



# 'Denmark contra Jvdæos':

## Conspiracist antisemitism and stigmatised knowledge in Danish national socialism, 1938–1945

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**ABSTRACT** • This article examines the relationship between conspiracy theories and antisemitism by posing the question of whether conspiracism is an inseparable and integrated part of national socialist antisemitism or a marginalised, extremist position even within such settings. An analysis of two Danish national-socialist journals, *Kamptegnet* and *National-Socialisten*, demonstrates how the introduction of *stigmatised knowledge* in the form of anti-Masonic conspiracy theories and the myth of ritual murder led to an antisemitic escalation process in *Kamptegnet*, imbuing antisemitism with a redemptive character during the Second World War. Antisemitic conspiracy theories, on the other hand, played a relatively marginal role in *National-Socialisten*, where aspects that enjoyed promotion in Germany were downplayed for tactical reasons. While antisemitism in *National-Socialisten* primarily played a role in caricatures and as a bizarre form of entertainment, an escalation can also be observed here as a consequence of the progression of the war and the intensified German propaganda effort.

In defining antisemitism, scholars struggle to grasp the differences in intensity and policy of various anti-Jewish manifestations across time, space and circumstances. Even during the national socialist era (1933–45), there were vast differences between the antisemitisms cultivated by national socialist parties and perpetrators across Europe. The subject of this article is the phenomenon of *conspiracist antisemitism*, which designates a worldview or mindset where everything can be explained by – and subsequently subordinated to – a conspiracy. Traditional channels of information are considered ‘lackeys’ which hide the truth, while alternative sources of information, and stigmatised knowledge such as occult, esoteric and subcultural ideas, are actively sought out, shared and integrated in the framework of understanding.

While the concept of race and biological racism was compromised after the Second

World War, conspiracy theories, also described as conspiracy beliefs, have remained a constant element within antisemitic movements and platforms, though often concealed behind codes and euphemisms. Thus, it is crucial to the understanding of the mechanisms of antisemitism to explore its relationship with conspiracy theories. By combining antisemitism studies with the acknowledgments from research on conspiracy theories and ideologies, radical antisemitic settings can be explored as *realms of stigmatised knowledge*, prone to conspiracy beliefs (Barkun 2013), just as concepts such as *the dynamics of expansion* from event conspiracies to systemic conspiracism can be perceived as an antisemitic escalation process (Barkun 2013; Gunz & Schaller 2022).

This article sets out to analyse the concept of *conspiracist antisemitism* as a variant of Gavin I. Langmuir’s ‘chimeric’ antisemitism

(Langmuir 1990) to determine whether it is an inseparable and integrated part of antisemitism as perceived by national socialists, or a marginalised, extremist position even *within* national socialist settings. In addition, the article explores the possibility of identifying a spectrum of conspiracism: is it conceivable to distinguish empirically between national socialist texts, utilising conspiracist ideas and references, and a conspiracist mindset, where all other ideological features are subordinated to a systemic conspiracy theory?

The research question of the relations between conspiracism and national socialist antisemitism is explored through a systematic analysis of two Danish national socialist journals: an investigation of the use of stigmatised knowledge and sources of information in the antisemitic journal *Kamptegnet* (1939–43), prone to conspiracist antisemitism (Bak & Emberland 2022), and the role of conspiracism in the weekly journal *National-Socialisten* (1931–45), published by the largest Danish national socialist party (Danmarks Nationalsocialistiske Arbejderparti, DNSAP).

## Conspiracism

From the outset, conspiracy theories represent an epistemological challenge. Post-modernism has contested scholarly positivism and our perception of an objective truth, as it is generally acknowledged that our subjective positions inform our perceptions and interpretations of sources, just as reconstructions of past and present realities are highly subjective and unavoidably informed by presentism. Falsification – even the mere characterisation of a perception of reality as a conspiracy theory – thus represents an epistemological problem: if there is no objective truth, how can a perception of reality be considered false? This problem is magnified by the nature of conspiracies, as they claim the existence of a secret plot of cabals, dedicated to obscurity and disguising any

evidence. However, it is a paradoxical advantage that conspiracy theory mimics scholarly apparatus and empiricism (Barkun 2013: 28). This makes it possible to approach conspiracist argumentation and documentation as a methodological problem. Since historical science relies on consistent logic of argumentation, declaration and valuation of sources and transparency, the same methodology can be applied to the study of conspiracy theories.

As described by Karcher & Simonsen in the introduction, the sociologist Michael Barkun offers a distinction between *event conspiracies* and *systemic conspiracies* as well as concepts to analyse the escalation from event to systemic conspiracism, such as the significance of adopting stigmatised knowledge, and the construct of *super-conspiracies* in which multiple conspiracies are combined.<sup>1</sup> Barkun is concerned with *the dynamics of expansion*, which explains why conspiracists are prone to adopt antisemitic tropes and codes. Moving from event to systemic conspiracies, from a limited purpose to a grand scope, the more the conspiracy theory seeks to explain, the larger its domain of evil, as ‘conspiracists find it difficult to keep out new putative evil-doers’ (Barkun 2013: 37). This inclusiveness in turn makes the conspiracy less susceptible to

1 The term *super-conspiracies* is unfortunately only loosely defined in terms of ‘conspiratorial constructs in which multiple conspiracies are believed to be joined in complex ways’ (Barkun 2013: 6). It can be further elaborated that a super-conspiracy involves the entire world, that the conspiratorial forces already control the system just as the super-conspiracies are more loosely connected to ideological systems. It might be argued that the antisemitic conspiracy concerned with a Jewish quest for world domination is indeed such a ‘super-conspiracy’, but Barkun himself defines ‘conspiracy theories that focus on the alleged machinations of Jews’ as a systemic conspiracy (Barkun 2013: 6).

disproof. Hence, conspiracists are tempted by the mother of all conspiracies, the antisemitic imagery of a secret Jewish world power. While not all conspiracies are inherently antisemitic, the probability of incorporating antisemitic tropes is high, in view of this dynamic. In this article, however, our primary object of concern is the reverse process: the adaptation of conspiracy beliefs in settings already infected with antisemitism.

Although Barkun only explores the dissemination of conspiracist beliefs in political settings (and mainstream audiences) in passing (Barkun 2013: 8, 188), his arguments on fragmentary and episodic conspiracist ideas versus methodical conspiracism may still provide a direction for further research. In addition, new research on antisemitism on social media (Hübscher & von Mering 2022) offers concepts that may be useful for exploring the radicalisation of antisemitic narratives, such as the concept of *antisemitic escalation*, which refers to the development of narratives within a broader discourse, from structural (or coded antisemitism) to blatant antisemitism though the integration of still more antisemitic narratives and conspiracist tropi (Gunz & Schaller 2022).

