activities, their recreational elements such as music, singing, theatre, and other musical elements, as well as sports life and young people's leisure activities. Finally, drawing on accounts from some of the cultural leaders, we present descriptions of how the work was carried out in practice and what issues were experienced.

Study groups and lectures

Regarding the study groups, it was emphasized in the plan that these were voluntary activities aimed at creating opportunities for personal development and the formation of attitudes. For example, it is described that:

> the importance of the study groups lies in the personal development they can bring the participants, and it seems clear that the attitude-forming effect they can have on the participants can be spread by them to the less developed in the camps. (Refugee Administration's Information Committee, 1946, p. 8)

The importance of the groups representing both sexes and different social affiliations is emphasized, and with regard to this it is written: "On the other hand, it is strongly emphasized that the participants in a study group should, as far as possible, be composed of representatives of both sexes and from all walks of life" (ibid.).

The study group was thus expected to play a role not only in personal development but also in social integration across gender and social differences, and at the same time contribute to the dissemination of ideas and knowledge. The method of study group work is described in more detail:

> A study group normally works in such a way that the participants take turns presenting the literature of the class in an introduction. … In practice, the lessons should certainly be taken as dialogues without changing the introductory speakers. This means that the teacher or leader is always the prime mover, who point by point discusses the material with the young people. It is a good method for the teacher to prepare a number of questions for each lesson taken from the material, which he addresses to the group. (ibid.)

It is further suggested that it should be possible to "let the pupils write German essays, possibly first on given subjects and then on freely chosen subjects", and that these essays can then be used in dialogues with the young people. It is also described that "a list of suitable study group material can be obtained at the head office" (Refugee Administration's Information Committee, 1946, p. 8).

As can be seen, the study groups were activities that were to be largely based on and unfold through dialogue, and thus also form the context for such dialogue and interaction between the participants. These were also activities that were to some extent participant-driven, but nevertheless with the study group leader as the "prime mover", as described in the quote above. By being based on an enquiring approach, the study groups' activities were to provide a framework for the participants' personal reflections and thereby contribute to their formation of attitudes and their personal development.

The study group as a practice within, for example, Danish public adult education has an interesting history (Larsson, 2001; Bjerkakera, 2014). It was a form of activity or enlightenment practice that from the latter part of the 1800s and especially in the first part of the 1900s had gained widespread use in the field of public education in various countries, and with inspiration from abroad, also in Denmark (Kjær, 2002). Inspiration came both from

Great Britain and the so-called "National Home Reading Union", which was founded in 1889 in connection with the public Britiish libraries, and from study group activities in Sweden in the early 1900s. Around 1910–1911, the Danish folk high school environment had sought to form an organization for study group work, and the idea of study groups had from that time taken root as a means of public education and enlightenment. By being based on dialogue and conversation, it was a form that was close to and in harmony with Grundtvigian ideas about education and public education, which in Denmark had gained a strong foothold throughout the 1800s. The study groups could be practiced as self-directed activities with questioning dialogue between the participants, and they were very successful through the Danish Workers' Educational Association (AOF) when it was established in 1924.

During World War II, the study group method in information work was also part of the activities of a Danish resistance group called Dansk Studiering [Danish Study Circle] (Andersen, 1984, p. 25; Høgh, 2007). Dansk Studiering was founded in 1941 based on the idea of library consultant Jørgen Banke, who had previously been involved in activities within public education and had initiated the establishment of the Danish Information Association in 1907. The idea of this was thus precisely information and learning, which was the original focus of Dansk Studiering; and Frode Jakobsen, the later initiator of the Danish Freedom Council, played an important role. Later, Dansk Studiering became more active in resistance activities and in 1943 changed its name to The Ring.

The study groups, which were thus intended as a very open and participatory form of activity, also matched well with the ideas of progressivism that teaching should be based on the participants' interests and their self-chosen activities. At the same time, it had attitude-forming and personality-developing potential, which was considered important precisely in connection with the activities for the refugees. In the refugee camps, such a form also provided a good opportunity to take the specific situation as a starting point, as well as the experiences and conditions of the participants who could be expected to join such activities.

Examples of material suggested for use in these groups included books such as *Socialpsykologische erfahrungen aus dem lagerleben [Social psychological experiences from camp life]* by Harry Wilde), *Die Deutschen in kommenden Europa [The Germans in coming Europe]* by Juvet, *Bilderbuch und demokratie [Picture book and democracy]* by Greyerz and *Hitler in uns selbst [Hitler in ourselves]* by Picard (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 204). The texts dealt with themes that were expected to be of relevance for the refugees, and which also provided an opportunity to discuss, for example, democratic practices.

Lectures

The lectures that the Refugee Administration mentioned in their letter of 1 July 1946 had been planned for the spring of 1946, prior to the implementation of the plans for the junior school. For the lectures, the Information Committee had decided to send 10 lecturers to the camps, each giving three lectures. When these lecturers were out giving their presentations, they also had the duty to subsequently "discuss with the refugees and give them the opportunity to ask all conceivable questions" (Havrehed, 1987, p. 175). The three topics chosen for the lectures were (Rowold, 1947, p. 12; Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 187):

1. What does it look like in Germany today?
2. The land reform in Germany,
3. What is democracy?

The Refugee Administration decided that German emigrants should be in charge of the lectures. They had to master the German language and have in-depth knowledge of German "mentality" (Havrehed, 1987, p. 175). Some lecturers might also have to deal with other types of problems, such as mood crises that could arise among the refugees. Such challenges could require immediate action, and the skills of the emigrants could be important in such situations.

In addition to the mentioned lectures, lectures with the following titles were held in most camps (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 206):

1. Germany's future opportunities as a democracy,
2. The tasks of the trade unions,
3. What political parties are now in Germany,
4. The necessity of de-Nazification,
5. The upbringing of youth.

Furthermore, between 1945 and 1948 many lectures were given on the various practical and factual issues that the refugees were concerned with.

Several of the German emigrants who had come to Denmark before 1940 had been involved in the information activities during the war. Some of these had formed the organization "The German Anti-Nazi Organizations' Refugee Committee" (TAOF), which was represented in the Refugee Administration's

Information Committee (Rowold, 1947, p. 16;[56] Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 211; Rowold & Bøggild, 2002, p. 19). As mentioned earlier, the Danish authorities did not want this organization to engage in political agitation in the camps, fearing that this would cause conflicts. However, the British military authorities expressed the view that Nazi forces might have too easy a time in the camps, and this was also claimed in the press. Against this background, emigrants from TAOF were officially included from the winter of 1945–46 and came to be responsible for part of the information work in the camps (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 211).

In the larger camps, a "folk high school" was established with the camps' German cultural leader as head. For these folk high schools, study plans were prepared in the individual camps with many types of activities such as study groups, lectures and actual courses in subjects such as language, shorthand, and bookkeeping.

Among the Danish leaders of the refugee work, it was considered how political the information work should be. Poul Hansen, who was responsible for the practical management of the work of the Information Committee, wanted a programme of cultural activities that was initially first and foremost entertaining and artistically and culturally sound, also for the sake of creating well-being (Hansen, 1946).[57] The information was also to have a political tone, but this was not allowed to be dominant. According to Harder, the refugees' interest in the politically informative part of the programme was generally less than the support for cultural offerings such as film screenings, theatre, revues, concerts, choirs, dance (Harder, 2020, p. 301).

Books and libraries

In the larger camps, libraries were set up with a stock of books that had been purged of Nazi propaganda (Refugee Administration, 1950, pp. 189ff). A challenge in this connection was censorship. With regard to this, the Refugee Administration's Information Committee wrote on 1 February 1946 that:

> the prerequisite for being able to carry out this work is, of course, that the censor not only knows German, but that he is also familiar with German culture and history and especially has knowledge of Nazi ideology and way of thinking, i.e. that he must be familiar with German literature af-

56 Rowold's account is included among Henrik Havrehed's archive materials in the Danish National Archives. See this for precise references to the material.

57 The document is the previously mentioned memorandum found among the archives in Odense City Archives. See the source list for an exact reference.

ter 1933. (Refugee Administration's Information Committee, 1 February 1946, p. 1)[58]

However, the shortage of books was very great, and the committee therefore also says that the censorship does not mean removing all books produced before 1933. The committee further pointed out the problematic and contradictory nature of exercising censorship, and wrote:

> It is clear that under truly democratic conditions, people should be able to decide for themselves which books they want to read, and in a certain way, Nazi books will also be important, but only for free-thinking and independent people. (Refugee Administration's Information Committee, 1 February 1946, p. 1)

The same letter emphasizes that books written before 1933 must be removed if they are written by authors with nationalist-militaristic tendencies. A number of authors are mentioned whose works are not allowed to be included in the camps' libraries, but there is also reference to publishers who could "keep themselves more or less free from Nazi influence" (Refugee Administration Information Committee, 1 February 1946, p. 4).[59] School books printed after 1933 can never be used, the committee writes, except for books in the natural sciences, but not biology. In March 1946, in continuation of the above guidelines, the committee writes a letter on "Subject and Study Group Literature" with an indication of books suitable for this purpose (Refugee Administration Information Committee, March 1946).

There was a lot of lending of books and therefore also much wear and tear on them. In August 1947, the book stock in Oksbøl camp was approximately 10,000 volumes, and "4,098 of the camp's 26,000 inhabitants were registered as borrowers. Of these, 2,557 had borrowed 3,430 books during the week" (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 189, 191).

Each camp library had a Danish supervisor and an information committee attached. As previously mentioned, each information committee consisted of the Danish supervisor, the camp manager, the German trustee, and some other interested German refugees. In addition to the library loans, the local information committee was to arrange movie evenings and slide lectures; the

58 The document can be found in Henrik Havrehed's archive material in the Danish National Archives. See this for precise references to the material.

59 Ibid.

expenses for this were covered by the Refugee Administration. Thirty-three such committees were set up (Havrehed, 1987, p. 171).

Radio, film, slides

In 1947, Karl Rowold reports that "Radios are installed in almost every camp ... so that news and musical programmes can be listened to" (Rowold, 1947, p. 12).[60] For the use of radio, specific listening times were stipulated, for example in the evening hours. As stated in the camp regulations from 1945: "Listening of radio is only permitted in the common assembly rooms within the time periods set by the camp leader" (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Copenhagen, November 1945).

In accordance with the Danish state's general policy for the refugees, German, English, and Swedish radio broadcasts were allowed to be listened to, but not Danish (Mix, 2005, p. 198). Especially German stations such as Berlin, Munich, and Hamburg were listened to (Havrehed, 1987, p. 171).

During the spring of 1946, a film service including some 50 films was established. Some of these were entertaining, others had educational and informative purposes. For example, a 1946 feature film *Die Mörder sind unter uns [The murderers are among us]* (Havrehed, 1987, p. 171) was shown. It was produced immediately after the end of World War II by the German film director Wolfgang Staudte, who directed several Nazi-critical films (Weckel, 2003). The film, which was shot in the ruins of Berlin, follows the photographer, Susanne Wallner. She has survived a stay in a concentration camp, but she prevents her friend, Dr Hans Mertens, from murdering an officer who has been guilty of serious war crimes. The moral point is that in a society governed by the rule of law, self-justice must be avoided.

