

ELLEN WILHELMINE NIELSEN, née LUNDQUIST'S

HELP

IN

OCTOBER 1943

TO JEWISH REFUGEES FLEEING TO SWEDEN

via DRAGØR, DENMARK

Revised notes for Martin Gilbert
from a report submitted in 2003 to
Mordechai Paldiel, The Righteous Gentile Programme
Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum, Jerusalem

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Abbreviations

EWN: Ellen Wilhelmine Nielsen

DLA: Dragør Lokalarkiv (The Local Archives, Dragør)

FM: Museet for frihedskamp – The Danish Resistance Museum

RA: Rigsarkiv – The Danish National Archives

Resistance groups:

DFD De Frie Danske (The Free Danes)

DSFT Dansk Svensk Flygtningetjeneste (Danish-Swedish Refugee Service)

HD Holger Danske

SE Studenternes Efterretningstjeneste (The Students' Intelligence Service)

FOREWORD

This is an account of how an individual experienced the Second World War in a country under Nazi German occupation. Researched from a local history perspective, it encapsulates a moment when local history found itself at the intercession of world history.

Situated on the Sound, Dragør throughout its history has interacted with the world outside in various ways. Important to the Hanseatic herring trade in medieval times, later in the 1500's it was an area which came under the special jurisdiction of immigrants from Holland for several centuries. It was an area through which a Swedish king bent on war with Denmark brought his forces; and an area of peaceful Swedish migration over the centuries. In the Age of sail Dragør was for a time the largest provincial port in Denmark (outside Copenhagen) in terms of tonnage of sailing ships. During the Napoleonic wars, Dragør harbour was a home port to the flotilla of rowboats that, after the destruction of the Danish fleet and the bombardment of Copenhagen by the British navy, continued to harass enemy ships in the Sound. Some of Dragør's inhabitants, many of whom were sailors also played a role as privateers in capturing enemy merchant vessels under letters-of-marque. Dragør, whose harbour was not developed to keep abreast with the development of steamships, gradually dwindled into a small fishing village, although its male inhabitants continued to sail the seas on merchant vessels. And its position on the Sound had also made it one of the home bases of the piloting service. Dragør families also had members who emigrated to the Americas, north and south. However, like elsewhere in the world, the Second World War had a profound impact on the daily lives of Dragør's inhabitants bringing the consequences of decisions made by nations far away directly into people's homes.

The "five accursed years" as the Nazi German occupation of Denmark is referred to continue to be a traumatic experience in the nation's psyche, judging by the response to new academic publications or utterances by politicians. It is not within the purview of this paper or within the author's competence to discuss this topic. The rescue of most of its Jewish population has earned Denmark international accolade as an example of courage and hope for humanity in a time of darkness. It alleviates somewhat the soul searching over what may or may not have been done differently during, especially the early years of the Occupation. Thus history writing on the rescue of the Jews may emphasize different aspects when it is written from the perspective of humanity and world history or from that of Danish national history. My perspective is the former.

An original Danish version of this paper published in 2001 was revised after access to new archive material and rewritten in English as a report to Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem in 2003. The present paper has been slightly revised, and confidential information omitted as per archive regulations. No new research has been undertaken since I last researched this topic in the summer of 2003, with the exception of the inclusion of an oral history interview made by then Local archivist Lis Thavlov with Ingolf Haubirk on the 29th September 2003.

INTRODUCTION

Ellen Wilhelmine Nielsen (EWN)'s experiences in the Second World War fall into the following categories:

- She helped in the rescue of Danish Jews in October 1943
- She then worked for the Danish resistance until her arrest in July 1944
- She was taken prisoner by the Gestapo, interned in Denmark and later deported to a concentration camp in Nazi Germany
- She was an eye-witness to an extermination camp's inferno

It is the combination of the above which makes her history unique, if only from a local history perspective. She was only one among many in Dragør who helped Jews fleeing persecution during the brief hectic days of October 1943. There were also others from Dragør who worked thereafter for the Danish resistance. She was also one of eight from Dragør known to have been deported to concentration camps in Germany, and one of only four survivors to have returned. As far as is known, she was both the oldest of the deportees and the only woman from Dragør.

Her contribution to the rescue effort cannot thus be seen in isolation. Therefore a brief account of both the rescue effort in Dragør as a whole, and subsequent events in her life will be included in order to place her contribution in perspective.

1. EWN'S BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS¹

Date of birth: 15th October 1888 in Dragør. Eldest daughter and 3rd child of eight.

Parents: Bodolph Magnus Lundquist (1861-1938) village smith and son of a Swedish immigrant and Eline C. Nielsen, née Sørensen (1862-1939) housewife, previously laundress

Religion: Christian (Danish Lutheran)

Education: seven years at the village school in Dragør until approx. age 14

Married. 20th June 1908 to Christian Magnus Nielsen (1881-1941) factory worker, previously attached to the Lighthouse Services

Address: Rønne Allé 42, Dragør, Denmark

Widowed: 11th April 1941 (through illness)

Children Six.

Occupation: Helped in her father's smithy as a child; later cleaned and mended nets for local fishermen. After her marriage she worked as a fishmonger at the Copenhagen city market at *Gammel Strand*.

Financial Status: Earned a pittance for a long day's work at the outdoor market. Even while her husband was alive and working, they took in summer visitors to make ends meet. Her husband would collect coal from the railway line on his way home from the factory. They had enough for bare necessities, especially as EWN brought home fish for supper, but there was nothing leftover for luxuries. However by 1943 she seems to have owned her own home. (*C1)

Social Status: Her social status was sufficiently low that as far as may be ascertained no obituary marked her passing.

Political affiliations: none (*C2)

Date of Death: 26th November 1967

By October 1943 she was a widow and head of her household. This along with her job as a fishmonger in a Copenhagen marketplace and her connections to local fishermen and crews of the Drogden Lighthouse service boat and the piloting boat as well as resistance figures from Dragør were contributory factors in her help to Jews fleeing persecution and subsequent resistance activities.

¹ Family information is gleaned mainly from records at Dragør local archives, hereafter abbreviated to DLA. Apart from official records, these include: private family memoirs deposited by EWN's grandson Tom Nielsen who lived with her until approx. age 12; Oral history interview (1968) with EWN's sister Mary Sofie (Steffensen) Riber and EWN's son John Nielsen (Tom's father). Ulla Lundquist who researches the Lundquist family-tree has been consulted for dates.

2. Dragør under German Occupation

The Town

What today constitutes the community of Dragør were then 3 separate communities, with the fishing village of Dragør and the farming community of Store Magleby with its Dutch roots each having its separate municipal authority and the primarily summerhouse community in Søvang under the jurisdiction of Store Magleby. The population of Dragør was approx. 2100 (with summer lodgers increasing the number during the vacations) and Store Magleby 1250. The town of Dragør was 158 hectares in size with approx. 900 households. Thus it was a small community where everyone knew each other.²

Dragør's strategic location with its proximity to Copenhagen's Kastrup Airport, and its situation on the Sound – within a few hours' sailing distance to neutral, unoccupied Sweden made it a magnet for the German occupying forces, various Danish resistance groups, and the Jews fleeing Nazi persecution.

The German Presence

Dragør Fort and many large villas and farms in the Dragør and Store Magleby area were requisitioned for the billeting of German personnel. Hangars, airplane repair workshops, service buildings and barracks were built, some existing to this day. Traces of the long taxiing route for airplanes built through Store Magleby's fields too exist to this day. German minesweepers were sometimes stationed in Dragør harbour as British airplanes mined the Sound with magnetic mines, and German military personnel maintained a presence in Drogden Lighthouse on the Sound after 1943.

The relationship between the Occupiers and the population of Dragør could be said to reflect that between the general populace of Denmark and the Nazi occupiers as a whole. After the initial panic at the onset of the occupation, the town settled down, at least on the surface to some semblance of normality. Social activity among the townsfolk seemed to continue, albeit with the addition of blackouts, air-raid shelters, and a growing interest in community singing, the shooting clubs and First Aid courses. German military personnel soon became a common sight in the local street picture; they were to be seen in the hotels, shops and the beach. German soldiers on rest and recreation, as well as visiting Hitler Jugend groups used the resort facilities of Dragør.

In this initial period, the Occupying forces seemed to behave with propriety, for Denmark was considered a model Protectorate. The Danes for their part being rather cautious and pragmatic seemed to accept their political leaders' collaborationist policies. Only a few Danish soldiers with exceptional courage had opposed the Occupation in its early days, and Denmark had been spared the terrible bombing and bloody fighting which heralded Axis Occupation elsewhere by surrendering to and collaborating with Nazi Germany.

However, appearances as always are deceptive, and over the next five years, it would be proved that not all Danes wished to play the role assigned to them by Nazi ideology. In the case of the fishing village of Dragør, as in the rest of Denmark there were other factors at play.

² Dines Bogø and Lis Thavlov, *Dragør og St. Magleby besat og befriet* (1995), pp. 7 & 91. Unless otherwise indicated, the description of Dragør during the Second World War stems from this work, written by Lis Thavlov, then archivist at the DLA and local historian D. Bogø, hereafter referred to as B&T.

The Danish Merchant Navy

Denmark was traditionally a sea-faring nation and several families in Dragør had fathers, husbands and sons on merchant ships around the world. When news of Denmark's capitulation reached them, many crew members of Danish ships insisted on joining the Allies. One example is the crew of "Elenora Mærsk", (which included a number of Dragør men), who insisted on sailing from the Persian Gulf to the port of Colombo to register for service with the Allies. EWN too, had a cousin, Magnus Sophus Lundquist (1895-1946) who sailed for the Allies.³

Other Overseas Connections

Danes living abroad joined the Allies, and those with family in Allied countries were more open to the idea of resistance as the famous examples of Monica Wichfield and her daughter Varinka Muus indicate. EWN had a daughter, Lise Robbins (1914- 19??) living in England. The emotional impact on a newly widowed woman of having a daughter out of reach in London, a city under German bombardment can only be imagined. That her daughter had met and married a US Air Force officer stationed in England who happened to be of the Jewish faith may perhaps have a bearing on EWN's role in the events of October 1943⁴

The Swedish Connection

Another group were those Danes who were opposed to the Danish government's collaborationist line and resisted at home or fled to Allied countries, or to neutral Sweden to help the resistance movement. With time, more resistance figures were forced to flee to Sweden, several through the aid of Dragør inhabitants.