The historians of religions Terje Emberland and Asbjørn Dyrendal introduce the term ‘conspiracy talk’, referring to codes and suggestions that indicate conspiracist themes, yet in a fragmented, episodic and anecdotal fashion (Dyrendal & Emberland 2019: 62). Such may or may not be connected to a coherent conspiracy theory and primarily refers to a profound distrust of established elites and their communication channels, just as it strengthens the cohesion and potential radicalisation of a group.

### Stigmatised knowledge and chimeric antisemitism

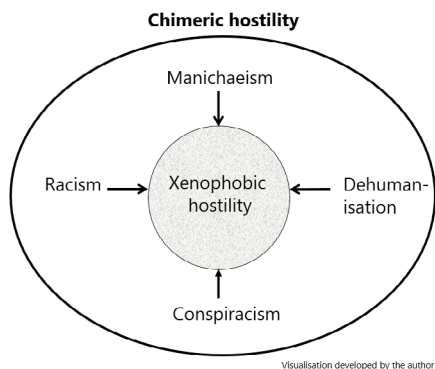
Stigmatised knowledge is defined as ‘claims to truth that the claimants regard as verified despite the marginalisation of those claims by

the institutions that conventionally distinguish between knowledge and error – universities, communities of scientific researches, and the like’ (Barkun 2013: 26).

It might be *forgotten* (or once allegedly known), *superseded*, *ignored*, *rejected* or *suppressed* (of allegedly known) knowledge. Radical political settings are *realms of stigmatised knowledge*, prone to conspiracy beliefs because of a basic distrust of epistemic authorities, the acceptance and promotion of stigmatised knowledge and the explanatory power of the conspiracy theories, as knowledge stigmatisation and opposition are attributed to the machinations of a conspiracy. On the one hand, conspiracy theories are an example of suppressed knowledge, on the other they explain why such stigmatised claims have been marginalised.

In the modern classic *Towards a Definition of Anti-Semitism* (1990), the medieval historian Gavin I. Langmuir presents a generic theory which understands antisemitism as a form of communication and focuses on the logic of argumentation in antisemitic statements and its implicit functions, intentions and consequences. Central to Langmuir’s theory is an analytical distinction between *xenophobic* – that is the ascription of a socially threatening behaviour to Jews in general – and a *chimeric* form of hostility referring to behaviour and traits that have never been empirically observed and have no connection to reality. Explicitly, Langmuir refers to German National Socialist antisemitism as an example of chimeric hostility. However, his statements are not further substantiated empirically, and it remains obscure which features in National Socialist antisemitism determine its placement in the chimeric category.

To enhance Langmuir’s theory, as Figure 1 illustrates, chimeric illusions may include Manichaeism (e.g., a radical dualism that perceives Jews as the representatives of darkness and evil), dehumanisation (e.g., depriving Jews



of human qualities and excluding them from the universal human community), racism and conspiracism. *Racism* is here understood as denoting biological racism, ascribing derogatory physical and mental characteristics to a group of people designated as a biological entity, a 'race'. The common feature of these types of chimeric hostility is an argumentative logic which relies on stigmatised knowledge. The distinction between *xenophobic* and *chimeric antisemitism* makes it possible to identify the logic and background intentions, as well as the consequences of antisemitic arguments, and allows for exploration of the escalation from xenophobic to chimeric argumentation. Whereas xenophobic antisemitism relates more or less to collective existence, conspiracist antisemitism has lost all connections to social reality. Hence, adopting and incorporating stigmatised knowledge and sources of information and accumulating antisemitic tropes and stereotypes – *the dynamics of expansion* described by Barkun – designates an antisemitic escalation process. This phenomenon is not confined to national socialist settings of the 1930s and 1940s but is readily observable in internet and social media forums of contemporary society.

### Danish antisemitic organisations

The first political organisation in Denmark dedicated to modern antisemitism was the lobby Danish Association for the Restriction

of Foreign Elements (Dansk Forening til Fremmedelementernes Begrænsning), also known as the Danes' League (Danskerligaen), founded as early as 1917, years prior to the first Danish fascist organisations. The organisation hardly had more than 500 members and its publications did not reach more than 1000 subscribers. Still, the group had profound importance for the development of a Danish antisemitic discourse, as central features and tropes of modern Danish antisemitism emanated from the group. In addition, the organisation was the first to promote conspiracist delusions of Jewish omnipotence. As early as June 1920, their journal *Dansk Nationalt Tidsskrift* quoted from the English version of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and in September the same year, the journal editor,



In 1936, the Royal Danish Library provided the book *Jødefaren* with an improvised disclaimer, as they glued a widely distributed statement on the forgery of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* made by leading ecclesiastical representatives on the front page.

Rasmus Bøgebjerg, instigated the translation and publishing of the first Danish edition of *The Protocols* (Lauridsen 2002: 284).<sup>2</sup> To further promote the text, Bøgebjerg collected miscellaneous antisemitic material and published the book *Jødefaren* ('The Jewish Peril') later the same year.<sup>3</sup>

The League lost momentum and ceased most of its activities in 1926. The last issue of *Dansk Nationalt Tidsskrift* came out in 1929, during the rally of the National Socialist German Worker's Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, NSDAP) in Nuremberg, and included a tribute to Adolf Hitler. Yet, during the era of the Hitler regime from 1933 to 1945, the antisemitic narratives and tropes of the Danes' League gave legitimacy to the claim of Danish national socialist parties that core ideas in their ideology were home-grown and not imported from Germany. In addition, individual members were awarded status as *Alte Kämpfer* and their publications reissued.

Denmark holds somewhat of a world record of having the most national socialist parties in the period from 1928 to 1945 (Djursaa 1981:17–18). Most significant was Denmark's National Socialist Workers Party (Danmarks Nationalsocialistiske Arbejderparti, DNSAP), the largest Danish national socialist party in terms of members, parliamentary status and political influence.

2 Indeed, it was Bøgebjerg who encouraged the Danish translator Gudrun Rørdam to publish under a pseudonym (Lauritz Clausen) to protect herself from public resentment, *National-Socialisten*, 30 July 1933.

3 Sergei Nilus, *Jødefaren* (Copenhagen: Lauritz Carlsen, 2020 – on commission at Vilhelm Prior). Digitalised by the Royal Danish Library in 2022. As a testament to the semantic confusion confronted with a foreign word not yet familiar in Danish, the author referred to his political project as 'Antisimitisme' (instead of 'antisemitisme') on page 4.

As to publications, the weekly *National-Socialisten* (1931–45), the official propaganda instrument intended to promote the ideas of the party, and the daily newspaper *Fædrelandet* (1939–45) had the widest dissemination, both being available from ordinary newsstands. DNSAP was established as early as in 1930 but faced initial difficulties in gaining traction among the Danish population, probably because of its overt emulation of the NSDAP. Indeed, DNSAP's inaugural party programme closely mirrored that of the German counterpart. Following a change in leadership in 1933, wherein the South Jutlandish physician and veteran of the First World War, Frits Clausen, gained leadership, the party successfully underwent a transformation. This involved a shift in focus from garnering local support in Southern Jutland to appealing to urban workers in Copenhagen. Under Clausen's leadership, the party membership base increased from 5000 in 1939 to 10,000 in 1940 and further to 22,000 in 1943. In 1939, DNSAP achieved a parliamentary presence by securing 31,000 votes, equivalent to 1.8 per cent of the total votes cast, resulting in three seats in the Danish parliament. The party's most significant parliamentary success occurred in the 1943 elections, where it garnered 43,000 votes, constituting 2.1 per cent of the total votes cast (Lauridsen 2003: 274–5).

