

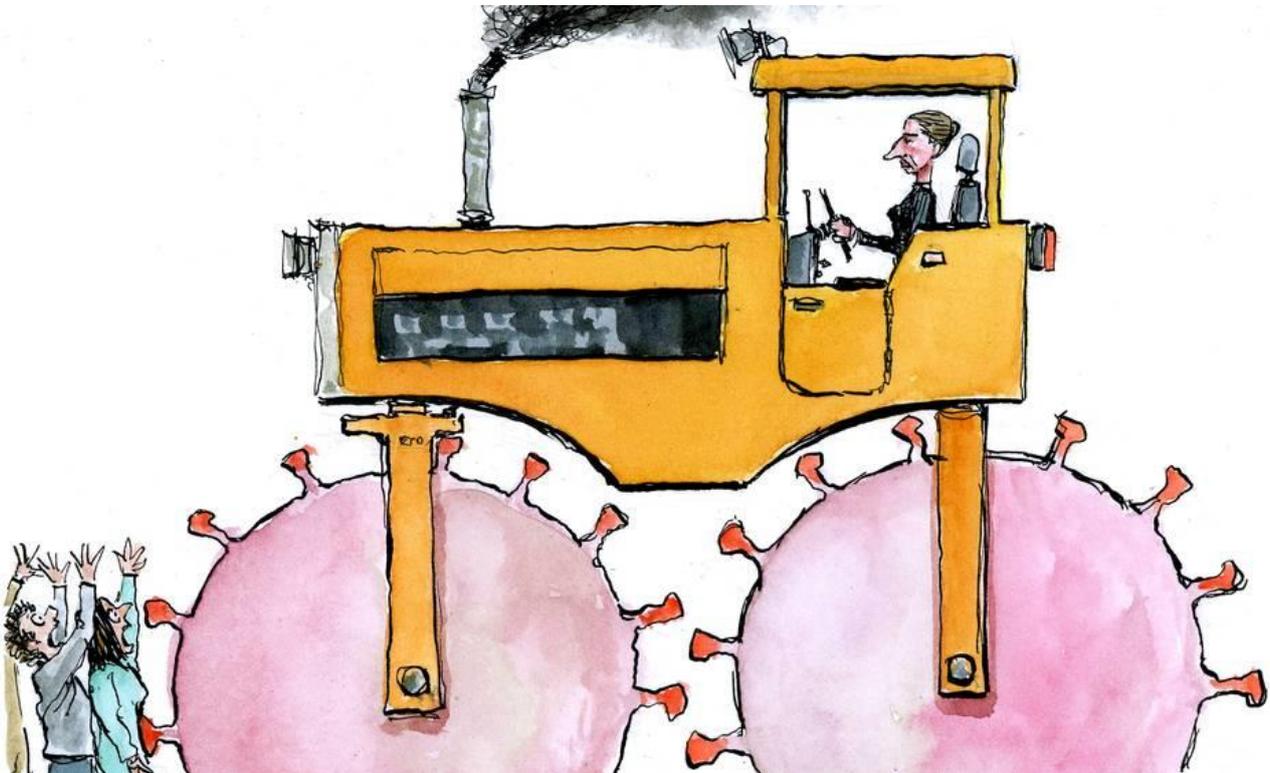
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### **The coronavirus has created a nanny state**

*When the state knows best and violates human rights, we are on a dangerous course*



The mink scandal is so big that it makes the Tamil refugee case look like a trifle. Prime Minister Poul Schlüter resigned back then, but current Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen is far too arrogant to do so. That would be the only right thing to do, and it would be a gain for Denmark and for democracy. Drawing: Rasmus Sand Høyer.

The pandemic has led to the violation of basic human rights and to the introduction of a nanny state that we have not seen before in Denmark. There has not been the slightest ethical analysis of whether this was justified.

It is not. The latest example was published in Jyllands-Posten 28 November. Elderly people living in their own home in a nursing home are forced to choose just one family member to visit them. It harms them, of course. Health Minister Magnus Heunicke says that one has to take extra good care of the residents because a third of all covid-19 deaths have been seen in nursing homes.

