

# **Combining Citizenship Education with Life-Philosophy and the Teaching of Christianity - in Danish Teacher Training.**

**From Preaching to Teaching, and from Neo-Nationalism to Multi-Culturalism?**

Tim Jensen

Paris 2014

# Preamble

During centuries of the history of the Danish nation state, the school made Danes out of the peasants.

Since the 90s the tendency has been to try to make mono-cultural Danish citizens ('medborgere') out of other-cultural citizens/culturally hybrid citizens ('statsborgere')

(TJ 2014, elaboration of Haas 2007)



# Preamble: More about Tim Jensen's Perspective on RE and Citizenship Education

The status and role of the majority religion, *and* the use of RE (religion education) in nation (nationalist identity-) building, must of course be questioned, inter alia because of, in Denmark as elsewhere, a relative increase in religious pluralization and individualization.

There are many questions to ask, a few of these, with special relevance for citizenship education and RE may be summarized as follows:



## Preamble: More about Tim Jensen's Perspective on RE and Citizenship Education (continued)

– How far should RE function as a theologically-based transmission of the Evangelical-Lutheran brand of Christianity and (postulated) Christian values, of a Danish culture seen as based on Christianity and Christian values, of an existentialist ‘life philosophy’ based in Christian theology, or of a postulated universal ‘religious dimension’ of life also tied to Christian theology and worldview – as a learning *about*, that cannot be distinguished from a learning *from* religion, i.e. the Danish majority religion? Brief: should RE continue to be (also) some kind of religious and moral *upbringing*?



IESR  
Institut européen  
en sciences des religions  
École Pratique des Hautes Études

## **Preamble: More about Tim Jensen's Perspective on RE and Citizenship Education (continued)**

– How far should RE, not just implicitly but also explicitly, aim at providing knowledge and tools for future citizens to better understand and handle the increasingly multi-religious and multi-cultural reality of Denmark, Europe and the world?

Some recent contributions to this debate, both in Denmark and elsewhere, have been linked explicitly to (a 'new' subject called) 'citizenship education'.



IESR  
Institut européen  
en sciences des religions  
École Pratique des Hautes Études

## Preamble: More about Tim Jensen's Perspective on RE and Citizenship Education (continued)

In my modest opinion, some of these ideas are intimately linked to an ideological and political agenda of transmitting and consolidating traditional societal and religious (Christian) ideas and values, - AND that with special regard to a perceived threat posed by Islam, the new Muslim presence, and thus not *merely* to a perceived or real loss of traditional values, due, inter alia to globalization and migration in general. (not a word about capitalism, neo-liberalism!)



IESR  
Institut européen  
en sciences des religions  
École Pratique des Hautes Études

## Preamble: More about Tim Jensen's Perspective on RE and Citizenship Education (continued)

In this way, a formally 'non-confessional', 'non-religious', and 'integrative' RE, possibly with citizenship education integrated, or running parallel to it, can – just like the 'confessional' and 'religious' RE – be deployed as a key instrument for the state for inculcating religious, moral values in order to (re-)socialize and domesticate its citizens.

This kind of RE can come in various shades, whether with regard to the transmission and consolidation of traditional, mono-religiously based values of the majority society and the nation state, *or* in regard to the transmission and consolidation of values seen as necessary for peaceful coexistence amongst citizens in a globalized and multi-religious world.

Here, I shall focus on how some kind of *teacher education*, nominally *about* Christianity, Life-Enlightenment, and Citizenship Education has been established - and now, in 2013 - left behind.



## A Few Historical Contextualizations *not* to be included

Polis/Polites

Ethnos/Demos (German/French)

Rousseau (common good life/society; civil religion)

French : citoyenneté

English : citizenship

( T.H. Marshall 1950: Citizenship and Social Class)





## However: NB: Danish: 'Statsborgerskab' AND 'Medborgerskab'

French : citoyenneté (+ nationalité?)

English : citizenship

Danish: Two terms

***Statsborgerskab***/citizenship = legal & political status, rights and plights  
(DEMOS)

***Medborgerskab***/citizenship = notion and feeling of identity, identification  
with a moral and social and political community/common core  
'values'(ETHNOS)

(Nationality, democracy, identity (nation building, identity building)

Globalization, individualization, europeanization, multiculturalism,  
pluralization (cosmopolitanism))

# Citizenship Education

Linked to Politics as well as to Pedagogics, to education and edification, to Bildung and Allgemeinbildung

Education/Edification: social ethics  
education/socialization/indoctrination

How to learn to live together - with common or/and different values

Challenge: how to combine the respect for the freedom of the individual/the subject etc, *and* having the state teach and preach a definite set of common values/- religious or not?