Viewed in isolation, DNSAP was somewhat of a political success story, but despite the prevailing political conditions and the German occupation of Denmark in 1940, the party never gained any significant influence. The German occupying forces pursued a policy of cooperation with the democratic political parties, and from 1943 onwards – and especially after the March 1943 election, which clearly demonstrated that DNSAP was not a contender for governmental power – DNSAP steadily disintegrated. By 1944, its membership had dwindled to 12,000.

With Henning Poulsen's pioneering study on the collaboration of Danish national socialists during the German occupation, a historiographic tradition was established which concluded that antisemitism was an 'embarrassing' issue for DNSAP (Poulsen 1970). According to Poulsen, antisemitism was only reluctantly incorporated in order to legitimise the party as national socialist, and consequently the antisemitism cultivated by DNSAP has been characterised as 'moderate'. However, in his extensive studies of Danish fascism, John T. Lauridsen has shown that the term is grossly misleading since the party opposed all forms of 'racial intermixture' (*Rassenschande*), believed in the alleged superiority of the Nordic race and advocated an ongoing racial war between the Nordic race and the Jews, including specific measures targeting Danish Jews (Lauridsen 2002). To the leading figures of the party, antisemitism was neither a product of opportunism nor an embarrassment. It was an integrated part of the political culture of the party and as such a regular feature on the internal communication platforms, although externally de-emphasised. However, DNSAP's relationship with racist antisemitism – which obviously did not allow any exceptions, even for friends or prominent cultural figures – was frequently inconsistent and largely dependent on political conjunctures (Bak 2004). Yet, no previous studies have addressed and explored the role of conspiracist ideas and frameworks within DNSAP.

The party was moderate only in comparison, notably when juxtaposed with one national socialist party in particular — the National Socialist Workers Party (Nationalsocialistisk Arbejderparti, NSAP), which wielded a considerable influence on the style, character and dissemination of antisemitism in Denmark. NSAP was founded in October 1935 by the translator Aage H. Andersen as a direct result of his exclusion from the DNSAP for his

'extreme opinions' – in practice his devoted dissemination of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (Bak 2004: 54–5; Lauridsen 2002: 272).

Andersen had joined the ranks of the DNSAP in 1934,<sup>4</sup> but his political ascent within the party experienced an abrupt halt just a year later. A catalysing factor was the pamphlet *Den kristne Kirke i nordisk Belysning* ('The Christian Church in a Nordic Light'),<sup>5</sup> published by him earlier that year, reviving the anti-Jewish ideas of Martin Luther within the conspiracist framework of *The Protocols* (Bak 2004: 54–5). Andersen's pamphlet generated considerable controversy in the mainstream press, which uniformly condemned it as a racist smear and ridiculed the use of a text that had already been exposed as a forgery in the early 1920s. The leaders of the DNSAP were afraid of the detrimental effect to the party's reputation, as they sought to attract support by de-emphasising antisemitism. DNSAP even forbade party members from selling or distrib-

4 Aage H. Andersen commenced his national socialist career in the National Socialist Party (National Socialistisk Parti, NSP), in 1933. NSP was established in 1932 by Wilfred Petersen, the influential leader of the Copenhagen section of DNSAP. By attracting young members from the metropolitan section of DNSAP, Petersen appealed to an activist working-class youth through his explicit antisemitism, revolutionary ideas and ultra-nationalist critique of DNSAP and its emulation of the German NSDAP. In 1935, a name change to Danish Socialist Party (Dansk Socialistisk Parti, DSP) coincided with the replacement of the swastika with the symbol of a white lightning. The journal *Stormen* (1932–40), published by DSP, had no limitations in persecuting individuals and promoting conspiracist antisemitism (Bundgård Christensen 2022: 85–7, 158–66).

5 Aage H. Andersen, *Den kristne Kirke i nordisk Belysning: 'Luthers Stilling til Jødespørgsmaalet'* (Copenhagen: Self-publishing company, 1935).

uting the pamphlet.<sup>6</sup> With the establishment of NSAP, Andersen's hands were no longer tied, and *The Protocols* were republished in Danish by NSAP in 1940 and 1941. Subsequent Danish editions (1986 and 2017) are reprints of the 1940 version.<sup>7</sup>

With Aage H. Andersen as supreme leader of NSAP, all other ideological features of national socialism were eradicated, except one: antisemitism now assumed a paramount role. In the party's mission statement, national socialism was explicitly equated with antisemitism: "There is only one salvation, and that is national socialism, to each and every point aimed at combatting the sinister and arrogant Jewish conquest of the world."<sup>8</sup>

In 1939, under slogans such as 'Denmark for the Danes', 'No peace on Earth as long as just one Jew is alive', and 'The Jew is the cancer of our society', Andersen commenced the publication of the weekly journal *Kamptegnet*, a Danish counterpart to Julius Streicher's *Der Stürmer*. While he copied and translated articles and cartoons directly from *Der Stürmer*, *Kamptegnet* also featured original material relating to Danish context and history as well as illustrations and caricatures by Danish

artists. Remaining true to the original in terms of extremism, personal persecution, and the tabloid style of *Der Stürmer*, *Kamptegnet* excessively focused on crime and sex. It regularly featured a column titled 'Miscegenation of the Week' ('Ugens Raceskændsel'). As a response to the hypersexual tone in the journal, the Danish Justice Department repeatedly contemplated banning *Kamptegnet*, citing the Danish law against pornography (Bak 2021: 48–51).<sup>9</sup> The journal, sold at ordinary newsstands with bright yellow posters announcing the weekly headlines, attracted massive attention at the time, and was probably perused by more people than the estimated circulation figures suggest.

The explicit sexual references were not the only aspects frowned upon. More than any other national socialist publication, *Kamptegnet* emerged as the quintessential symbol of racist antisemitism. Deemed foreign and 'un-Danish' by the mainstream press and political establishment, racist antisemitism faced ridicule and stigma for its association with National Socialism. While antisemitic prejudices and stereotyping – what Langmuir refers to as *xenophobic* antisemitism – were prevalent in Danish society in the 1930s, they were seldom explicitly acknowledged as such. Instead, such discourses were embraced as part of the prevailing paradigm, rarely scrutinised and never stigmatised (Bak 2004). In contrast, racist antisemitism and racial theories could be characterised as stigmatised knowledge years before both were scandalised by the Holocaust.

