Danish and German national symbols

By Inge Adriansen

National symbols are meant to make all of us - individuals as well as members of specific groups - feel part of the common nation. National symbols are meant to illustrate our shared past and show our expected future. If a symbol is properly worked out, we'll be able to identify ourselves with the hidden message included in the symbol.

In the 1960es national symbols were simply out! The use of national symbols expressed an oldfashioned conservative philosophy, which - at the time - only a few wished to be identified with. To day it is quite different. Since the mid-seventies national symbolism has had a renaissance in Denmark, and apparently this can be directly connected with Denmark's entry into the European Economic Community, the EEC.

At the referendum in 1972 regarding Danish membership the political agitation flourished, and the opponents touched the national chords as much as possible. So they did at yet two other EEC-referendums in 1986 and 1992. A couple of days before the voting in 1986 I visited Aarhus. In the main street I was confronted with a row of posters, stating: »Holger says no!« - »Holger shall always say no« - »Do as Holger. Say no!«

This was the brief, distinct message of a long line of posters. A foreigner would never be able to guess who Holger was and what he refused. But to a Dane it was obvious! Who else could it be but our old national hero Holger Danske (Dane), who called upon all his compatriots to vote NO to the EC?

The posters were distributed by SF, the People's Socialist Party. Quite similar advertisements were published in the daily papers by SID, the trade-union of semiskilled workers, who usually supports the left wing of the Social Democrats. This gives every reason for reflection. Why do we find the use of national symbolism among the previous internationalists - the left wing in Denmark? In the fifties it was the left wing that rejected national symbols as out-of-date ideological stuff, whereas today the members of that same left-wing movement make extensive

use of the old arsenal of symbols from the national armoury. Simultaneously business-people have discovered that there is profit in national symbols. Consequently, proper commercial circles to some extent share symbols with the left wing.

However, national symbols have always included paradoxes. How tangled the world of national symbolism is can be illustrated by returning to Holger Danske. This Danish national hero - who was used as an argument against the EC - is in fact a Frenchman. His origin has its roots in the French medieval poetry of chivalry and his name is Ogier le Danois[1]. He turns up in legends and ballads connected with Charles the Great. The interpretation of his name has caused severe disagreement among legend researchers.

Possibly Danois doesn't mean Danske at all, but so it was interpreted in the late Middle Ages. Consequently, the legends about Holger Danske were translated into Danish, and in Denmark new myths and ballads were made of the old legendary figure. A chapbook was published in the 16th century, and it was reprinted several times. As late as the 18th century the book was still popular among Danish common people.

In 1837 the Danish author and hymnwriter B. S. Ingemann wrote a novel in verse about Holger Danske. In this novel he merged the traditions of the chapbook with the latest Danish legends about the hero. Grundtvig too, who was a dear friend of Ingemann, became enthusiastical about Holger Danske. He turned him into a parable of all Danish heroes and a symbol of the Danish national character. It is Ingemann's and Grundtvig's version of the Holger Danske-myth, that is handed down to the present time, - as it is their literary representation of Holger Danske that formed the basis of a bronze-statue made in the eighteen-nineties and placed at a hotel in Elsinore. The sculptor's sketch made of plaster was to be placed in the casemates of the magnificent Renaissancecastle, Kronborg in Elsinore, and here - in the depths of the casemates - Holger Danske became the joint possession of the whole nation. Ever since, he has been strongly exploited - ideologically as well as commercially. In political campaigns the left wing as well as the right wing have used Holger Danske, and in the newspapers he appears in advertisements for chairs, sleeping pills and mattresses!

If we should identify a trend, we might say that from being a subordinate character in some French ballads Holger Danske was transformed into a Danish national symbol, literally at first, later metaphorically. The most national and conservative circles were the first to make use of him as a symbol, next he was used commercially. In the nineteen-fifties he was rejected by the business world, just to be rediscovered 20 years later by the left wing, who is still using him frequently in keen competition with the right wing, who is now returning to old methods, too.

This may sound like a strange development, but it really is not. An identical trend can be seen with a number of national symbols. We are often inclined to believe that national flags, national anthems and national traditions as a whole are deep-rooted and ancient symbols, gradually developed through a historical process. But this is not the case.

Most of these phenomena were formed in the 19th century Europe, and during the 20th century these ideas were spread to almost all new states in the world. To-day national traditions and symbols apparently play an even greater role in young states than in the old ones. Every new state needs to demonstrate its independence and to express its identity through symbols evoking loyalty and devotion among its citizens and respect from the neighbouring states. These symbols are often presented by the governments and perceived by the population as ancient and firmly established ideas, which show continuity in the historical past of the nation. In new states this very conscious use of a figurative language, completely adopted from the former colonial master, may sometimes seem very artificial.

We may be inclined to regard the use of national symbolism in older states as natural - as something grown out of history, especially when it comes to our own nation. This is in fact an illusion. How it really is even in old nations, I shall show by reference to some of the most firmly rooted and cherished Danish and German national symbols. They are comparatively young symbols, all of them indicating external cultural influence.

I might as well have chosen to illustrate these assertions on the character of the national symbolism by examples from any European country, but for me it is natural to refer to Denmark

and Germany, since in my daily work I am dealing with the nationality struggle in South Jutland.

The national symbols concerning Denmark are *Mother Denmark*, the female symbol of the Danish nation, *the Girls of South Jutland*, the symbol of the lost Southern Jutland (or Slesvig) and *Dannebrog*, the world's oldest national flag.

