

HOME

A SPECIAL EXHIBITION ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF WAR AND PERSECUTION

31 OCTOBER 2013 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2014

How the rescue of the Danish Jews provided material for an American folk song!

The Danish Jewish Museum's special exhibition HOME opens on October 31, 2013. One of the themes in the exhibition is the international recognition and fame that the rescue of the Danish Jews has brought Denmark. One of the many artists who has been inspired by the story is the American singer and songwriter Fred Small. His song Denmark 1943 can be heard at the exhibit. But what inspired him?

Solidarity was a motivation

The song *Denmark 1943* is on Fred Small's album *I Will Stand Fast* from 1988, a collection with strong moral messages. Fred Small was in the early 1980s involved in the civil rights movement in the USA, and in that connection he learned of the rescue of the Danish Jews. In the beginning of the 1980s the homosexual activists in Boston initiated the so-called 'Denmark campaign'. "They asked straight allies to wear pink triangles, just as King Christian of Denmark had worn a yellow star in solidarity with Danish Jews during Nazi occupation," says Fred Small.

He thought the story was a good one, and wrote a song about it. "I wrote the song because I wanted to provide an alternative to the dominant narrative that during the holocaust, no one helped the Jews. Sadly, this was often the case: the lack of moral courage by gentiles under the Nazis is deeply troubling. But it was not *always* the case, and the Danish counter-example is very powerful – a model and inspiration to us all," says Fred Small.

USA likes a good story

Of course, Fred Small discovered quickly that the story about Christian X was a myth, but he explains that the story of the rescue of the Danish Jews is of great interest in the USA because it represents a glimpse of decency and courage in the otherwise dreadful 'Nazi era', as he says. "It's good to know that *somebody* cared enough to risk their own lives for the sake of their Jewish neighbors." According to Fred Small numerous books on the subject have focused on this bright story in the last 30 years.

Today Fred Small is the minister at the Unitarian First Parish Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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