A study on conspiracist antisemitism in early Nordic fascism demonstrates that in the 1920s, racist antisemitism did not hinder the Danes' League from gaining a foothold in conservative and agrarian settings. However,

6 In autumn 1933, *National-Socialisten* did feature a series on *The Protocols*, but according to Frits Clausen, this was due to a sudden shortage of article material, as he himself had not been able to finish a planned series of articles (see Lauridsen 2002: 285).

7 Sergei Nilus, 'Zions Vises Protokoller' (*Den jødiske Verdenserobringsplan*) (Copenhagen: Den ny Tid's forlag, 1940). A new edition, based on Lauritz Carlsen's translation, was published by Aage H. Andersen in 1941, and a photographic reprint of the 1940-edition was published in *Nordland forlag* in 1986 (see also reprint of the 1986-edition, published by Imprimatur in 2017).

8 Aage H. Andersen, 'Er "Zions Vises Protokoller" et falsum?' in Nilus Sergei, *Zions Vises Protokoller* (Charlottenlund: Self-publishing company, 1941).

9 For contrast, see the article on *Kamptegnet's* Swedish counterpart *Hammarén* by Lars M Andersson in this special issue.

their conspiracist ideas played a pivotal role in their modest political achievements. By the 1930s, the same particular type of antisemites still encountered difficulties in finding a place within the mainstream of DNSAP, where racism was definitely not an obstacle (Bak & Emberland 2022). Within the NSAP, there were no restrictions on promoting pornographic, racist and conspiracist themes. Yet, what remains unexplored is whether *the dynamics of expansion*, accumulation of stigmatised knowledge and sources of information, can be identified in *Kamptegnet*, and what factors conditioned the antisemitic escalation process.

### Notes on methodology

*Kamptegnet* was published intermittently from 1939 to 1943. All issues have been examined for references to stigmatised knowledge and sources of information. At its peak in 1941–2, *Kamptegnet* was printed in 14,000 copies. By May 1943, the circulation had dropped to 1,800 copies (Bak 2004: 85).

*National-Socialisten* was published weekly from 1931 to 1945. For the purpose of this article, volume 8 (1938) and volumes 12 to 13 (1943–4) have been systematically examined for references to stigmatised knowledge and conspiracist themes. Unfortunately, volumes 9 to 11 (1939–42) are missing from the National Library (Det Kongelige Bibliotek). The circulation figures for the printed copies of *National-Socialisten* are unknown, yet the journal was an official collective organ for the party, but unlike for example the internal newsletters of DNSAP, *National-Socialisten* was also intended to serve a propaganda purpose aimed at a larger audience of potential sympathisers. As mentioned before, both journals were publicly accessible and on sale at ordinary newsstands.

In the statistical compilation of the prevalence of conspiracist tropes and rhetoric in

*National-Socialisten* (Figure 1, below), a distinction is made between ‘Conspiracist antisemitism’ in text (A), in caricatures (B), and ‘References to conspiracist ideas’ (C). This distinction is maintained to highlight the difference between articles that elaborate an explicit conspiracist worldview – promoting a systemic conspiracy – and unreflective references, such as concepts like ‘World Jewry’ or ‘international Jewish high finance’. Such codes or tropes refer to a conspiracist mindset, yet only in a fragmented and implicit manner. Furthermore, a distinction is made between the theme of anti-Freemasonry (D) and texts that assert an explicit association between Freemasons and Jews (E) to accentuate that not all texts containing anti-Masonic themes were antisemitic.

The same article may contain elements of conspiracist antisemitism (A) and associations between Freemasons and Jews (E). In such cases, both references are registered separately, so the numbers in these columns cannot necessarily be aggregated. The same is true for articles that may include both references to conspiracist ideas (C) and associations between Freemasons and Jews (E).

The number of articles containing the selected themes is recorded for each appearance. The same issue may include an article containing conspiracist antisemitism (A) as well as a caricature with the same feature (B). The very same issue may even include yet another article with unreflective references to conspiracist ideas (C). Consequently, the numbers can be totalled for each category but cannot be aggregated across categories.

### *Kamptegnet*

*Kamptegnet* was published in two phases with significant differences. The periodical was initially released as a monthly journal from May 1939, transitioning to a weekly format from the summer of 1940 until November 1940, when it ceased publication as a result



of financial difficulties. The marketing efforts faced challenges; newspapers, for instance, refused to carry advertisements for the journal. Nevertheless, the publication resumed in May 1941, adopting a professional and modern graphic design, featuring photographs, illustrations and caricatures, including collages. The German occupying forces had decided to invest funds in the venture. As will be evident below, it was not only the design that had changed.

*Kamptegnet* exhibits numerous defining traits akin to those found in antisemitic publications such as the Norwegian *Nationalt Tidsskrift* (Karcher & Simonsen 2023; Karcher & Simonsen in this special issue), the Swedish *Nationen* (Berggren 2014) and *Hammarén* (Andersson in this special issue).

Not only did they share the delusion of a Jewish world conspiracy, but they also interpreted this threat as a racial struggle between Jews and Germanic-Nordic peoples. They exposed and ridiculed Jewish individuals and placed the conspiracist narratives within the local social and historical contexts. The Jewish conspiracy was not an abstract construction but a tangible worldview within these circles.

As a means for exploring the relationship between antisemitic conspiracism and belief in other forms of stigmatised knowledge, *Kamptegnet* possesses exemplary features. Not only was the journal blatantly racist and promoted racial theories, both rhetorically and visually it dehumanised Jews through associations with the devil as the ‘earthly representative of Satan’,<sup>10</sup> as well as with pests and vermin. The journal printed caricatures containing associative metaphors and devil symbols typical of the antisemitic genre: the octopus, the snake, the rat, the spider, the crocodile and the monster, and promoted entrenched visual stereotypes of physical repulsiveness – hooked noses, full lips, near-sighted eyes, gesturing crooked hands,

10 *Kamptegnet*, no. 7, 1941.

broad bellies and large feet. Additionally, *Kamptegnet* portrayed Jewish men as emasculated and Jewish women as unfeminine and sexually undesirable. All contributed to promoting a Manichaeic dualism.

In addition, new conspiracist topoi emerged. The initial version (1939–40) scarcely touched upon the subject of Freemasonry, whereas the theme gained prominence during the second phase as a conspiracist narrative gradually unfolded. In 1941, *Kamptegnet* featured a series on Danish Masonic orders fixated on alleged initiation symbols, rituals and admission levels. Secrecy was the primary objection, as exemplified in this instance where the clandestine nature of the order is underscored threefold: ‘The conspiratorial brothers conducted their secret business behind locked doors.’<sup>11</sup> A year later, Aage H. Andersen himself authored a series of articles portraying Masonic orders as henchmen of the Jews in their global quest for world dominance. The logic behind such collaboration was never rationally discussed, but as Andersen articulated in the text:

Through Freemasonry, Judaism obtained worldwide control over the leading cultural, financial and political circles worldwide. Lodges across the globe are under the complete control and influence of Judaism, and this relationship holds true even in Christian lodges, whether ‘the Brothers’ acknowledge it or not.<sup>12</sup>

In the same article, the antisemitic theme even took a back seat as Freemasons were depicted as front-line fighters in the global war against Christian societies:

All the revolutionary uprisings and wars that shook Europe during the nineteenth

11 *Kamptegnet*, no. 13, 1941.