Films could of course provoke many reactions and discussions among the refugees. With regard to the above-mentioned film, Havrehed explains that it made a huge impression on the refugees, triggered shock in some and led to letters to the editor of *Deutsche Nachrichten* (Havrehed, 1987, p. 165, 171).

The newspaper *Deutsche Nachrichten*

The refugees in the Danish camps had a great need for news, especially from Germany. In accordance with the Danish state's general policy for the refugees, Danish newspapers were not allowed in the camps (Mix, 2005, p. 198). However, the Danish authorities and the Allied leadership in Denmark both

60 Rowold's account is included among Henrik Havrehed's archive materials in the Danish National Archives. See this for precise references to the material.

wanted to meet the need for news, and while attempts were made to obtain German newspapers, this proved too difficult. Danish authorities then decided to publish a German-language newsletter, and this became the weekly newspaper *Deutsche Nachrichten*. This newspaper had a very special history, since it had originally been started in 1943 as an illegal newspaper on the initiative of German emigrants with anti-Nazi sympathies. These same emigrants also produced the magazine, which during the war was supported by private funds, especially from the labour movement. From 1943 until the liberation, the magazine was distributed to German soldiers, to Germans living in Denmark, and to the German minority in Denmark. After the liberation, the publication continued, and for a period it was delivered in a semi-legal way to the refugees in the camps.

In November 1945, a meeting was held on this matter in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs with the participation of Hans Sievers and the editor at the time. Here, guidelines for the continuation of the magazine were established, as stated in the announcement sent out:

> From 1 December 1945, "Deutsche Nachrichten" will be published by the previous editorial staff in cooperation with the Refugee Administration, so that an editor appointed by the Refugee Administration will be attached to the editorial board and be responsible in relation to the Press Act." (Statens Civile Luftværn, [The Danish Civil Air Defence] 12 December 1945, p. 1)[61]

It also appears that "The name of the magazine is from this date 'Deutsche Nachrichten' with the subtitle 'Newspaper for German refugees in Denmark. Published by the Danish Refugee Administration in cooperation with German anti-Nazis in Denmark', and will be published in 20,000 copies" (ibid.).

From that point on, the refugee administration was responsible for distributing the magazine with the aim of having it function in a democratic way as a news media in the camps; and it was (as can be seen above) published weekly in 20,000 copies, calculated as approximately one for every 10 refugees (Havrehed, 1987, p. 126). The refugee administration could see the opportunity to use the magazine in connection with the information activities, providing general information for the refugees, as well as fighting Nazism, and it therefore cannot be said that this was a completely neutral news media.

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61 The document can be found among the archives in Odense City Archives. See the list of sources for further reference. Quotes from the original text are translated into English by the authors.

When the new *Deutsche Nachrichten*, published by the Refugee Administration, first appeared in late 1945, the editorial staff still consisted of German emigrants and included Hans Sievers, Karl Raloff, and Karl Rowold (Jefsen, 1986, p. 596). These people also played important roles in connection with the camps. Sievers was a member of the Refugee Administration and was affiliated with the Education Committee, and Karl Raloff was the district manager (cultural leader) in the Kløvermarken camp. As editor-in-chief, the Refugee Administration appointed the South Jutland high school teacher and former resistance fighter Jef Jefsen (1986, p. 596). He laid down a relatively open line for content and debate in the magazine (Harder, 2020, p. 309). In his memoirs, Karl Raloff wrote about his approach to the magazine's purpose and about the refugees that: "after having spent the previous 13 years behind the spiritual barbed wire of the one-way Göebbels press, they were to learn how to find their place in the new world that they would find in their new home" (Raloff, 1969, p. 166). Raloff puts it this way: that they should learn "to think for themselves again and not let others think for them" (ibid.).

The magazine disseminated important international events, news in the field of art and culture, as well as information of direct relevance to the camps' residents, including about the situation in Germany. It also conveyed contributions from the residents themselves, where they – in a democratic way – could have their say in a section with the headline "The word is free". The last issue of *Deutsche Nachrichten* was published in November 1948, when there were only about 3,000 refugees left in Denmark.

Articles in *Deutsche Nachrichten* about German culture and history often gave rise to debate among the refugees. Some Germans felt talked down to by people who in their eyes represented the victors and who tried to subdue the defeated with "guilt propaganda". The dissatisfaction was expressed in letters to the editor and opinion pieces, and they were taken seriously and answered by the editors. Walther Franz – whose account of his stay in the Kløvermarken camp will be referred to later –somewhat ironically describes the pages of the letters to the editor as "the 'Hyde Park Corner' of the refugees, a valve for tormented hearts, through which they could vent their annoyance, whether they were scolding the recent German past or the poor conditions of present life" (Franz, 1949, paragraph 4.86).[62]

However, the very act of opening up a debate was a democratic step. And contributions could also be seen about democracy, such as in this excerpt from a longer entry:

62 Franz's account can be found in the internet archive "German Refugees in Denmark from 1945 to 1949". See the list of sources for a more precise reference.

> I speak out of my most honest conviction, because the fate of my beloved homeland is close to my heart. I have clearly recognized that a genuine democracy is the right thing, and I am therefore also prepared to support it, even if some of the inmates in the camp are looking down upon me for this reason. (*Deutsche Nachrichten*, 1946, no. 27)

An important application for *Deutsche Nachrichten* was thus linked to the efforts to spread and educate about democracy, both as an idea and as a practice. This was expressed in many types of contributions, including articles about Hal Koch's texts used in the study group work and his book *What is democracy?* In Denmark, Hal Koch was generally known for his publications on democracy and democratic practice. An example is his article in the Danish newspaper *Berlingske Aftenavis* on 12 September 1945 entitled "The Word or the Sword", in which he argued for democratic dialogue. We quote here an excerpt from the post that deals with the resolution of conflicts, where Koch points out that there are only two ways to solve them, one of which consists of "fighting, which means that it will be the will of the strongest that prevails" (Koch, 1945). The other, that:

> one can talk one's way out, which means that through a "conversation" between the conflicting parties one seeks to have the matter illuminated in a comprehensive manner, and that the conversing parties really strive – it must not be forgotten – through conversation to arrive at a more correct and reasonable understanding of the problem of the conflict. (ibid.).

Of this, he says: "This is democracy. It is the conversation (dialogue) and mutual understanding and respect that is the essence of democracy" (ibid.).

Hal Koch's texts were used in various forms of teaching and information activities, where they could form the basis for discussions, and the texts could subsequently be obtained as special prints through the central information activities (Havrehed, 1987, p. 185).

Recreational activities: Music, singing, theatre, and sports

In the Information Committee' memorandum, activities of a literary and musical nature are mentioned especially in connection with the item "Song and Music Evenings", but also in connection with the item "German literature". In practice, such activities came to unfold in many forms in the camps. This is evidenced by both reports from the cultural leaders and the refugees' own descriptions. However, singing seems to have occupied a special place, which

was also supported by the initiatives. Under the item "Song and music evenings", the committee mentions Carl Maria Savery's musical activities for the refugees and how these were implemented by the Refugee Administration:

> In Copenhagen refugee camps, during the month of December, a large number of experiments have been carried out with such evenings. The aim was to give the refugees a song and music experience rooted in an earlier Germany. (Hansen, 1946, p. 4)

The committee goes on to say that for this purpose "a song booklet has been printed in 100,000 copies and with 50 folk songs from before the Nazi era" (ibid.). Regarding the inclusion and thus the revival of the German folk songs, which had been "more or less suppressed" under Nazism, it is told that "it will undoubtedly prove to be of great importance" (ibid.).

A certain method used by Savery is described, namely "first to let the refugees sing one or two of the more well-known songs, after which he rehearses a few of the lesser-known ones", and it is also pointed out that fees can be given to refugees who will be able to take on such a task in the camps (Hansen, 1946, p. 4). Savery himself recounts these activities in his memoir "Music and Man" (Savery, 1951):

> The task was to organize the musical possibilities that existed within the ranks of the refugees themselves, to support the efforts of the Germans to form choirs and orchestras, to give a quality to the musical work in churches, schools and theatres, and to find suitable material for this work. (Savery, 1951, pp. 58–62)

Savery also emphasized the importance of:

> bringing the Germans back to their old beautiful folk songs. The fact that the refugees were now allowed to sing folk songs from the pre-Hitler era established the connection with an earlier and freer way of life, and they became more open and receptive. … Many of the young people did not know these older songs, so contact had to be made here from the old to the young. (ibid.)

Rowold, who was a member of the Refugee Administration, also describes his experience of the importance of music: "In these hours of music, song, poetry, plays and films, many people found relief from their worries and needs and opened themselves up to the reception of new faith and new strength for

the future" (Rowold, 1947, p. 11). He further describes the development of cultural life in the camps:

> Cultural life has experienced a significant upswing with the support of leaders everywhere. Directors have stimulated and developed the refugees' own cultural work, so that no camp today stands without at least one amateur performance, a choir and a music group, which with the most primitive means have created an often admirable framework for the cultural life in their camps. (Rowold, 1947, p. 12)

In a 1946 account of the cultural work in the Rom camp, Hans Winkler writes about singing activities that he himself was responsible for. Here, one can recognize elements of the approach that Savery's work laid the foundation for and which is described in the Information Committee's memorandum:

> Music. In the 6 open singing lessons, I got the participants to sing folk songs, canons and small art songs. Between the individual songs, I told about the composers, the lyrics and the cultural background. By choosing songs from other nations, from Jews and Jewish piano composers, I could work against Nazism without being too intrusive. (Winkler, 22 July 1946, p. 4)[63]

Winkler's report also shows a wide range of other musical and creative activities such as theatre and painting, and in connection with festive events such as a summer party on Midsummer Day, folk dance, choir, operetta, and variety shows were arranged. There are also descriptions of a wide range of such cultural activities from several of the other camps.

The education and information plans also dealt with the leisure activities of young people. The Refugee Administration's plan provided guidance both in terms of the forms and the principles on which it recommended to base the activities. In this context too, the efforts for democracy were integrated, as can be seen in the following excerpt:

> It is recommended that in order to systematize sports and leisure life, "Jugendgruppen" should be formed, through which the young people can become acquainted with democratic forms of association. Such a "Jugend-

63 Hans Winkler's account is included in the material in the Refugee Administration's archive in the Danish National Archives, Archive number 1946, "Information. Correspondence with committees, etc.", Box no. 107. See the list of sources for further reference.

> gruppe" should preferably consist of 20–40 young people of both sexes. However, they should absolutely not be composed along party political or religious lines. (Refugee Administration, 1946, p. 11)

In addition to the intention of having the young people learn "democratic forms of association", principles for the activities are also mentioned, such as gender integration and composition across religions and political positions in the communities. It is emphasized that the composition of groups should "absolutely" not reflect party political or religious divisions. This appears to be a very important recommendation, which must also be seen in light of the objectives of seeking to educate for democracy and equal rights across, for example, gender and politics. Such a practice could show other paths than those many German children and young people had known previously.

