

A Psychoanalytic View of Racial Myths in a Nazi Propaganda Film: *Der Ewige Jude* (The Eternal Jew)

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This paper describes the emotional appeal of propaganda utilizing concepts from psychoanalysis, small group psychology, and psychohistory. The film propagandist attempts to exploit irrational emotional responses to visual scenes and commentary to change attitudes, values, and behavior in a mass setting. A link between shared unconscious fantasies and myth is offered as an explanatory concept to explain propaganda's wide emotional appeal. The German Nazi anti-Semitic film, Der Ewige Jude, serves as the case example of the exploitation of such fantasies in a mass setting for a political end.

KEY WORDS: anti-Semitic; film; mass communication; Nazi; propaganda; psychohistory; racial myth; shared unconscious fantasy.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the emotional appeal of propaganda by utilizing concepts from psychoanalysis, small group psychology, and psychohistory. Propaganda, like pornography, is one of those difficult words to define. One person's propaganda is another one's persuasive argument (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1992). *The Oxford English Dictionary* (1989) offers several approaches. The word propaganda is derived from the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* (Congregation for Propagating the Faith), a committee, founded in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV, comprised of cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church. The second definition involves the systematic scheme or concerted movement for the propagation of a particular doctrine or practice. The third definition is the systematic propa-

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gation of information or ideas by an interested party, especially in a tendentious way, to instill or encourage a particular attitude or response. The last definition comes closest to the view of this paper that political propaganda is communication that has as its goal the arousal and exploitation of the mass audience's irrational, emotional response to the propagandist's message to change attitudes, values, and behavior.

There have been several psychoanalytic studies of propaganda associated with World War II. Ernst Kris (1941, 1943, 1944, 1947) was involved in a wartime project involving propaganda and made several contributions to the subject. In his paper on the danger of propaganda (1941), Kris described the power of the slogan to arouse emotion. He also discussed anxiety, libidinal conflicts, and external danger as increasing one's suggestibility. Nazi propaganda, he asserted, had the aim of driving people into crowd formation so that suggestion was made more powerful.

Money-Kyrle (1941) discussed German and English propaganda in World War I and compared it to Nazi propaganda. He concluded that the audience was prone to influence from parent figures which were internalized. To be effective propaganda must correspond to or symbolize unconscious fantasies.

Glover (1947) in his psychoanalytic study of war, observed that the success of propaganda depends on the comprehension of preconscious and unconscious aspects of human nature to hurt the morale of the enemy but also to enhance one's own group solidarity.

Simmel (1946) saw anti-Semitism as a form of mass psychopathology, a shared delusion or mass psychosis in the case of Nazi Germany. Propaganda was thus a means of enhancing this delusion, a substitute for the leader's spoken word. His analysis rested on the assumption of a devouring instinct in mankind, manifesting itself in normal and pathological groups. Jew baiting he saw as "Jew biting," and anti-Semitism a way to bite, tear and destroy through words.

Adorno, Lowenthal, and Massing (1946) studied anti-Semitic Nazi propaganda as part of a larger study of anti-Semitism at Columbia University. They found that this propaganda won people over by playing on their unconscious conflicts rather than by logic. The propaganda was personalized and non-objective, substituted means for ends, and constituted an irrational wish fulfillment. They described propaganda as a regression to a ritualistic form of communication by which emotions are sanctioned by an agency of social control, an externalized conscience. Its purpose was to weaken the self-contained individual by 1) creating a dichotomy of friend and enemy and 2) by the promotion of an indefatigable lone wolf, innocently persecuted leader of the common people. The religious language and form of propaganda lends the impression of sanctioned ritual as a cult is created. The

cult is based on the premise that might makes right and what is established is right. Finally, the performance of a ritual sacrifice is needed to solidify the group. In Nazi Germany the chosen enemy was the Jews and the slogan, *Judenblut muss fließen* (Jewish blood must flow), fulfilled.

In this paper I wish to build on these previous studies in order to explore ways in which psychoanalysis can add further to the understanding of the emotional appeal of propaganda. Specifically, modern psychoanalysis has increased understanding of the ways in which emotions may be shared by way of unconscious fantasies (Arlow, 1982; Sachs, 1942). Arlow has described the effect of shared unconscious fantasies in psychoanalytic supervision, in twins, in literature, as well as in the mythologies involved in political and religious movements. When unconscious fantasies are shared in a group, individual fantasies are transformed into unconscious group fantasies (Bion, 1959). These group fantasies may in turn become the building blocks for historical group fantasies, form the basis of cultural myths, and affect the wider political and historical process (Arlow, 1961). Propaganda may be understood as operating on all three levels in arousing shared emotion and unconscious fantasy, exploiting group formative regression (Scheidlinger, 1968), creating ideology and new group values and norms, and thus becoming a rationale for political action.

