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**The Silent War:
Soviet Active Measures Operations against Denmark
During the Cold War—
Prerequisites, Techniques and Results**

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Abstract:

THE SILENT WAR is the story of the active measures offensive (“aktivnyye meropriyatia”) waged by the East Bloc against Danish politicians, media and “public opinion” in general in the years before the Berlin Wall came down.

The goal of this well-planned offensive – known from i.a. defectors from the East and from the Communist Party - was to influence Danish public opinion and political planning in order to undermine Danish NATO membership and weaken the Danish armed forces (or the political will to use the same). The tools used were legal as well as illegal ones. Propaganda and open diplomatic efforts were used in combination with covert operations. Due to Denmark’s geographical position the country was in the very center of the offensive and the Warsaw Pact-planners gave high priority to the efforts to run the country down from “inside”.

The book takes its starting point in the internal security debacle that occurred in Denmark during the 1980s, in no small part due to the propaganda offensive, and describes the mental climate from which the offensive profited. This includes the attitudes and opinions of the “youth uproar,” of which substantial elements were gradually accepted as official policy.

The book also relates the East-Bloc’s offensive technique - including, for example, how the idealistic but naïve Danes were misused - as well as the recruiting and use of so-called propaganda agents. The book reveals how the apparatus established and used against the Danes was structured and functioned - in particular the East-Bloc intelligence services’ special departments for disinformation and propaganda. Also included are the communist front organizations’ activity and infiltration of Danish associations, groups and institutions. And there are specific examples of propaganda operations. The information given is intensively documented in the footnotes.

The book concludes by giving an account of what was done both officially and through private channels to counteract the pressure from the East. Still further, it discusses the long-term damage the propaganda offensive has inflicted upon the Danish political system.

In this Internet version only the foreword and the table of contents has been translated into English. The page numbers of the table of contents refer to the printed Danish version.

Table of Contents

<i>Foreword</i>		9
<i>Chapter 1. It was really about us...</i>		
1.1.	Sixty atom bombs—and then some	13
	Befehl anlanden!	13
	The veil falls	13
	The warnings	14
1.2.	And the Danes?	15
1.3.	The political parties	17
	The Social Democratic Party	17
	Capitulation’s henchmen	24
1.4.	Propaganda offensive against Denmark	25
	Why did it happen?	25
	The simple art of brushing it off	26
	The Danish love of comfort	27
	Aggressive totalitarianism	28
	“Active measures”	28
	Frontline witnesses	30
1.5.	This book	32
	Sources	33

Chapter 2. The Stage is set

2.1.	On the way home—and at home	36
2.2.	Human weaknesses	37
	The decline of civilization	38
	Irrational man	38
	Propaganda's possibilities	39
	The psychological defense	40
2.3.	The "68-ers"	40
	A profile	40
	"Youth uproar"	42
	Marxism	45
	Water bearers and fellow travelers	46
	The crime	46
2.4.	Restructuring brains	50
	The children	50
	School	55
	Institutes of higher learning	59
	Dissolution of standards	64
	"The free press"	68
	Denmark's Radio	73
2.5.	Conflict between ideologies	79
	Two models of society	79
	The difference is erased	81

Chapter 3. "Aktivnyye meropriyatia"

3.1.	Expansive Communism	86
3.1.1.	(Non)peaceful coexistence	86
	Lenin and peace	86
	The promised "peaceful coexistence"	87
	Continual warfare by every useful means	89
	The end justifies the means	91
3.1.2.	Ends and means	93
	The goal	93
	The organs	94
	Paths to assumption of power	96
	Reconstruction	98
	Active measures	100
	Focus: Propaganda operations	106
3.2.	The "strategic long-term plan"	107
	History of the plan	107
	Stages	108
	Infiltration of the social democracies	109
	Theater of operation Denmark	110
	History repeats itself	112
3.3.	Active measures	117
3.3.1.	The main characteristics	117
	Structure	117
	Disinformation	118
	Propaganda	120
	Extent of the operations	123

3.3.2.	The prerequisite: Drawing a map of the Danish apparatus	124
	The chart is drawn	124
	The sources	125
3.4.	The apparatus	127
3.4.1.	KGB	128
	Tasks	129
	Organization	130
	Co-workers	132
3.4.2.	STASI	134
3.4.3.	The Communist Parties' role	135
3.4.4.	Front Organizations	139
	The purpose	140
	Typology	142
	The Peace Movement	146
	Other useful organizations	151
3.4.5.	East-bloc personnel in the West	159
	Officers	160
	Diplomats, trade representatives, journalists, scientists, etc.	161
	Illegals	161
3.4.6.	Erring Danes	162
	Agents, confidential contacts and useful idiots	162
	Search field	174
	Recruiting and the path to use	179
3.4.7.	Financing	188
3.5.	Propaganda activities	190
3.5.1.	A composite profile	190
3.5.2.	Examples of propaganda operations	194
	“The war for peace”	194
	The charm campaign against the Radical Left	199
	Limited operations	202
3.5.3.	Propaganda techniques	203
	Point of departure: rejection of loyalty in communications	204
	Distortions and lies	204
	The hidden truths	208
	Stagecraft	212
	Hidden delivery	216

Chapter 4. The Result

4.1.	Evaluation	220
	A matter of opinion	220
	Arriving at an assessment	223
	Conclusion	224
4.2.	Passivity in the West	225
	Official Denmark	225
	Unofficial Denmark	228
	And the day of reckoning?	235
4.3.	Long-term damage?	237

<i>Bibliography</i>	244
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<i>Index</i>	253
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Foreword

This book was written in a state of amazement.