Three figures of importance to the present account are Max Weiss (1905-1968), Arne Sejr (1922-1998) and Leif Hendil (1898-1961), who were the Danish contacts in Sweden for those who worked through Dragør harbour. Although they worked for a common cause, and helped each other when necessary, there was deep rivalry among the three for the services of the few fishermen who dared sail for the resistance, and over the dwindling number of harbours open to them as the German arrests gathered in pace. A stiff note from one of Arne Sejr's assistants in Malmø to Hendil regarding Martin Steffensen (1915-1985), one of EWN's nephews illustrates this⁵.

³ Svend Jans, *Søfolk fra Dragør under 2. verdens krig* (1991) pp. 17-19, and 78; and personal communication from Ulla Lundquist.

⁴ In a written interview with John Nielsen by email, he confirmed that EWN received letters from his sister Lise in London during the war. See also a letter (FM archives NO. 12A-52) dated 15th June 1944 from "post-assistenten" (Jørgen Palm Petersen?) in Denmark to "S2" (Max Weiss) in Sweden: "There is a letter this time to England. It should be delivered to Steffensen at the Fishmonger's so it can be sent on. It is to his (female) cousin." Which of EWN's Steffensen nephews this was, Gerhardt or Martin Steffensen is not known. Hans Steffensen only fled to Sweden in August 1944. See below for more information on EWN's male relatives involved in the rescue and in resistance activity. All translations are the author's own.

⁵ Dated the 31st March 1945, it reads: "With ref. to your letter of the 30th, I hereby inform you that fisherman Martin Steffensen does not work for SE, but for "De frie Danske" with Police Superintendent Max Weiss. I therefore urge you to contact Weiss as we don't wish to mix ourselves in a matter of no concern to us. Yours, Hjalmar Ravnbo." DSFT archives, RA.

The Dragør fishermen EWN was in touch with worked for all three at various times, For the purposes of this account Max Weiss was the most frequently used contact, with Arne Sejr a second, and Hendil third, although in historical terms Leif Hendil is better known and had the widest range of contacts. What is of importance for the present account is that the three men saved copies of the extensive correspondence that went on between the Danish and Swedish ends of the resistance network.

Some of the Dragør fishermen, for instance EWN's family had Swedish relatives, but there is no evidence to indicate whether or not they received direct help from these relatives. However, this close cultural affinity may have facilitated the rescue effort in October 1943. Finally, the attitude of official Sweden, as well as private Swedish individuals in welcoming the Danish refugees, both Jew and gentile, must not be forgotten.

August 1943

The nature of the Occupation changed with time. As the fortunes of war began to favour the Allies, the attitude of many Danes towards the nascent Danish resistance movement changed. From being considered a dangerous nuisance which would bring down the wrath of the Nazi German occupiers, the populace in general gradually came to look with more favour on the movement. With British help and encouragement, the Danish resistance gradually increased their sabotage activities to such an extent that the Model Protectorate was no more. On the 29th August 1943, the Danish government was forced to acknowledge that its collaborationist policy was no longer acceptable to the general public.

The unforeseen consequence of the end of official collaborationist policy in August 1943 was that Danish Jews were now completely at the mercy of Nazi Germany. For as long as the Danish government had cooperated on other issues, the implementation of Nazi racial laws in Denmark was seen by the Nazi German administration in Denmark as unnecessary provocation to Danish public opinion. Difficult as it is to believe it in retrospect in today's media saturated world, the average Dane in the street then seems to have been unaware to Nazi racial policy. EWN, for instance, according to Harold Flender had been unaware of the Nazi persecution of Jews in Denmark until she was asked for help⁶.

⁶ Harold Flender, *The Rescue of the Danish Jews* (1963) pp. 139-140. This source is somewhat problematic as there is no way of ascertaining to what extent the dialogues in the individual accounts have been peppered with poetic license. He also incorrectly states for instance that EWN was arrested in December. In EWN's case what is of interest is not so much the details of his narrative, but how he came into contact with her in the first place, as it is possible that this could be through someone she had rescued in October 1943.

3. The Rescue effort in Dragør – October 1943

Despite its heavy German military presence, there were two reasons for Dragør being used for the rescue action. Dragør's situation on the Sound signified first of all that the harbour and its fishing fleet could be used in the rescue, and secondly its pre-war popularity as a summer resort for Copenhageners meant that some Jewish families already had contacts in Dragør.

Resistance groups involved in the rescue effort

In the early days of the rescue effort there were both unorganized transports through private initiative and transports organized by the resistance. However, it must be remembered that membership in the resistance groups was not hard and fast. Those who worked for one group during the rescue attempt may later have joined another, and be better known as having been members of the latter group. Certain resistance figures were members of several groups concurrently. During the hectic days of the rescue effort, it was more a question of using those one knew and trusted.⁷

The main groups that seem to have used Dragør harbour for the rescue effort were De Frie Danske (DFD), Holger Danske (HD), and Studenternes Efterretningstjeneste (SE). While one of the largest organizations which participated in the rescue effort in the Copenhagen area was the Dansk Svensk Flygtninge Tjeneste (DSFT), there is no evidence that they used Dragør harbour for this purpose, although they were to use Dragør fishermen later on for illegal transports to Sweden. Among the groups known to have used Dragør harbour for resistance activity after October 1943 were the Danish Communist Party's sabotage group BOPA; DFD; SE, DSFT; the saboteur group HD and the Danish Naval and Military intelligence.⁸

Contacts between the Resistance and Dragør fishermen

Approximately 14-15 fishing boats from Dragør are said to have been involved in the rescue action⁹. Dragør harbour was used by other visiting boats, including the *Christiane* from Bornholm and an unknown stone cutter which are known to have sailed refugees to Sweden. Dragør harbour was also home to various other working boats, including the stone cutter *Hebe*, and the large cutter or tender, the *Gerda III* which served Drogden Lighthouse in the Sound. Its crew members, Otto Andersen, Einar Tønnesen and one of EWN's nephews, Gerhard Steffensen (1911-1959), were all Dragør men.¹⁰

⁷ Confirmed by Ingolf Haubirk in a telephone interview with the author. See also P. Birkelund, *De Loyale Oprørere* (2000); J. Barfod, *Folkets oprør* (1990); H. Dethlefsen, *De illegale sverigesruter* (1993); R. Kreth and M. Morgensen, *Flugten til Sverige* (1995), and B&T, op. cit for more details. Sofie L. Bak makes a comprehensive survey of sources on the events of October 1943 in *Forfølgelsen af de danske jøder* (2001).

⁸ Towards the end of the war, many of the groups on Amager island, where Dragør is situated seem to have been referred to under the collective term AMPA or Amager partisans.

⁹ B&T op cit., p. 91.

¹⁰ Information from Lis Thavlov (DLA) and Ingolf Haubirk. See also Henny Sinding (Sandø)'s account in Jørgen Kieler *et al.*, *En modstandsgruppes historie* (1982), Vol. 1, p. 66. Today, Gerda III belongs to the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York and is berthed in Mystic Seaport in Connecticut, USA.

During the rescue effort, *Gerda III* sailed several hundred Jews from Christianshavn harbour in Copenhagen to Sweden, with the help of Henny Sinding, a member of HD and daughter of the Director of the Lighthouse and Buoy Services. In her account, Sinding asserts that the crew approached her with the idea of sailing Jewish refugees, although whether an individual crew member came up with the idea on his own, or whether they were asked by someone else in Dragør is not known (*C3). *Gerda III's* usual tasks were to sail the Lighthouse keeper and his staff of five from Dragør to Drogden Lighthouse and back, as well as to service the sea buoys in Drogden Channel.

According to Ingolf Haubirk, the lighthouse was visited by pilot boats not only from Dragør, but also from various parts of Denmark as well as from Sweden.¹¹ Thus, at least until the lighthouse was commandeered by Germans in 1943, (IH regrettably does not indicate if this occurred before or after October 1943) those who were underground and wished to escape to or via Sweden were sailed over to the lighthouse from mainland Denmark.

The Drogden Lighthouse keeper, Ejler Haubirk Snr. (1891- 19xx) lived in Dragør with his wife and children. They, especially the two sons, Ejler Haubirk jnr., (1920-1944), a renowned resistance figure, and Ingolf Haubirk (1923- 2007) were to play a role both in resistance activity and in the rescue effort. According to Ingolf Haubirk, his older brother was involved in resistance activity from the outset of the Occupation. Those who were brought to Dragør by the Haubirk sons would be housed by their parents and taken to the lighthouse by their father on *Gerda III*. Thus by the time of the rescue in October 1943, the crew of the latter were already used to resistance activity.

Through his work, the lighthouse keeper was to keep both fishermen and various resistance groups informed of German activity in the Sound¹². As a naval officer he had close contacts to the Danish military. According to Ingolf Haubirk his parents housed many refugees who were sailed from Dragør.