IESR  
Institut européen  
en sciences des religions  
École Pratique des Hautes Études

# Citizenship Education, and RE and Alternatives: Ethics/Values etc.

RE in many places confessional, supported by the state, inter alia to have the future citizens learn about *and* from the majority religion, in order to transfer (what was) the postulated or real common (Christian or secular-Christian) values and norms. The social order/ social ethics.

RE in many places thus with an alternative subject that reflects this function of the school and RE: Ethics, Values, Values and Ethics, or Citizenship Education.

# Citizenship and Citizenship Education: Now to Denmark

***Statsborgerskab***: DK the first country (I think) to introduce this in 1776 (*ius soli/ius sanguinis*)

***Medborgerskab*** (the moral, ethnos, identity 'thing') first introduced in 1999, by the then Minister of Education, Margrethe Vestager (daughter of a minister in the Danish established church, now one of the new EU top politicians), in a booklet named "Education and Community (or 'Fellowship'). It is about education/edification or *Bildung/Allgemeinbildung*, it s the first *explicit* use of the notion of citizenship linked to the politics of identity building through education.



IESR  
Institut européen  
en sciences des religions  
École Pratique des Hautes Études

# Citizenship and Citizenship Education: Now to Denmark

BUT, of course:

without the explicit mentioning of 'citizenship', politics of identity, identity-building, and the creation of a *feeling of belonging* to the same community of citizens, has been the aim of education in/and of the public school for centuries, and it has been intimately linked to the majority religion, the Lutheran-Evangelical Church and/or to what has been conceived of as Christian values.

# Historical Overview: Religion, RE and implicit Citizenship Education

In Denmark, a Lutheran variant of Protestant Christianity has for nearly 500 years been the dominant majority religion, and, consequently, transmission of the knowledge of this religion has been seen as (all-) important, and as the main focus and task of the public school in general and of whatever kind of RE, confessional or not.

# Historical Overview: Religion, RE and implicit Citizenship Education

## 1814–1975: Forming good (Christian) citizens

A public elementary school was first established in Denmark in 1814, with the subject *Religion* (= instruction in Christianity) as one of four subjects.

The Education Act stated that the teaching (in the school in general) should contribute to the children's *dannelse* (*Allgemeinbildung*) which at the time, of course, could not be imagined as detached from the teachings of the Lutheran church.

# Historical Overview: Religion, RE and implicit Citizenship Education

## 1814–1975: Forming good (Christian) citizens (Continued)

In spite of the establishment of freedom of religion with the 1849 Constitution, and therefore *in principle* also the separation of church and state schools, the intimate relations between state, school and the established Lutheran-Evangelical church, the *Folkekirke* ('The People's Church') continued.

Up to 1933, the Church was the supervising and inspecting authority. In 1933 this supervisory role conducted by the Lutheran parish minister was limited to RE, rather than to the school curriculum at large, and from 1949 to 1970 (when it was finally discontinued) the minister's authority was limited to the right to attend RE lessons.



# Historical Overview: Religion, RE and implicit Citizenship Education

## 1814–1975: Forming good (Christian) citizens (Continued)

Following a long debate, in the 1937 Education Act the name of the subject was changed from *Religion* to *Kristendomsundervisning* ('Christian Education'), and an opt-out possibility was introduced for both pupils and teachers (§52).

At the same time, the earlier article in the Education Act requiring that teaching in the school at large should be consistent with the teachings of the Church, was deleted. Instead, the new Education Act (§ 1, Paragraph 3) now stipulated that 'Christian Education in the *Folkeskole* shall be in accordance with the Evangelical-Lutheran doctrines [*Lære*'] of the *Folkekirke*' (Undervisningsministeriet 1937).

The change of name may be seen as an indication of secularization and pluralization: up to then 'religion' was, as a matter of course, Christianity, but in 1937 this was no longer so. However, it might also be an indication of a Barthian theological view: Christianity is the truth but no religion.

# Historical Overview: Religion, RE and implicit Citizenship Education

1975–1989: *De-confessionalized but still forming good (Christian) citizens*

# Historical Overview: Religion, RE and *implicit* Citizenship Education

## 1989–1995: Teaching (and 'Preaching') Danish Culture as Christian Culture

In 1989, the Ministry's curriculum and guidelines for the subject were revised, but *not* the Education Act, with its specific mention of the subject.

