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A map in 2 colours is at the end of the book.

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BRITISH SURVEY HANDBOOKS

General Editor: JOHN EPPSTEIN

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LONDON: BENTLEY HOUSE  
NEW YORK TORONTO BOMBAY  
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BRITISH SURVEY HANDBOOKS

# DENMARK

CAMBRIDGE  
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
1945

## N O T E

The object of the series of British Survey Handbooks is to give essential information about the history, economic life, conditions and outlook of the various nations of Europe, and of the effects of the war upon them.

This handbook has been compiled by the British Society for International Understanding in collaboration with the Danish Council Information Office. It is the joint work of Mr Sten Gudme, who has contributed the two chapters on Denmark under the German occupation, Mr Blytgen Petersen, Mr Anker Svart and Miss Kathleen Gibberd.

An appendix gives practical guidance upon municipal government, social legislation and other matters of interest to those whose duties may take them to Denmark during or after its liberation.

JOHN EPPSTEIN

*Editor*

*April 1945*

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

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**CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.** Denmark is a democratic monarchy. The constitution lays it down that legislative authority is vested jointly in the Crown and Parliament. Executive power rests with the Crown, while the administration of justice is exercised by the courts. The established Church is the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and to it the King must belong. Constitutionally, the King can do no wrong, and he exercises his authority through the Ministers appointed by himself to be responsible for the government of the country. The Ministers may be impeached by the King or the Lower House in matters relating to the discharge of their official duties, such cases being tried before the High Court of the Realm. Without Parliament's consent the King cannot declare war or conclude peace, enter into or denounce alliances or commercial treaties, cede any part of the country, or enter into any obligation which alters the constitutional status of the country.

The Danish Parliament (*Rigsdag*) consists of the *Folketing* (the Lower House) and the *Landsting* (Upper House), the former having 149 and the latter seventy-six members. There are four main political parties represented in Parliament, namely, the Conservative, the Social Democrats (the most powerful), the Liberal Lefts,<sup>1</sup> who in the main

<sup>1</sup> The 'Left' in Danish politics applies to Liberals. The Social Democrats are the Socialist Party.

represent the interests of the farmers, and the Radical Lefts, chiefly supporting the interests of the small farmers and smallholders. The Communist and Nazi Parties are both small in numbers. At the April 1939 elections the former received 40,893 and the latter 31,032 votes, each securing three seats in the Lower House.

All men and women of Danish nationality (women received the franchise in 1915) above the age of 25 possess voting rights (with certain exceptions in the case, for instance, of persons convicted of 'dishonourable offences', or undischarged bankrupts, etc.). *Folketing* members are elected for four-year periods. To vote in the *Landsting* elections men and women alike must have attained the age of 35 and must be permanent residents in the *Landsting* constituency concerned.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT.** Denmark consists of twenty-two *Amt* (counties), not including the Faeroe Islands. The chief state official of the *Amt* is the *Amtmand* (Prefect). The other important officials are the *Amtslæge* or *Kredslæge* (Medical Officer of Health) and the *Amtsvejinspektør* (County Surveyor of Roads).

There are eighty-eight towns, each constituting a municipality. The highest permanent official is the *Borgmester* or *Formand*. He is head of the municipal services. The permanent Secretary of the Council is called the *Raadmand*, who deals especially with financial matters. He will not be found in smaller towns.

The *Stadsingeniør* (Borough Engineer) is head of all technical services, and deals with matters

relating to water supply, sewage, fire service, construction and maintenance of roads and bridges, town planning, building regulations, etc. The *Kommunelaege* is the Medical Officer of Health. The *Arbejdsanvisningskontor* is the Labour Exchange, and this is headed by a local Manager.

*Socialinspektören* are the Poor Relief Officer and Public Assistance Officer, and the *Rationeringsudvalg* is the local Supply Committee. The *Priskontrollör* is the local Price Controller. The *Kaemner* is the Collector of Local Taxes and the Town Accountant.

In larger towns the same set-up will be found, but on a correspondingly larger scale. In Copenhagen, for instance, there is an *Overpraesident* (Chief State Official), one *Overborgmester* and five *Borgmestre*, and there are also five *Raadmaend*. The Chief of Police is the *Politidirektör*, while he is called the *Politimester* in the provinces.

There are 1292 rural districts. The Chairman of the Council is the *Sogneraadsformand*. The permanent Secretary of the Council is the *Sogneraadssekretaer*, whose duties correspond to those of the *Raadmand* in the towns. The *Sogneraadskasserer* is the Tax Collector and Accountant, corresponding to the *Kaemner* in the towns. The *Sognefoged* is the Parish Sheriff, who is concerned with various police and fire service duties.

Denmark is divided up into nine *Stifter* (dioceses), consisting of ninety-three *Provstier* (deaneries) and 1290 *Pastorater* (parishes).

Headmasters of schools are called *Skolebestyrer* or *Overlaerer*, except in Grammar Schools where

they are called *Rektors*. Schoolmasters generally are called *Laerer* and schoolmistresses *Laererinde*.

**CURRENCY, WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.** The currency is the Danish *Krone*, or Crown, which is divided into *Öre*, of which there are 100 to the *Krone*. The par value of the *Krone* was about 18.50 to the pound sterling.

The metric system of weights and measures applies in Denmark.

**SOCIAL INSURANCE.** Denmark's most important contribution to social legislation, which stands generally on a very high level, is to be found in the sphere of social insurance. 'Support for self-support' is the slogan under which this was evolved. In Denmark the state organizes and regulates insurance; sometimes it runs the insurance company itself. A far-reaching reform of the social insurance laws was passed through Parliament in 1933.

In Denmark everyone has to be insured, including washerwomen and cleaning women—no wage earner is excluded from this obligation; thus they are all eligible for benefit if they become unemployed. Under modern legislation, moreover, all unemployment societies are compelled to pay into continuation funds so that workers may continue to receive relief at the end of the period covered by their ordinary unemployment insurance.

While insurance against unemployment and accident are limited to workers, sickness and other kinds of social insurance are open to every citizen. Health insurance is by law compulsory for every-

one. On reaching the age of 21 every person must join a Sick Benefit Society or the State Sickness Insurance Association. To the sickness insurance is attached an invalidity insurance scheme, which is compulsory for all between the ages of 21 and 60 years. Under this scheme there are extra allowances for the disabled and the blind.

A system of old age pensions is also attached to the sickness insurance, but, although this is given the name 'insurance', it is actually public relief paid entirely by the State and municipality. This pension is available to people on reaching the age of 60, but it is increased if the pensioners wait one, two, or more years before claiming it.

The Danish people were well on their way towards establishing a State in which all who are in need receive care, but the unemployment problem has not yet been fully solved. In the years immediately preceding the war the Government forbade overtime work in industry and commerce, introduced holidays with pay (a fortnight in industry and commerce and a week in agriculture) and subsidized private building enterprises to relieve unemployment.

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International Frontier  
Railways

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Scales  
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100  
English Miles  
0 10 20 40 60 80 100  
Kilometres

NORTH SEA

SKAGERRAK

The Skaw  
Skagen

LESÖ

Lim Fjord

Hirshals

Aalborg

KATTEGAT

ANHOLT

Mariager

Viborg

JUTLAND

Silkeborg

Hummelb.

AARHUS

Halsingborg

Elsinore

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