In practice: The cultural leaders' descriptions of information activities

As described in the above-mentioned memorandum, the organization of the information work was placed in the hands of the central libraries and larger libraries. The organization was to be based on the committees of five to seven members that each library was to establish, and which had responsibility for camps within the library's area. Reports prepared by the district or cultural leaders give an impression of how the activities were carried out in practice.

The cultural work and cultural activities were implemented and unfolded differently depending on the size and conditions of the individual camps. The opportunities have been better in the larger camps, and it is also from these that the more detailed descriptions of differentiated cultural activities are found. From the Oksbøl camp, Kløvermarken, the Rom camp, and other camps, descriptions of very comprehensive cultural and information activities are known. Reports from the smaller camps also include descriptions of cultural activities, such as music lessons, instrument lessons, choir and singing, films, morning gymnastics, and the like (e.g. in Report from the camp in Stabrand, 1 May 1946, Refugee Administration).[64] However, the activities are significantly better described and, one must conclude, generally also broader and more differentiated in the larger camps. In the cultural leaders' reports, it

64 Reports like this one from the camps are included in the Refugee Administration's archive material in the Danish National Archives under "Reports on the camps' schools and on the teachers". See the list of sources for further reference.

is not always clear whether the described activities have primarily taken place in the larger camps, but this is probably the case.

Karl Rowold, who was a member of the Refugee Administration's Information Committee, has written a lengthy account of the refugee camps and his efforts in this context. This includes a section on cultural work in the camps, where he also touches on the information work. He writes:

> In the first months of 1945, the Culture and Information Department sent German emigrants to give lectures on topics such as "The German Land Reform", "What does it look like in Germany today?" and "What is democracy" in all camps. Using authentic material taken from German newspapers and notices, they gave the refugees answers to questions that were asked daily. Interest in political issues and the issues of the future increased, and there was an intellectual life in the camps. However, it does not proceed without heated discussions. (Rowold, 1947, p. 12)[65]

The discussions were not always about matters of principle or political positions in relation to democracy. In the Refugee Administration's report, a small excerpt from a report from a Danish leader of a study group on democracy is reproduced:

> 20 April 1946. ... Today, it broke loose on the occasion of Hal Koch's little chapter on freedom, a delicate subject in this cramped camp where they have now been in prison for a year. "Why do we have to stay here? Why can't we at least come out and do some work, dig our own peat, help the Farmers?" (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 208)

The fact that the task of initiating these activities could be challenging is seen through descriptions from the committees. In a lecture given on 28 February 1946, the district manager (cultural manager) for the Aarhus area who was also responsible for the Aarhus Library Service describes the conflicts faced in the work and the considerations he thought should be made in relation to this type of activity (Krämer, 28 February 1946).[66] This relates to some extent to political issues, where contradictions are confronted and create tensions, as is also evident in other reports on the information work.

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65 Rowold's account is included among Henrik Havrehed's archive materials in the Danish National Archives. See this in the source list for precise references to the material.

66 Krämer's account is included in the archives in the Refugee Administration's archive in the Danish National Archives. See this in the source list for a more precise reference.

From the Rom camp, Hans Winkler tells of the information work, which in his area includes the library, the folk high school, radio, and various lectures, for instance in history (Winkler, 22 July 1946).[67] Regarding the library, he writes:

> The Library has a Reading Room with a small Standard Library. From closed camps a number of smaller collections of books have arrived, which, however, had to be censored ... . The lending is well organized. We have a bookbindery. In the near future, there will be a discussion on "Why and how do you read books?". The discussion will start a series of book reviews, which will be read in connection with the reading evenings and then published in the newspaper. (Winkler, 22 July 1946, p. 5)

With regard to the folk high school in this area, Winkler says that it has started up as "Discussions (called 'At the Round Table')" and has aroused a lot of interest. In addition to medical lectures, there are also lectures on topics such as "The Danish Folk High School, New Buildings in Germany, New Furniture in Germany, The Allotment Garden". A very interesting part is Winkler's description of teaching the subject of history, which he organized for nurses, kindergarten teachers, and assistant teachers. It was a subject that was otherwise sought to be treated with care. He says that his presentations on this are very popular and are received with:

> almost enthusiasm, and more and more people are asking to be allowed to join. I now hold classes for all the teachers (about 100), besides two hours for the kindergarten teachers (about 50). Every Saturday I give an hour on World Literature. (Winkler, July 22, 1946, p. 5)

Radio was also part of the information work. Winkler describes that:

> There are 17 "Hörgemenischaften" ("Listening Communities"), which gather 800–3500 listeners every day. We are trying to expand the system, but we lack material. In special overhang boxes a summary of the most important information is posted every day. In an almost surprising way, it is precisely radio listening that has contributed to bringing the discussion beyond the narrow circle of the camp. (Winkler, 22 July 1946, p. 4)

67 Winkler's account is included in the archive materials in the Refugee Administration's archive in the Danish National Archives. See this in the source list for a more precise reference.

In the Rom camp's *Lager-Zeitung*, the camp newspaper produced by the refugees themselves, describes an activity consisting of an evening lecture in connection with a 'Literary Circle':

> On Saturday 1 June, 1. Literary Circle (Reading Evening) took place at the school, where about 60 listeners participated. Mr. Dr Winkler himself read after talking about the importance of "Reading Societies" in Denmark. We first heard a chapter from the Danish University Professor Hammerich's book "Germany in the course of time". (*Lager-Zeitung für die Flüchtlingslager Rom I und II*, No. 30, Rom, 9 June 1946, p. 5)[68]

Winkler describes that "in all activities I try to indirectly inspire respect for humanistic and democratic ideas and forms ... , and I try to draw attention to other nations, and to international contexts and world culture" (Winkler, July 22, 1946, p. 2).[69] He also mentions the political problems and contradictions between the refugees: "There is undoubtedly in Rom a small opposition group, consisting of very left-wing socialists and secret Nazis, who partly work together" (Winkler, 22 July 1946, p. 2), but no direct resistance was experienced. However, he describes a process where he had heard a lecture by a professor who had become chairman of a cultural committee. The lecture was, in Winkler's opinion, "not without Nazi sympathies". He launched an investigation, and the professor was then unable to continue (Winkler, 22 July 1946, p. 2).

In the Karrebæksminde camp in the south of Zeeland a study group on democracy was held in the summer of 1946.[70] The group was led by a Danish provost with one of the participants, a German professor, assisting him. The circle included some 30 participants; about two thirds men, the rest women. In his report, the provost notes that Hal Koch's articles were used as a basis and turned out to be a good starting point for the conversation and dialogue. He further reports:

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68 The newspaper is included among the materials in the Lomborg-Rom Local History Archive. See the list of sources for a more precise reference.

69 Winkler's account is included in the archive materials in the Refugee Administration's archive in the Danish National Archives. See this in the source list for a more precise reference.

70 Described in a report written by the leader of a study group in Karrebæksminde Camp 1946. The report is included in the archive materials in the Refugee Administration's archive in the Danish National Archives. See this in the source list for a more precise reference.

> There was no obvious Nazism, but a certain distrust of democracy and a pronounced urge to defend Germany by shifting as much of the blame as possible onto others… The professor's view was that the other powers had not given Germany a chance, when under the Weimar Republic it was really seeking to build a democracy, and had thereby paved the way for Hitler.

Many of the participants agreed with this view. But one of them, a schoolteacher, said:

> There is one thing that has convinced me that there is democracy in England, and that is that they overthrew Churchill. If Hitler had been victorious, I wonder how much workers' movement would have been left to oppose him.

From the camps in Aalborg East, the head of the "Oberschule" describes cultural and information activities in his report in a section on "Kulturelles Leben im Flüchtningslager Aalborg Ost" ('Cultural life in the Aalborg East refugee camp').[71] He describes how many facilities in the individual camps had been taken over from the former German occupying forces but now found new uses. In the camp in Aalborg East, he describes a cinema hall with room for an audience of 500 and a large stage that became the cultural centre of the camp. Here, musicians and mimes quickly got together and made events where everyone was welcome. There were formed theatre groups and song groups, singing evenings, operettas and other musical events were organized, and even a ballet group (Report from the headmaster, undated, p. 7).[72]

He goes on to explain that the camp had a good and rich library. However, reading required calm, both inner and outer, which many did not have. Therefore, there was a desire for lectures, of which for example the following were held: Dr Geyer on *Der Mensch im deutschen Recht [The human being in German law]*, Dr Neumann on *Der Dichter Konrad Ferdinand Meyer [The poet Konrad Ferdinand Meyer]*. The lectures took place in the cinema hall and there was a large turnout, he says, with the hall being full. One speaker dealt with nuclear energy. Pedagogical presentations were held for the teachers. Savery also visited this camp (Report from the headmaster, undated, 11).[73]

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71 The account of the head of the school, Poschmann, is undated, but written after he ended his stay in the camp. The account is found among the documents in Arne Gammelgaard's archive materJials in the Danish National Archives.

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid.

Karl Raloff, who was the district manager associated with Kløvermarken, also tells in his memoirs about the cultural work:

> Under my leadership, a great deal of cultural activity also developed in Kløvermarken. An information committee was formed, composed of refugees, in which we decided on tasks and plans at regular meetings. The committee was chaired by the current professor of German at the University of Helsinki, Dr Erich Kunze. (Raloff, 1969, p. 164)

The work grew, making it difficult to obtain sufficient premises, props, etc. They "had a theatre, the 'Volksbühne' with 334 seats and a concert hall with 240 seats, a Master Jakel theatre with 250 seats and a concert hall with 450 seats", he explains, as well as several amateur theatres, revues, and cabarets, where "in 1946, almost 500 performances were carried out with 146,862 spectators. Often there were up to 6 events a day in the various rooms" (ibid., p. 164).

Music had a special place in the camp's activities, he writes, and in relation to this Savery played a central role, forming several choirs and a string orchestra. Raloff also describes that information work was carried out in the form of a "folk high school". Here, there were "weekly lectures that served as ordinary political education work with the aim of educating for citizenship and democracy" (ibid., p. 165), and in addition to this "dozens of study groups, working committees and courses dealing with political, economic, historical, art historical, literary and biological questions as well as with other subjects" (ibid., p. 165). Raloff also took up the post of editor of *Deutsche Nachricten* from 1 January 1947 and had thus "returned to my old profession", as he puts it (Raloff, 1969, p. 165).

As previously mentioned, there would for many reasons be most to report from the larger camps with many refugees and facilities, and the descriptions from those places also take up the most space in the reports. Although there are also descriptions from the smaller camps, the information and cultural activities have undoubtedly been most prevalent in camps of a certain size.

Information, culture, and democracy

After the establishment of the Ministry of Refugees' Information Committee, the work of drawing up guidelines for the effort quickly began, and the committee was able to issue descriptions of this in the spring of 1946. The activities to be implemented were intended partly to contribute to promoting well-being among the refugees and partly to contribute to information. How-

ever, activities aimed at creating well-being had priority and also included cultural activities. The information activities aimed to create a framework and basis for the refugees' development of knowledge about Germany and Europe after the end of the war, including knowledge of current social conditions and of the political conditions and developments in Germany. An important goal was related to information about democracy and the development of an understanding of democracy, also as a practice.