Another well-known resistance figure from Dragør who was heavily involved in the rescue effort was Jørgen Palm Petersen (1905-1945). His brother Knud Palm Petersen had sailed for the DFD since June 1943 and thus also sailed many Jews to Sweden from both Dragør and other harbours along the Sound. Jørgen Palm Petersen was also in contact with the skipper of Dragør harbour's piloting boat, Hans Steffensen, another of EWN's nephews. The special significance of the pilot boat was twofold: it was never checked coming in or out of the harbour by the Danish Coastal Police which had an office in Dragør, and it could also refuel at will at a time when fuel was otherwise strictly rationed. Up to thirteen refugees could be hidden in this boat at a time. A local shop keeper, Thyra Petersen recounts that she was telephoned by the Pilot's station when they were ready to take on board the refugees that she and her husband Cai Petersen had hidden in the shop's store room. That the refuelling pump was at the Petersen's grocery and ships provisioning shop made contact even easier.¹³

Resistance activist Kaj Holbech (1901-1944), a renowned Danish editor had a sister who lived next door to the Haubirk family on Drogdensvej in Dragør, and Ingolf Haubirk recalls that Holbech was one of their contacts who sent refugees to Dragør. Earlier, Holbech had himself taken great interest in Dragør's theatrical scene. Another enthusiastic member of amateur dramatics in Dragør was EWN's son John Nielsen (1916- 20xx), though it is not known if this contact was used when Holbech participated in the rescue attempt. Among Holbech's other contacts were school teacher Elise Schmidt Petersen (1905- 199x) who hid Jews in her home as a result of a telephone call from Holbech.

¹¹ DLA interview 29.09.2003 with Ingolf Haubirk op. cit

¹² Information from Ingolf Haubirk and Lis Thavlov. See also Ejler Haubirk Snr., *Drogden Fyr under besættelsen*, Fyrbladet Nr. 1. 1948.

¹³ Information from Lis Thavlov; B&T op cit., pp. 97-98; oral history interview with Knud Palm Petersen (DLA Nr. 67003) and unpublished written account by Thyra Petersen (DLA).

Dr. Poul Dich (1895- 1990), the town's doctor was one of the most active in the rescue effort¹⁴. The medical profession being one of the few with easy access to petrol, this indefatigable doctor not only hid Jewish refugees in his own home, but also drove around the farms in Dragør and Store Magleby to hide Jewish refugees. The medical profession played a crucial role in the rescue activity throughout Denmark. One of EWN's close contacts during the rescue effort and in the resistance activity afterwards was a doctor from Bornholm practising in Copenhagen at the time¹⁵.

Actress Gorma Haraldsted (1904-1999) too had contacts to Bispebjerg Hospital, and among others to professor Ole Chievits¹⁶. At the time of the rescue she worked as a secretary to the Director of the Steamship company, Danneborg. She used her contacts to the two Haubirk brothers, Ingolf and Ejler Jnr., to send Jewish refugees to Dragør, many of whom were known to her from the theatre and ballet school in Copenhagen. Another resistance contact of the Haubirk brothers', the leader of SE, Arne Sejrr mentions that one of his resistance colleagues, Erik Bunch Christensen (1918-1944) helped more than 60 Jews sail from Dragør. According to Ingolf Haubirk, they helped altogether approximately 200-300 Jews to Sweden through Dragør. In a telephone interview, he named EWN's brother Godtfred Lundquist (1885-1960) and his son Kaj Lundquist (1909-1981) as the two fishermen they primarily used. In his subsequent oral history interview he also names two other local fishermen Leth and Wærling as also having helped¹⁷.

Thus Dragør's fishermen came to play a significant role in rescue and resistance activities, especially during the period that Dragør harbour was used. In the small town that Dragør was then, a local woman like EWN counted a number of fishermen among family and neighbours. In her case her eldest brother Godtfred Lundquist and his sons Jan (1905-1983) and Kaj Lundquist; her younger sister Mary's 3 oldest sons Gerhard, Hans and Martin Steffensen; as well as her own sons Oluf Nieslen, John Nielsen and his wife Esther helped in the rescue effort and in resistance activity¹⁸. Three or four of her next door neighbours, including Karl (b.1925) and Jørgen (b.1926) Frisk too are known to have done so. (*C4). **It must be remembered that there were many others who sailed Jewish refugees from Dragør to Sweden, but in this account the focus is on those who were known to have connections to EWN.**

According to estimates by Lis Thavlov and Dines Bogø, approximately 600-700 Jews were helped through Dragør in the hectic days of early October. They also estimate that another 400-500 refugees may have come over before and after this period. How many of these were Jewish is not known.¹⁹

Payment to fishermen

¹⁴ See e.g. accounts of Fru Clara Melchior and Frøken Helga C. Melchior in B. Blüdnikow and K. Rothstein (eds.) *Dage I Oktober 43:vidnesbyrd*, 1993, pp. 181-189.

¹⁵ *Erstatningrådetsarkiv* (RA)

¹⁶ Ingolf Haubirk in his telephone interview mentioned that after he fled Dragør and went underground, he had lived in the house belonging to Klaus Chievitz, the son of Ole Chievitz. The contact to Chievitz had been facilitated by Gorma Haraldsted. See also the account of J.L. Cohen in Blüdnikow and Rothstein (eds.), op. cit., p. 36.

¹⁷ Information from Ingolf Haubirk; see also Arne Sejrr, *en kamp for frihed. S.E. 1940-1945* (1995); **DLA tape nr. L38... 29.9.2003.**

¹⁸ Oral history interviews with fishermen, DLA Tape no. 67008; J. Barfod op cit., information from historian Peter Birkelund, archivist Lis Thavlov, and EWN's son John Nielsen.

¹⁹ B&T, op. cit., p. 92.

Many families in Dragør town, in the outlying farms in Store Magleby and in Søvang opened their homes to the Jews fleeing Nazi persecution.²⁰ A comprehensive list of all those who helped in the area is however impossible to draw up, not least as Danes in general are modest to a fault. Besides, many who participated are no longer alive. Furthermore, the few instances of sheer greed where rescuers demanded and in some cases received exorbitant sums from the refugees have led to unpleasant rumours in the town to this day. The fact that the tale of the rescue effort in Dragør was thus tarnished consequently makes it a somewhat sensitive issue to delve into locally, and prevents more in depth investigation of those who genuinely helped.

The majority of the fishermen were very poor (*C5). So it is hardly surprising that during the rescue effort some sensed and seized the opportunity to earn an extra income. Sums of between 1500-3000 Danish kroner per refugee are mentioned in various accounts as being the average fee. A few demanded huge amounts. Yet, there are also others who were paid with a bottle of Snaps or a bicycle²¹. A letter dated the 27th October 1943 from Malmø to “Tom” or Robert Jensen (1900-1944), leader of the DSFT at the Copenhagen end relates the following:

“... I have been told that if one were to contact Lighthouse keeper Haubirk, Dragør, one would be able to deal with a nice Dragør fisherman Godtfred Lundquist, who at least earlier has sailed many for 100/- to 125/- kroner per person ...”

Given the date, there is a likelihood that the letter writer is referring to the sailing of Jewish refugees, although there is also the possibility that this refers to others that were sailed over to Sweden, such as downed allied pilots or parachutists, and others engaged in resistance activity²².

Ingolf Haubirk in his oral history interview 60 years later recalls that, 1500 kroner per person was the rate paid to Godtfred Lundquist. The wealthier of the refugees paid for those who could not afford the price. However he confirms that no one who could not afford the price was left behind.²³

As the rescue effort became more organized, the method and payment too came under the scrutiny of resistance figures, and it became impossible to charge exorbitant prices.

Whatever their motives, if the fishermen had not been prepared to risk their livelihoods and even their lives in the mine infested waters, the rescue effort would not have been as successful as it became. For it is only in retrospect that it was seen that there were no direct sanctions for the fishermen who sailed Jewish refugees, at least from the German side. In fact one of the main reasons for its success in Dragør was because the German personnel in the area turned a blind eye. It is rumoured that the Commander of Dragør Fort even watched the rescue in broad daylight. This same rumour has it that he was later transferred to the Eastern Front for his neglect of duty.

The local tax authorities however were not merciful according to rumour. Many local fishermen returning to Dragør after internment after the war were said to have been welcomed with an outstanding bill from the tax authorities²⁴. More seriously for the fishermen, according to some

²⁰ Accounts of both successful and failed attempts to sail to Sweden from Dragør are included in the rescue accounts collected by Ole Barfoed (IV T 48-RA). Some of them are also published in B. Bludnikow and K. Rothstein (eds.) *Dage I Oktober 43* (1993). See also an annotated oral account of Poul Brygger Olsen a rescuer from Dragør in L. Thavlov, *Et lille lys i mørket*. Nyt fra lokalhistorien - nyhedsblad for Dragør Lokalarliv, nr. 17, 2003.

²¹ B&T, op. cit., p.94.

²² DSFT archives (RA) pack 7:1. It is an unsigned carbon copy. The letter writer is most likely Leif Hendil.

²³ DLA Oral history interview with Ingolf Haubirk, 29.09.2003, op. cit.,

²⁴ B&T, op. cit., pp. 109-110.

accounts, the local Gestapo were thought to have recourse to these tax papers to make their arrests in the course of 1944.

Stormy weather and mines in the Sound too were dangers the fishermen and refugees faced. Accounts by both groups mention the terrible weather conditions around the 3rd-4th October at the height of the rescue effort²⁵.

That many local families, despite war shortages were generously willing to open their homes to strangers in need should not be forgotten. As in the case of the fishermen, they could not know at the time whether or not there would be German sanctions. That the rescuers were nervous both of the Germans and of informers is mentioned in several accounts²⁶.

The seeming inaction on the German part was to lull those who participated in the rescue effort into a false sense of security. Over the coming months people came to feel that it had not been a dangerous act, and to this day, this seems the prevalent belief among historians writing on this issue. Yet, it was to have tragic consequences as will be seen later.