The aims (Articles 1–2) read (my emphases and translation; Undervisningsministeriet 1989):

# Historical Overview: Religion, RE and implicit Citizenship Education

- The aim [...] is that the pupils obtain knowledge of Christianity in its various manifestations past and present. The point of departure is stories from the Bible. **The pupils shall be familiarized with the fundamental values of Danish culture.**
- [...] at the secondary level, the meeting [or: 'encounter'; Danish *mødet*] of Christianity with other religions and views of life [*livsopfattelser*] are to be included with regard to the **pupils getting an understanding of [*får forståelse for*] foreign ways of life and attitudes**

# Historical Overview: Religion, RE and implicit Citizenship Education

## 1993–2004: Teaching (and 'Preaching') a so-called Religious Dimension & Christian Life-Philosophy (Continued)

The 1993 Education Act leaves no doubt: the Danish public school is seen as a key instrument in the *politics of identity*, and the stated objectives, no longer restricted to RE but now applying to *all* subjects and the school as a whole, clearly reflects a political and public discourse provoked by what is perceived of as a threat to social and cultural identity and security, and to what is called 'Danishness', namely Europeanization, globalization (plus individualization), and, maybe most important, Islam and the immigrant Muslim community

# Historical Overview: Religion, RE and implicit Citizenship Education

*2004–2013: More of the Same – But Now With  
'Knowledge' Highlighted and Exams*

# Teacher Education Elementary School: RE and Citizenship Education

## *Historical overview*

Teacher's Training Seminars ('Lærerseminarer') were established at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and in 1818 a national Education Act for the education of teachers for the elementary school was given. In general, Christianity was stipulated to play a key role in 'awakening' the teacher's postulated predisposition for religion, something considered instrumental for becoming and being a qualified teacher.

# Teacher Education Elementary School: RE and Citizenship Education

## *Historical overview (continued)*

Until 1954 the education was comprehensive and consisted of several compulsory subjects including *Kristendomskundskab* ('*Knowledge of Christianity*'). In 1954, it became possible to specialize in one or two subjects, inter alia, *Kristendomskundskab*, as a supplement to the compulsory subjects in order to qualify for teaching in the *Mellemskole* ('*Middle School*' - form level 8-9 with exams).



# Teacher Education Elementary School: RE and Citizenship Education

## *Historical overview (continued)*

In 1966 (implemented in 1969), this was extended to two to three electives, whereas the number of *compulsory* subjects was reduced, though still including *Kristendomskundskab*. The contents of *Kristendomskundskab* was limited to Christianity, with a focus on Biblical exegeses, dogmatics and church history.

# Teacher Education Elementary School: RE and Citizenship Education

## *Historical overview (continued)*

In 1975, knowledge about “other views of life” (‘andre livsopfattelser’) and “general religious elements from a phenomenology-of-religions perspective” became part of the compulsory subject, maybe to ensure that all teachers could teach a new school topic ‘Foreign Religions and Other World Views’, introduced in the Education Act for the elementary school the same year.

The Education Act as of 1991 was followed by a new curriculum in 1992. *Kristendomskundskab* focused on Christianity in a European and Danish context, on so-called common human (existential) and ethical questions, on encounters between religious and secular worldviews, and on basic features of ‘other religions’.

# Teacher Education Elementary School: RE and Citizenship Education

## *Historical overview (continued)*

In **1997**, the comprehensive character of teacher education was substituted by a teacher education tending towards 'specialization'. Teachers should specialize in teaching four subjects, and the numbers of compulsory subjects was reduced. In some of the first drafts for the Education Act, *Knowledge of Christianity* was removed as a compulsory subject.

This was met with opposition, and a compromise, introducing two new subjects called *Knowledge of Christianity/Enlightenment of Life* (KL= 'Kristendomskundskab/Livsoplysning') and *School and Society* (SIS= Skole og Samfund), was reached.

# Teacher Education Elementary School: RE and Citizenship Education

In the preparatory work for KL, it was mentioned that increased encounters between people with different cultural backgrounds made knowledge, not just of “other religions and cultures” but also of “one’s own background”, essential. A qualitative difference between (knowledge of) Christianity and ‘other religions’ can be seen in the objectives:

“The students shall gain insight in/familiarity with (‘indsigt’) the impact of Christianity on the foundational values of European and Danish culture”, and “acquaintance (‘kendskab’) with other religions and world-views that have played and still play a central role in our culture” (Undervisningsministeriet 1998).