One cant not find German symbols completely parallel to the Danish ones, but some very similar. *Germania* is the female symbol of the German people, *The doubleoaks of Schleswig -Holstein* symbolize the rooted and close relations between Schleswig and Holstein. The Danish flag has not a German parallel.[2]

The female symbol of Denmark

Denmark is the title of a painting made in 1850-51 by a female immigrant (fig.1). The artist, Elisabeth Jerichau-Baumann, was born in the Russian part of Poland in a German/Jewish family and educated at the Academy of Arts in Düsseldorf. Later she settled in Rome, where she married a Danish sculptor in 1847. In 1849 they went to Denmark and here - only one year after her arrival - the artist managed to paint the picture, that became the very personification of the Danish people[3]. This was possible, because she was able to build upon Danish literary tradition representing the native country as a beautiful, young woman ready for battle.

This tradition was founded by Grundtvig already in 1815 and until his death he maintained that the symbol of his Danish fatherland had to be a woman. For Grundtvig the Danish nationality was female and womanly. In poetry and national songs he described the national character of the Danish nation as feminin. The Danish nation was often symbolized with a shieldmaid or valkyrie. This is a certain type of active energetic women, known from Norse Literature.

In 1850 the first Danish-German war ended. Denmark won a big battle at Isted. Grundtvig was full of joy over this dearly bought victory in which two of his sons participated as volunteers. He wrote a great poem, praising Mother Denmark as a

The painting »Denmark« was made by Elisabeth Jerichau-Bauman 1850-51, only a year after she settled in Denmark. The Danish national symbol was created by an immigrant born in a German-Jewish family in Warzawa, educated in Düsseldorf and Rome. (fig.1)

shieldmaid. This poem inspired the artist Elisabeth Jerichau-Baumann to paint her version of Denmark.

The painting was highly criticized by many intellectuals for having been made in German style and being sentimental. But it soon became extraordinarily popular among people of all classes. It was bought by Denmark's great patron of the arts, Brewer Carl Jacobsen, and it was reproduced and made in uncountable versions. It was painted on china, printed as postcards and represented on silver. The title was soon turned into *Mother Denmark* in order to underline its character of an intimate national symbol. Even to-day, 150 years later, the newspaper-illustrators are able to use this female symbol of the fatherland, being sure that every Dane sees this woman as a symbol of the whole Danish nation.

National symbols can be inflammatory and lawsuits have been carried out against various symbols, for instance that of Mother Denmark. She was used on the back of an almanac[4], published in South Jutland, which was under German rule from 1864 to 1920 (fig. 2). The majority of people in the northern part of South Jutland were Danish by nationality and mother tongue.

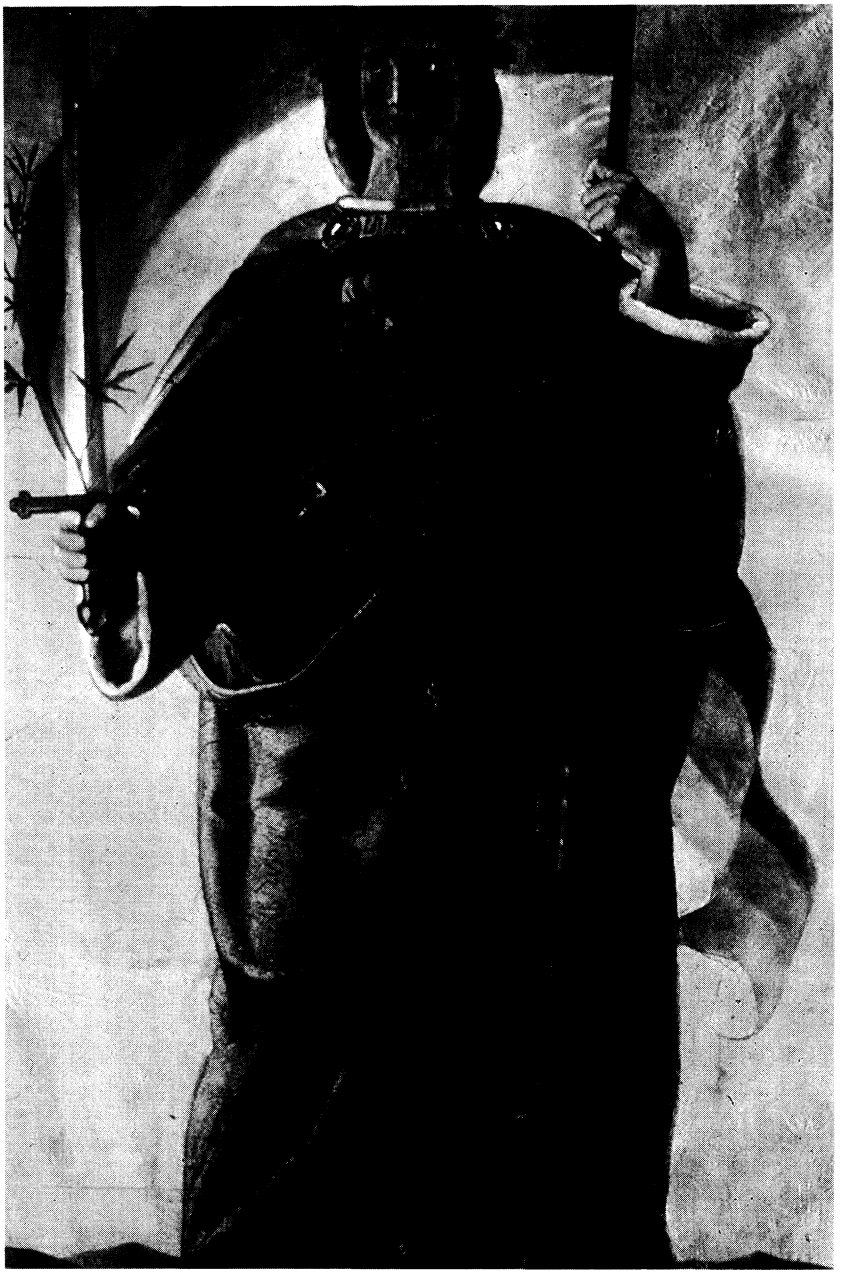
From 1894 and onwards the leaders of Danish-minded people in South Jutland published an almanac showing Mother Denmark on the back-cover. Mother Denmark was placed at Dybbøl Banke in South Jutland, the famous battlefield from the war in 1864. By her side you see a runic stone from South Jutland - carrying an inscription in Old Norse. The stone was brought to Berlin by the Prussian government after the war in 1864. The message of the picture is that South Jutland has been Danish from the beginning of time - and it will become so again some day.