As part of the cultural activities, the committee took the initiative to launch various musical offerings in the camps. C. M. Savery was brought in to lead an experiment in initiating such activities. His course was very successful and his visits to the camps as the leader of these activities became very popular. His approach was described for possible use by the cultural leaders. Songbooks were also quickly printed in the camps. The musical activities could bring the refugees together for something common across age groups and political divides and contribute to well-being. In addition to the well-being aspect, the activities could also be seen as an alternative to the upbringing that many young people had been exposed to in the Hitler Youth organization. The songbooks included songs from the time before the National Socialists took power in 1933. Among other things, an attempt was made to re-establish the connection to Germany's culture before 1933 and thus also to the Weimar Republic's more democratic political culture.

The district and cultural leaders' descriptions of cultural and information activities in the camps show a very wide range of activities. In relation to the information effort, this also included lectures, reading circles, and study groups on democracy. However, it is also reported that this could meet some resistance, for example due to the contradictory experience of dealing with democracy while involuntarily being under guard in an internment camp. Despite these conditions, however, one gets the impression that the information activities succeeded in many camps – at least judging from the district managers' descriptions.

Refugees' experiences with education and information in the camps

The German refugees' experience of the education and information efforts in the camps appear in a number of texts, in most cases written down some time after the end of the stay. Some of these texts have been published later in books or articles, others are available in archives. Based on such texts, we document and discuss in this chapter selected refugees' experiences with the education and information activities in the everyday life of the camps. In interpreting the refugees' memories and descriptions, it should be noted that the education and information efforts did not have an organized framework until after the establishment of the Refugee Administration in the autumn of 1945. As mentioned earlier, the Danish authorities initially expected the refugees' stay in Denmark to be relatively short, and it was not until some time after the end of the war that it was recognized that there would be a need for organized schooling and information for them in the camps.

The descriptions and memories in the chapter build on texts from the following people:[74]

74 Account by Rosemarie Arbaczewski included in Pedersen (2003), story by Oskar Negt is included as a chapter in Negt (2016), account by Walter Franz is available as a web publication (Franz, 1949), account by Lore Ehrich is published in book form (Erich, 2022). Other accounts by Ralph, Hanna, Klaus, Ruth, Patrick, Sebastian, Emilia, and Margaretha are included in Arne Gammelgaard's archive material, which is located in the Danish National Archives; their names are pseudonyms and their accounts anonymized, and we therefore only use a first name. The anonymous persons mentioned were all aged between 7 and 14 years on arrival, except for Emilia, who was younger and Hanna, who was older.

Name	Age at arrival at the camp	Camp	Text
Rosemarie Arbaczewski	11 years	Skovby	School assignment: "Camp life", written down in camp December 1946
Ralph	7 years	Rå (Maribo), Aalborg	Notes written in 1956
Hanna	Approx. 24 years	Svendborg, Aalborg West	Report written December 1999
Lore Ehrich	34 years old	Hørby, Aalborg East	Report written in 1945 and 1996
Walther Franz	53 years old	Kløvermarken	Report written 1947–49
Klaus	14 years	Brønderslev	Report written 1995 (+)
Ruth	7 years	Refsvindinge (Nyborg) Knivholt, Aalborg West	Report written 1951
Patrick	Approx. 14 years	Skovby	School assignment: "Thoughts on the future", written in camp 1949
Sebastian	12 years	Aalborg	Report written "after more than 50 years", i.e. around the year 2000.
Oskar Negt	10 years	Agger, Knivholt	Chapter in memoir, published 2016
Emilia	4½ years	Kolding Skallerup Dune, Rye, Grove Oksbøl	Report written March and July 1996
Margaretha	10 years	Høvelte, Aalborg East	Report written as a school assignment 1950–51

Most of the people whose accounts we include were children when they arrived at the refugee camps. However, there are also three adults, two of whom have contributed to education and information work in the camps, while the third has lived in a camp with his two children. Some of the texts were written during the stay in the camp, others relatively soon after, and others again much later. Clearly, texts written during or shortly after the stay give the most immediate impressions of camp life, but the later accounts also contain descriptions of specific conditions and situations. The stay in the refugee camp has clearly left strong marks.

In the description, we draw in particular on four longer accounts, written by Lore Ehrich, Walther Franz, Oskar Negt, and Margaretha, but supplement these with memories from the other people.

As background, we briefly describe how two of the refugees experienced their journey to Denmark and the Danish refugee camp, since this appears in their memoirs.

The journey to refugee camps in Denmark

Almost all the German refugees who arrived in Denmark in the spring and summer of 1945 came from East Prussia. It was the easternmost part of the German Empire, an area on the Baltic Sea with Danzig (today Gdansk) and Königsberg (today Kaliningrad) as its main cities. After World War II, the area was divided between Poland and the Soviet Union. In the years 1942–1944, the people of East Prussia could experience the war as relatively distant; there was indeed war between Germany and the Soviet Union, but the front was far to the east, and it was even further from the western front and the Allied troops in Italy and France. However, from the summer of 1944, the Soviet Union went on the offensive and pushed back the German troops. In October, the Soviet troops reached Memel on the border to East Prussia. Until then, there had been no consideration of evacuating German civilians from the area; Hitler had forbidden the German army to withdraw, and the German leadership believed that steps to evacuate the civilian population would undermine confidence in the military and the authorities. The military situation became increasingly untenable, and the population was alarmed by stories of looting and atrocities against civilians committed by Soviet troops. There was much truth in the accounts: abuses against civilians had occurred on a large scale, but the situation was also exaggerated by the German media (Harder, 2020, pp. 29–35). From January 1945, when the Soviet army attacked on a broad front, fear of the Soviet troops led many civilians to flee

west. And because the German authorities had not planned evacuations in time, the escape took place under chaotic conditions.

There are many accounts of the escape from East Prussia. One of them is told by Lore Ehrich, who lived in a small inland town with her children, aged 2 and 5 years old. Her husband, who was a German officer, had been killed in the summer of 1944. At the end of January, she saw an ever-increasing flow of German soldiers and civilian refugees passing through her town on their way west, and her family was told to meet with the local administration to join a refugee transport. Ehrich describes the situation:

> While artillery rumbled over us, now stronger, now weaker, and one hit already broke windows; while the party, mayor, women's organization and civil servants had long since quietly left, we still sat and waited for the promised transport. Only a single party member stood quivering like a cracked pillar, trying to shield himself from the storm of questions by shouting uninhibitedly to the people. Otherwise, they have been told all along that the previous escape attempts only led to panic among the rest of the population, and at the right moment the party would of course take all necessary precautions. But suddenly the order was issued that everyone could do what they thought was best. (Ehrich, 2022, pp. 35–36)

After returning to her house, which had meanwhile been taken over by German troops, Lore Ehrich, her two children, and her parents fled on foot in snowy weather. With great effort, they gradually moved westward and towards the coast. Sometimes they got a ride with German soldiers for a while. After a few days, Lore's father was too ill to continue, and his wife stayed with him. Further on in the journey, there were many dangerous situations, including when they drove with a horse-drawn carriage over the ice on Frische Haff, a large inland lake out to the Baltic Sea. They were fed less and less and became more and more exhausted. Finally, they reached Danzig and from there they went on by ship. They did not know where they would be sailed to, but it turned out to be to Copenhagen, where they arrived in mid-March. From here, they were sent by train to North Jutland, where they initially stayed in a villa in Hørby, which was furnished for refugees. Later, Ehrich and the children stayed in a children's hospital in Aalborg, a refugee camp near Aalborg, a barracks at the then airport in Aalborg East, the hospital at the airport (because she was weakened by jaundice), a larger barracks (with about 300 people), and possibly several places near Aalborg. In the summer of 1947, she returned to Germany but had to live in a refugee camp until 1958.

Most of Ehrich's long account was written down in May 1945, while she was in the hospital. She depicts situations and people during the flight and the different places in Denmark where she stayed, and she describes her feelings and reflections along the way.

Another account of the flight from East Prussia to Denmark is told by Oskar Negt, who much later became a well-known sociologist and philosopher. He has described the escape in a memoir written many years later (Negt, 2016; see also Grama 2020). Negt and his two sisters arrived in Denmark by ship from Königsberg in February 1945.

Oskar was then 10 years old, his sisters a few years older. Their family had fled when the Russian army approached their home region near Königsberg. During the escape, Oskar and his two sisters, Margot and Ursula, had gotten away from the rest of the family and had stayed for a few weeks in Königsberg, until a young Hitler Youth woman helped them get on a ship out of town. The ship was initially headed for Schleswig-Holstein but ended up sailing to Copenhagen. After a short stay in Copenhagen, Oskar and his sisters were sent by train through Denmark to a small refugee camp in Agger, where only 52 refugees lived (Refugee Administration, 1950, p. 298). Later, after Germany's capitulation, they were moved to a slightly larger camp, which was established in December 1945 in Knivholt near Frederikshavn (Hansen, 1968, p. 266). Oskar and his sisters stayed in Denmark for over 2 years.

Negt and his sisters reached Denmark before the German capitulation, and he noted how the refugees' life situation in Denmark changed fundamentally after that time. Suddenly, leaving the camps was forbidden, and barbed wire fences were hastily erected. Now the refugees were interned as unwelcome guests.

Living in a camp

Lore Ehrich's account gives a vivid impression of the often very difficult conditions in which the refugees came to live. For example, in the villa in Hørby, where several small children die due to exhaustion, illness, and poor sanitary conditions, and where the Ukrainian doctor coming twice a week has neither medication nor instruments. Her own children were also affected by the difficulties: "Miserable and apathetic, they lay with clothes on and froze all day on their straw sacks" (Ehrich, 2022, p. 112). She welcomes the German capitulation because it means the end of Nazism's grip on German society; but she also notes how the refugee camps from then on are closed off with barbed wire. She could no longer go for walks in the park with the children and "the

atmosphere had become so anti-German that people went to the police if they heard someone speaking German on the street" (ibid., p. 151).

Unlike Lore Ehrich, Negt does not write much about the experience of illness and hunger in the camp; he was also a child and had his sisters to help him. However, he and other young people were bored. Boys played football with a ball sewn together from scraps of clothing, but it soon stopped being fun. However, the fight against boredom became the starting point for a positive experience with Danish society. On the second day after the internment, the camp was visited by an elderly Danish gentleman. It turned out that he was the mayor of a nearby small town. He came to reassure the German refugees. When the mayor was leaving after talking to a number of adults in the camp, Oskar ran after him with a request. He told the mayor that camp life was boring for young people and asked if it was possible to get some tools so that he could make crafts to pass the time. The mayor did not say anything, but nodded, and when he visited the camp for the third time, he brought a small box of tools and materials for Oskar. Shortly after, the camp in Agger closed, and Oskar did not see the mayor again; but he took the toolbox with him to Knivholt. There it became the starting point for an initiative that he took together with a couple of other young people in the camp, making toys for use as Christmas gifts. Many of the residents in the camp helped to find usable materials, especially paints, and this helped to revive inmates who were otherwise on the verge of giving up (Negt, 2016, pp. 176–177).