Hitler (1925), of course, had his own theory of propaganda to which he devoted a good deal of attention in *Mein Kampf*. He wrote:

[I]ts (propaganda's) effect must be aimed at the emotions and only to a limited degree at the so-called intellect. . . . The art of propaganda lies in understanding the emotional ideas of the great masses and finding through a psychologically correct form, the way to attention and thence to the heart of the broad masses. (p. 180)

The 1941 Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda film, *Der Ewige Jude*, which Joseph Goebbels (1939) called a propaganda masterpiece, offers a case example for understanding the emotional processes involved in propaganda. I would like to discuss the two most emotionally arousing scenes in this film: one in which Jews are equated with rats coming out of a sewer; the other a portrayal of "genuine" kosher ritual slaughter of animals. These two scenes were deemed so generally offensive that another version of this film was made leaving these scenes out. This sanitized version was thought by Goebbels to be more suitable for women and children. I will discuss these two scenes and their relationship to each other to discuss the role of shared unconscious fantasies in the creation and promotion of racial myths in political propaganda. A brief description of the film will be presented first followed by a psychoanalytic and group psychological approach to its understanding.

THE FILM

When the German armed forces invaded Poland in September, 1939, Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda sent film crews shortly after (October 4) to "document" the nature of Jewish life in Poland for a planned anti-Semitic film. Some of this footage was used in *Der Ewige Jude* which purported to be a documentary describing the history and "true nature" of the Jewish people. Thus the film is sprinkled with newsreels, charts, graphs, and photographs purporting to give an objective, even scientific, picture of the Jews. The title of the film comes from an exhibition of "degenerate art" that toured Germany and Austria from November 9th (sic), 1937 to June 11, 1939 (Baker, 1991) and titled "Der Ewige Jude." An anti-Semitic book by the same title was published in 1937 by the Nazi Party (Diebow, 1937). This book contains a compilation of much of the same anti-Semitic thematic content as the film, but in greater detail. It consists mostly of photographs with text. After the invasion of Poland the Luftwaffe presented Hitler with a photo album containing documentation of the invasion with handwritten titles, and this album is now in the Library of Congress (Hitler, 1939). Page 34 contains five photographs of men and women, disheveled and dirty, and entitled in calligraphic script, "Der Ewige Jude."

All of these titles owe their origin to the Christian legend of the Eternal Jew (Anderson, 1965; Welch, 1983). The legend concerns a Jew, Ahasuerus, who refused Jesus' request for food, drink, and rest while carrying the cross to Golgotha. (Ahasuerus is also the name of the Persian king in the Old Testament who is married to Esther in the Purim story.) As punishment, all Jews are said to be compelled to travel from place to place without the rest of death, that is, eternally. This legend can be traced back to the 6th century, but it gained widespread dissemination with the chapbook published in 1602 in Germany. This legend has diverse versions in literature throughout Europe (Anderson, 1965).

The film premiered on November 28, 1940, in Berlin and was shown in theaters throughout Germany and subsequently in the occupied countries. The film had a very interesting and complex development as it was almost two years in the making. Hitler was involved at every step and delayed its release several times for additional changes. The Danish historian, Stig Hornshoj-Moller (1996), argued that the decision to make the film may well have been integral to the decision to annihilate the European Jews.

The film depicts a parade of negative stereotypes of Jews and a series of distortions, lies, and myths about Jewish life, character, body, and mind (see Gilman, 1991). The film begins with footage of Jewish life in Poland *after* the German invasion. The "Eastern Jewish subhumanity" is described

as living in “dens” and “ghetto holes.” There is no mention that the living conditions and the ghettos themselves were created by the Nazis and their invasion. The footage is dark, the music Eastern, and the theme of Jews crowded together or on the move in groups repetitive throughout this part of the film. Pictures of “Jewish racial heads” purport to document the bodily features of the “lower race.” Gilman (1991) has documented the extent of this “scientific” racial thinking about the Jewish body: the nose, the foot, the skin. Poland is described as “the breeding ground” for “international criminals” and “cutthroats.” These characterizations not only portray a dehumanization of the Jews, but they also set up Poland as the logical future killing ground.