In 1895 a lawsuit was brought against this picture, and it was forbidden because of its inflammatory content. To-day one can hardly imagine how the powerful German Empire could actually feel threathened by this kind of national symbols.

One of the most popular pictures of Mother Denmark is a poster, made for the referendum in 1920, when the population in the northern part of Slesvig had to decide if they wanted to become Danes again or to remain German inhabitants. The referendum was the fulfilment of the wishes of the majority of the

Jerichau-Baumann's symbol of the Denmark became almost authoritative in the late 19th century. Here she is - on the cover of an almanac published in South Jutland in 1894. The picture was soon forbidden as nationally inflammatory. (fig.2)

Mother Denmark welcoming her daughter is the motive of this poster for the referendum in 1920. The artist Joakim Skovgaard was a grundtvigian. He made the picture as an illustration of the verse, written by Henrik Pontoppidan. The original drawing was given to the Danish folk high school Danebod in South Jutland and is still to be seen here at a prominent place. It gives a moving picture of the Danish interpretation of the reunion in 1920. (fig.3)



Germania is a symbol of the German nation, i.e. the Germanspeaking people. The painting was made by Philipp Veit in 1848 and hung in the Paulskirche in Frankfurt am Main, the place of the »Vorparlament«. In this version Germania is a symbol of the liberal movements and the revolutions of 1848. (fig.4)

population. For 56 years they had lived as Germans, and now they got the chance of deciding their own fate and border. All kinds of national symbols were used in the campaign. On the poster (fig.3) we see Mother Denmark welcoming her daughter, who was robbed by the Germans. The mother lifts her arm to thank God for the miracle. The text is taken from a Danish national song. It goes like this: »It sounds like a fairy-tale, a legend from the good old days, a robbed daugther, deeply mourned for, has safely returned home.«

It is a touching, almost pathetic picture without a gloating or triumphant tone against the German counterpart. The artist was Joakim Skovgaard, whose masterpiece is the decorations in the cathedral in Viborg. Skovgaard was an outstanding Grundtvigian and was confirmed by Grundtvig himself. In his art he demonstrates an intimate familiarity with Grundtvig's ideas, in this drawing for instance how to act against your opponents[5].

The female symbol of Germany

Germania is the personification of what is specifically German. She is an image of the German people, who longed for a united Germany. The symbol appeared after 1815, and during the following decades Germania was a placid, rather melancholy woman, who grieved over the separation of the German people. In connection with the revolution in 1848 Germania was represented by the painter Philipp Veit as a woman prepared to fight (fig.4). She is wearing the German revolutionary banner with the three colours symbolizing the development beginning in the dark night of despotism, passing through the red dawn of revolution to the bright day of freedom. She also wears a sword, decorated with green leaves. It is a beautiful, almost moving image of March 1848, an image of the German people's longing for being united in *one* state.

After the defeat of the Liberals in 1848 the Germania-symbol was suppressed by the rulers. It reappeared, however, in the eighteen-seventies after the formation of the German empire, this time promoted not by the opposition groups but by the conquerors. When the French-German war ended, the intention

The Niederwald Denkmal near Rüdesheim am Rhein is a most imposing piece of art. It was done in the 1870's by Schilling after the German defeat of France 1870-71. (fig.5)

was to build a monument of peace in Niederwald on the Rhine. But soon the goddess of peace changed into a goddess of victory, a Victoria called Germania, who looked very martial (fig. 5). The statue became a strong image of »Wacht-am-Rhein«. Germania in Niederwald is crowning herself. This incident, which is also known from the Emperor Napoleon displeased Kaiser Wilhelm 1. and his chancellor Bismarck. In their opinion it was unnecessary to present the German people as independent as that.

In spite of some resistance the Germania in Niederwald became the prototype of the German people and Fatherland. The head of Germania was used to decorate the German stamps up to 1923 and numerous documents were decorated with Germania combined with symbols of power - such as banners and arms. Bank notes, too, were decorated with the female national symbol. Germania, however, was robbed of her sexual radiation and often of her sword as well and made comme-il-faut when decorating official papers. Germania in this modified version has probably corresponded with the Kaiser's ideal of a woman, but as a national symbol she was hardly suitable for rousing and maintaining the population's love of their country.

However, another representation is! August von Kaulbach painted the picture with Germania under influence of the outbreak of the First World War. The title was »August 1914«. It represents very strong feelings, making it fit for stirring up the animosity against foreigners and intensifying the urge to defend the German Fatherland. In reality Germany was the aggressor, but von Kaulbach's Germania is shown as a woman defending her home and her native country, which foreigners wish to burn down (fig. 6).