12 *Kamptegnet*, no. 9, 1942.

and twentieth centuries up to the present day can [...] be proved to be the work of Freemasonry (and the thus established Jewish influence).<sup>13</sup>

The anti-Masonic campaign had its own particular economic and political dimensions, as *Kamptegnet* asserted that a clique of master craftsmen, members of the Masonic order, prevented smaller businesses and craftsmen from securing work and concessions.<sup>14</sup> This stirred social indignation, leading NSAP to accuse even their national socialist competitors in DNSAP of being ‘Freemasonic’ as the term took on connotations of nepotism and cronyism.<sup>15</sup> In line with *Kamptegnet’s* style, individual Freemasons were also exposed in the journal.<sup>16</sup> Naturally, in the Jewish lodge, B’nai B’rith, *Kamptegnet* identified the quintessence of evil:

the entire globe [is] entangled in the Jewish espionage network [...]. It is quite clear that nothing can occur in any country’s government without one or more of the Jews, cunningly placed in important key positions, immediately being informed and letting their lodge devise counter-measures and plans that only serve to benefit world Jewry and no one else.<sup>17</sup>

The conspiracist ideas of a global Masonic network and influence, coupled with the social indignation on behalf of the working class and petty bourgeoisie, fuelled the anti-semitic conspiracist narrative, expanding the domain of evil in terms of size, reach and potency.

13 *Kamptegnet*, no. 9, 1942.

14 *Kamptegnet*, no. 13, 1942.

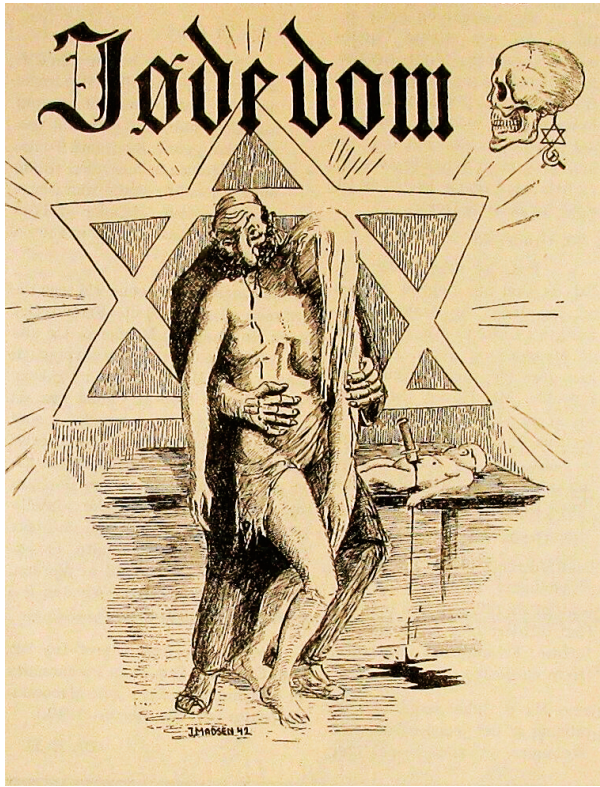
15 *Kamptegnet*, May 1939.

16 *Kamptegnet*, no. 22, 1940, for example.

17 *Kamptegnet*, no. 5, 1942.

From 1941, another notorious antisemitic phantom surfaced: the myth of ritual murder. The ritual murder accusation – or the myth of blood libel – originated in medieval Europe, and was triggered by internal Christian social and religious crises. The myth became a regular feature in Christian anti-Judaism, was revived in the modern era as a reaction to Jewish emancipation and eventually played a decisive role in national socialism, where the accusation supported the dehumanisation and social exclusion of Jews (Kieval 2021). The first-ever reference to alleged ritual murders appeared in *Kamptegnet* in late October 1941, initiating a series of no fewer than fifty-five articles, one in every issue throughout 1941 and 1942. The articles had a vast thematic and geographic scope, addressing ritual murders across most parts of Western and Eastern Europe – and even cases in San Francisco and Damascus – spanning a dizzying historical period from the fifteenth century to the 1890s. The articles drew on a plethora of stigmatised knowledge related to magic, folklore and folk medicine, in addition to anti-Judaic readings of the Old Testament and the Talmud. The ritual murder myth is overtly linked to conspiracist antisemitism, as the stories particularly emphasize the collective and transnational cover-up and secrecy that are prerequisites for the murders to remain unresolved and continue through time and ages (see, e.g., Simonsen 2020: 358–9).

There were no citations in the articles, but in several instances throughout the series, there were references to Danish newspapers and institutions, indicating that any copying had been followed by editing and Danish adaptation. An obvious source of inspiration was the special issues on ritual murders published by *Der Stürmer* in May 1934 (incidentally banned for comparing Jewish ritual murder with the Christian sacrament of communion



While most caricatures in *Kamptegnet* were copied from *Der Stürmer*, this drawing is most likely of Danish origin, suggested by the amateurish style and the signature 'J.Madsen 42'. It not only features the myth of ritual murder of infant children but also suggests the theme of the Jewish man's sexual desire for 'Aryan' (read also 'Germanic' or 'Nordic') women in a non-consensual relationship, as the woman appears to be drugged, just as the Jewish male displays cannibalistic and vampiric inclinations (*Kamptegnet*, no. 9, 1942).

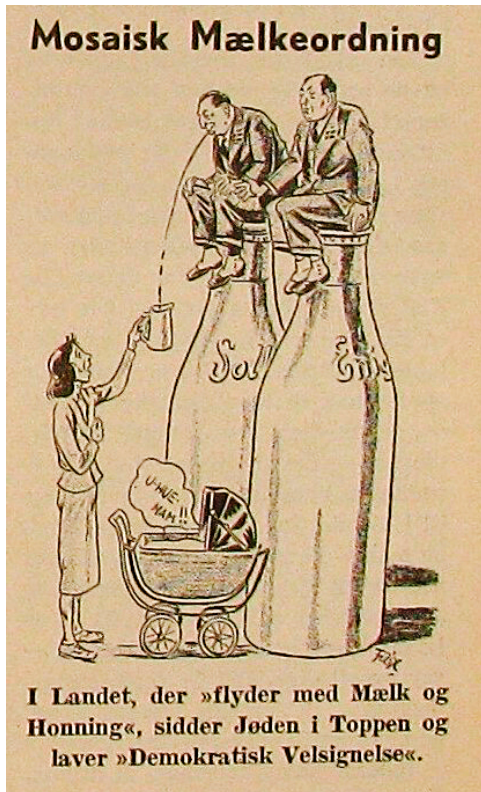
(Biale 2007: 123–7).<sup>18</sup> Though the series in *Kamptegnet* featured examples, images and cartoons from the special issue, they were neither a translated copy nor a direct imitation of style and sequence, just as *Der Stürmer* was not the only source.<sup>19</sup>

18 *Der Stürmer* continued elaborating on the topic despite the previous ban and international uproar, which suggests that the ban in 1934 was a tactical move in the consolidation phase of the NS regime (see, in addition, Roos 2014).