The German Raid

On Monday, the 4th October, at around 8 pm, a detachment of Wehrmacht troops and Gestapo drove into the Dragør harbour area. Jewish refugees disembarking from three taxis were arrested. This was at the height of the rescue effort and many refugees and fishermen were at the harbour. Shots were fired and in the panic most refugees and fishermen managed to hide in various houses in the town. Boatloads of refugees too managed to sail away.²⁷ Ingolf Haubirk, who was on the way with refugees to Kaj Lundquist hurried back to his parents' house in Drogdensvej where the refugees were hidden until the following day when they managed to sail to Sweden.²⁸

Apart from those arrested, the main casualty of the raid seems to have been an elderly fisherman whose son was out sailing Jewish refugees to Sweden at the time. In panic he hid in a small shack in the harbour area and was found dead of a heart attack. Dr. Dich attended to him in the midst of a busy night driving around Dragør hiding refugees. Very early the following morning, a German ship was blown up by a mine near Dragør. The many ambulances that were called in from Copenhagen on this pretext drove a number of Jewish refugees who had been hiding in Dragør back to the city.²⁹

The ship *Christiane* hired to sail refugees from Dragør to Sweden was not seen in the harbour after this raid, despite having only used a few days of the two weeks mooring fees paid to the harbour. It is said to have sailed 70 refugees at a time. According to Bogø and Thavlov, it is highly likely that many of the

²⁵ Ibid.; DLA tape no. 67008; Ole Barfoeds papers (RA) op. cit.

²⁶ In Ole Barfoed's papers mention is made of a woman from Dragør who brought back a Danish Jew home with her from Copenhagen. The woman's husband was too frightened to house him. He let him stay the night in his house, but early the next day, he went down to the station, and seeing that all was clear, brought back the refugee to the station. The latter fled to Sweden subsequently through another route.

²⁷ The approx. 14 Jewish refugees who were arrested were taken to the nearby Dragør Fort, and later to Vestre prison in Copenhagen, Horserød internment camp and onto Theresianstadt. Except for one: the octogenarian Hannah Adler, a well known Danish educator, the maternal aunt of Niels Bohr. According to the entry in the Danish Biographical Lexicon, Miss Adler's arrest and internment led to an enormous outcry among her old students who wrote hundreds of letters in protest, leading to the German administration freeing her from Horserød internment camp. If this story is accurate, it must be unique among the horrors of the Holocaust.

²⁸ Oral interview with Ingolf Haubirk (DLA), op. cit.

²⁹ Jørgen Barfod, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

refugees who were taken care of by Dr. Dich had been sent to Sweden on the *Christiane*³⁰. As DFD members like Jørgen Palm Petersen and Kaj Holbech are known to have been at Dr. Dich's home on the night of the raid, it is assumed that the *Christiane* had been organized by the DFD.

As the home port of *Christiane* at the time, Bornholm, was also the town of origin of the doctor from the DFD who worked closely with EWN in the rescue effort, it is possible that he may have had a hand in organizing the ship, although no evidence has been found to confirm this supposition. It is also quite likely that the occasion mentioned by Flender, where 30 Jewish refugees were hidden in EWN's house was the night of the raid, although once again it is not possible to confirm this³¹.

While in the very early days of the rescue effort, most fishermen had sailed only at night, gradually some had become emboldened to sail by day. However, the raid made the fishermen cautious once again. The large-scale sailing of Jewish refugees via Dragør ended with the raid, although sailing continued on a smaller scale.

³⁰ B&T, op. cit., pp. 101-102.

³¹ Flender, op. cit., p. 140.

4. EWN's Role in the rescue effort

How did EWN first get involved in the rescue effort?

In October 1943, EWN worked as a fishmonger at the market on Gammel Strand in Copenhagen, along with a group of other female relatives from Dragør, among them her sister Mary Riber, mother to the three Steffensen brothers. According to Flender's account, it was two of EWN's acquaintances, at the marketplace, two brothers who sold flowers there, who first approached her. They were willing to pay 2000 Danish kroner each if EWN could find a fisherman to sail them to Sweden. On being informed that as Jews, their lives were in danger, she took them home to Dragør that very day³².

As no names or dates are recorded for this incident, attempting to verify this in archive material of the Swedish police would be highly time-consuming. Especially, as the thousands of refugees arriving in Sweden had been told to give false information, e.g. of the harbour they left from in order to protect rescuers in Denmark. Another remotely possible avenue of research is if the Copenhagen authorities of the time issued licences to work in the marketplace.

However, it is possible to narrow the search a little, as in the very early days of the rescue, fishermen like EWN's brother Godtfred Lundquist sailed to Klagshamn and not to Limhamn as they did later. Lis Thavlov believes that as they were the first of many refugees EWN took care of, it must have been before the German raid in Dragør on the 4th October. This raid took place on a Monday, indicating that EWN must have brought the two brothers home by Friday, the 1st at the latest, if not before. As Rabbi Marcus Melchior had informed his congregation of the pending raid on the morning of Wednesday the 29th September, it is possible that the brothers contacted EWN already that day³³.

How did the Danish resistance get in touch with EWN?

According to Flender's account, she spoke to several fishermen she knew. The fisherman who sailed the two brothers is then said to have put her in touch with a resistance group that was using Dragør harbour to sail refugees over³⁴. As mentioned earlier, there were several resistance groups, e.g. DFD, HD and SE whose members were busy helping Jewish refugees through Dragør.

Although his name is not mentioned in Flender's account, there is no shortage of candidates. It is highly likely that it was one of the following family members or close neighbours known to have sailed refugees and was in touch with the Danish underground.

Her eldest brother Godtfred Lundquist first springs to mind. As mentioned earlier, along with his son Kaj Lundquist, he had already been sailing among others, Danish naval personnel, allied airmen and a parachutist to Sweden, work organized by the Haubirk brothers. That Godtfred Lundquist was an indefatigable helper in the rescue effort was common knowledge in Dragør³⁵. It is thus quite likely that he may have been the first that EWN turned to for help.

³² Flender, op. cit., pp. 139-140.

³³ See P. Borchsenius, *Historien om de danske jøder* (1968), p. 287. Pastor Borchsenius himself was hidden by Elise Schmidt Petersen in Dragør on his way to Sweden.

³⁴ Flender, op. cit., p.140

³⁵ Jørgen Barfod, op. cit., pp. 47-49.

If he had his hands full already, it is more likely that his son Jan Lundquist sailed these refugees. Ingolf Haubirk confirmed that as far as he knew EWN did not take care of any of the refugees they (the Haubirks, Godtfred and Kaj Lundquist) helped³⁶. John Nielsen recalled that it was his cousin Jan Lundquist who sailed the refugees who found shelter in EWN's home. Furthermore, an oral history interview with Dragør fishermen mentions that Jan Lundquist sailed with refugees³⁷ (*C5). However, it has not been possible to identify the resistance group for which Jan Lundquist sailed.

The few who have mentioned her in secondary literature, within the context of local history by Svend Jans and Bogø & Thavlov, as well as in a broader Danish historical perspective by Jørgen Barfod had recourse to interviews with local helpers, including fishermen, some of whom were later arrested along with EWN³⁸. As they assert that she later worked for the sabotage group HD as a courier, it has always been assumed that the refugees too were sent by this group. John Nielsen, EWN's son concurred with this many decades after the events.

Interestingly enough, as mentioned earlier, EWN's nephew Gerhard Steffensen sailed hundreds of Jewish refugees on *Gerda III* from Copenhagen with the help of a member of HD, Henny Sinding. While this may have been EWN's contact to HD, no evidence has been found to support this surmise.

Another possible contact to HD may have been the ship owner Arne Nielsen (no relative), who lived on the same road as EWN. He, along with the entire crew of the stone cutter *Hebe* that he owned, were arrested by the Gestapo around the same time as EWN. Arne Nielsen (b. 1905) had close contact to a HD leader "Bergstrøm" alias Knud Larsen, for whom he acquired dynamite³⁹. Johan Hansen (1911-1945) who may have been a crew member of the *Hebe*, but who also owned a slavage boat too is said to have been connected to Holger Danske among others⁴⁰.

Archive research however points to another group *De Frie Danske*. Two men who worked closely with EWN in the rescue effort, the doctor from Bornholm and Jørgen Palm Petersen were members of the DFD (*6). Gerhard and Martin Steffensen too are known to have worked with DFD, as well as SE after the rescue effort⁴¹. Their brother Hans Steffensen could also have been a contact between EWN and Jørgen Palm Petersen. As mentioned earlier, he was the skipper of the harbour's pilot boat and sailed many refugees for JPP.

Of the resistance groups mentioned, no written archive information has been found that directly links EWN to Holger Danske during the rescue effort. The group's involvement with EWN seems to be based on oral history interviews at Dragør Local Archives. Dr. Jørgen Kieler, an expert on the HD

³⁶ Telephone interview with Ingolf Haubirk

³⁷ DLA Tape no. 67008.

³⁸ Ibid; S. Jans, *Besættelse-befrielse omkring Dragør 1940-1945* (1985); Barfod (1990) *op. cit.*, pp. 43-55. B&T seem to have based their account on these 3 sources. Since the early taped interviews were made by then archivist Svend Jans, further interviews have been undertaken by Lis Thavlov during her period as archivist at the DLA. These comprise accounts by fishermen, other helpers as well as several Jewish refugees who were sailed to Sweden from Dragør. See Sources page for a list of oral history interviews now available.

³⁹ Optagelsesbegæring (FM). Information provided by Arne Nielsen in a questionnaire for post-war membership of a club for ex-resistance members.

⁴⁰ I. Damgaard-Petersen (ed.), *Faldne i Danmarks modstandskamp* (1970).

⁴¹ Birkelund, *op. cit.*, pp. 324 and 330, as well as personal information from historian Peter Birkelund of the Rigsarkiv (Danish National Archives). A letter dated 10th August 1944 (after the recent arrests of EWN and others from Dragør) from "postassistenten" Jørgen Palm Petersen to Max Weiss in Sweden reads: "...Greet Steff from me, he is an old friend. I will be sending him an account of conditions in Dragør..." FM 12A-52. Several other letters in this archive refer to "Steff", e.g. 26th and 31st August, 24th September, 30th October 1944, and 6th and 15th February 1945. As all three of EWN's Steffensen nephews were in Sweden by this time, it is unclear to which of them Palm Petersen refers.

group too searched for, but found no written archive material in this context. On the other hand, the involvement of members of De Frie Danske under the leadership of Director Niels Mikkelsen, with Jørgen Palm Petersen and Kaj Holbech in the rescue effort from Dragør is well documented.