So much for the Germania-symbol of the German people. It will be most interesting to see whether she will get a »comeback« after the German reunion.

Germania was given in accordance with the state of nation. August von Kaulbach painted »August 1914«, which gives us the German interpretation of the causes of the outbreak of the First World War. (fig.6)

The Girls of South Jutland

Quite a different symbol is »De sønderjyske piger«, the Girls of South Jutland or Slesvig (the Duchy has two names). This symbol obtained a unique popularity in Denmark in all classes of the society in the late 1800s. This is an example of how a picture created to make money was changed into a real national symbol[6]. The two girls represent the Danes in South Jutland, who were under German rule since 1864, but still longing for Denmark. The creator was a gifted publisher, Ernst Bojesen, in Copenhagen. He wanted to make something, which could finance his valuable books. Since everybody in Denmark took a great interest in South Jutland, he had a photographer in Flensborg in Slesvig take a photo of two pretty young girls from a folk high school wearing national costumes (fig. 7). Preferably they should look as if they were longing for their Danish native country. The picture was distributed in 1879 and it became so popular that within nine months 50.000 copies were sold. The first picture was given to the Danish king and life-sized versions of the picture were sent to his two daughters, Empress Dagmar in Sct. Petersborg and Queen Alexandra in London.

When the symbol of Mother Denmark was dismissed from the Danish almanac in South Jutland in 1896, it was replaced by the two girls (fig. 8). The meek girls became a much stronger symbol of the Danish nationality than the combatant Mother Denmark with the sword in her hand. The two girls are not only meek, they show perseverance, too. They look as if they are prepared to endure sufferings. By this replacement the Danish movement even made progress. Mother Denmark was standing at Dybbøl in the middle of South Jutland with a map, which showed only the area of the Danish-speaking population. The girls of South Jutland, however, reach far south to the ancient rampart of Danevirke and their map is fully unfolded. This picture tells us that Denmark has a historical right to get back the whole of the lost South Jutland. Runic stones from the Danevirke are standing next to the two girls. The stones bear inscriptions in Old Norse and emphasize the historical right of the Danes to possess South Jutland in its entirety.

The oldest name of the Duchy - Sønderjylland - was even forbidden by the German court as well. Henceforth, the region should only be known by the name Slesvig. But instead of removing the name from the map a black stamp of censorship was put on it to emphasize the persecution of Danish-minded people in South Jutland.

By the outbreak of the First World War all Danish-national manifestations were forbidden and the almanac was published without any pictures. After the referendum in 1920 the majority of South Jutland became Danish, and now it was possible to publish the almanac showing Mother Denmark on the cover again. In 1960 many people held the view that this symbol of the national struggle was outdated. Now the time had come to establish relations between the two nationalities, not to guard the frontlines. This was done by putting this up-to-date version of the girls from South Jutland on the cover of the almanac. But now they do not look meek and suffering from German pressure. On the contrary, they are smiling kindly and sympathetically to show the good relations between the Danish and the German populations on either side of the border. In 1955 the German government promised to treat its Danish minority equally, and that is why the girls are able to smile happily. So, this is not just a commonplace scrap, but a manifestation of improved relations between the two national groups at the German-Danish border. The picture reflects how national symbols may change concurrently with the political development.

The Double-oaks of Schleswig-Holstein

The German parallel of the Girls of South Jutland is the socalled double-oaks, Die schleswig-holsteinische Doppeleiche[7]. Trees have been used as symbols ever since antiquity. They have symbolized the State, the administration of Justice, happy events and victorious wars. During the Reformation in the 1500s the colour green became the colour of Protestantism - it was a living symbol, which opposed the barren Roman Church[8]. In the 1700s the green colour and the green tree became significant symbols of national liberty after the winter of tyranny.