Another theme that emerges in the narration is the characterization of Jews as a plague. The composer Wagner is quoted as calling the Jew “the corporeal demon behind man’s decay.” The narrator explains that Jews are “a nation of parasites”: “Whenever a sore appears on the body of a people the Jews settle in and feed on the decaying organism.” As the narrator proceeds to lecture on the “history” of the Jews, scenes of Poland give way to scenes of Palestine, and eastern music is heard once more. The narrator likens the migration of Jews to Egypt to the scenes of Polish Jews on the move after the invasion. He explains that while the Jews lived in Egypt, intermarriage resulted in “the final mongrelized Jew” with “Negroid admixture.” From Egypt and the Middle East, a map shows the dispersion of Jews to Europe, North Africa, and America. The purpose of this idea is to portray Jews as alien to Europe, as non-white, and therefore firmly on the lowest rung of subhuman life according to the Nazi racial “biological” hierarchy (see Gilman, 1991 for a fuller explanation of these concepts).

After the description of the dispersion of Jews from the Middle East, a map is shown illustrating the dispersion of brown rats from Central Asia. Then against the background of close-ups of rats crawling over each other and then out of a sewer grate, the narrator explains that “among animals they [the rats] are the element of insidious destruction just as the Jews are among men.” Rats are associated with spreading plague, leprosy, typhoid, cholera, and dysentery, the narrator explains. They are cunning, cruel, cowardly, and travel in large packs. Likewise Jews constitute a parasitic plague on the world. The idea of Jews as rats was not new in Germany. It was presented in a feature film in 1922, *Nosferatu*.

Charts and statistics are offered purporting to show the Jews’ preeminent position in international and domestic crime (47% of all robberies, 98% of all white slavery, etc.). The American film on the Rothschild family is used to “document” the international world conspiracy to gain Jewish domination of the world’s economy. Jews are said to possess secret knowledge that allows them to create a network, a “spider web” of influence

over the ordinary gentile working man (see Hsia, 1988 for a discussion of the idea of Jewish “magic” in Reformation Germany). Then a rogues’ gallery of Jewish bankers, financiers, and political figures is paraded across the screen to document the extent of this Jewish influence in Europe and America. Statistics are offered showing the percentage of lawyers, judges, doctors, and businessmen in Germany who were Jewish. Then the narrator provides a list of those Jews who have killed German officials and those who have robbed German states of millions of marks.

The film then moves to scenes of assimilated German Jews who appear like ordinary Germans in dress and language. The film asserts that these Jews have adopted a “mask” behind which lurks the rat-Jews of the ghetto. “Niggerization and bastardization” pervade all areas of Jewish cultural life and are then foisted on the unsuspecting German people. This includes the Jewish influence in art, theater, popular music, film, and even science (Einstein is “the relativity Jew”). Excerpts from the film, *Dimitri Karamasow-Murderer*, in which a Jewish actor stars, purport to show the Jews’ interest in murder. Peter Lorre is seen in the film, *M*, playing a child murderer. Scenes of “degenerate art” from the traveling exhibit and African American jazz music “attest” to the Jews’ racial inferiority and “depravity.” The film suggests the Nazi idea that Jews are really Africans of mixed race who create depraved art in Europe and depraved music in America.

The next sequence shows excerpts from a Jewish cultural film made by the Polish Jewish American, Joseph Green. This film was *Der Purimspiler* and shows a Purim celebration in a Jewish home. Purim is the story, probably fictional, of a Jewish queen, Esther, married to a Persian king, Ahasuerus, who saves the Jews from annihilation at the hands of an evil man named Haman. The narrator of the film, however, describes Purim as “a celebration of the slaughter of 75,000 Persian anti-Semites, a festival of vengeance.” This is followed by scenes of a Jewish yeshiva and a rabbi teaching Talmud. The narrator reads Talmudic quotes that purport to advocate exclusive Jewish privilege for the domination of the world. Rabbis are held to be primarily political agents of the Jewish conspiracy.

Then the film depicts a smiling Jewish ritual slaughterer and gruesome scenes of “genuine” kosher butchering. Koshering is portrayed as cruelty to animals. A cow is bound and then its neck is slashed without anesthetic or stunning. As blood flows out of the wound, the sound of the animal’s suffering is heard. The Jewish butchers are seen laughing and joking as the animal bleeds to death. There are then scenes of similar butchering of unbound sheep and then an unbound cow that is left to wobble around with blood flowing from a fatal wound. The narrator intones: “As in the

case of kosher slaughter National Socialist Germany has cleansed itself of all Jews.” Presumably the logic here is that what the Jews do to animals can then be done to the Jews.