However, it is not completely implausible that EWN and Jan Lundquist worked for both groups at the time. What is of importance is that EWN and her family helped save the lives of many people, who for the most part were total strangers.

Details of EWN's help

First of all, she used her work at the marketplace as a cover for her activities as a courier. She passed on information between the resistance and fishermen who were sailing the refugees.

Secondly, she hid Jewish refugees at her home in Rønne Allé 42 in Dragør until it was time for them to sail. EWN was helped by her son John Nielsen and his wife Esther who lived with EWN with their young children. The two women fed and took care of the refugees. Who shouldered the financial burden is not known, although it is reasonable to assume that the resistance group involved helped with the financial costs.

The refugees were taken along the short distance to the harbour on foot. John Nielsen recollects going on ahead of the refugees to check that there were no German soldiers or informers in the vicinity. In Flender's account EWN's two oldest sons helped with this task. John Nielsen's older brother Oluf (b. 1910-xxxx) too lived in Dragør at the time, and was employed as a watchman in Amalienborg Palace⁴².

Flender in his account also contends that EWN worked closely with Elise Schmidt Petersen who hid Jews at the request of Kaj Holbech. In an oral history interview on her life and times many decades after the events, ESP also describes how she hid Jews in her home, and how she had to go underground in August as a result of the arrests in the town⁴³. However, she does not name EWN in her account.

EWN's next door neighbours at No. 40, the young Frisk brothers mentioned earlier and an older man Louis sailed refugees to Sweden⁴⁴. Whether they hid refugees themselves, or whether they were closely involved with EWN during the rescue effort is not known.

How many were helped?

The exact number of those refugees helped by EWN is difficult to ascertain. John Nielsen estimated that the figure must have been around 50-75. Flender mentions a larger figure of "over a hundred"⁴⁵.

The historian, Peter Birkelund asserts that there is too little archive material to determine details of the DFD's help in sailing Jewish refugees through Dragør, whereas there are figures for other groups⁴⁶. If Bogø and Thavlov's estimated figures that approx. 600-700 were rescued through Dragør in the hectic period in early October, and a further few hundreds before and after this period hold true, John

⁴² Flender, op. cit., p. 140; email interview with John Nielsen; information from the 1940 census (RA).

⁴³ Oral history interview with Elise Schmidt Petersen, DLA.

⁴⁴ DLA tape no. 67008, *C2 and *C5

⁴⁵ Interview with John Nielsen; Flender op. cit., p.140.

⁴⁶ P. Birkelund, *De Loyale Oprøre* (2000), p. 222; Dethlefsen, *De Illegale Sverigesruter 1943-1945* (1993), pp.146-150.

Nielsen's figures of 50-75 seem reasonable. Especially given the fact that he actually lived at home and was a participant in the rescue effort with his mother.

EWN's motivation for help

Here we are in the realm of supposition, as no one who interviewed her ever thought to question her on the subject⁴⁷. However, it is possible to speculate over her motives.

It was most likely not from any political motive as she is not known to have had any political affiliations. John Nielsen also maintained that his mother was not especially religious. Yet, her strong spirit cannot be denied. It was only in her very last day in the Jugendlager Ückermark that she admits to losing hope. Until then, through the long months of hell she had not given up hope of rescue. There are references to God in several of her letters from prison in Denmark, but they may also be construed merely as the linguistic conventions of the times⁴⁸.

That she was made of stern stuff is also attested to by Knud Palm Petersen. In an oral history interview where he discusses his imprisonment and interrogation by the Gestapo, he mentions a glimpse of EWN in Vestre prison and refers to "tough old ladies" who were heavily involved in resistance activity and who knew how to keep their mouths shut⁴⁹.

There is no evidence to indicate that her motives were pecuniary, although it is likely that the resistance groups who used her during the rescue effort or the refugees themselves may have had to help with ration coupons for food was not easy to come by for townspeople, even in a relatively peaceful occupation period. And among the refugees, the younger children would have needed feeding, although how much food the fleeing adults felt like consuming may have been another matter⁵⁰. Another indication that a disproportionate amount of money did not change hands is the fact that before, during and after the war she seems to have been rather poor *C9.

As EWN seems to have been a pragmatic, down to earth woman with a strong sense of right and wrong, it is quite likely that it was the humanitarian aspect that motivated her⁵¹. It is impossible to ascertain what role the acquisition of a Jewish-American son-in-law played in her decision making. It was for instance not an aspect mentioned in the Flender interview.

⁴⁷ There is a remote possibility that this may have been addressed in an interview she gave the British War Crimes Investigation Unit as a potential witness for the prosecution for the trial of Ravensbrück camp personnel. The papers of the WCIU are to be found among the 100 or so files dealing with Ravensbrück in the Public Records Office in London. It was regrettably not within the present author's means to search these archives.

⁴⁸ EWN's letters from Vestre prison and Frøslev internment camp are among her papers in Dragør Lokalkiv.

⁴⁹ DLA tape no. 67003. However the date he recalls seeing her, Christmas, was incorrect, as by then, she was already in Ravensbrück. It would have been a few weeks earlier, when she was back in Vestre prison briefly before being deported. He also mentions how he was confronted with fellow DFD members during interrogations, e.g. his leader Niels Mikkelsen whom EWN too worked for. He describes how those who knew a great deal protected the "smaller" figures. After a particularly brutal interrogation, Mikkelsen attempted suicide but survived (E. Foss, *Fra passiv til aktiv modstand* (1946), pp. 278-279. Both Knud Palm Petersen and Mikkelsen remained in captivity in Vestre jail until the end of the war, while Knud's brother Jørgen Palm Petersen died in the British bombing of the Gestapo HQ, Shellhuset in March 1945.

⁵⁰ See e.g. Helga C. Melchior's account in Blüdnikow and Rothstein (eds.) op. cit., p. 184.

⁵¹ Here it must be remembered that a very small percentage of the population were actively involved in the Danish resistance in 1943.

Thus, in the long run common decency may have been a likely motivating factor. Her letters from prison and the accounts of her concentration camp experiences attest to her decent nature⁵².

What were the consequences of the rescue effort for EWN?

The main consequence was that she became deeply involved in resistance activity. The rescue effort may have opened her eyes to the reality of Nazi evil. Although as mentioned earlier, the fact that her daughter was living in London and her cousin was sailing for the Allies under life threatening circumstances would hardly have made her well disposed towards the Nazi German occupation.

It also put her in contact with a number of highly active resistance figures who for their part saw the advantages of an innocuous elderly woman commuting daily between her workplace in a busy market in the centre of Copenhagen and her home in Dragør where a great many family, neighbours and acquaintances were fishermen.

The seeming lack of interest by the Occupation authorities in punishing those who participated in the rescue effort may have emboldened EWN to work for the resistance. Later however, this very factor facilitated the Gestapo in Dragør's investigative work on resistance activity, leading to a great many arrests in Dragør, including that of EWN nine months later⁵³.

⁵² EWN papers DLA; FM questionnaire op. cit., and her interview in K. Fleron, *Kvinder i modstandskampen* (1945)

⁵³ An entry in the illegal resistance newspaper *Frit Danmark* for the 2nd August 1944 (DL) is of particular interest. After announcing the list of those arrested in Dragør, including EWN, it goes on to assert: "...as far as it has been possible to find out, the arrested were charged with having helped Jews over – an old story. The reason that this has now been resurrected is said to be because the Germans believe, that through this they can find out the illegal sailing routes to Sweden." (The author's translation).

5. EWN's Resistance Activity

When asked about her resistance activity, EWN was always discreet and never provided any specific details or names of those she worked for, apart from admitting her participation in “illegal transports” and the distribution of resistance newspapers.⁵⁴ (*C8)

John Nielsen confirmed that she distributed illegal newspapers. The DFD published an underground newspaper and also used Dragør harbour and fishermen for its underground post and transport service, and confidential archive material confirms her involvement with this group.

She was condemned to be shot to death for sabotage and the smuggling of weapons. John Nielsen also confirmed that she transported weapons. However he always maintained that she worked for the sabotage organization Holger Danske, thus it is possible that the weapons in question were intended for this group. Where they originated from and who the recipients were, is a mystery. As mentioned earlier, no written evidence was found supporting her involvement with HD, although an oral history interview with some Dragør fishermen being the only other evidence for her involvement with this group.

A third group who were involved with sabotage activity, and who in the summer of 1944 organized the import of weaponry from American sources through Sweden was the SE with the Haubirk brothers at the Danish end and Arne Sejr at the Swedish end. Code named Twinkle, the large-scale import of these weapons only occurred after EWN's arrest. Interestingly, Gerhardt and Martin Steffensen, who by then had escaped to Sweden were to participate in this endeavour by sailing their boat the *Nilfiske* from the Swedish port of Limhamn to a midway point on the Sound⁵⁵. While it could be speculated whether or not a few examples of these weapons may have been sent on earlier, Ingolf Haubirk had no knowledge of any resistance activity on the part of EWN.⁵⁶

As it has not been possible to locate any details of EWN's American son-in-law, the late Lieutenant-General Leo Robbins' military activities during the Second World War, it is not possible to ascertain whether or not his existence played a role in EWN's resistance activity. That EWN communicated with her daughter during this period was confirmed by John Nielsen. The letter to England referred to previously in the FM's archives sent to “Steff” for forwarding to his cousin in England could, in the absence of any other evidence, be a personal letter from EWN to her daughter Lise Robbins⁵⁷.