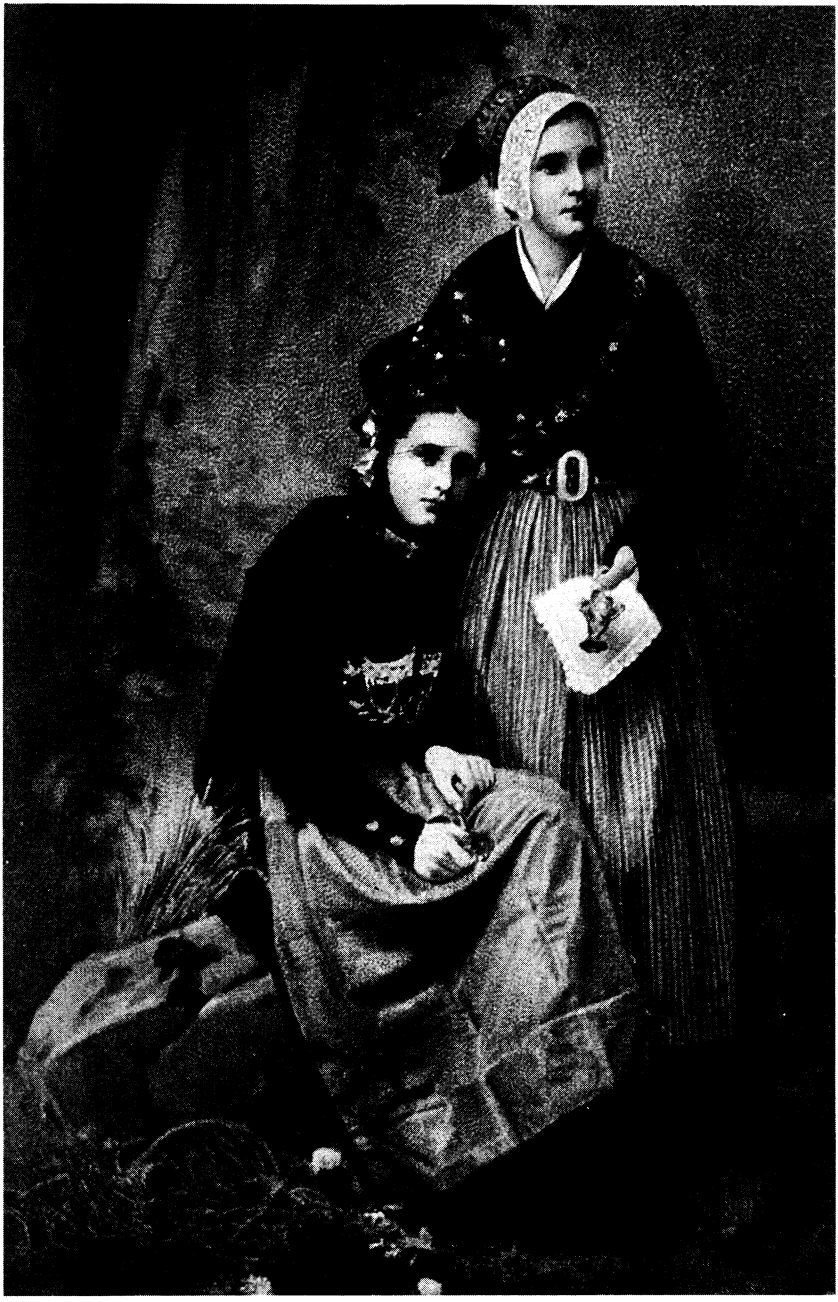


Photo arranged by photographer Schumann in Flensburg in 1879 as a model for a popular picture produced in Copenhagen. It is a symbol of the Danish minority in South Jutland being under German rule since 1864. (fig.7)

A Danish almanac published in South Jutland from the 1890's was very popular. Its cover was decorated with the two girls of South Jutland, a symbol of national faithfulness to Denmark and perseverance in spite of German pressure. (fig.8)

At the beginning of the American War of Independence the colonists fought under a banner bearing a green tree. Later on this flag was replaced by the »Stars and Stripes«. After the war trees of Liberty were planted in USA as symbols of independence. French troops, who took part in the war, brought back the idea to France, and during the French Revolution liberty-trees were in their prime. In the period 1790-1792 60.000 trees were planted all over France, and the symbol was soon adopted in the Swiss Republic, formed in 1799.

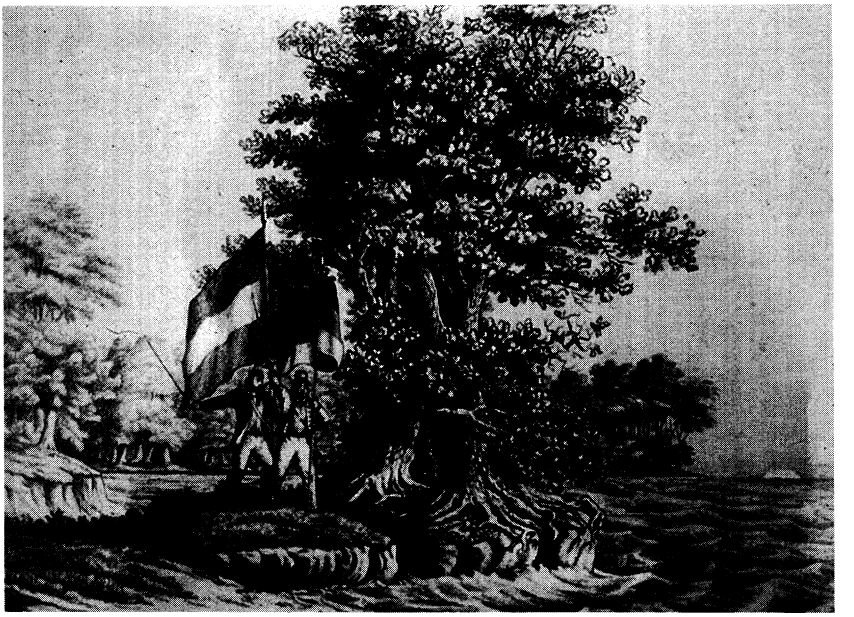
In Schleswig-Holstein the tree of liberty obtained a special presentation, as the liberal German poet M.F. Chemnitz in the 1840s wrote a patriotic song about the symbol. He took inspiration from two oaktrees, which had grown together in a natural way, and he wrote the song: »Oh, teures Land, du Doppeleiche«.

This beautiful symbol fired people's hearts at once, and it was soon used by other poets, for instance Hoffmann von Fallersleben. He wrote the song: »Up ewig ungedeelt« about »zwei deutsche Stämme, die sind ein Baum geworden, verwachsen felsenfest«.

Numerous pictures of double-oaks were made in the revolutionary year of 1848. One of the most popular examples shows a German student and a student from Schleswig-Holstein each standing with their banner by »Schleswig-Holstein meerumschlungen« (fig.9).

In 1848 many double-oaks were planted in Schleswig-Holstein. They were formed by tying two young oaks together so that they became double-oaks. These trees were removed by the Danish authorities in the 1850s after the end of the first Danish-German war. In 1864 Slesvig became German and new double-oaks were planted. Especially in 1898 - 50 years after the revolution in Schleswig-Holstein - double-oaks were planted all over Schleswig-Holstein, hundreds and hundreds of trees with memorial-tablets bearing the slogan »Up ewig ungedeelt«.