At the end of the film, Hitler is seen speaking to the Reichstag in 1939, threatening the destruction of European Jewry: “Europe won’t find peace until the Jewish question is settled. . . . If international Jewish financiers inside and outside Europe succeed in plunging the nations into a world war once again, then the result will not be the victory of Jewry, but the destruction of the Jewish race in Europe.” The film ends with scenes from Leni Riefenstahl’s *Triumph of the Will*, depicting the faces of “Aryan” youth, marching troops, waving flags, and faithful followers of Hitler.

It is important to note that there is nothing ideologically new in this film. Most every charge against the Jews was made by Hitler (1925) in *Mein Kampf*. Additionally there is nothing really new in Hitler’s ideology, exterminationist anti-Semitism having been widespread in Germany as Goldhagen (1996) described. What was new was that anti-Semitic themes formed the basis of feature films, illustrating the policies and intentions of the state.

ANALYSIS OF THE FILM

The intention of the pornographer is to appeal to what has been called the “prurient interest” of the viewer by tapping conscious and unconscious fantasies to elicit feelings of sexual excitement. In similar fashion, the political propagandist attempts to make use of existing cultural myths, like the Eternal Jew, that will convince the audience of a particular attitude, value, ideology, or behavior. The analogous prurient interest in propaganda is prejudice and hatred, the arousal of which promotes an ideology and affects political behavior: acquiescence in the destruction of Jews and loyalty to the larger war effort. This acquiescence involved not only Germans but many non-Germans all over Europe. By what psychological means was this accomplished?

The political propagandist attempts to create and then exploit a cognitive and emotional regression in the viewer. Propaganda operates best in situations of threat, danger, and demoralization. If the external threat is not manifest, then it is the purpose of the propaganda to create the feeling of threat. By 1940, after seven years of Nazi rule, various threats had been identified by the regime. The propagandist attempts to show that a particular attitude or ideology is the solution to the threat. In this way, conditions for regression are enhanced. As part of the cognitive regression, a polarizing we-they, black-white view of the world (Meissner, 1978; Volkan,

1988) is created in which one group is seen as all good and humanized and the other as all bad and dehumanized. An idealized leader or ideology is portrayed as banishing all distress and solving all complex problems. In this process, the individual's sense of ego identity may be loosened or lost as the viewer identifies with the idealized leader.

The power of film images, particularly mixing reality and fantasy on the large screen, adds immensely to a cognitive regression in the viewer. In this way the film makes use of the psychology of the dream and daydream where images connect with primary process, emotionally-laden thinking rather than to reason and logic. This is how the film images manage to link to the unconscious fantasies of the individual. One of the enjoyments of viewing film is having our worst fears portrayed in a way that allows us to conclude that they are not real after all. But the political propagandist's aim is to portray our worst fears as real indeed and to suggest that they can only be dealt with by means of his ideology.

William Meissner (1978) has described what he called the paranoid process and traces this process in the development of prejudice, group development, and identity formation. In a complex argument, he links early childhood defense mechanisms, a clinically paranoid process, and externalization onto ideology and belief systems:

The clinical understanding of the paranoid process is rooted in the introjects, the drive-dependent and defensively motivated internalizations drawn from significant object relationships during the course of development and life experience. Any aspect of the introjective configuration can serve as the basis for projection; but usually when one polarity becomes the dominant focus of self-organization, the opposite polarity is projected. [P]rojective propensities require a framework, a sustaining organization of conceptual integration, to allow them to take on further meaning and relevance. Such paranoid constructions, while they may take the form of conspiratorial hypotheses in their pathological renditions, more usually in the common run of human experience find expression in various forms of ideology or belief systems. (Meissner, 1988, pp. 71–72)

Meissner applied the paranoid process concept to a group formative process he called "cultic." That is, groups utilize the paranoid process to create a sense of the ingroup as all good and the outgroup as all bad. Meissner has applied these notions primarily to religious cultic activity illustrated by Jewish and Christian messianism as well as to the formation of the early Christian Church. His analysis can apply also to political movements such as the Nazis and to political belief systems such as those depicted in the film. Propaganda plays an important role in the creation and maintenance of the paranoid cultic process.