Whether EWN was compelled to reveal the nature of her resistance activity under Gestapo interrogation, or she was found with weapons or other incriminating material in her possession at the time of her arrest will never be known. Unlike in other countries under Nazi occupation, it is my unsubstantiated hypothesis that the nature of the occupation in Denmark was such that a death sentence in the Danish context would have required some concrete evidence of the crime. Among those arrested with her from Dragør many were merely interned in Denmark for the duration of the

⁵⁴ FM questionnaire, op. cit

⁵⁵ P. Birkelund, op. cit., p. 324

⁵⁶ Dethlefsen, op. cit., p. 156; DLA tape nr. Ingolf Haubirk 2003 op. cit.

⁵⁷ See footnote 4.

war, that she was deported to Germany is another indication of the seriousness of her activity in German eyes.

As she was a courier, among others for Niels Mikkelsen and Jørgen Palm Petersen of the DFD I digress briefly to look at the activities of this resistance group to obtain a clearer picture of her connections.

Restaurant Director Niels Mikkelsen first financed and later also co-published the underground newspaper *De Frie Danske*. He is considered the “real” chief of DFD from Spring 1943 to his arrest in October 1944, according to historian Peter Birkelund, the recognized authority on the DFD. Mikkelsen was also the leader of DFD’s illegal transport of post and resistance figures to and from Sweden. He is further known to have helped the Danish military intelligence service with an illegal post and transport route⁵⁸. He also sent reports to Sweden on German activity in the Copenhagen and Dragør areas.

Jørgen Palm Petersen was Mikkelsen’s right-hand man, especially during the DFD’s rescue effort through Dragør. He was the postmaster of DFD’s illegal route to Sweden. Moreover, he was the postmaster of another resistance group’s underground route to Sweden and was variously named “*post assistant*” and “*speditoren*” in this connection.

As the DFD’s transport route was a very small-scale one, involving only a few people and 2-3 boats, and many of its important figures were already “underground”, EWN with her freedom of movement played a crucial role as a courier for this group. Jørgen Palm Petersen’s brother Knud Palm Petersen is known to have sailed twice weekly, on a Tuesday and Friday for the DFD. This is most likely one of the routes for which EWN was a courier. In his own oral history interview, he does not divulge any information on his routes, but refers by name to EWN several times⁵⁹.

(First mate Ejler Haubirk Jnr., was an active member of the resistance from the beginning of the Occupation, according to Ingolf Haubirk working for various groups. With the help of his family in Dragør among others, he helped several military personnel, a parachutist, as well as downed allied crewmen escape to Sweden. Among the groups he is associated with are the sabotage group BOPA, DFD and SE. After October 1943, he worked for the DSFT briefly, as well as running his own route with the help of Ingolf Haubirk and Gorma Haraldsted to help stranded allied airmen to Sweden. In the summer of 1944, he joined Arne Sejr’s SE to help organize weapons supplies from Sweden. He was also associated with another underground group, meeting at a shop called “Farmands Barnevogne”. This group was infiltrated by an informer which led to EH being shot dead on the 20th October 1944.)

Another method of obtaining information on EWN’s activities is to consider the other seven men from Dragør who were deported to Nazi German concentrations camps. The three local policemen who were arrested in the general round up of Danish policemen in September 1944 do not seem to be relevant to EWN, whereas the other four may do.

Christian Jensen (1917-1945) was arrested on the 2nd July in a group of people in Dragør caught reading underground newspapers. He was released, but rearrested the following day. John Nielsen confirmed that his mother EWN knew him. Jensen was transferred to Frøslev internment camp from Vestre prison in the same group of prisoners as Jan and Godtfred Lundquist. His obituary merely mentions that he was a member of AMPA, the Amager Partisans, As this was a cover name for a multitude of resistance groups on Amager island; all it proves is that he was active in the resistance movement. As nothing is known of his underground connections, it is impossible to make any connections to EWN

⁵⁸Birkelund, op. cit., pp???

⁵⁹ DLA tape nos. 67008 and 67003 op. cit.

through him. Deported to Alt Garge, he died on the 15th April 1945 in the concentration camp Neuengamme, in the process of being repatriated⁶⁰.

Johan Hansen, arrested on the 29th July in Dragør was either skipper of the stone cutter *Hebe* and/or owner of a salvage boat in Dragør. He was arrested for procuring dynamite and sailing to Sweden for the resistance. The groups he was associated with were the SE and HD.⁶¹ It is possible that EWN was a contact between Hansen and the resistance. He died in the concentration camp Dessauer Ufer on the 29th March 1945.

The two other concentration camp survivors from Dragør were arrested at the same time as EWN making it likely that she was courier between them and the resistance. One was the young Karl Blankholm Frisk (b. 1925), EWN's next door neighbour who was deported to Dachau and Neuengamme⁶². The other was his employer, an owner of a local dairy who was arrested for sabotage and deported to Dessauer Ufer with Johan Hansen. (*C9). While there is no evidence that EWN worked with the latter, there is a strong possibility (but again no direct evidence) that she may have been a courier for the latter.

⁶⁰ Ib Damgaard Petersen (ed.), *Faldne i Danmarks frihedskamp*, p. 199.

⁶¹ Ibid. p. 156. See also B&T op cit., pp. 70-71 & p. 115.

⁶² FM optagelsesberetning.

6. The Arrest and Incarceration

Villa Pax

Two months after the Rescue effort, the Gestapo chose a house in Dragør, ironically named Villa Pax as its headquarters for Amager island, which comprises Southern Copenhagen, Kastrup Airport and Dragør. From Villa Pax they gradually tightened the noose around resistance activity in and around Dragør- From time to time, various inhabitants in Dragør were arrested and sometimes freed after questioning.

Around February 1944, EWN's nephew Gerhardt Steffensen went underground and fled to Sweden with his family. In May 1944, a Dragør fisherman known to EWN was arrested. During the General Strike in early July so many were arrested in Dragør that Villa Pax was bursting at the seams. On the 2nd July 1944, Gorma Haraldsted who worked with the Haubirk brothers in Dragør was arrested.⁶³

On the 24th July, the leader of the DSFT in Denmark, Robert Jensen ("Tom") was shot dead in a Gestapo raid and a great deal of incriminating material was found, including a long list of codenames⁶⁴. While EWN's name does not seem to feature, those of Godtfred Lundquist (L76), Christian Hansen (L82) both Dragør fishermen are on the list, as are those of Niels Mikkelsen (L50 & L44) and Kaj Holbech (L43)⁶⁵. Three days later, on the 27th July, a number of people from Dragør were arrested.

Niels Mikkelsen, in a letter to Max Weiss in Sweden dated the 26th July, immediately after Robert Jensen's murder furiously blames Leif Hendil in Sweden for insisting on a list of codenames, and informs Weiss that he has warned everyone he could who was on the list. In the same letter he mentions that "the package has been entrusted to the old lady"⁶⁶. It is not possible to determine with certainty if this refers to a package given to EWN.

Godtfred and Jan Lundquist, EWN's neighbours Karl and Jørgen Frisk and another member of their household, were among the 16 or so Dragør fishermen arrested along with EWN.⁶⁷ Others in Dragør who disappeared underground included Ejler Haubirk Snr., and his wife, Kaj Lundquist and Elise Schmidt Petersen. A number of fishermen fled to Sweden, among them EWN's nephew Hans Steffensen who fled at the instigation of Jørgen Palm Petersen⁶⁸.

As her next-door neighbours were already arrested towards dawn on the 27th, and she herself was arrested only at around 9.45 pm, it is more than likely that she was aware of their arrest. The question of whether she assumed and hoped that they would be freed like several other young men in the town

⁶³ Information from Peter Birkelund (Rigsarkiv) and Henrik Skov Kristen (Frøslev)

⁶⁴ See account of "Tom" Robert Jensen's help to the Melchior family in Helga C. Melchior's diary entry for the 12th October 1943, and Clara Melchior's diary entry for the 15th November 1943 in B. Blüdnikow and K. Rothstein (eds.) *Dage i oktober 43*, pp. 186-189.

⁶⁵ The list can be found in DSFT archives and in Jørgen Hæstrup's archive IVTB both in the RA.

⁶⁶ Letter dated 26th July 1944 from Niels Mikkelsen to Max Weiss. FM archives.

⁶⁷ Information from papers in the DLA; Statsadvokaten for Særlige Anliggende AS- Sag fra provinsen Nr, 3-751RA; and B&T op. cit., 70-71 & 107-110.

⁶⁸ Information from DLA. Ingolf Haubirk in his telephone interview however remembers his parents as having gone underground as early as the end of 1943; he remembers how family photographs were destroyed in order to avoid identification. After his brother was murdered their parental home was occupied by German troops for the remainder of the war.

had been previously, or whether she had no place to run away to is not possible to ascertain. A combination of her age, sex, financial and social status may have been against her. She had spent the early evening of the 27th July at a family birthday party in Dragør at the house of her son Oluf Nielsen who worked as a watchman at Amalienborg Palace. She had returned home a little earlier than the rest of her family as she was tired. Here she was arrested by two members of the Gestapo in Dragør and taken to Gestapo headquarters, where one by one others were brought in.

From Villa Pax most of those arrested including EWN were driven to the German section of Vestre prison in Copenhagen. During the next few days, they were brought back to Villa Pax singly or in groups for interrogation. In a letter smuggled from Vestre prison, she describes the brutality of one of these sessions:

“We were anxious when we saw where we being taken to. When we came there we were locked in the cellar. Ugh! A plank to sleep on, a couple of blankets. Someone knocked on the wall. It was Gotfr. (Godtfred L.) Poor him. I could speak a little with him, that helped a little. The next day interrogations. Terrible, 3 and a half hours, but then “x” was interrogated. It was horrible, he screamed and howled, and for us down below it is still a nightmare to think about, if one thinks at all, one shouldn’t think here... I could never go home if they are still there, Thank God that none of you have experienced it, they are criminals...”⁶⁹

Vestre Prison

EWN was condemned to be shot to death for sabotage and the smuggling of weapons. She was in the German section of Vestre from the 28th July until the end of October, thus also spending her 56th birthday in captivity. After a gruelling two day journey she arrived in Frøslev internment camp in southern Denmark on the 27th October 1944.