Like Frau Germania the double-oaks were used on bank notes. They symbolize the close relationship between the two Duchies, Slesvig and Holstein. The common coat of arms of the Duchies is standing by the roots to illustrate the deep-rooted, in-



»A patriotic scenery« is the title of this drawing, made by W. Selck around 1848. It shows a German and a Schleswig-Holsteinian student side by side willing to fight for liberty and unity. The two oaktrees growing together are symbols of the same ideas. (fig.9)

The Danish flag was sent by the Lord to the Danes on a crusade in Estonia in 1219. This myth is known by all Danes and it is a motive of many national songs. The artist C.A. Lorentzen made this painting in 1809 at a time when Denmark was in great trouble and needed to believe, that the Lord was still going to help the Danes. The king bought the painting and it was spread in many copies. (fig.10)

grained relationship. It is nationalism illustrated with a generally understandable and attractive picture.

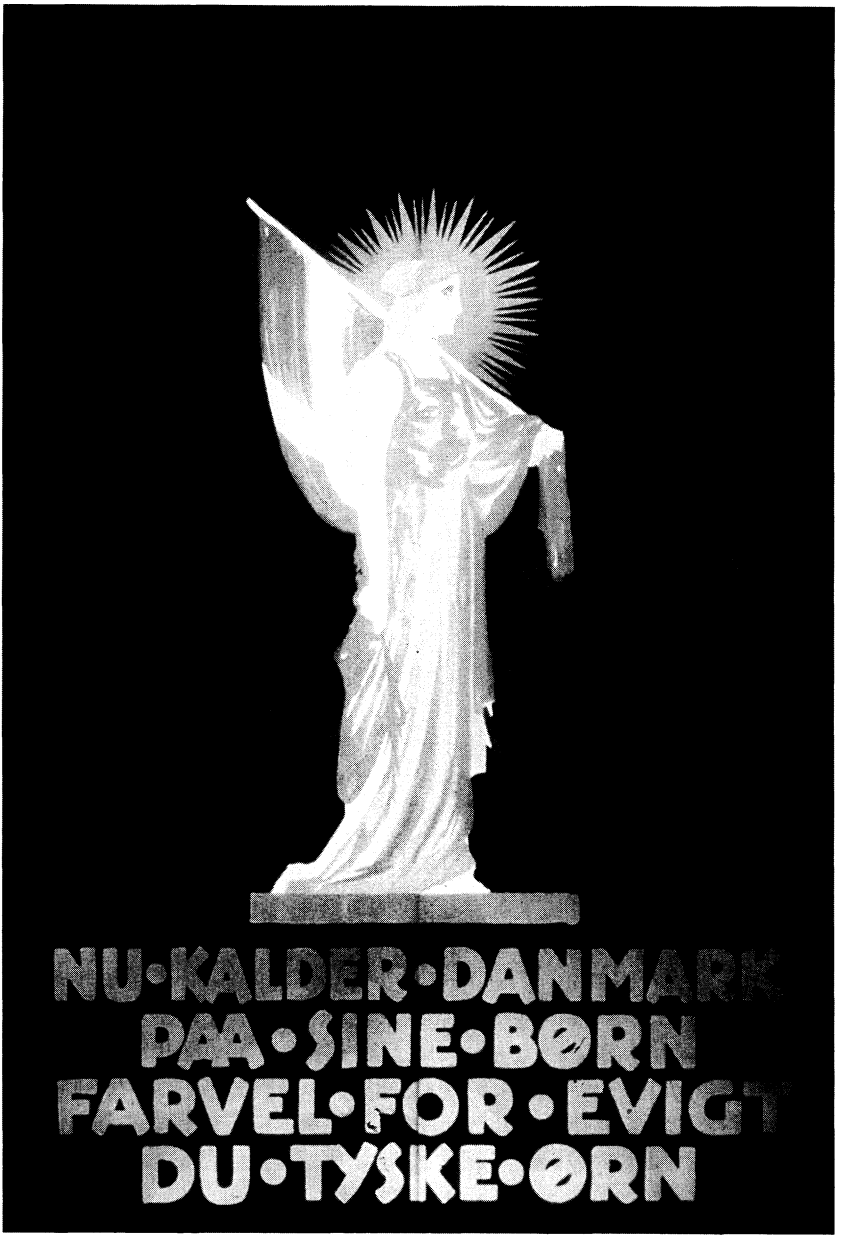
Like »the Girls of South Jutland« the Double-oaks of Schleswig-Holstein, too, became a popular decoration on plaques, pipes, bowls, bank notes and coffee-cups. It is a charming example of a national struggle reflected in all kinds of social life, even at coffee parties.

The Danish national flag

We, the Danes, look upon our flag, the Dannebrog, as the oldest national flag in the world. - It was given to us as a national symbol back in Medieval times. During a crusade in Estonia in 1219 the Danish conquerors were in trouble. The King, Valdemar Sejr, was about to give up - despite his name, Valdemar The Victor. However, God helped the Danes! A red flag with a white cross upon it fell from the sky, landing in the midst of the Danish ranks, - and under this sign of the cross they accomplished their crusade. And ever since Dannebrog has been the Danish national flag.

This myth is part of the historic consciousness of all Danes. We read about it in our school-books, we sing about it, and its hidden message of the Lord helping Denmark in her hours of darkness is part of our cultural heritage. A painting of this happy event was made by the artist C.A. Lorentzen during the Napoleonic wars after the English capture of the Danish fleet and the bombardment of Copenhagen (fig.10). The aim was to boost the patriotic feelings of his fellow-countrymen.