# Teacher Education Elementary School: RE and Citizenship Education

*Historical overview (continued and ended)*

When a new teacher education was introduced in **2007**, KL and SIS were replaced by a new compulsory subject called *Knowledge of Christianity/Enlightenment of life/Citizenship* (KLM= Kristendomskundskab, Livsoplysning, Medborgerskab), and the concept of citizenship (education) was thus introduced for the first time in the Danish education system.

# Combining Citizenship Education with Life-Philosophy and the Teaching of Christianity in Danish Teachers Training.

*KLM= Kristendomskundskab, Livsoplysning,  
Medborgerskab 2007*

# Combining Citizenship Education with Life-Philosophy and the Teaching of Christianity in Danish Teachers Training.

The national curriculum, in force from 2007, stated that the aims of the subject are that the students must obtain competences that enable them to (my translation and emphases):

- a) **Relate to the impact of Christianity (in the singular definite form: *kristendommen*) and other world-views (*livsanskuelser*) on the fundamental ('foundational') values found in a European and Danish cultural context.**
  
- b) Relate to the school's task as regards the "Bildung" ('dannelse') of the pupils as individual citizens of Denmark and of the world.
  
- c) Prepare the pupils to take active part in a society characterized by equality, freedom and democracy.

# Combining Citizenship Education with Life-Philosophy and the Teaching of Christianity in Danish Teachers Training.

The national curriculum for KLM continued (my translation and emphases):

d) Develop the critical faculty of the pupils and the capacity of the students to relate to and handle new challenges as well as learn to live together with respect for one another's norms and values.

The contents of the subject area 'Religion and Culture' were:

- a) Christianity, its central stories, concepts, history and impact with a focus on Denmark
- b) Judaism and Islam as European minority religions
- c) Religion and human rights considered in the context of the meeting of cultures and school
- d) The contemporary relation between religion, culture and politics
- e) **The impact of evangelical-Lutheran Christianity on democracy, the welfare state and the school in Denmark**

(Undervisningsministeriet, 2007)



# Combining Citizenship Education with Life-Philosophy and the Teaching of Christianity in Danish Teachers Training.

*KLM= Kristendomskundskab, Livsoplysning, Medborgerskab 2007*

The subject, with its combination of what had been or could be seen as many subjects, was hotly disputed from day one. A key criticism insisted that KLM was the result of a neo-romanticist politics of identity aiming at enabling teachers to promote and secure a (postulated) national-cultural-Christian heritage and (equally postulated) specific Danish values originating in Evangelical-Lutheran Christianity.

# Combining Citizenship Education with Life-Philosophy and the Teaching of Christianity in Danish Teachers Training.

*KLM= Kristendomskundskab, Livsoplysning, Medborgerskab 2007  
(continued)*

Though some of the discussions reflected a struggle for work and jobs (social scientist teachers over against RE teachers), the discussions primarily were due to professional as well as ideological disagreement, with e.g. teachers of social science insisting that they were the best qualified for teaching the citizenship part of the subject, arguing, furthermore, that the curriculum in a non-scientific way 'de-politicized' the citizenship concept. At the same time, some RE teachers complained that religion had been 'reduced' to (its) political and sociological aspects while the important life-philosophy tradition and approach had been played down. politics of identity aiming at enabling teachers to promote

# Combining Citizenship Education with Life-Philosophy and the Teaching of Christianity in Danish Teachers Training.

*KLM= Kristendomskundskab, Livsoplysning, Medborgerskab 2007 (continued)*

A 2012 research project by my now Ph.d. student, Karna Kjeldsen, however, showed that the subject in the local contexts had fairly different profiles. Some common tendencies, though, could be discerned: All classes analyzed had actually been taught a fairly nuanced picture of Islam, stressing diversity and different Muslim views on democracy and human rights, and they also had read literature with a critical perspective on essentialist discourses on culture and 'Danishness'.

All classes had also read literature promoting intercultural dialogue as necessary for peaceful coexistence in a globalized and religiously and culturally pluralistic school, nation and world.

At the same time, however, a majority of classes had primarily read literature with a positive version of Evangelical-Lutheran Christianity and its impact on a Danish culture, the welfare state and democratic values. (Kjeldsen 2012)

# Combining Citizenship Education with Life-Philosophy and the Teaching of Christianity in Danish Teachers Training.

## ***KLM= Kristendomskundskab, Livsoplysning, Medborgerskab 2013***

When a new teacher education program was negotiated in 2012-2013, KLM once again became hotly debated. This time, though, it was discussed whether KLM should be totally abolished, as recommended by an expert committee.