Other children also took the initiative to overcome the monotony of camp life. For example, Emilia describes:

> We had no toys and became quite good at inventing games. We made our own game boards for board games … . The board served a dual purpose, we kids used it for games, my mom used it to dry soap. We made our own "Poetry Books". They were booklets of paper, sometimes they were toilet paper, neatly sewn together with a cover on the outside. We wrote verses, poems and congratulations to each other into them. Sometimes we made bookmarks out of woollen shreds glued to heavier paper. For glue, we used a mixture of flour and water. … My sister Ursula and I became very good at gymnastics, handstands and flips. (Emilia's account, p. 2)

Another positive experience for Oskar Negt in the Knivholt camp came when his sister Ursel was put to work in the kitchen at the naval station in Frederikshavn, from where German soldiers worked after the capitulation to dismantle naval mines and depth charges. Ursel was picked up from the camp in the morning and dropped off in the evening. Ursel became the girlfriend of (and

later married) a German signalman who worked at the naval station. After a while, the guards at the camp allowed Oskar to occasionally go with his sister and spend the day at the naval station, often in a room in a signal tower. In the tower there was a radio, also with German broadcasts, where Oskar could listen to school radio and music.

Despite such positive experiences, he found the internment intense and writes, for example:

> What occupied me already when I was 11 or 12 years old was the question: Why do they lock us up? Why do they fence off the beach that we see with steel wire? It is children, women, old people or men who have been wounded in the war, who are guarded by heavily armed guards. A British military commission that visited our camp also asked the question: Is this a concentration camp? (Negt, 2016, p. 205)

In the memoir, Negt also recounts conversations with his sisters about life in the refugee camps. When asked what the camp time meant to her, Margot answers:

> The carefree time as a young girl, you lost it. You didn't know what it meant to grow up "normally". After all, we already had parental responsibility for our much younger brother. So spending the time as a fourteen-year-old, fifteen-year-old, sixteen-year-old without survival strategies – we didn't know that. (Negt, 2016, p. 187)

Lore Ehrich's and Oskar Negt's accounts show many of the conditions that characterized the German refugees. This was partly due to the violent experiences from the escape from East Prussia, where both Ehrich and Negt's families were split up along the way and did not reconnect with each other until several years later. And it was due to the experiences of life in the camps, with illness, child death, close cohabitation with others in cramped conditions, hunger, detention behind barbed wire, lack of contact with family members, boredom. In his report, Klaus also emphasizes that:

> The monotonous life behind steel wire, of course, exerted a great influence on the refugees, and therefore it was attempted in every way to keep them physically and spiritually occupied, so that their thoughts could be diverted from the imprisoned existence. As far as possible, the young people were to be engaged in physical work for at least 4 hours every day, but this could only be done for the boys, because in the rather limited area (about

6 a.m.)[75] there was simply not enough work for everyone. (Klaus' account, p. 16)

However, the accounts also describe positive experiences of being far from the hostilities, supporting each other, and receiving help from others, including Danes.

Such conditions obviously affected the mental state of the refugees. The Danish health authorities were also aware of this, and in 1945 a "Nerve Clinic for German Refugees" was established. Hans Reichner, who was head of this clinic in the years 1945–48, summarized his observations on the refugees' mental health problems in 1950. He rejected the concept of "camp psychosis", which was very common at the time, and instead pointed out that living conditions in a closed camp could lead to developmental damage in children and mental disorders in adults. He highlighted five aspects of camp life in particular: idleness, cramped housing, collectivization, scarcity of activities, and passivity (Reichner, 1950, see also Harder, 2020, pp. 264–266). These conditions are also evident from Ehrich's, Negt's, and other descriptions.

With the term "collectivization", Reichner was referring to the confinement of the refugees, their limited freedom within the camps, and the uncertainty of their own situation and future. He assessed that this limited the refugees' options for daily life, weakened their ability to take an independent stand, and made them excessively susceptible to rumours and prejudices.

The idleness and passivity were the result of the camps' poor range of activities and experiences, both for young people and adults. Reichner pointed out that the adult refugees had become unemployed, they were prevented from practising their profession, and this damaged their self-understanding and self-respect. As a German camp administration was gradually established, many doctors, teachers, clerks, and craftsmen were able to find employment, but many were kept in passivity. This was especially true of the peasants, of whom there were many among the East Prussian refugees. However, schoolteachers in the camps, who often worked with teaching, were also, according to Reichner, in many cases characterized by lethargy, joylessness, and nervous overexcitement. Reichner saw it as an expression of the fact that the teachers never really had time off and were never alone. They were always surrounded by people and never had the opportunity to be in nature or be alone with their own thoughts. The children in the camps may have had compulsory schooling, but it could be difficult for them to see the meaning of the education when they did not know anything about their future. Like the adults,

75 A "Morge" is an old German area corresponding to approx. 2,500 m2.

the children were therefore characterized by passivity, indecision, and waiting. Reichner also points out that the children were characterized by premature maturation:

> What these young people lack first and foremost is the cheerful relaxation at a well-deserved end of work, the cheerfulness and openness that usually characterizes mature young people when they are away from the constraints of the apprenticeship or youth school. Instead, we find everywhere early maturation, often awkward faces, sometimes also an unconscious imitation of adult manners, which can extend to the smallest stereotypical quirks. (Reichner, 1950, p. 10)

Reichner's presentation of the refugees' mental state seems relatively unnuanced, without including the nevertheless positive elements that emerge from the refugees' accounts. The presentation probably reflects the experiences and symptoms he encountered among the camps' residents in his professional role. However, it does give an impression of the difficulties that the Danish authorities' plans for education and information had to meet.

Experiences with school teaching

In Lore Ehrich's and Oskar Negt's accounts, there is little about teaching in the camps. In the case of Ehrich, this is partly explained by the fact that the report mainly covers the period up to and around Germany's capitulation and thus before the Danish authorities took initiatives to organize schooling for the children of the camps. However, such school is mentioned in a few places. In March 1946, Ehrich says that she has begun teaching literature at the camp's school, at the upper grade. She does not receive a salary, but she does receive a little extra food (Ehrich, 2022, p. 200). Her son Axel also starts going to school, and this makes Ehrich think about the contrast with his previous life, where the first day of school used to be a festive event: excited children with new school bags, and parents, uncle, and aunt accompanying them. However, she is grateful that the refugee children get the opportunity to go to school at all. But Axel's schooling in the camp is a disappointment:

> Axel, who at the age of two already knew his picture books by heart and as a four-year-old already dictated letters, has fallen completely behind in development and is not at all a good student. Most often he cannot remember his tasks for the next day at all ... . He is easily distracted and daydreams. For both of us, schoolwork is a daily horror. (Ehrich, 2022, p. 214)

In Oskar Negt's account, it does not appear that he has participated in school teaching. He writes that in the Knivholt camp there was no regular school teaching because there was a lack of teachers. However, Oskar himself received a form of individual instruction from a man "who had crippled hands and probably for that reason had not been suitable as a soldier – he was a schoolteacher and liked to discuss. I spent many hours with him, but he would not give classes" (Negt, 2016, p. 176). In the conversation with his sister Margot, which is included in the memoir, Oskar asks if the sisters went to school in the camp. Margot answers no, adding a recollection of her relationship with Danish schoolchildren:

> Once the camp leader came – listen, young girls have to do something. From then on, we always had to do something in the middle of the day with the young girls, take care of them. Had to take them in the shower once a week, over to the school, which was a school opposite. There, the Danish children – mostly boys – spat at us "German pig dogs". It was terrible. (Negt, 2016, p. 186)

It is interesting that neither Oskar nor his sister believe that there was school education in the Knivholt camp. According to the authorities, education took place in the camp. In a memorandum from the refugee administration from the summer of 1947, around the time when Oskar and his sisters returned to Germany, it appears that the school system in Knivholt comprised approximately 1,300 pupils (Report by J. Aa. Jensen, 28 June 1946).[76] The discrepancy can probably mostly be attributed to a shift in memory over the more than 60 years that had passed but may also be an expression of the fact that schooling has not been a significant feature of the children's lives in the camp. Emilia, who stayed in the Skallerup Klit camp, writes that "because of the cold, we did not have much school teaching in the winter" (Emilia's account, p. 2).

Other accounts that describe the situation of children during the flight and in Danish refugee camps contain more references to school education in the camps. We include two of these accounts, written by Margaretha and Walther Franz, and supplement with statements from other texts.

Margaretha came to Denmark with her family on 1 May 1945. They came by ship after a difficult and exhausting escape from a small town just outside

76 The report can be found in the Danish National Archives' materials from the Refugee Administration's Education Committee: Reports on the camps' schools and on the teachers. See the list of sources for a more precise reference.

Königsberg. In Copenhagen harbour, they had to wait a few weeks before they moved on, initially to the camp Høvelte in North Zealand, a few weeks later to the Aalborg East camp in North Jutland. Margaretha was a schoolgirl at the time. In October 1948, she and her family were able to return to Germany. Her account was written at the turn of the year 1950–51 as a final assignment at a German middle school.

Margaretha and her family came to Aalborg by ship. From the harbour, the refugees had to walk as a group to the camp in Aalborg East:

> There were curious Danes of all ages standing on the street, and we had to put up with them spitting in front of us and laughing and mocking our misery. But there were also those among them who had compassion for our fate and who could not hide their tears. (Margaretha's account, p. 3)

In the Aalborg East camp, the school was in a former hangar (see also Wagner-Augustenborg, 2012). The classrooms were rooms at the sides of the hangar that had previously been used as accommodation by the German military. For the first 3 months that the family was in the camp, there was only a primary school, but in August 1945 a gymnasium (high school) was also opened, where pupils from the primary school could be admitted after an oral and written examination. Margaretha went to this gymnasium; she had already been enrolled in a gymnasium in Königsberg before fleeing. She describes that in the early days there were almost 40 students in each class. In the last year, the number of students declined as refugees began to return to Germany. The school's teaching staff was often changing, because many left and others came from other camps.

One of Margaretha's teachers had previously been a professor of history at the University of Berlin. His history lessons consisted of lectures, a form the students did not understand. "It was completely foreign to us, that kind of teaching, we couldn't understand it, and we teased him at every opportunity" (Margaretha's account, p. 13). However, such situations were not typical for the teaching. Strict discipline and order prevailed in the school, and young people who did not comply with the regulations were expelled.

At school, the students had 5 hours of teaching every day. The curriculum and holidays were decided by the school committee of the Refugee Administration in Copenhagen. Textbooks were printed in Copenhagen especially for the refugees. Paper and pencils were also delivered from there, but these was given out very rarely, and therefore teachers and students had to work more orally than in writing. An official team was quite often sent out to the individual camps to assess and get an impression of the school conditions. In

the latter part of Margaretha's stay in the camp, the primary and secondary school was supplemented by a vocational school for boys and girls, where only subject teachers taught.

