

To Friends everywhere:

Greetings from the Danish Yearly Meeting

April 2<sup>nd</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup> 2016 about 15 Friends and friends of Friends met for Yearly Meeting in Copenhagen. Since our last yearly meeting, we have gained three new members, and one of our older members passed away. Again this year, it was necessary to keep the international guests to a minimum and therefore, we only had our two Nordic support Friends, Caroline and Vidar Salvigsen, and Norwegian Friend Ven Dag Hovda Sture (representing FWCC/EMES). We are grateful for the economic support we get from FWCC/EMES that makes it possible for us to have frequent visits from our Nordic support Friends.

Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> we met for a short silent worship, followed by an orientation in the official rules and regulations for refugees' and migrants' residency in Denmark. Roughly 17,000 refugees are expected to get a residency permit in Denmark in 2016. By listening to the stories of a Chechen woman, who has been living in Denmark for nearly 10 years with her two children, we were able to get an insightful impression of her situation in the wars in Chechnya, her husband's liquidation, and her flee to Denmark. She also provided a living description of the difficulties refugees face in terms of language barriers, and getting acquainted with the new societal rules. Today she is well integrated and almost finished with a medium-long education.

Later in the day, we examined the European refugee crisis from a Quaker perspective. We were reminded of the fifth Moses book chap. 24, v. 17: "You shall treat foreign and parentless justly ... remember that you too were once slaves in Egypt..." as well as number 22 in Advice and Queries: "Respect the wide diversity among us in our lives and relationships. Refrain from making prejudiced judgments about the life journeys of others...Remember that each one of us is unique, precious, a child of God." One can also find "spiritual refugees" that are searching for a spiritual home, and we think we have something to offer these people in our Quaker group. At the end of the day, after a short business meeting, Vidar Salvigsen and Dag Hovda Sture shared some experiences from the World Plenary meeting in Peru 2016.

The following day, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, we held our usual hour-long Sunday worship. The question "how do I use my inner light" sparked many thoughtful contributions during meeting for worship. After a short coffee break, we asked our guests and new members to come with input about the future of the Danish Yearly Meeting. We only have a few hands to take care of the administrative and practical things, but thoughtful suggestions of how to involve more people were presented. We ought to be hopeful when we experience small positive victories and do our best to support and rely on the energy of our new and younger members. After a vegetarian lunch, we rounded off with an informal conversation among Friends and friends of Friends. We believe that the Danish Yearly Meeting has a future.

På Årsmødets vegne

Mogens Clausen, sekretær