

UPF Copenhagen, Denmark's The Peace Road 2018 Peace March and Symposium Karsten Nielsen - November 18, 2018



Copenhagen, Denmark - The Peace Road 2018 event started with a peace march, followed by a small symposium with the theme of “How to promote dialogue?” **hosted by Jacob Holdt in his Ubuntu-house.** Jacob Holdt became international known in the 70’s with “American Pictures” showing the hardships of America's poor people. He is still a peace activist and collaborates with several peace organizations.



The event was organized together with Minhaj Youth Denmark on Sunday Nov. 18th, 2018 at 1- 4 pm.

At first the participants gathered at the Copenhagen City Hall Square, where hot soup was being served. At 1:30 pm the march started along the pedestrian street in the busy city center to Ubuntu-house. The march was accompanied by selected music pieces intersected with inspirational quotes.



Zoraiz Khushdil, chairman of Minhaj Youth Denmark, moderated the symposium with much humor and warmth.

Thorkil Christensen, UPF introduced the peace idea behind the Peace Road initiative and showed a short promotional video.



Mazen Ismail, poet, was the first speaker. Mazen was born in Beirut, Libanon, but he and his parents came to Denmark as refugees. He grew up in his family in a Danish provincial town and experienced bullying, tension and exclusion. At the age of 17 he had nine knife wounds and was ended up in prison. During this time Hans Andersen's fairy tales and other poetry made deep impressions on him, and after his release he started to study, explore music, write song lyrics and played theater. His band, Lagix, soared to the top of radio charts in the Middle East with the single "Love You".

In 2014, he founded the consultancy "Talte Tanker" [Spoken Thoughts], aiming to strengthen young people's professional, personal and creative skills in collaboration with educational institutions, job centers and local governments.

At this event, Mazen shared three of his poems. He emphasized empathy and the need to listen and try and understand other people's situation and feelings. Especially many of the young people present were touched by the depth of his thoughts and poetry.



Christopher Roehl Andersen, member of **Copenhagen City Council** and former Chairman of Social Liberal Youth in Denmark, was the second speaker. He stated, it is important to be curious about each other, try to understand other people, their feelings, motivations etc. and always enter into dialogues with an open mind. The only risk is that we could change own opinion or standpoint. Participation as citizens is essential, since it is a prerequisite for our own shared freedom. Dialogue - or conversation - is necessary to ensure our collective freedom. Dialogue means democracy in practice.



This was followed by a dance performance by the modern afro-ballet **Root Astray**.

During the break with coffee and cake, there was very happy and lively sharing among all participants.

Subsequently, we had a panel debate focused on how to promote and inspire dialogue and stronger and deeper relationships in our community and nation.



In conclusion, **James Houston** and **Elizabeth Bramsen** sang two beautiful songs.



It was the first time UPF Denmark held a symposium in conjunction with the Peace Road project, and we see some potential to develop this in the future.