Political parties, however, from opposite sides of the political specter, managed to form a majority in favor of the subject.

In the end, a political compromise was reached, with 'Evangelical-Lutheran Christianity' and 'Enlightenment of Life ('livsoplysning') still explicitly as the two knowledge- areas next to the the one on citizenship. The name was thus the same, but important changes introduced:

# Combining Citizenship Education with Life-Philosophy and the Teaching of Christianity in Danish Teachers Training.

***KLM= Kristendomskundskab, Livsoplysning, Medborgerskab 2013***  
national curriculum in effect as of August 2013 (Uddannelses- og Forskningsministeriet, 2013, my translation):

**Competence area:** 'Allgemeinbildung' (*Almen dannelse*) (KLM) concerns the interpretation of the general aim of *Folkeskolen*, the development of an 'ethics of profession' (*professionsetik*) and the handling of complex challenges as a teacher in a global society characterized by pluralism of cultures, values and religions.

**Competence aims:** The student is able to reflect in a nuanced manner on ethical, political, democratic and religious challenges connected to teaching, co-operation with parents and the school in a globalized society.

# ***KLM= Kristendomskundskab, Livsoplysning, Medborgerskab 2013***

<b>Knowledge aims: The student has knowledge of:</b>	<b>Proficiency aims: The student is able to:</b>
Central stories, concepts and the history of Christianity's impact on different historical periods' views on humanity and 'Bildung'.	Evaluate relations and conflicts between Christianity, secularization and school in a historical and current context.
Christianity, Judaism, Islam and other world views ( <i>livsanskuelser</i> ) in a contemporary context	Enter into dialogue with pupils and parents who have different religions and hold different world views.
The relation between religion, culture and politics in evangelical-Lutheran Christianity and other world views, different types of secularization and their consequences for the school	Handle religious and cultural dimensions surfacing in the school.

# ***KLM= Kristendomskundskab, Livsoplysning, Medborgerskab 2013***

**Life philosophy (*livsoplysning*), ethical traditions and their backgrounds in the history of ideas.**

**Use different types of ethical argumentation.**

Rituals and interpretation of human existence within selected philosophical and religious traditions.

Organize professional co-operation on complex ethical and religious challenges within the school.

Human Rights, children's rights and the background of these rights within the history of ideas, including the relations between human rights, religion and democracy.

Make suggestions for the organization of teaching, co-operation with parents and colleges and a 'school culture' (*skolekultur*) based on freedom of conscience, equality and democratic 'Bildung'.

Different types of citizenship in the history of ideas, the historical and current perspectives, and

Develop links between the school's function as providing citizenship and cultural 'Allgemeinbildung' and

# ***KLM= Kristendomskundskab, Livsoplysning, Medborgerskab 2013***

the philosophical and pedagogical-philosophical background for concepts such as tolerance, authority, equality, freedom and solidarity seen in relation to pluralism and integration within the school.

organize integrative teaching within fields of tension (*spændingsfelt*) between the individual and of the wider community (*fællesskab*)



# Combining Citizenship Education with Life-Philosophy and the Teaching of Christianity in Danish Teachers Training.

## ***KLM= Kristendomskundskab, Livsoplysning, Medborgerskab 2013 (continued)***

The neo-romanticist, neo-nationalist, cultural-Christian discourse, has thus been played down, and the former paragraphs on the impact of Christianity and Evangelical-Lutheran Christianity on foundational European and Danish values, democracy, welfare state and school deleted.

The subject has still, though, the status of the core compulsory common subject for all teachers. It is the core subject for what is considered 'Allgemeinbildung' (Almen Dannelse'), the one meant to most clearly enable the teachers to teach and act in accordance with the overall general aims of the public elementary school, the general aims still mentioning the familiarity with Danish culture, acquaintance with other cultures, and the democratic values and competences of the coming citizens.

# **Combining Citizenship Education with Life-Philosophy and the Teaching of Christianity in Danish Teacher Training.**

***KLM= Kristendomskundskab, Livsoplysning, Medborgerskab 2013 (continued)***

Conclusion: in principle:

**The aims of 'Combining Citizenship Education with Life-Philosophy and the Teaching of Christianity in Danish Teacher Training'.**

**Has moved from the 2007 Preaching to Teaching, and from Neo-Nationalist Politics of Identity to Competent Handling of Multi-Culturalism. (At least for now and in principle.)**