

Moron Cakes and Boycott Apps: How Danes Cope With U.S. Belligerence

By AMELIA NIERENBERG

LONDON — A family-run bakery in the center of Denmark has been selling out of “moron cakes,” which just happen to be orange. Downloads have spiked for apps used to boycott American-made goods. Sales of red “MAGA” hats have surged.

Only this MAGA stands for “Make America Go Away.”

The crisis with President Trump over Greenland has hit home in Denmark.

The Arctic colossus has been a part of the Danish kingdom for more than 300 years. In the face of Mr. Trump’s insistence that Greenland should belong to the United States, Denmark’s leaders have answered with a firm but diplomatic no.

Ordinary Danes have seen no need for such politesse.

In a very Danish fashion, they

Jeanna Smialek contributed reporting.

have turned to a sometimes acerbic humor to express their frustration and get through one of their greatest geopolitical crises in recent memory.

“When things get really tough, we make fun of it,” said Anne-Sophie Lahme, a trend researcher and a director of Lahme, a Danish communications agency. “We have to survive, and we survive with humor.”

The impulse for a little needling can be therapeutic, and quite literally. A rebellious needlepointer became a local news darling for offering free pincushion patterns from her website for “letting out any built-up anger!” (Yes, they bear Mr. Trump’s image, including a tuft of orange yarn for hair.)

“It’s just for fun,” said Trine Runge Jessen, the needlepointer, who lives in the Danish city of Aarhus. “But, somehow, it isn’t funny.”

Jokes aside, some Danes are getting serious about stepping

away from the United States. On Saturday, Danish veterans marched in protest through Copenhagen to express their outrage at Mr. Trump. And late last month, Denmark’s public broadcaster ran a guide for divesting from American tech.

One of the boycott apps, UdenUSA, (or Without USA) recently became the most-downloaded app on the country’s Apple store, according to Appfigures, a market intelligence firm.

“People really wanted to boycott the United States,” said Jonas Pipper, a founder of the app, which appears internationally as NonUSA.

“They feel like they have power,” he added. “They gain power back when they gain that clarity.”

To use the app, consumers scan a label. If a product is American, a red X appears, and UdenUSA suggests a local alternative. (Otherwise, it shows a green check.) A



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A twist on the MAGA hat uses Greenland’s capital, Nuuk, in a pun on “Enough is enough!”

free version allows three scans a day. For about \$3 a month, a user gets unlimited offerings.

The surge of downloads of a similar Danish app, Made O’Meter, has been so intense that they almost crashed its server, said Ian Rosenfeldt, its founder.

“It’s a kind of silent protest,” he said. “If you feel that you’re getting attacked and you feel totally

powerless, you need some way to feel a little bit in control.”

Between them, the two Danish apps have about 130,000 lifetime downloads, Appfigures said.

The memes and boycotts have fortified worried Danes, who have long reveled in their country’s nothing-is-sacred-and-no-one-is-special sense of humor.

Danish humor is self-effacing, said Mette Moller, a Danish expert on satire and rhetoric. “You have to be able to take yourself not too seriously,” Dr. Moller said.

For Danes, that makes an American president who has built his brand on bragging an especially easy target.

“You’d be wasting your breath on such a person,” said Pelle Guldberg Hansen, a behavioral scientist at Roskilde University in Denmark. “It’s much more accepted that you just mock them by making them seem insignificant and idiotic.”

As Mr. Trump swept into office

again a year ago, the family-run bakery in central Denmark debuted its “moron cakes.” They are a pun in Danish on a “kaj kage,” an ode to Kaj, a little green frog who is a mainstay of Danish children’s television.

Add one letter — kaj to kvaj — and they become “moron cakes.” Some are orange, instead of green. Others blue, in a nod to how cold Mr. Trump would be in Greenland.

“It’s a way that you can laugh in the face of it all,” said Nina Bauer, a Danish food historian.

Even the bakery, Kjer’s Brod, is not immune to growing fears about retaliation from the Trump administration.

After conferring for days, the owners declined an interview. They said that they were worried that they would be denied entry to the United States — a country they love to visit — if they appeared in a curious border officer’s Google search.