By then several resistance men known to her had been arrested or shot dead while resisting arrest. Niels Mikkelsen and Jørgen Palm Petersen were arrested on the 14th October along with a group of other important resistance figures, while Kaj Holbech was shot dead resisting arrest on the same occasion. Ejler Haubirk Jnr. was shot dead on the 20th October, as a result of an informer in yet another group of which he had been a member (*C11).

Frøslev Internment camp

Among EWN’s fellow inmates in the women’s barrack were Gorma Haraldsted who had arrived there on the 4th November⁷⁰, as well as a well-known resistance figure Kate Fleron. In 1945, soon after the end of the war she included a long interview with EWN on her Ravensbrück experiences in a book on Danish women in the resistance⁷¹.

While conditions in Frøslev camp were much better than in jail as the internal affairs of the camp were run by the Danes, two constant worries remained. The first was that male prisoners were being chained together and placed in the front compartments of troop and goods trains to counter the increasing sabotage against German trains, As Godtfred and Jan Lundquist had been in Frøslev since the 6th of September, she had reason to worry. Jan Lundquist had at least once been sent on such a “Himmelfarts commando” transport, as EWN refers to it in a smuggled letter, but had returned safely⁷². The other worry was deportation.

⁶⁹ Ellen Wilhelmine Nielsen’s papers (DLA).

⁷⁰ Information from Henrik Skov Kristensen (Frøslev Camp Museum). She was released in February 1945 and spent the rest of the war in Sweden.

⁷¹ K. Fleron, *Kvinder i modstandskampen*. Nyt Nordisk Forlag, Arnold Busch, 1945, pp. 195-203.

⁷² EWN’s papers (DLA).

On the 28th November she was informed that she was on a deportation list with nine other women, but that she was spared as the German Commander of Frøslev Camp did not wish to send more women to Nazi Germany. However on the 11th December there was to be no reprieve. The ten women including EWN were first informed that they were to be released, Half an hour later they were told the bitter truth. That this coincidentally was the birthday of her deceased husband could only have added to her misery. The ten women were first sent back on the gruelling journey to Vestre prison in Copenhagen, before being deported with an 11th woman on the early morning of the 14th December to Germany. Why they were first sent back to Copenhagen instead of being deported directly from Frøslev to Germany as was the custom remains a mystery.

7. Deportation to Nazi Germany

The reason why she was deported instead of being executed as her sentencing demanded was that by the summer of 1944, many condemned Danish prisoners were deported to avoid creating unnecessary martyrs.

In Ravensbrück, EWN was given the number 94315, and a red triangle as a political prisoner⁷³. In the first few weeks the 11 women were in a Zugänger barrack with over 1000 women, and then moved to one with 350-375 women.

In the early weeks she worked long gruelling hours digging gravel and spreading garbage. An accident with a heavy wagon laden with gravel which banged into her shoulders put a seriously ill EWN, already decimated with constant diarrhoea into the revier for a few days around Christmas. Immediately after Christmas, the group of 11 women were moved into the Dutch block where conditions were slightly better. It is probably here that she spent her days knitting for the German war effort.

However, conditions as a whole in the camp were truly abysmal, and those who were incapable of working received red cards. EWN and another Dane, Johanne Hansen (JH), along with a few Dutch women were unfortunate enough to receive them. The first time they appeared on a list for transportation, an unnamed German nurse, who was well disposed towards them, removed the two Danes from the list.⁷⁴ On the next occasion there was to be no reprieve.

How and why did EWN end up in an extermination camp?

As far as can be ascertained, EWN was only one of three Danish gentiles in Ravensbrück to end in such a camp. As non Jewish Danes and Norwegians were considered to belong to the “Aryan” race, they generally avoided ending up in transportation lists to extermination camps. That this did not occur in EWN’s case may merely be due to her and JH being considered too old and unfit for work⁷⁵.

Flender’s account of a conversation between EWN and the Camp Commander of Ravensbrück cannot be verified⁷⁶. When in December 1946, EWN was asked by a newspaper reporter whether the two women had been sent to the extermination camp by mistake, she replied that she did not think so, but that one could never know⁷⁷.

⁷³ A graphically detailed description of her experiences in Germany are to be found in her interview to Fleron, op. cit., as well as the questionnaire she completed for the FM. Jørgen Barfod’s *Helvede har mange navne* (1994) describes among others, life for the Danish detainees in Ravensbrück, While K. Ottosen’s *Kvinneleiren* (1991) provides a general account of the Scandinavian women in Ravensbrück, highly relevant are the following accounts: P. Achton, *Jeg har båret lærkens vinger* (1975); N. Bisgaard, *Kvinder i modstandskampen* (1986); S. Salvesen, *Tilgi- men glem ikke* (1947) and L. Børsum, *Kvindehovedet Ravensbrück* (1947).

⁷⁴ It is possible that this was Schwester Gerda, who has been named by other Scandinavians, e.g. the Norwegian Sylvia Salvesen, op. cit., and the Dane, Ragna Hamilton, *Det knuste mig aldrig* (1985) as having been extremely helpful.

⁷⁵ The 3rd Dane, Thora Jespersen, born 1887 is also said to have been on the list, but was instead sent to Matthaussen along with a few Norwegian “Nacht und Neberlass” prisoners and 2000 Roma. She too survived. See Barfod (1994) op. cit., pp. 78-82; Ottosen op. cit., 269-280; and Astrid Blumensaadt’s archive (Odense Stadtarkiv).

⁷⁶ Flender, op. cit., pp. 140-141.

⁷⁷ The Danish daily newspaper, *København*, 7th December 1946.

Jugendlager Ückermark⁷⁸

On the 2nd February 1945, EWN and JH were sent along with a group of elderly and sick women and children to a nearby camp, the Jugendlager. A French woman, Irene Ottolord who was in this group describes how those who could not walk were put into the carts which usually transported soup around the camp, and how those who could walk were whipped by the guards and forced to push the heavy carts along the muddy road⁷⁹.

The first few days, EWN lay in what she terms the “Tonhalle”, along with over a thousand women lying on wet mattresses on the floor, three women to a mattress, receiving neither food nor drink. They sucked on raw potatoes they had. The roll calls lasted hours. The only purpose here being to choose the weakest women and children for death.

At the morning Appel on the 8th of February, they were asked to return their overcoats. A quick-thinking EWN pulled out the lining of hers and hid it in her trousers. According to JH, many other women who saw this followed EWN’s example. Three days later, they were asked to turn in their blankets. It was hoped that starving and freezing the women would further the process. For the camp’s sole purpose was extermination, unlike Ravensbrück which had several factories, like Siemen’s using slave labour. However, staying alive here too implied showing that one was still capable of working. And there was only one type of work in this camp.

In the middle of February, EWN and JH, along with four Dutch women they shared the contents of Red Cross parcels with, came into a new barrack, the only one in the camp that had heating. The woman in charge of the barrack, Grethel, a 60-year old German Jehovah’s Witness who had been in prison for eight years by then⁸⁰ had taken a liking to her, according to EWN. How much this was also due to the contents of Red Cross parcels is not known. Although neither EWN nor JH’s accounts are clear on the subject, it may be assumed that it was now that they began their forced employment in order to keep alive. A job that consisted in carrying their fellow prisoners, women and children who were too weak to walk to the vehicles taking them to the gas chambers, and removing their bodies afterwards for cremation. The work was done under the scrutiny of drunk and hysterically screaming SS men and women who whipped the women to make them work faster⁸¹.

Her body covered in sores; plagued with lice, diarrhoea and food hallucinations, her entire being concentrated on keeping herself alive, how much opportunity there was for moral reflection is debatable.

How did EWN stay alive?

At least twice, EWN was selected for the gas chambers. On the first occasion there were so many chosen that day that, after standing in front of a barrack for an entire day, those remaining, including EWN were returned to their barracks. The following day, all those remaining were crammed into the

⁷⁸ The following account has primarily been compiled from Fleron op. cit., pp. 199-201 and Achton, op. cit., pp. 92-94.

⁷⁹ Erika Buchmann, *Die Frauen von Ravensbrück*, p.109.

⁸⁰ Signe Sand, “Kvinder i modstandskampen” in V. la Cour (ed.) *Danmark under besættelsen* Vol. III, 1946, pp.??

⁸¹ Lise Børsum, op. cit., p. 245; FM questionnaire; Flender op. cit., p. 141 and Bisgaards, op. cit., p. 151.

waiting vehicles, except for the last four, among whom she was. Then Grethel came to her rescue by saying she could still work.

The second time, both EWN and JH were selected and waiting in line when Grethel saved them once more, by taking them to the barracks and hiding them until the vehicles were gone. This time the reason was another, a private package had arrived for JH, the contents of which saved both women's lives.

The Red Cross parcels

All Danish and certain Norwegian concentration camp inmates occasionally received Red Cross parcels while in Ravensbrück. While not all package reached their destination unscathed, those that did were sometimes shared around among other Scandinavians in need by the two women who unofficially headed the Norwegian and Danish prisoners, Sylvia Salvesen and Anna Weng Seidemann. The contents not only fed the prisoners and enabled them to barter or bribe camp personnel, but also gave hope to those who received them, that they had not been forgotten by those back home.

Packages were strictly forbidden in the Jugendlager. However, two German women and a Polish woman who worked in the main camp's office smuggled parts of the Red Cross parcels to the two Danish women. With their contents EWN and JH were able to bribe those above them to stay alive.