This unsolicited guardianship of persons who are legally competent and entitled to autonomy cannot be defended. In principle, paternalism is a good thing because it is about taking care of the interests of others in the best possible way, but there are three degrees of paternalism:

It is true paternalism when parents take care of their children or when a guardian looks after the interests of an incapacitated demented person.

It is solicited paternalism when a patient is faced with different choices and asks the doctor to make the decision.

It is unsolicited paternalism when a psychiatric patient has refused medication but is still forcibly medicated "for his own good." The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which Denmark has ratified, has urged all states to abolish this abuse.

Unsolicited paternalism is an abuse that should not occur. Heunicke justifies his abuse with something factual, but that does not hold. Then one could also ban all young men from driving because most deaths in the traffic happen among young men.

Many old people have very little time left to live, which they are well aware of, and they would rather run a slightly increased risk of becoming infected than not seeing and hugging their loved ones. Heunicke does not allow them to decide for themselves.

We have a government that violates our fundamental constitutional rights and also violates other laws.

This is dangerous for the democracy. History has shown that leaders who assure us that the situation is so serious that we must give up our freedom to gain security against an external or internal danger usually end up giving us neither freedom nor security but themselves the absolute power.

It even went so far that Head of Cabinet Per Okkels wrote to the Director of the National Board of Health Søren Brostrøm that he should abandon his professionalism for political reasons. This is also dangerous for our democracy. If the truth doesn't matter, and one can just lie as one pleases, which Donald Trump did all the time, thereby creating a false reality, then one paves the way for the introduction of a dictatorship. We have seen far too many of these in Europe in the last 100 years, just think of Russia, Belarus, Portugal, Spain, Germany, Italy, Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Greece, and the millions of murdered citizens and other unimaginable sufferings the dictatorships brought with them. And we even have them today, just outside the EU, and new ones are on their way inside the EU, in Poland and Hungary.

The government sent both police and military to North Jutland to scare the lives of the mink farmers, even though what it was doing was illegal. These are exactly the things we see when a country goes from being a democracy to becoming a dictatorship.

Mai Mercado (the Conservative Party) became very angry when she, as Minister of Social Affairs, learned that Britta Nielsen had stolen more than DKK 100 million, which should have been distributed to society's most vulnerable citizens. How did the Minister of Trade and Industry Simon Kollerup (the Social Democrats) react when he was told that Danske Bank had stolen very large sums, also from those who had the least money to make ends meet, by illegal debt recovery that had been going on for almost 30 years despite countless warnings from bank employees?

Kollerup did not get angry, but on the contrary called for us to jointly restore confidence in the bank. The interviewer asked how much it would take before he lost confidence in the state's bank, pointing to the three major scandals in a very short time:

Money laundering in Estonia, one of the biggest scandals in the whole world, where at least DKK 750 billion is believed to be money laundered gangster money; the Flexinvest case, which was reported to the police because the bank knew that its customers would lose money on the bank's counseling while it enriched itself; and now the debt recovery scandal, which is also about a very large amount of millions, where the top management lied in front of rolling cameras, and where even the chairman of the board Karsten Dybdahl tried to hide what had happened.

It is surreal that a minister talks about restoring confidence in a bunch of criminals. After all, that's not how we deal with crime that is not committed by people in suits. As Axel Strøbye says in the Olsen gang movie in the episode about the Bedford diamonds, the police take care of the petty criminals; the big ones get police escorts (and come to the queen's table).

What has happened to the Social Democrats, who in the old days did so much good for "the little man"? They sold Dong Energy to a criminal company, Goldman Sachs, which, along with similar companies, created the global financial crisis. Has Danske Bank, like the Americans who received financial support from Obama after their scams, become "too big to fail"? Do you not dare touch them because they are so large that it would be too much trouble for yourself to give them the fate they deserve? I think so. What else should the explanation be? Where did the decency and social responsibility towards the rest of society go?

Denmark does not look like itself these years. The mink scandal is so big that it makes the Tamil refugee case look like a trifle. Prime Minister Poul Schlüter resigned back then, but current Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen is far too arrogant to do so. That would be the only right thing to do, and it would be a gain for Denmark and for democracy.