The author grew up in a milieu in which we were interested in what went on in the world around us and where the most important thing in this context was not to have the right opinions, but to find out what was right.

From the windows of the family home on the hill above Sletten Harbor north of Copenhagen, we could see the foreign ships of war on the Sound, which - it was rumored - gave the prime minister sleepless nights. The Russian defeat of the Hungarian uprising in 1956 confirmed that he had good reason for this. It was therefore that I enlisted in the National Guard (*Hjemmeværnet*) in 1963.

Here we got some glimpse of the tale that in a way left no doubt later of Denmark's exposed position. A visit to Berlin in the mid 1960s that included a trip through East Germany confirmed that we were neighbors of a political monster-system. Since we were all able to make these observations, it was pure and simply impossible to imagine that others could not come to the same sober conclusions.

In the course of the 1960s, however, that sort of person who is today known as the "elite" began to remodel and redefine the threat so as to make it disappear. I remember, for example, a lecture in the Students' Association by Helveg Peterson Sr. from the Radical Left party (a party in the political center), who had designated himself as a specialist in security policy. This led him to conclude that we could cut back on defense. In the same place I experienced the outstanding Social Democrat - later minister - Kjeld Olesen in the role of a sleek *elegantier* in a light gray suit, who also argued for a reality apart from that which could be seen outside in daylight.

Conditions continued to develop this way in an ever more uncomfortable direction. The Viet Nam War - which I became acquainted with and which departs somewhat from the pictures the "68-ers" have since presented as valid - was ballyhooed. Here we saw the brutality which the other side was determined to gain control of an innocent populace in an unfortunate land.

In 1968 - the year in which Russian tanks rolled into Prague and crushed the Czechoslovakian Spring - we elected a conservative administration under the radical Prime Minister Hilmar Baunsgaard. That confirmed a defense policy which cemented the distance between the "political" conception of what we were facing and the actual threat from the East. This tension between the political reality and the actual facts eventually became untenable. Add to this that the government clamped the lid on the ability of our two intelligence services to follow the enemy's activities here in Denmark. A mass of relevant information that had been laboriously collected quite literally ended up on a bonfire.

In a series of articles, I tried to call attention to the problems - a vain endeavor, since hardly anyone in political power took the time to read what some undistinguished young man, and one who was rowing against the tide, had penned.

The question was therefore: Was there any purpose or was it contrarily counterproductive to continue in the service? What was voluntarily given of a good heart on the one hand was merely tossed away by the other, by politicians perceived other interests to be gained. Could we even rely on politicians who could to this extent neglect the facts in favor of political accommodation? Might such politicians perhaps even handle the National Guard's records in such a manner that they risked ending up in the wrong hands?

The military threat against Denmark had at that time - despite the unending talk of peace of *détente* - grown to such an extent that a new occupation was a possibility to be reckoned with, one however that most likely would be preceded by a period of foreign policy adaptation which would eventually sacrifice us. In such a case, it would be necessary to have a platform for Danish resistance that would justify liberation by the Western powers. The result was that I left the Guard.

In the following years, Warsaw Pact activity expanded - and increasingly aimed now against Danish public opinion and key Danish politicians. A conscious - and one must say - well directed operation that largely utilized concealed means. Nonetheless, Anker Jørgensen (prime minister) found it appropriate to turn off the lights in the Labor Information Central that thus far, under the Danish Confederation of

Trade Unions's rule, had tried to keep track of the underhanded things that were going on beneath the surface.

Following the establishment of the conservative administration in 1982, which put the Social Democrats in the opposition, the propaganda offensive from the East had such smooth water for sailing that its success seemed already in view. By virtue of the party's abandonment of its traditional defense policies, Denmark was thrust into the very phase of accommodation that would be the first step to realigning our relationship with NATO and tearing us loose from the West's guaranties of security. The intent of the East Bloc offensive was, however, not acknowledged publicly, and our two intelligence services did nothing to warn of the situation (they were not allowed). I started writing about it, in order to get the relevant information out to a wider public. It wasn't however easy. I couldn't get any of the larger publishers to print my book, *The Public Opinion* which included a section on the East Bloc's propaganda operations. That wasn't considered to be "political correct".

The work was interrupted by the fall of the Berlin Wall, which should have been the death knell of the previous year's discouraging experiences. I don't, however, have any recollection of any closure - and certainly not the champagne-drunk sense of triumph that otherwise should have been obligatory on such an occasion. Quite the contrary, I remember the direction it took and I felt resignation born of experience that fellow-travelers - the sort of rabble we had been dealing with - have a formidable ability to regroup, to redefine their sins as good deeds, and to find new ways to serve their personal interests and ideas fixes with no consideration of the consequences for others.

Therefore, during the years that one has been able to follow the parody of getting even with these individuals - which has almost turned into getting even with those who endeavored to hold them by the ear (the Danish intelligence service - PET) - it has become unbearable just to sit and watch. It has been particularly intolerable to hear the same people who served dictatorship then, go about now, lecturing others on morality, reason, decency, democracy and human rights.

Invaluable material has turned up to show what these people did. But there has been no collected *overview* in Danish writings of the concealed aspect of the East Bloc offensive against Danish public opinion and none of that offensive's *techniques*. Therefore, the entire tale of the silent war against Denmark - that was interrupted by the fall of the Berlin Wall - must be fully told.

The author hopes that the book will contribute to the elucidation of a series of uncomfortable events which for better or worse constitute a part of European history, so that they will not be repeated. And if the book can also help to clear the air and establish a possibility for a fresh start in relation to the Eastern European nations- who were tyranny's first and greatest victims - then the author cannot hope for more.

My thanks to those who have helped - no one named, no one forgotten, and no one revealed.

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