Good Friday

The 30th March 1945, Good Friday, was a day which remained in EWN's mind long after the war had ended. She witnesses that over thousand fellow prisoners were sent to their deaths that day:

“The positions the souls lay in, when they were dead. I will never forget their blackened legs with weeping sores! How these souls have suffered”⁸²

is EWN's description of that day, when asked in the FM questionnaire to describe her work conditions during Easter. (*C12)

The following day, EWN stood for roll call in “heartrending terror” (*hjerteskrænde angst*). After the previous day's terror she had finally lost hope. An SS guard came over to her, checked she was Danish and removed her from the row. A German head nurse had arrived from the main camp to take the two Danes back. Finally, Anna Weng Seidemann had managed to get them back, most likely through bribes. The two women were hidden by day in the revier, as there were no longer elderly women left in the main camp. By night they worked in a uniform factory ripping apart filthy, bloody uniforms, In the FM questionnaire, she remembers these nights at the factory as being sheer agony.

⁸² FM questionnaire; Fleron, op. cit., p. 201.

8. Repatriation

Unknowingly to those in the Jugendlager, on the same Good Friday, a delegation from the International Red Cross in Switzerland had visited the main camp. After long discussions with Himmler over the previous weeks, it had been agreed that the inmates of the camps could be repatriated. The first group of women from Ravensbrück, 299 French women and a Polish woman were to be evacuated to Switzerland. On the 6th April 1945, all surviving women from the Jugendlager were returned to the main camp. At dawn on the 8th April, eight busses from the Swedish Red Cross arrived in the camp to evacuate the Scandinavians.

EWN was one of a group of approximately 100 women- 24 Danes, 74 Norwegians and 2 French women who were evacuated that day. She was one of five who were transported by stretcher. She remembers nothing from the time she lay on this stretcher to when she woke up in a Swedish sanatorium of the 1st of May.

She remained in a Swedish hospital for about six weeks, before she was transferred to a Danish hospital for further treatment. She returned home to Dragør in the summer of 1945.

The Post-War Period

On her return to Denmark she attempted without success to resume work at the fish market in Gammel Strand. Subsequently she worked as a cleaner and canteen assistance at a Danish film studio until ill health and age prevented her from working further.

According to her daughter –in-law Esther Nielsen, EWN also attended English classes with her. In the early 1950s, EWN's two younger sons emigrated to North America with their families. Altogether all of her four youngest children were to emigrate, and EWN visited them twice. (*C13).

Throughout the rest of her life, for the next 22 years, she suffered from various aspects of the “concentration camp” syndrome⁸³. In Ravensbrück museum she has acquired a new number- she is listed as number 5110 of those who survived.

The first interview she gave after the war seems to have been that given to Kate Fleron in 1945. She gave an interview around October 1946 to two British officers from the International War crimes Investigation Unit who were in the process of preparing the prosecution's case against the camp's personnel.⁸⁴

Around the 17th December 1946, the British War Crimes tribunal in Hamburg called EWN as a witness for the Prosecution. However, she never arrived, as according to newspaper interviews she gave at the time, although she was very keen to give her witness account, she had never received an official invitation⁸⁵. Strangely enough, a document in the National Archives in London dated the 10th

⁸³ Danish doctors who had been deported to concentration camps studied the conditions of their fellow victims. See e.g. Killer *et al.* (1952) and (1968).

⁸⁴ Interview with EWN featured in ”To danske Kvinder vidner til Ravensbrücks Rædsler” *København*, 7th December 1946.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, and *Berlingske Tidende* 7th, 18th and 20th December 1946.

December 1946 from the Danish Military Mission requests a daily allowance for EWN, and a handwritten addition declares that the witness for the prosecution would soon be on her way⁸⁶.

Along with a great many others, EWN also completed a detailed questionnaire for the Danish authorities on their experiences in German concentration camps⁸⁷, the results of which may be seen in Jørgen Barfod's account *Helvede har mange navne* (1994). The Council for Compensation (*Erstatningsrådet*) too has, an albeit less detailed questionnaire completed by her. Apart from the interview given to the War crimes Investigations Unit, which is most likely to be found among the hundred or so files on Ravensbrück at the National Archives in London, the only other English language interview with EWN seems to be in Harold Flender's account from 1963.

⁸⁶ Information from Alan Bowgen, PRO London from WO 309/1656.

⁸⁷ Archived at the Danish Resistance Museum.

9. Conclusion

There are many unanswered questions that may shed more light on EWN's wartime experiences. For instance, it would have been useful to know who in Denmark had provided Flender with her name. It is possible that this was someone who had been helped by EWN in 1943. Despite advertisements in both the *FV-bladet* (the resistance veterans' magazine) and *Jødisk Orientering*⁸⁸, it was not possible to find anyone who could provide any information on EWN's wartime activity.

Another aspect is Lieutenant General Leo Robbins' service record from the Second World War, which although is irrelevant for EWN's role in the rescue effort, may provide a hint as to whether Leo Robbins' war work could in any way have been connected to the Danish resistance, and thereby to her own resistance activity.

Thirdly, more information on EWN may be gleaned from other archive material which have not been searched, e.g. Arne Sejr's archive, the Danish Police (AS) reports at the time of the arrests in July 1944; or the Frihedsfonden's Archives all in the RA for Niels Mikkelsen and the doctor from Bornholm, for Jørgen and Knud Palm Petersen, Johan Hansen, Christian Jensen and others from Dragør; the Compensation Council's archives on various Dragør inhabitants and possibly Danish Military intelligence files from this period. The Swedish border police archives from late September to early October, which possibly may be found in the State archives in Lund too may be of interest. Above all, EWN's witness statement for the War Crimes Investigation Unit in the NA in London may be useful.

What is known with certainty is that EWN helped save lives in October 1943. As seen above, this factor led to her participation in resistance activity and may have indirectly facilitated the Gestapo's enquiries. The subsequent tragic and macabre events in the Jugendlager Ückermark have however overshadowed her role in the rescue effort, both for herself as well as for others during her lifetime.

The question of moral choice and responsibility has to be addressed. How much choice did EWN have in the extermination camp? Did she have the luxury of moral reflection in the face of such overwhelming evil and terror? Would any lives have been saved if she had refused to work, thereby most certainly losing her own? Did she have a choice?

What has to be remembered is that when faced with a choice in 1943, with time for reflection, and not knowing the possible sanctions for herself or her family, EWN did not hesitate. She chose to save lives. Until her death 22 years later, she suffered immensely as a result of her incarceration in Nazi Germany. Whether the memory of those lives she saved in October 1943 gave her solace is not known.

⁸⁸ The then editor of the *FV-bladet* Erik Heimann Olsen and Rabbi emeritus Bent Melchior kindly helped place the advertisements.

10. SOURCES

§ The above account is partly a translation of an article on EWN in Danish (2001), and partly a revised English version based on new information sent to Yad Vashem in 2003.

EWN's letters from Danish prisons (July-Dec. 1944) and the questionnaire on her concentration camp experiences that are archived in the Danish resistance Museum (FM) are the only handwritten documents from EWN in this period.

(A witness statement from her may be among the hundreds of papers belonging to the War Crimes Investigation Unit (for Ravensbrück) in the National Archives, London, but regrettably it was not possible to research this).

Interviews with her are found in Fleron 1945; Flender 1963, and in 2 Danish daily newspapers, the *København* (7.12.46) and the *Berlingske Tidende* (7th, 18th and 20th Dec. 1946).

It has to be kept in mind that the contents of these published interviews may not always be accurate. Similarly the private memoirs and oral history interviews mentioned below were conducted many years or even many decades after the events, information may have been deliberately omitted, changed, misunderstood or involuntarily forgotten. Many of the actors themselves knew only parts of the truth, and the habits of secrecy from the war have not always been left behind.

The following oral history interviews in the DLA have not been looked at as they had either been overlooked or been taped by then archivist Lis Thavlov after I completed my own work in 2003.

68002 I,II	25-3-68	Bent Hedegård, Poul Hoe Larsen og Gerhard Jørgensen
68003 I,II	1-4-68	Svend Iversen, Hugo Hansen & M.O.Jensen
	24-3-1994	Erik Petersen fisherman
	24-1-2005	Martha Beltrano (née Haubirk)
	3-1-2005	Poul Petersen - AMPA
	19-10-2001	Kirsten Koppel- refugee
	18-06-04	Ruth Strauss (Kroll)- refugee
	10-6-02	Bent Nathansen- refugee
	5-1—06	Kirsten Svendsen (née Jensen) refugee

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primarily as evidence of an attempt by an adult to deal with a childhood trauma and mystery, as from one day to the next the grandmother he lived with disappeared for an entire year and must have returned a very changed human being.

-Oral History Interviews:

68010 I & II 1-7-68: Mary Riber (Steffensen) née Lundquist and John Nielsen: EWN's sister and son

67008 29-5-67: Jan Schwartz, Willy Christensen and Thorvald Palm: Dragør fishermen

67003 12-4-67: Knud Palm Petersen & Arne Stautz (Nr. 67003)

67007 I & II 1967: Edwin Kræmer and Police Superintendent Kaj Møller

Elise Schmidt Petersen

Dr. Poul Dich

29.09.03 Ingolf Haubirk

-Parish and Census Records

-Accounts of Dragør by local citizens

- R. Walloe, Riber slægter fra Dragør

- R. Walloe, Blichmann slægter fra Dragør

b. *Museet for Danmarks Frihedskamp* (FM)

- Spørgeskema til den danske koncentrationslejrvidbog (Questionnaire on EWN's Ravensbrück experiences)
- Optagelses Begæring i Landsforeninger af besættelsestidens politiske fanger (entry forms for a national society for ex-political prisoners from the Occupation which contain entries for several Dragør figures)
- S. A. Henriksen's Papers 12A-52
- Max Weiss' Papers 14B-14
- Finn Nielsen's Papers

c. *Rigsarkiv* (RA)

- Census 1940
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