

This book is one in a series of 100 short volumes in Danish devoted to an overview and highlights of Danish history. Some of the volumes will also appear in English in a series entitled *The Focus on Danish History*.

The title of this particular volume centers around a constitutional amendment in 1953 when the colony of Greenland was supposedly made into a Danish province. With this constitutional change as a point of departure, the book examines governance practices and cultural developments in Greenland, and to some degree in Denmark, in the periods leading up to and following the so-called integration.

It is surprising how easily the author skips over or brushes away evident shortcomings in the integration process. These included: the lack of a constitutional mandate for the municipal body in Greenland that approved the integration after a very short debate; the non-representation of eastern and northwestern Greenland in that municipal body; the absence of a referendum in Greenland although one was held in Denmark; the lack of options like free association and independence that in addition to integration had been stipulated by the United Nations for the decolonization process; and the deliberate avoidance of UN oversight along with misleading information provided to the UN monitoring procedure.

The book thus falls largely into line with many historical accounts of the colonial era. One way of summarizing its contents could read as follows: The natives were happy; they were grateful to the good masters; the Danish administrators and merchants only had good intentions; they brought civilization to the locals; power and profits never constituted motives; the natives so appreciated the Danes that they wanted ever closer ties; and they really wanted to learn and speak the Danish language.

The book also underlines the Danish desire to close Greenland to foreign influences as a means of protecting the locals, while allowing and facilitating modernization and self-development. The consumer society introduced by American military presence during WWII is seen as a threat to the local culture. The author does not dwell on how Danish domination and windows open only to Denmark and closed to the rest of the world helped shape the Greenlanders' wishes, nor does he wonder why all these decades later, notwithstanding the noble intentions, progress has been slow and equal rights have not been achieved.

Other difficult questions have also by and large been avoided or barely mentioned in the book, such as; the removal of children from Inuit parents; racial discrimination in f.ex. salary differences between Danes and Greenlanders; the denial of minority rights to Greenlanders living in Denmark and thus the absence of mother language education; and the financial dependence caused by Danish subsidies without taking into account the economic and political benefits which come Denmark's way from this 'possession'. Towards the end the author, however, acknowledges that Danish governance has not been unproblematic and brings up the growing demand for independence.

Notwithstanding the shortcomings listed above, the book offers an easy and pleasant reading. Frequent references to Greenlandic literature and to statements by explorers and local politicians indicate thorough, if not very critical, research. The photographs are generally interesting, but maybe too many of them show royals and Danish politicians.

The book itself has no footnotes, but plenty of these are set forth on the book's website ("<https://unipress.dk/media/15736/noter-groenland.pdf>", visited on 9 March 2020). A bibliography on the book's last page lists only four items, but some materials are mentioned in the text and several additional sources are listed on the same website ("<https://unipress.dk/media/15735/litteratur-groenland.pdf>"). The website also presents summaries of some 10 reviews of the book ("<https://unipress.dk/udgivelser/g/grønlands-amt/>"), seemingly all Danish and all more positive than the present review.

As stated above, the book's publisher is Aarhus University Press. The book series has its own website ("[www.100danmarkshistorier.dk](http://www.100danmarkshistorier.dk)", which now automatically transfers to "<https://unipress.dk/bogserier/100-danmarkshistorier/>", visited on 9 March 2020), and the series also has a governing board composed of academics from leading universities and institutions in Denmark; however, the Universities of Greenland and of the Faroe Islands are missing – so much for integration. Still, the North-Atlantic colonies of Denmark get at least one book each.

In addition to this Greenland volume, forthcoming in 2020 is "Færøerne efter freden" (The Faroe Islands after the Peace) written by Hans Andrias Sølvará. The book on Iceland is entitled "Den islandske revolution 1809" (The Icelandic Revolution in 1809) by Søren Mentz,

published in 2018 (see “<https://unipress.dk/udgivelser/i/islandske-revolution,-den/>”).

While the book about Iceland covers much of her colonial history, the title is misleading because the events in 1809 do not qualify as an Icelandic revolution; it was a Danish merchant, Jørgen Jørgensen, or should we call him a pirate, who overthrew the Danish Governor and pretended to rule the country until he was arrested some weeks later. If anything, the locals were amused bystanders of this demonstration of the vulnerability of the colonial masters. After some prison time, Jørgensen later emerged as a prominent citizen in Tasmania.

The history book about Greenland does not acknowledge the often parallel step-by-step realization of the demands by freedom movements in the three colonies: from an all-powerful monarchy in Denmark and trade monopolies, to colonial assemblies with limited powers, to home rule, to expanded home rule or self-rule and sort of free association, to personal union and sovereignty, and finally to independence. Nor does the author give credit, like he should do, to a colonial power which eventually gives in to the demands for freedom following lengthy negotiations and without the colonies having to resort to violence.