> Through this establishment, a lot had been achieved. The young people were further educated, since most of them had neglected a lot because of the war and the flight, and they also had an occupation and duties to do. (Margaretha's account, p. 15)

According to Margaretha, the high school in Aalborg East was the best in all the refugee camps, with the best teaching staff and the best teaching materials. It was also responsible for holding exams, not only for its own students but also for students from a number of other refugee schools. First, written exams were held, then oral ones:

> In the presence of the Danish camp director, the school principal and leading men from the refugee administration in Copenhagen, the oral exam took place. This day was always very significant for our high school students. After the festivities ended, the school choir sang a song of honour for the students, and then we led them back to their barracks with loud applause and cheers. (Margaretha's account, p. 14)

Margaretha also talks about other events, including a large annual school sports event held jointly for several camps, cultural film screenings twice a month, and lectures by the teachers about poets or other famous personalities. "Every effort was made to facilitate our learning, and still to bring us up to be decent people" (Margaretha's account, p. 14).

Margaretha's presentation of school conditions is relatively sober and informative, perhaps because she had the experiences at a distance when she wrote, and probably also because the text was to be used as an assignment in her school course. She describes a number of positive experiences, for example the celebration of the oral exam. However, she also clearly describes how life in a refugee camp was fundamentally unsatisfactory:

> But despite all these arrangements, whether they were good or bad, it was not possible to achieve satisfaction among most refugees. We lacked the freedom! What it felt like to be locked up behind barbed wire for three and a half years not everyone can understand. When we left the barracks, our gaze immediately fell on the fence that sealed us off from the outside world, and it was as if we were hit by a dagger in the heart. We saw the

> Danish farmers working in their fields, the children romping around, the beautiful houses and the glorious landscape on the other side of the Limfjord. The world is so big and beautiful, and then we had to live crammed together with so many thousands of people in one pile and in such miserable dwellings. (Margaretha's account, p. 21)

Walther Franz arrived in Copenhagen as a refugee on 1 May 1945. He, too, had fled from East Prussia, more specifically Königsberg, where he had been a teacher at the city's high school. From the autumn of 1945, he lived in the refugee camp Kløvermarken, where he was quickly involved in school teaching. He returned to Germany in April 1947. His long account was written in 1947–1949.

As a teacher, Franz was given the opportunity to live in the camp's school town, where the barracks were less densely occupied, because the teachers' homework was taken into account. He describes everyday life in the barracks:

> I am assigned to the Latin lesson. Over the next few days, classes will begin. --- I sit again in the living room and read. Then a shout sounds outside: "Food pick-up!" Two women have placed a bucket of heavy, square tubs on the street in front of our barracks and are waiting for us. We grab the eating bowl, hurry outside and return to the table with our allocation of white cabbage. (Franz, 1949, paragraph 1.90)

Franz describes the schools in the camp. He says that the high school, when it was fully developed, had 480 students, and that there were four primary schools with more than 4,000 students. However, the classrooms in the school could only accommodate half of the students, so teaching had to be done in two shifts: morning and afternoon. The teaching thus took place in overcrowded, poorly heated rooms. The classrooms had brightly painted wooden walls and long benches and tables, joined together by boards and battens. There were almost no textbooks available; for the Latin teaching in eight classes, for example, there was only one single book. However, there was a blackboard, and the students had to copy all the lessons from the blackboard and thus create a textbook for themselves.

> But how many mistakes can sneak in like that! And what were they going to write on? There was a shortage of paper. Inventive minds made booklets out of the abundant toilet paper and introduced the foreign language lessons into them. Ink was delivered at the end of the year, and pencils were scarce. (Franz, 1949, paragraph 1.112)

Franz emphasizes that Claus Moldt, the head of the teaching in the Kløvermarken camp, did what he could to procure teaching materials. The students had very different knowledge from previous schooling.

> And then there was only one remedy: to start all over again. This applied to all subjects. And that was good. For the war, with its destruction of schools, its bombing nights, and its anti-aircraft auxiliary service, had never allowed regular, uninterrupted education. (Franz, 1949, paragraph, 1.115)

In the schools of the Kløvermarken camp, boys and girls were taught together. It was a new and positive experience for Franz, and one of the reasons why he was able to write: "In spite of all the difficulties [that piled up], I have never been so happy to teach as here in Kløvermarken" (Franz, 1949, paragraph 122). He found that the girls encouraged diligence and thoroughness in the work and dampened the boys' rough behaviour. "The sexes get to know each other in the joint teaching, lose their shyness towards each other and associate with each other naturally and harmlessly" (Franz, 1949, paragraph 1.123).

The group of teachers was very diverse; it included lecturers, assistant professors, middle school teachers, primary school teachers (trained at girls' gymnasiums), and assistant teachers. Just like in the Aalborg East camp, the teachers changed frequently. The music lessons were first given by a pianist, then a social welfare assistant, and finally a concertmaster. Chemistry was initially taught by an 86-year-old former associate professor, later by a director of a gasworks. However, the teachers' commitment was great. "The teachers were almost entirely imbued with the ethos that our beautiful vocation demands, and the enthusiasm of the assistant teachers proved to lead to beautiful results, despite methodological and didactic shortcomings" (Franz, 1949, paragraph 1.120).

Franz emphasizes it as a positive quality of schoolwork in the camp that:

> there was no separation between school and private life, rather the school permeated the entire camp. It was present in the "Elite Choir", in the youth groups, at the puppet theatre, at sports and when the children played. Camp life would have lacked a strong vitality if the school had not been there. Everywhere, pupils, teachers and parents came together, got to know each other a little more closely, and foolish barriers collapsed. (Franz, 1949, paragraph 1.130)

Franz presents a positive image of the camp's young people and their relationship to school education:

> It was a group of students who understood it and did not abuse it when you were friends with them. And yet all these young people had already gone through the fear of death and thus matured by years. They applied other yardsticks to things and had not lost the happy mind of youth. Now that life had been bestowed upon them, they wanted to live it too. In addition, there was a real eagerness to learn. They had been without school, and the teaching was for them a change in the monotony of camp life. Extended vacations became boring for them. At school, on the other hand, you experienced something, you got together with your friends, and the teaching offered tensions of all kinds. (Franz, 1949, paragraphs 1.124–1.125)

This description can be compared to Hans Reicher's previously mentioned characterization of the refugees' mental problems. Where Reichner points out that the teachers in the camps never really had time off and were alone, and that they were therefore often characterized by joylessness and nervous overexcitement, Franz emphasizes the positive aspect of the close connection between private life, school, and other activities in camp life. And where Reichner points out that the students had difficulty seeing the meaning of school education when they did not know their future, Franz emphasizes the students' desire to learn and the school as positive elements in camp life. By virtue of the subjects he taught in the gymnasium, Latin and music, Franz has probably met the more resourceful and motivated young people. However, his and Margaretha's accounts testify to the fact that for many children and young people, the school education in the camps met the essential need for meaningful interaction and learning.

Experiences of the teaching

Several accounts from German refugees preserved in archives include shorter descriptions of school education. One of them is a school assignment on "Camp Life", by Rosemarie Arbaczewski, written in a refugee camp in December 1946. She describes the school as follows:

> It's called "The Skat School" because the men play skat[77] there in the evening. When we have put our bags in our seats, we go to the stove, where

77 A game.

> everyone stays before the class begins and during the breaks. We talk about Christmas preparations and school matters, and in this way the breaks go quickly with merry talk. When class begins, the teacher calls the boys, who mostly stay outside. After four hours, the morning is over, and we then go home. We are now taught in all subjects, so that in Germany we can continue in a higher school. (Arbaczewski in Pedersen, 2003, p. 14)

Another school assignment was written by Patrick, who was a few years older than Rosemarie Arbaczewski. His theme is "How I think about my future":

> At home, I was in high school and had to get my exam [Abitur] so that I could study later. If we come back to Germany now, it will probably be difficult for me to go to school again. Due to the war and the refugee period in Denmark, I have lost almost 3 years of actual school time and will probably have to attend a very low grade level and then have to go to school until I am 20. I don't want to do that, and it would probably be difficult because of the lack of money and the conditions down there. So I've decided on a different career. (Patrick's account, p. 1)

Both Patrick and Rosemarie Arbaczewski are considering the future after refugee life, but he has clearly thought through the situation more and draws a conclusion. He now wants to take a forestry education.

In some reports, school education is presented in a concise and relatively neutral manner. This applies, for example, to Sebastian's account, which was not written down until more than 50 years later.

> Other important tasks for the refugee service were to get schools and cultural life going, but crafts and a fire brigade were also necessary. Everything could be done because all social groups were represented among the camps' refugees. As for education, in each camp there was a primary school, and in larger internment camps there were also secondary schools; diplomas were later recognized in Germany. The cultural life was diverse. Theatre and singing groups, chess clubs; poetry readings and foreign language courses were also part of the offer, and finally a camp newspaper was published every month. (Sebastian's account, p. 8)

While Sebastian expresses that the teaching has worked well, Ruth, whose account was written a few years after the camp, is far more reserved:

> Mentally, the children are also behind. When we were first in Denmark, no one thought about school. People were happy that they could rest after the exertions of the escape and the many nights of bombing. Later, when people thought about school, there was a lack of teachers. We then got a little schooling, but it was only a bare minimum. After a year, school started in relatively normal way. The children were all behind, and therefore you cannot compare the school with an ordinary school in Germany. High school teachers also taught here. One by one, the refugees all went to Germany, and teachers always accompanied them in the small transports. Soon there were too few teachers. There was only enough for the upper grades, and the lower grades were then taught by the students from the upper grades. 19-year-old girls and 17-year-old boys taught in elementary school classes. (Ruth's account, pp. 11–12)

Ruth stayed (like Oskar Negt) in the Knivholt camp, and she mentions that in the Aalborg-West camp the school was more advanced; there, they mainly had algebra and space theory and Latin. She writes that she came back to Germany with large gaps in her professional knowledge but nevertheless filled most of them over time.

Ralph first stayed in the Rå camp near Maribo but later moved to Aalborg West and experienced the change as positive in relation to school teaching:

> The positive thing for us children in this large camp was that the teaching was handled by German teachers and other suitable people. A former German aircraft hangar served as a school building. Although in some cases it was only possible to teach to a limited extent, it avoided falling too far behind in general education, especially for pupils in the lower grades.
>
> We were given teaching materials in the third and fourth grade: a "songbook for German refugees in Denmark" and a "Bible study" book. Before that, we probably didn't have any teaching material at all. These materials were used to read and sing, practice retelling, teach religious lessons, write dictation, and train memory. (Ralph's account, p. 13)

The descriptions in these reports indicate that the children and young people have participated in school education and that they have experienced the teaching as useful and meaningful, even though not everyone has perceived it as academically adequate. The descriptions also testify to the fact that the refugees have been concerned about how to continue schooling after returning to Germany.