19 The front-page cartoon from the special issue on ritual murder, *Der Stürmer*, May 1934, featured in *Kamptegnet*, no. 28, 1941, whereas other cartoons and photos from the issue were printed in e.g. 25, 1941, and 32, 1941 (also featured in the front page of *Der Stürmer*,

The articles serve as a textbook example of the workings of antisemitic escalation through the incorporation of a steady flow of sources of stigmatised knowledge. They explicitly question the authority of science, established religious institutions and the mainstream press, yet were seemingly obsessed with 'proofs' and historical sources, just as they involve the

May 1939), 4, 1942, and 29, 1942. The special issue established a canon on ritual murders and was an obvious inspiration for the series in *Kamptegnet* as such. The article on the ritual murder of Father Thomas in Damascus in 1840, printed in *Kamptegnet*, no. 28, 1941, may serve as an example, as the article contained detailed information and narration which did not emanate from *Der Stürmer*.



*Kamptegnet*, no.11, 1942, signed 'Felix'. Felix was a recurring cartoonist in *Kamptegnet*, and his drawings had obvious Danish references. In this instance, there is a reference to Danish dairy companies, while the Jewish stereotypes wear an emblem of the Danish flag, a mockery of their 'alleged' Danish loyalty. The text reads: 'Mosaic milk programme. In the land "flowing with milk and honey", the Jew sits at the top and performs a "democratic blessing"'. (The Danish dairy companies – most likely Solbjerg Mejeri and Enigheden – supplied milk to the Copenhagen Milk Supply (Københavns Mælkeforsyning), which was owned by Carl Salomonsen and his daughters, Elna and Lillian.)

application of pseudo-scientific methods and visuals (such as statistical tables of reported ritual murders through the centuries).

The markedly changed tone of the journal, following the articles and accompanying illustrations, may explain why all reservations were abandoned in February 1942, when the journal published a letter to the editor which combined a wide range of conspiracist themes: the Templar Knights, satanic cults, Masonic lodges and Jews, all of whom were alleged worshippers

of a satanic creature.<sup>20</sup> In the terminology of Barkun, this testifies to the introduction of a *super-conspiracy*, combining multiple conspiracies (Barkun 2013: 6).

*Kamptegnet* undertook an antisemitic escalation process in the second publishing phase from 1941, through a dynamic of expansion, incorporating an increasing volume of conspiracist topoi and stigmatised knowledge of obscure and occult origin. The escalation was probably conditioned both by a closer formal and actual collaboration with *Der Stürmer* and by the conjunctures of the ongoing war. It is hardly coincidental that both the anti-Masonic and the ritual murder themes emerged in *Kamptegnet* just months after the German invasion of the Soviet Union and an intensified German propaganda effort, which exploited conspiracist and apocalyptic themes. There was also a domestic explanation: in December 1941, NSAP merged with DNSAP. This consolidation had been under way throughout the year, influenced by the absence of a national socialist take-over, internal divisions within DNSAP and aggressive internal competition among the national socialist parties. In a statement to the members, the former party leader, Andersen, had to emphasise that all contention with DNSAP should be halted immediately.<sup>21</sup> While membership of NSAP was automatically transferred to DNSAP, the most fanatical core of members continued their antisemitic activities within the Danish Anti-Jewish League (Dansk Antijødisk Liga), organised the same year as a sub-section of the National Socialist organisation, the Anti-Jewish World League

20 *Kamptegnet*, no. 6, 1942: 'BAPHOMET I vore dage', signed by 'Peder Pedersen' (most likely a pseudonym, as both the first name and surname are common Danish names).

21 Danish National Archives, party order, 12 December 1941, Archives of Dansk Antijødisk Liga, Package no. 21.

(Antijüdische Welt-Liga).<sup>22</sup> Choosing the symbol of a dagger engraved with 'Denmark contra jvdæos', Andersen sought to rally all antisemitic forces in a struggle for survival:

Judaism and Communism have organised a battle that will doom our people and bring victory to Judaism – so Danes must now organise to illuminate these world-destructive forces, to protect our people from annihilation.<sup>23</sup>

In other words, conspiracism had become redemptive.

*Kamptegnet* may have subscribed to the excessive conspiracist and racist antisemitism of *Der Stürmer*, yet despite their similar tabloid nature, *Kamptegnet* never achieved the popularity and reach of its German counterpart. The followers of NSAP never reached significant numbers, with party members and supporters combined never exceeding 1000.<sup>24</sup>

22 Danish National Archives, 'N.S.A.P.'s 6-Aarsdag', undated manuscript, Archives of Dansk Antijødisk Liga, Package no. 49.

23 *Kamptegnet*, no. 30, 1942.

24 Aage H. Andersen continued his national socialist activities as the editor of the monthly magazine *Racetjenesten* (December 1943 to December 1944), published by the Danish League for the Promotion of Racial Consciousness (Dansk Liga til fremme af Racebevidstheden), a continuation of the Danish Anti-Jewish League, which changed its name because its leader believed that conditions were now conducive to 'the positive work of racial hygiene'. In early 1944, the League was incorporated into the SS in the Schalburg corps, where Andersen was appointed head of the Central Office for Racial Issues. Most of his work involved preparing so-called Aryan certificates and genealogy documents, see *Racetjenesten*, December 1943. Andersen was expelled from DNSAP for the second time in May 1944, as the party distanced itself from the corps because they considered it under German

## National-Socialisten

As previously mentioned, conspiracist antisemitism, and especially references to *The Protocols*, were intricate matters within DNSAP. It did not serve the propaganda effort well; however, the antisemitic narrative connected DNSAP not only to the German model but also to other national socialist parties in the Nordic region and in Britain. The weekly journal *National-Socialisten* served a dual purpose: it was an official collective organ for the party and a propaganda and recruitment tool geared towards a broader audience. This meant walking a fine line regarding the utilisation of antisemitism. The function of the journal can thus be compared to that of the NSDAP's party newspaper, *Völkischer Beobachter*, especially in the period leading up to the seizure of power. It is an interesting observation that approximately more than half of the articles with antisemitic content in *Völkischer Beobachter* in the period 1925 to 1932 also incorporated conspiracist themes (zu Utrup 2003: 161).