This beautiful myth, however, is not true. Dannebrog did not become the national flag in the sense of the flag of the nation until 1854. In 1834 King Frederik 6. prohibited private people to use the Dannebrog. The flag had for centuries been the official flag of the Danish fleet, but in the army it did not become the common flag of all regiments until 1842[9]. Grundtvig was very enthusiastical about this and wrote a speech for the King, thanking him for introducing Dannebrog in the army and asking him to allow that this old flag - given by the Lord - should be used



On this poster from the referendum in South Jutland in 1920 the Danish symbol of nation, i.e. the folk, is set against the German symbol of the state. It is a very conscious way of manipulating. The artist Thor Bøgelund was very eminent at making sensitive appeals and has also made posters with the heavenly sent flag. (fig.11)

in private homes[10]. This did not happen until after the free constitution was given and a democratic process was started.

The heavenly sent flag reappeared on an election poster from the referendum of 1920 in South Jutland, when the population had to choose between Danish and German. This poster was among those most widely distributed. The text does not say »Vote for Denmark« but »Vote for home«. It is an extremely emotional appeal and has a Grundtvigian tone.

Manipulating use of symbols

Absolute rulers always have used and always will use the ressources at their disposal. That is a well-known fact. More surprising is it to find that the manipulating use of national symbolism often occurs in democratic states. A number of examples from the referendum in 1920 will illustrate how easily symbols are manipulated. During the weeks prior to the referendum a vehement debate took place, Danish as well as German. The debate was mainly carried out at large popular meetings and through posters. A popular Danish poster shows the female symbol of Denmark and the German eagle (fig.11). The text says: »Now Denmark calls her children - farewell forever German eagle!«

This piece of agitation was indeed clever! To oppose the Danish popular symbol, Mother Denmark, to the German symbol of the state, der Reichsadler, is not fair. Mother Denmark facing Frau Germania would have been fair, or the German eagle versus the Danish lion. By the use of the imperial eagle as a parallel to Mother Denmark Germany appears harder and more undemocratic than Denmark. Furthermore, the artist has manipulated the classic Danish symbol. He has replaced the obligatory sword with a palm thus giving the impression that Mother Denmark is a symbol of peace rather than of eagerness to fight. In that way the poster reflects the spirit of 1920[11].

In the Weimar Republic, however, similar unfair propaganda appeared. In the northern part of South Jutland 75% of the population cast their votes in favour of Denmark, and in the southern part only about 20%. A new border was drawn in accordance with these results. Nevertheless, many German-minded

people in the northern part of the region protested emphatically against the new border, and they were supported by their former countrymen. The magazine Die Woche published a picture showing Germania trying to protect her poor daughter who was about to be taken away from her protector[12] (fig.12). But it is nt true. At the left side the ballot box is placed. The new border was made in accordance with the votes. That means that the main part of the population stayed with their fatherland.

Contemporary use of national symbols

A remarkable trend in the present use of national symbols in Denmark and Germany is commercialism. To-day the Danish flag is used predominantly at sporting events and with the purpose of selling politics and merchandise. The Dannebrog has only one potent rival as the national symbol that will sell products - the statue of the Little Mermaid. One even finds advertisements able to combine the Dannebrog, the Little Mermaid and some merchandise. National symbolism in the service of commercialism is a characteristic feature of the 1980s. In particular the Dannebrog is used when appealing to investments. In advertisements for subscription you will often find the flag. It signals something healthy, secure and genuinely Danish - and in no way does the viewer associate to capitalism and profit. In these cases the Dannebrog serves a diversonary purpose or as a substitute.

To-day the Danish flag is especially used at sporting events. An amazing nationalism is flourishing especially at the football-matches. The crowd dresses in flags or at least in red and white clothes, they paint flags in their faces and wave flags in their hands. This special kind of nationalism culminated in June 1992 at the final match in the European championship in football. Denmark played against Germany, and both teams fulfilled the stereotypes of the Danish nation. The Germans boasted in advance, because they felt sure about the victory. The Danes had hardly trained in advance, and in spite of all odds they won - and the Danish roligans (the name alludes to the British Holigans - 'rolig' means quiet in Danish) even behaved well. In spite of this, I do not consider this kind of nationalism a harmless or

A German example of sensitive agitation at the 1920-referendum is a picture showing how the daughter is thrown away from her (German) mother. The picture was published after the referendum, and 75% of the population in the northern part of South Jutland had actually voted for Denmark. (fig.12)

indifferent phenomenon. It is a substitute for feelings of solidarity and mutual connexion with one's country and compatriots.

Finally, we will turn to a painting, in which some of the strongest Danish national symbols are linked together. The picture has been painted by the Danish artist Hans Nikolaj Hansen after a photo (fig.13). His painting shows exactly how the celebration of the reunion took place in the Dybbøl entrenchments on July 11th, 1920. Here we can see the most important Danish national symbols united in one picture: *The king, the flag, the fatherland* (a view of the famous battlefield of Dybbøl Banke), *our will to defend ourselves* (a veteran from the war of 1864), *the people* (the young girls) and last but not least *our historical right to possess all of it* (the golden horns from Gallehus engraved with runic letters in Old Norse). Through this painting the artist demonstrates how brilliantly the national figurative language can be used and combined. The painting also shows that this figurative language is most effective when presented in a pleasant aesthetic way. Four old hags could never replace the young girls! Aesthetics are an important but frequently ignored part of the analysis of the national figurative language.