In his chapter on school and education, Hans-Georg Mix concludes that even though the schooling in the German refugee camps in Denmark is a small chapter in German school history, the school and German teachers have hardly received such great recognition at other times:

> All contemporary accounts I know of express great gratitude to the male and female teachers who taught under the most difficult conditions, both in terms of their personal situation and in terms of the opportunities offered to schools. (Mix, 2005, p. 148)

Mix points out, however, that the present accounts must be assumed to originate from the most resourceful refugees, and that disinterested and unmotivated young people have probably not written about their experience but rather repressed it. It is known from other sources that there were disciplinary problems in the camps, but they must rather be understood in terms of how camp life, with internment, close cohabitation in very little space in poorly insulated barracks, inadequate food, and a lack of contact with family members outside the camp affected the lives and psyches of children and young people.

Culture and enlightenment in the camps

As we have described in Chapter 8, there were many cultural and educational activities in the camps. Mix writes that "in the refugees' accounts, titles of films, hits, plays that evoke fond memories of the time in the camps appear again and again" (Mix, 2005, p. 151). Especially in the large camps such as Oksbøl, Kløvermarken, and Grove-Gedhus, a wide range of offers and activities were developed. This had started in the first refugee camps in the spring of 1945; here, the refugees had tried to combat passivity and boredom through initiatives for concerts, choirs, dance events, readings, impromptu courses in, for example, foreign languages and other things. The initiatives could also draw on the improvised variety shows that the Wehrmacht soldiers had performed for each other at the barracks. Refugees with talent and interest were involved in this, and after the capitulation and the departure of the German soldiers, the performances continued. In several camps, actual theatre ensembles arose quite early on, performing existing, most often classical, plays. The driving forces were often professional theatre people among the refugees (Harder, 2020, p. 297; Havrehed, 1987, pp. 176ff). Sometimes special songs were written for these performances, such as a song entitled "Wenn dich mal

die Sehnsucht plagt" which was about lice, bedding, poor catering, primitive toilets, dirty clothes, etc.

Theatre performances are often mentioned in texts from the former refugees. Rosemarie Arbaczewski writes in her school assignment about camp life that there are often theatre performances in the camp and that there is a theatre group for the adults. "Then the adults forget their sorrows for 2–2½ hours" (Arbaczewski in Pedersen, 2003, p. 11). And Klaus writes:

> Theatre: The camp had its own theatre group, which consisted of about 40 people. At first, we performed every 3 months, but later about every 6 weeks. The theatre group also gave 2 performances in Hjørring and 1 in Skallerup, and the camp itself was visited by 2 other theatre groups, from Hjørring and from Sæby. (Klaus' account, p. 12)

Walther Franz was one of the refugees who got involved in the Kløvermarken camp's theatre. He writes that for a year his life in the camp revolved around the two poles of school and theatre. His days were filled with preparation, teaching, correction work, school administration, role learning, rehearsals, and acting (Franz, 1949, paragraph 1.139). They performed, among other things, Friedrich Schiller's play *Kabale und Liebe*. Franz's account shows the difficulties and the commitment to the project:

> The little free time we had, we spent in the theatre barracks, interested in everything. We watched how the seats were raised to three floors, how backrests were put on the benches for the first time in Kløvermarken, and how the walls were painted in a beautiful, deep red colour. Quast had made drafts for stage pictures, and an old painter transferred them to large format. A foreman from a theatre in Düsseldorf carved the small props, such as a desk and divan, with great skill and experience, and transformed modern furniture into rococo chairs and rococo tables by putting a few boards on or by painting them a little. So far, everything went well. But where were we going to get costumes and wigs from? Here Mr Savery comes in as a rescuer. Through his connections, he managed to get a theatre man to lend us the necessary equipment from his Copenhagen stores. (Franz, 1949, paragraphs 1.143–145)

The theatre was meant to entertain, but it was also meant to contribute to democracy and to confront the German past. In the Kløvermarken camp, the leader of the information and enlightenment work, Dr Kunze, wrote politically educational comments on the individual plays in the theatre pro-

grammes. In the programme for *Kabale und Liebe*, Kunze emphasized the play's depiction of the struggle against the power of tyrants and the social evils. Franz comments that:

> the eternal value of the work is probably much more prominent for us today than the social conditions that hardly touch us as anything other than historical facts, which of course allow us to draw parallels to the present. (Franz, paragraph 4.94)

Klaus, who stayed in the camp in Brønderslev, writes that singing evenings were often held. The camp had two choirs, one predominantly Christian, and there were about 50 people in each choir (Klaus' account, p. 12). And Hanna took the initiative to form a choir herself:

> To enrich our monotonous lives, I started a girls' singing group. We had time, so we met almost every night. We sang, told stories, and everyone told about their home and what they had experienced. In the morning, we often went to the individual camps and woke people up with song, and we also walked around in the evening. People were very happy about it. (Hannah's account, p. 2)

Mr Savery, whom Walther Franz refers to in the quote above, was, as previously mentioned, the music teacher Carl Maria Savery, who had been engaged to organize singing and music evenings in the refugee camps (see mention in Chapter 8 and Harder, 2020, pp. 302–304). Hannah describes that her choir was also visited by him several times. "He was a splendid man who had much regard for the refugees" (Hannah's account, p. 4).

Dancing was another activity that many people participated in. A female student from the teacher training college in Pasewalk, near Szczecin, recalls:

> the accordion pieces with which Willi in Grove in Jutland twice a week played up for everyone to dance, standing on a table in the middle of the hall. Behind the steel wire, he gave joy to hundreds of people. For many, it was a dose of life quality for which I would like to say thank you today. The eyes lit up when the uneven wooden floor was danced on to the sound of "It was on Capri". (Mix, 2005, p. 152)

In his discussion of the cultural activities, Mix points to contrasts in the descriptions and statements of the young people in the camps. On the one hand, the young people appear depressed and crushed by the experiences of

the escape, internment, and the difficult living conditions in the camps, on the other hand they can dance and have fun seemingly carefree. Mix does not believe that this is an expression of different groups among young people; there is a tension in people and their situation. "The young people in the camps had not forgotten the misery and the escape, but the joy of the new life was stronger" (Mix, 2005, p. 152).

As mentioned in Chapter 8, there were also direct information and enlightenment activities in the camps. During 1945, "folk high schools" were established in a number of camps, offering lectures, courses, and study groups. The topics were diverse and included German culture, literature and language, music, foreign countries and peoples, natural sciences, mathematics, pedagogy, electrical engineering, trade, and first aid. No lessons in the Danish language were offered; the refugees were not to be integrated into Danish society.

Democratic education and learning

As described above, the effort to spread a democratic culture among the refugees characterized many aspects of the Refugee Administration's efforts. This was reflected in the various information activities, including the magazine *Deutsche Nachrichten*, lectures, courses, and study groups.

A central element of the political information efforts was lectures and study groups, partly based on Hal Koch's texts on democracy. In the accounts of the former refugees, these activities do not appear as frequently as theatre, music, and song, but they are described by Klaus, among others:

> There were 4 lectures and 1 reading evening. The titles of the lectures were: "What is democracy?", "About a lecture by Thomas Mann", "What is democracy? (2nd series)" and "What does it look like in Germany?" The topic of the reading evening was "Iphigenia". The lectures were of crucial importance for coexistence and for the German management of the camp on a democratic basis. (Klaus' report, p. 12)

As discussed in Chapter 6, an attempt was made to introduce elements of democracy into the management of the camps. However, these elections of representatives among the refugees could also contribute to a social differentiation among the camps' residents. The Danish camp leaders' awareness of this risk is evident from an article in *Deutsche Nachrichten* about the principles of the democratic order in the Kløvermarken camp:

> All current employees in the camp administration, area managers, other positions and positions enjoy no special rights in relation to catering or supply of clothing, school or other necessities of life. (Mix, 2005, p. 48)

In practice, however, these principles could not always be observed. This is evident from several reports. Harder mentions, for example, that office-trained refugees who worked in the central refugee register at Kløvermarken were given privileges in the form of exemption from the ordinary camp work, better food, clothing, and bathing facilities (Harder, 2020, p. 146). Margaretha describes the situation in the Aalborg East camp as follows:

> In time, a certain social layer, often called "the top ten thousand", developed among the internees. It was those in the camp who held some post that belonged to this group, and then those who were doing well with them and could benefit from it. They soon differed in all outward characteristics from their fellows and their fate. They were all well fed because they were given extra food. In most cases, they had a single room and crowded other people together, which did not bother them at all. (Margaretha's account, p. 23)

The Danish authorities' attempts to introduce elements of democratic self-management and learning in the camps had some impact among the refugees, but with limitations. One such limitation was that the Danish leaders and mediators were rarely sufficiently familiar with the refugees' backgrounds and experiences. In his account, Walther Franz describes an example of this:

> The teachers at the vocational school were also taught democracy by a Dane who was no more than 24 years old, and who was often driven into a corner by the aggressive matrons through questions that had to do with the contradiction between theory and practice --- camp life offered plenty of material for this kind of thing. (Franz, 1949, paragraph 4.103)

Franz also describes how an American journalist who visited Kløvermarken's schools asked "the wise, sensitive teacher, who herself came from an old, democratic family, how the youth's attitude was to democracy. And she replied: 'They do not want it preached, they want to see it'" (Franz, 1949, paragraph 4.100).

The teacher's statement points to the contradiction in the Danish authorities' ambitions for political education in the camps. It was possible to introduce certain democratic mechanisms into the organization of the camps and estab-

lish education in democracy, and some of the refugees could engage in this. But in the closed societies of the camps, democratic posts could be combined with the acquisition of privileges and the deepening of social differences. The decisive obstacle, however, was the confinement in the camps, the prohibition of moving out into society, as described by Franz:

> The young refugees were not, like the young souls of other states, brought up in a democratic tradition, but had to gain new land, a land which was portrayed as paradisiacally beautiful for them, but which first and foremost remained a mirage that was soon torn to pieces by the barbed wire. (Franz, 1949, paragraph 4.120)

Life and learning in the refugee camps

The vast majority of German refugees who arrived in Denmark at the end of the war and were placed in camps in various parts of the country came from East Prussia. They had left their homelands for fear of the advancing Soviet troops and their often-brutal behaviour. The flow of refugees consisted mostly of women, children, and the elderly, because the men had been conscripted for military service. The situation was chaotic, both because of fighting and poor transport facilities, but also because the German authorities had refused to accept the need for flight until the last minute. Many of the refugees had to stop, lost contact with family members, or lost their lives along the way. Stories handed down from refugees give a vivid impression of the difficulties. On arrival in Denmark, the refugees were exhausted, often ill, and mentally affected by the experiences during the journey. The first refugee camps around the country were set up quickly, with cramped space, insufficient food, and very little healthcare. There were almost no opportunities for activities for the many children and young people in the camps. After the end of the occupation, the Danish government gradually initiated a systematic effort to improve conditions in the camps, including school education and information activities, but even though the Danish refugee administration made great efforts, the practical framework for education was for a long time unsatisfactory; there was a shortage of facilities, of schoolbooks, and of paper and writing utensils. At the same time, the situation of the refugees changed after the end of the occupation; the camps were sealed off from the outside world and placed under guard, while the Danish authorities waited for the refugees to be sent home.