*National-Socialisten* was undeniably racist and officially endorsed racial theories and legislation. Antisemitism was consistently present, but in the 1930s, it was primarily related to themes such as animal cruelty, crime and espionage. The journal swore in spectacular cases of drug trafficking, criminal gangs, nightclubs excesses, white slavery and racketeering, with individual cases distorted and exaggerated, and turned into collective accusations against Jews. Like *Kamptegnet*, *National-Socialisten* also attacked named Jews (as was the case with the Norwegian *Nationalt Tidsskrift* and in the Swedish journal *Hammaren*; see Karcher & Simonsen, and Andersson in this special issue). The underlying political agenda in these cases typically

control. On DNSAP's relationship with the Schalburg corps, see Lauridsen 2003.

revolved around opposition to snobbery and exploitation of the working class. The journal thus positioned itself as an advocate for the common man, exploited by the system and paying the bill. Initially, the party's programme towards Jews in Denmark was officially limited, as the journal primarily opposed immigration and aimed to limit Jewish influence in societal matters so it 'corresponded with their share of the population'.<sup>25</sup> Overall, antisemitism added a baroque aspect of tabloid entertainment to the political propaganda, everyday politics and international news, which dominated the columns of the journal. This observation is supported by the fact that antisemitism was often represented only in caricatures, which, in turn, were copied from national socialist media from Germany, and frequently from England.<sup>26</sup>

In general, most references to a global conspiracy and its workings were few, subtle and unreflective. For example, the magazine made vague assertions such as the press being controlled by Jews, about 'Jewish power positions around the world', Jewish attempts 'to undermine and destroy Nordic culture', 'international Jewish high finance' or Jewish 'culture-destroying activities'.<sup>27</sup> However, such claims were not placed within a larger framework revealing the conspiracist context. Often, the chains of associations were very long and implicit, as in 'The System' → capitalism → Freemasons → Jews. This may be explained by the fact that these 'codes' were readily decoded by the reader as established knowledge in the setting. However, it seems more likely that they were stereotypical claims, topoi drawn from the common antisemitic cultural heritage.

25 *National-Socialisten*, 48, 1938.

26 See the contribution by Graham Macklin in this issue for the introduction to concurrent antisemitic publications in Britain.

27 E.g., *National-Socialisten*, 30, 1938; 35, 1938; 13, 1943; 4, 1944.

Yet, explicit promotion of the conspiracist notion of the Jewish quest for world domination was also evident in the journal,<sup>28</sup> though never with a direct reference to *The Protocols*. Instead, anti-Jewish conspiracist ideas with Christian origins were actively endorsed. These representations were rooted in an anti-Jewish interpretation of the purpose of Judaism: since God had abandoned the Jews for rejecting Jesus, their original mission of serving the Messiah had been distorted into materialistic aspirations for earthly power, fuelled by hatred of Christians.<sup>29</sup>

By the summer of 1943, the situation changed. In March 1943, the editors of *Kamptegnet* were sentenced to prison for defamation. The court case, which became a national sensation, convinced the German Plenipotentiary in Denmark, SS-Obergruppenführer Werner Best, that *Kamptegnet* no longer served National Socialist interests (Bak 2021: 55–6). He withdrew his support, effectively shutting down the journal,

28 In Norway, conspiracism played a crucial role in understanding the war's development. During the early stages of the war, while the non-aggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union was in effect, propaganda focused on 'Jewish power in England'. Subsequently, the emphasis shifted to the fight against 'Jewish Bolshevism', re-emerging as a predominant theme from 1941 (see Karcher & Simonsen in this special issue). In addition, see Herf 2008. A similar dynamic likely existed in *National-Socialisten*, but unfortunately, it cannot be substantiated, as volumes 9 to 11, covering the years 1939 to 1942, are not publicly available.

29 E.g., *National-Socialisten*, 12, 1943. An influential figure in promoting such interpretations in Denmark was the Bishop of Copenhagen, H.L. Martensen (1808–1884), whose opposition to Jewish emancipation in *Den christelige Ethik* (1871–8) also relied on conspiracist themes. For this reason, *Den christelige Ethik* is included in the Danish antisemitic canon (Bak 2003: 175).



The tone and tropes of the caricatures in *National-Socialisten* changed radically from the 1930s to the late war years. Here are examples from no. 3, 1938, and no. 18, 1944.



and later facilitated the editors' departure to Germany. To avoid a complete loss of face, *Kamptegnet* was allowed to continue as a two-page feature in *National-Socialisten*. The first entry was printed in June 1943, the last in February 1944.<sup>30</sup> Conspiracism, with a redemptive agenda, now became an integral part of the publication. On the front page of *National-Socialisten*, a 'battle of life and death between international Jewry and the new era: National Socialism [...] an unprecedented ideological-military confrontation' was declared.<sup>31</sup> The same issue also featured the first explicit reference to *The Protocols*. Rhetorically and visually, the journal underwent an immediate radical transformation. The scornful, aggressive style of *Kamptegnet* persisted. While the extent of antisemitic content in the rest of the journal remained relatively stable, an escalation occurred as not only conspiracism but also other forms of stigmatised knowledge spread to other pages of the journal, such as references to ritual murder.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, the conspiracist notion of the harmful and secret activities of the Freemasons, which played a significant role in *Kamptegnet* from 1941, never caught on in *National-Socialisten*. Freemasonry was mostly ridiculed, as 'mummery and nonsense'. However, the idea of a secret capitalist network of Freemasons controlled by Jews became more prominent by 1943, but mainly as an implicit, unreflective reference. Antisemitism remained a regular feature in the journal's caricatures. However, they also changed in character, adopting an apocalyptic style with symbols of death and references to blood and sacrifice as recurring motifs. By 1944, conspiracist antisemitism had

30 The first entry of *Kamptegnet* appeared in *National-Socialisten*, 22, 4 June 1943, the last entry in 5, 4 February 1944.

31 *National-Socialisten*, 22, 1943.

32 *National-Socialisten*, 31, 1943

Figure 1. Conspiracist themes in *National-Socialisten* 1938, 1943 and 1944 (see 'Notes on Methodology' for statistical considerations).

	A. Conspiracist antisemitism – text*	B. Conspiracist antisemitism – caricatures	C. References to conspira- cist ideas	D. Anti-Free- masonry	E. Association between Freemasons and Jews
1938	8% (4)	0	8% (4)	4% (2)	0
1943	13% (7)	11% (6)	10% (5)	4% (2)	19% (10)
Incl. <i>Kamptegnet</i> (from June 1943)	31% (16)				
1944	10% (5)	25% (13)	6% (3)	2% (1)	8% (4)
Incl. <i>Kamptegnet</i> (to Feb. 1944)	15% (8)				

become an established feature in the caricatures of *National-Socialisten*.

Overall, *National-Socialisten* featured explicit conspiracism in texts in 8 per cent of the issues in 1938, along with a comparable number of conspiracist references. The corresponding figures were 31 per cent and 15 per cent for conspiracist texts in 1944 and 1945, respectively. The implicit references remained relatively stable during the period, while the conspiracist theme in caricatures steadily grew throughout the period, progressing from no references at all in 1938 to 25 per cent of the issues containing caricatures with conspiracist content in 1944.