The German parallel of this painting is the enormous statue of Germania in Niederwald on the Rhine. It is not a coincidence that this painting became the very painting of the event, which for most Danes was a fulfilment of their wishes. In a way it is an illustration of a Grundtvig-text from 1845 »De historiske Minders Betydning« that means »The influence and significance of historical memories«. Grundtvig writes about the wonderful popular meeting at Skamlingsbanken in 1844 and the birth of the Danish folkspirit. Grundtvig did not pay much attention to monuments and memorials, but he created national consciousness in his compatriots. It was not a pure nationalism but a national consciousness including a political culture based on dialogue and respect for minorities.

Flemming Lundgreen-Nielsen, a prominent Grundtvig researcher has characterized the reunion between Denmark and Slesvig in 1920 as a vision composed by Grundtvig[13]. The Danish king promised the German minority to work for our common good and he beseeched the Danish minority in Germany to forget hatred. These words were in the spirit of Grundtvig.

Hans Nikolaj Hansen made this painting on commission of Det Nationalhistoriske Museum at Frederiksborg Slot. It illustrates the celebration of the reunion of the northern par of South Jutland (Schleswig) with Denmark. The most important Danish national symbols are combined in a brilliant way - and the painting reflects what really happened. (fig.13)

Conclusions

This outline of national symbols has shown a certain resemblance between the Danish and the German symbols, but also considerable differences. These differences are due to the fact that there are more national monuments in Germany than in Denmark, and that they have been used far more actively, for instance at school-excursions and at sporting events. A German historian has explained these arrangements as propaganda efforts necessitated by the people not having a direct part in the German unity. The patriotic monuments and the national celebrations were meant to make people feel part of the great shared struggle for the fatherland.

In this paper only a few Danish and German national symbols have been referred to. There are much more allegories and symbols of the two nations. The masculine heroes such as Holger Danske and the German Herman in Teutoburgerwald are rather different. The German heroes are active, energetic and vigorous, whereas the Danish heroes are hesitating, late awakening, but honest men. Generally speaking, most of the *Danish national symbols reflect a lack of strength*. This is due to our heritage from Grundtvig. He did not create the Danish national identity. It already existed in a minority of the population before Grundtvig. But he played a very important role, when our national character assumed a definite shape in the last part of the 19th century - at the time when the national symbolism was developed.

National symbols must always remind us of something. That is why they should be read or decoded in a political as well as a psychological respect. The symbols, which have been examined here, all date back to the 19th century, yet most of them appear much older and religious ornaments are connected with many of them. These facts illustrate that references to national, historical and Christian values are often misinterpretations or extension of the actual intentions. Frequently, the national symbols serve as substitutes.

Finally, I want to underline an important feature in national symbolism of almost all nations: It is amazingly easy to transfer a symbol from one nation to another and to use this symbol for

quite different purposes. The Mother Denmark has German »foremothers« or prototypes. The Girls from South Jutland were inspired by a French allegory of the Alsace-Lorraine in mourning. The idea behind the North American trees of Liberty crossed the Atlantic to France and from here it spread to Germany. And the German Kaiser-hymn borrowed its text in Denmark and its tune in England.

All these symbols have developed from 1850 to 1914, a period characterized by *invented traditions*, meant to ensure the nationalization of masses. Even to-day the national symbols are important tools for the governments in order to build a common nation. The peoples, however, can use the symbols against their governments. In Rumania and Czechoslovakia the hammer and sickle were cut out of the national flags, and demonstrators waving the flags with a hole in the middle became the very symbol of the national and anticommunist rising.

The national symbolism is of current interest - and not only because of the new nationalism in Eastern Europe. The symbols contain an incredibly flourishing and inventive world of images and it is simply exciting to see how an apparently very specific national figurative language is transferable to the opponent - if only these images are generally understandable, aesthetically attractive and use a well-known imagery.

Noter

1 Knud Togeby: Ogier le Danois dans les littératures européennes, 1969.

2 An adapted version of this paper with many illustrations has been published in English in Journal for Nordic ethnology Ethnologia Scandinavica 1991. A Danish version is to be found in Inge Adriansen: Fædrelandet, Folkeminderne og Modersmålet, 1990, chapter 12.

3 Inge Adriansen: Mor Danmark, valkyrie, skjoldmø og fædrelandssymbol (I: Folk og Kultur 1986)

4 Sprogforeningens Almanak, Aabenraa 1894 og 1895.

5 The relationship between Grundtvig and Joakim Skovgaard is described in Jørgen Glenthøj: Joakim Skovgaards billeder i Viborg Domkirke, fortolket af »Den sungne Bibel«, 1991.

6 Inge Adriansen: »De sønderjydske Piger« fra forlæggerprofit til folkeeje (I: Sønderjydske Årbøger 1988).

7 Inge Adriansen: »Teures Land du Doppeleiche« - om rodfaste symboler i grænselandet, især de slesvigholstenske dobbeltege (I: Nordslesvigske Museer 1979).

8 Hans Trümpy: Der Freiheitsbaum. Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde, 1961.

9 Helge Bruhn: Dannebrog og danske Faner gennem Tiderne, 1949 s. 179-180.

10 Flemming Lundgreen-Nielsen: Grundtvig og danskhed (I: Dansk Identitetshistorie 1992, s 61).

11 Inge Adriansen & Immo Doege: Dansk eller tysk? Billeder af national selvforståelse i 1920, 1992, s.12.

12 Adriansen & Doege 1992, p. 46.

13 Lundgreen-Nielsen: Grundtvig og Danskhed, 1992, p.174.