In his consideration of school and education in the refugee camps, Hans-Georg Mix concludes that the teaching played a very positive role for children

and young people and for camp life in general. He draws on contemporary accounts from refugees, and the accounts of Margaretha, Walter Franz, and others that we have drawn on here confirm this impression. Like Mix, we must make the reservation that the most informative stories must be assumed to originate from more resourceful refugees. However, it was certainly fundamentally positive, both for children and parents, that schooling constituted an organized joint activity in the otherwise stagnant camp life, and at the same time there has been a great need for children and young people to be able to acquire knowledge after having been cut off from it for several years. This has been a good basis for positive teaching situations despite the inadequate framework. And as for the German teachers, who in their educational background and experience were a complex group, working with teaching in the camps' schools provided an opportunity for positive and appreciated activity in camp life.

In addition to the education for children and young people, there was widespread cultural and information activity in the camps. Initially, this was organized by the camps' own residents, but the activities were gradually supported and regulated by the Danish authorities. The refugees' accounts contain descriptions of events and experiences with music, dance, and theatre, which created variety and commitment to camp life. There were also more specific information activities in the form of lectures, courses, and study groups, and the Refugee Administration published *Deutsche Nachrichten* with news from Germany and debate.

Cultural and information activities in the camps were influenced by the Refugee Administration's aim of developing a democratic culture and knowledge of democracy among the refugees. This was expressed in the choice of plays and films, and in the subjects of lectures and study groups. An attempt was also made to fit an element of democracy into the camps' leadership and legal system by holding free elections for positions that could be filled by refugees (although candidates had to be approved by the Danish camp management to prevent anyone with obvious Nazi sympathies from running for office). These were well-founded initiatives for democratic learning, but the impact was weakened by tendencies towards the development of hierarchy among the refugees and by the fundamental contradiction of the camps being isolated from the surrounding society.

Conclusion

Receiving and creating a framework for the housing of the approximately 250,000 German civilian refugees – the many fleeing and forcibly evacuated German citizens who had come to Denmark at the end of the war – was a demanding task for the Danish authorities. It was also a task that had to be solved under uncertain and contradictory conditions. Initially, it was expected that the refugees could quickly be sent back to Germany, but it soon became apparent that the repatriation would be slowed down by the need for a comprehensive plan for dealing with the refugee problems throughout Europe. Thus, there was a need not only to ensure shelter, food, and medical care for the refugees in Denmark but also to create orderly conditions and opportunities for activities in the many large and small refugee camps around the country – camps that had often been established in haste. For these tasks, the Danish authorities established an organization, the Refugee Administration, in the autumn of 1945. In Danish public opinion, the attitude towards the refugees was not positive; many saw them as part of the former occupying power, and there was, for example, dissatisfaction with the fact that schools were used to accommodate refugees.

In relation to food and shelter, education and information activities for the refugees appeared as a less obvious task, but it was a task that the Refugee Administration took seriously. In this book, we contribute to investigating and documenting how the task was approached and what results were achieved. More specifically, we ask what pedagogical ideas and networks characterized the plans for the education and information efforts in the refugee camps, how the plans were designed and realized, in what ways the plans and efforts were characterized by ideas of democracy, and how the German refugees in the camps, based on their situation, experienced the education and information efforts and activities.

In trying to answer these questions, we must, in addition to existing scientific analyses, draw on documents and reports, the vast majority of which

date from the time of the Danish refugee camps approximately 75–80 years ago. In our use of this material, we have sought to distinguish between different levels in the historical situation, including the ideological and conceptual background for the work of the Refugee Administration, the plans prepared for educational, information, and cultural activities, the activities carried out in the camps, and the refugees' experiences with these activities. The material is heterogeneous; in the presentation of the activities carried out in the camps, it mainly consists of, for example, brief administrative reports from the inspectors of the Refugee Administration, and more detailed reports, often written later by individuals.

After its establishment, the Refugee Administration relatively quickly set up two committees to draw up plans for school education and information activities in the camps. Many of the committees' members were prominent and experienced personalities in Danish education and enlightenment activities and represented the tradition of democratic enlightenment and to some extent also pedagogical progressivism that had grown strong in Denmark in the interwar period, even though pedagogical progressivism had not made a strong impression in the school system. The committees also included several German emigrants who had been engaged in education and information activities based on democratic ideas, but who for political reasons had had to leave Germany before the war. The ideas of democratic enlightenment and pedagogy came to characterize the plans that were designed and implemented. The objective of strengthening democratic awareness and practice was clear in the plans, and methods such as study group work were prioritized.

The conditions for the education and information activities were difficult. Especially in the early phase, there was a lack of teaching resources such as writing paper and German-language schoolbooks. A lack of suitable classrooms could also make it necessary in some places to divide the pupils into morning and afternoon classes. Especially in relation to the teaching of history and societal conditions, there was a need to develop materials not influenced by Nazi ideology. Among the camps' refugees, there were many with a background in teaching or other professional knowledge dissemination, and they were recruited as teachers. Interviews were held with all involved in teaching and the potential teachers, and some were rejected due to uncertainty about their democratic dispositions.

There were major differences in the conditions for education and enlightenment in the camps. In the large camps, it was possible to differentiate so that classes could be set up for both primary and secondary education, and possibly also for vocational education. In the small camps, there were far from the same opportunities. However, despite the difficult conditions, both ad-

ministrative documents and personal accounts indicate that ideas about democracy in general have played a role in the teaching and information work in the camps. The same applies to a certain extent to progressivist approaches to teaching, although this can be more difficult to assess. Claus Moldt's formulation (quoted in Chapter 4) that on the basis of their many years of political education under democracy, Danish authorities should contribute to making the refugees fellow citizens in a democratic Europe, expresses the effort well. The supervision established by the Refugee Administration was not only to ensure that the framework of the teaching was carried out but also to help ensure that intentions for democratic education were followed up. The same was true of the democratic elements, including free elections to the positions of trustee and to the magistrate, which were incorporated into the camp organization.

It can be difficult to assess the extent to which the teaching in the refugee camps fulfilled these ideas and intentions. However, the available reports indicate that the refugees who acted as teachers made a significant and committed effort, and that both children and adults were happy with the teaching and the information activities. The teaching certainly met a great need for children and young people to be able to acquire knowledge after having been cut off from it for several years. And the reports also indicate that the German refugees who took care of the education had generally not identified with Nazism but rather had had basic democratic attitudes.

From an analytical perspective, one can understand education and enlightenment in the Danish refugee camps through the concepts of transfer, translation, and transformation in comparative educational research (Chapter 3). *Transfer* is reflected in the movement of ideas from the inter- and transnational level, including ideas of pedagogy and of socialization to democracy in Europe and the United States, as well as the ideals of the UNESCO constitution. These ideas were then interpreted and *translated* at the national level, and were expressed, for example, in plans for education and information for the refugees, and at the local level in the camps, where they could potentially contribute to the refugees' understanding of and experience of democratic practice. These experiences could also potentially be taken back with them to Germany, where they could play a role in building a democratic state (*transformation*).

However, these results can only be considered as potential; many factors could affect whether refugee education actually had this effect. One of these factors is the nature of the refugee camps as total institutions, isolated from the surrounding society both physically and socially. The isolation is also an exclusion, an expression of the fact that refugees are unwelcome elements

who must be isolated in order not to pollute the national order. In Agier's formulation (Chapter 3), refugee camps are out-places where the refugees experience a double exclusion – partly from their area of origin and partly from the space of the local population. From the Danish authorities' point of view, there were good reasons for the isolation, including avoiding exposing vulnerable refugees to the anger of Danish citizens. However, for the refugees whose accounts we have used in the analysis, isolation clearly appears to be a problem. Even with limited access to information, the refugees were able to observe Danish society and its democracy but were generally not allowed to enter, let alone participate in it. At the same time, life in refugee camps is in principle temporary, and even though life in the camp may be prolonged, the timeframe remains uncertain for the refugees, and it becomes very difficult for them to imagine a future and act in relation to it.

In the Danish refugee camps, an attempt was made to provide a visible alternative to the form of coercion, exercise of power, and ideology that Nazism had represented – an alternative in the form of the ideals of democracy and freedom that the winners of the war predominantly stood for. These ideals also represented a strong tradition in Danish society, and here they were further linked to ideals of popular enlightenment in a modern society. As Popkewitz (2018, p. 80) writes: "the citizen is not born but made" – people are not born but are educated and socialized into citizens.

In planning the practices of the Danish refugee camps, authorities were aware of the role and importance that upbringing and development in the camp could play for the refugees' understanding of society and citizenship, and they chose to promote principles and frameworks for education for democracy. We see this as a result of the context in which this practice originated: a time of heightened attention to the struggle against authoritarian regimes and to the importance of democracy, as well as a political climate in which many people took a positive view of or endorsed the ideas of progressive education and pedagogy. By formulating a framework for education and information that reflected this, they also contributed with support for democracy advocates among the refugees in the camps.

School and education are important contexts for the socialization of children and young people. Stays in refugee camps can be seen in such a perspective, encompassing the way in which everyday life is organized and shaped as well as the various forms of organized education and training activities that may have been established.

In a contemporary analysis commissioned by UNESCO, the author concludes that "access to education for refugees is limited and unequal" across regions and contexts of displacement (Dryden-Peterson, 2011, p. 6;

Dryden-Peterson, 2017). And the quality is often not high (Dryden-Peterson & Horst, 2023, p. 591). The experiences that refugees gain from camps and the socialization that takes place during their stay can have a great impact on their future lives and on how they will participate in and contribute to society. The United Nations Refugee Agency has estimated that by 2025, 117 million persons were living as forcibly displaced persons in exile from their places of origin because of persecution, conflict, and violence. Of these, 30 million were refugees displaced from their countries of origin (UNHCR, 2026). Today, when there are large flows of refugees in different parts of the world and where refugee camps are the setting for many people's lives – some for a short period of time, others for a very long time – these issues have not become less important, and the experiences from the education and information efforts in the Danish refugee camps after the Second World War can still provide a relevant insight into such issues.

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Beretning af Ralph (pseudonym) [Account by Ralph].

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Beretning af Hanna (pseudonym) [Account by Hanna (pseudonym)].

Løbenummer [No.]: C2, Indhold: C2 Breve fra daværende internerede med beretninger D – C2, Breve fra daværende internerede med beretninger H [Letters]
Beretning af Klaus (pseudonym) [Account by Klaus (pseudonym)].
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Løbenummer [No.]: C3, Indhold: C3 Breve fra daværende internerede med beretninger J – C3, Breve fra daværende internerede med beretninger N [Letters]
Beretning af Patrick (pseudonym) [Account by Patrick (pseudonym)].
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Løbenummer [No.]: C5, Indhold: C5 Breve fra daværende internerede med beretninger T – C5, Breve fra daværende internerede med beretninger Z [Letters]
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