In *National-Socialisten*, as in *Kamptegnet*, the escalation was evidently caused by the developments of the war. DNSAP was deeply involved in military collaboration, actively participating in recruiting volunteers for German military service in the Waffen-SS, with approximately 75 per cent of the Danish volunteers being members of DNSAP or other national socialist parties (Bundgård Christensen et. al 1998). The majority of the antisemitic content in *National-Socialisten's* caricatures sought to justify German aggression, claiming Jews were responsible for the war. Whereas

anti-Communism and antisemitism had been continuously linked explicitly and visually, during the late war years, antisemitism became closely tied to the increasing and explicit anti-British and anti-American propaganda. By 1943, phrases like 'English-American Jewish World War' had become a standard reference.

Unlike its Norwegian counterpart, National Unity (Nasjonal Samling), the German occupation in 1940 did not free DNSAP from dependence on public opinion. As Norway came under direct German rule (*Reichskommissariat*), all political parties – except National Unity – were dissolved and elections abolished. Hence, National Unity could unleash all restraints in their apocalyptic struggle against 'World Jewry' (Simonsen 2017; Karcher & Simonsen in this special issue). In Denmark, DNSAP still had to adhere to democratic norms in its efforts to expand its membership base and enhance electoral support. The party continuously competed with established democratic parties and aimed to directly engage voters through their political press.<sup>33</sup>

33 The limited prevalence of antisemitic and conspiracist content is particularly striking,



Yet, after the German occupation of Denmark in 1940, DNSAP was confronted with the concrete challenge of devising political solutions to the so-called 'Jewish problem'. Despite the Germans choosing to collaborate with the democratically elected government, DNSAP systematically worked towards a take-over, which included plans for the consequences of such a regime change for the Danish Jews (Lauridsen 2002). Thus, antisemitism was *realpolitik* for DNSAP until the spring of 1943, when the occupying power definitively lost interest in the party, following the disappointing election results in March 1943. While the necessity of providing the party with more political ballast explains the alliance with NSAP in 1941, the antisemitic baggage DNSAP thus acquired did not pose a problem concerning the main objective: ensuring the party's influence within the framework of the German overrule. In essence, the desire to gain favour with the Germans, particularly with Werner Best, explains why tactical considerations for Danish public opinion played a less prominent role after the German occupation. What hindered the party's consolidation in 1935 became pivotal for its survival in 1941.

By 1944, the prevalence of antisemitic content in general, and the conspiracist variant in particular, was declining. Once again, the political conjunctures had shifted.

The democratically elected government had resigned in August 1943 following a popular uprising. Despite DNSAP's efforts, the Germans prioritised democratic legitimacy over radical measures, at least until the

giving Erling Hallas's role as editor for volumes 7 to 8 (1937–8) and 10 (1940). Hallas was notably dedicated to antisemitic propaganda and authored the book *Racekamp: Vejledning til forståelse af Jødeproblemet* in 1941. Hallas perished on the Eastern Front in January 1944 (see Lauridsen 2002).

elected government failed to maintain control, as evidenced by the riots in the summer of 1943. However, instead of appointing a national socialist government, the Germans exercised direct rule, initiating a reign of terror and persecution. In October 1943, they targeted the Danish Jews, forcing the majority into exile and deporting approximately 500 individuals to the Theresienstadt ghetto. The German action did not halt the antisemitic agitation, neither in *Kamptegnet* nor in *National-Socialisten*, but it rendered antisemitism more abstract. Paradoxically, this also explains why the conspiracist theme continued. Conspiracist antisemitism did not necessitate the presence of actual Jews.

## Conclusions

It was not racism or the sexualised, mocking and scornful rhetoric of Aage H. Andersen's propaganda which prompted DNSAP to stand back. Instead, it was the conspiracism that completely dominated Andersen's agenda. The disagreement may have been primarily tactical, yet it also reflected different views on the use of stigmatised knowledge, such as references to *The Protocols*. Although DNSAP and NSAP separated in 1935, they merged in 1941 during the German occupation of Denmark. The ideological differences were not profound enough to prevent the parties from collaborating at a time when both were supported by the occupation forces, and the opportunistic mood in larger segments of the population provided new recruitment potential. As the war progressed, the conspiracism of *Kamptegnet* took on an increasingly paranoid, apocalyptic and redemptive tone, supported by the incorporation of additional stigmatised knowledge, such as anti-Freemason conspiracy theories and the myth of ritual murder. Meanwhile, although conspiracist antisemitism was not absent in *National-Socialisten*, it mainly persisted as subtle, unreflective references. This

pattern remained relatively stable in the journal as a whole, even though the integration of *Kamptegnet* into *National-Socialisten* in 1943 meant that the journal embarked on an anti-semitic escalation route. Most prominently, this meant adopting the association between Freemasonry and Jews, along with conspiracist themes related to an anti-British and anti-American agenda.

Conspiracist antisemitism was far from mainstream in Danish national socialism, as represented by DNSAP. It was an obstacle and a liability until tactics and propaganda changed with the conditions of the war. On average, 10 per cent of *National-Socialisten's* issues were infected with explicit conspiracism. The explanation is most probably national, stemming from Denmark's geopolitical status and vulnerability to accusations of German influence, which might lead DNSAP to downplay aspects of National Socialism that enjoyed significant promotion in Germany. Antisemitism was never absent from the party's propaganda, yet it primarily appealed to xenophobic and racist prejudices prevalent within the broader populace. In Denmark, conspiracism remained an extremist position even within the national socialist setting.

However, as a result of the German occupation in 1940, another tactical consideration emerged – one focused on positioning the party as a viable alternative to the democratically elected government. This required a consolidation of National Socialist forces in Denmark and a readiness to develop plans

for the persecution of Danish Jews – just as it allowed for radicalisation in *National-Socialisten*. *Kamptegnet*, on the other hand, never sought popular support or parliamentary representation; their objective was an apocalyptic struggle for survival. With society already on the brink of disaster, only radical redemption would suffice, rendering all tactical considerations as treacherous.

Using national socialist journals to explore the prevalence and character of conspiracist antisemitism has proved methodologically fruitful, as it allows for the identification of conspiracist themes, stigmatised knowledge and antisemitic escalation. Additionally, it is possible to observe differences between explicit and implicit conspiracism, with the latter working through codes and references. These may function as a means of strengthening cohesion within the setting and signalling ideological affiliation. In *National-Socialisten*, such fragmented conspiracism was obviously connected to a coherent antisemitic conspiracy theory. However, the same phrases and references can move outside these particular environments and become part of the antisemitic cultural heritage without new users being aware of the conspiracist framework they are engaging in. This process is currently increasingly evident in the use of conspiracist themes in anti-Israeli protests following the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza and underscores the urgent need for studies that combine antisemitism studies with research on conspiracy theories and ideologies. ■

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