Vamik Volkan (1988) has described a similar theory involving object relations theory, group process, and inter-group conflict. He refers to this process as the need for enemies and allies and traces this process in the

formation of inter-ethnic conflicts such as that between the Turks and the Greeks on Cyprus. He states:

[T]he concept of the enemy is intertwined with the child's developmental process of discovering who he is, from whom he is separated, to whom he is related, and from whom he should withdraw. A common enemy appears before the group as its members try to form and maintain a cohesive sense of self and, later, the sense of a group self in ethnic and national terms. (p. 4)

Volkan stressed the issue of the formation of the self as crucial to the group process which gives rise to ethnic prejudice and warfare.

Let us now return to the film in order to understand better the multiple levels of meaning of the rat and the butcher images in the film using these and other concepts.

Both Meissner and Volkan implied that in social development where there is group distress a cognitive and emotional regression takes place that is accompanied by a polarizing attitude. The regression involves cognitive mechanisms like splitting, projection, projective identification, primitive denial, and idealization-denigration, that are associated with early child development and with extreme forms of psychopathology. It is also characterized by the use of emotionally-laden pictorial images. The polarizing tendency is crucial in propaganda because polarizing language is endemic to it. Allport (1958), in his classic study of prejudice, cites the study by Lowenthal and Guterman on demagogic speeches. Allport summarizes propaganda as involving the following points:

You've been cheated. There's a widespread conspiracy against us. The Conspirators are sexually corrupt. Democratic government is corrupt. We can't trust foreigners. Our enemies are the lowest animals. There is no middle ground. There must be no polluting of blood. There is a disaster around the corner. Therefore the situation is too urgent to permit the luxury of thought. Everybody is against me, your leader. (pp. 389-390)

This formula fits the message of *Der Ewige Jude* as well as the polarizing state of mind posited by Meissner and Volkan.

In *Der Ewige Jude*, the propagandist tried to "document" that Jews were the ultimate "they," the ultimate enemy. The image of the rat carries the powerful message that Jews are not really human, thus rendering them worthy of annihilation. One function this dehumanization is meant to serve is the strengthening of the German people as a cohesive group in the war effort as well as the solidification of the Nazi Party as the true agent of this redemptive war.

In the process of trying to create group cohesion, the political propagandist, like the pornographer, appeals to deep emotional levels in the individual. As the pornographer appeals to particular conscious and unconscious sexual fantasies in the audience, the propagandist also taps certain

fantasies and feelings in his audience. Film images greatly enhance this tendency.

The image of the Jew as rat is one such image which is in turn linked to the unconscious fantasies of individuals. What does psychoanalysis have to offer to the understanding of the image of the rat in this emotional appeal? Leonard Shengold (1967, 1971, 1982) in a series of papers described individuals whom he called "rat people" because of their deep identification with rats. His view is as follows:

The clinical condition I ascribe to those seduced and beaten as children is more common than the preoccupation with rats shown by the specific patients discussed. Reviewing Freud's famous case of the Rat Man, one sees that the rat can stand for subject or object of any stage of libidinal development, but is particularly associated with eating and being eaten, and with anal erogeneity. I view the rat as a kind of hallmark indicating cannibalism. The omnivorous destructiveness, murder, and cannibalism directed against members of its own species, and above all the remarkable teeth of the rat, have established it as one of the chief cannibalistic imagos (others are spider, wolf, snake, vampire, sphinx, witch). (1967, p. 403)

Shengold presented ample clinical evidence from many case reports to the effect that rat fantasies not only involve passive homosexual wishes but also projected cannibalistic oral sadistic wishes combined with anal sadism. He draws upon Greek mythology, Orwell's *1984*, and Rabelais' *Gargantua* to amplify his thesis.

Hitler (1925) equated Jews with rats in *Mein Kampf*:

The Jew is only united when a common danger forces him to be or a common booty entices him; if these grounds are lacking, the qualities of the crassest egoism comes into their own and in a twinkling of an eye the united people turns into a horde of rats, fighting bloodily among themselves. (p. 302)

The film's rat images echo Hitler's with the image of the Jew as greedy and avaricious in a world-wide conspiracy to capture the world's wealth through evil cunning rather than through hard, honest labor. The rat-Jew is portrayed as cannibalistic through explicit references in the film to the Jew as parasite, spider, blood-sucker, and plague bringer all cited by Shengold as part of the cannibalistic imagery of his rat people patients. The brown rat represents both feces and the sadistic feelings attributed to feces, including cannibalistic ones (rats feed on flesh) (see Shengold, 1971 for a more detailed history of the rat and its representations in literature, folklore, etc.).

R. P. Hsia's (1988) examination of the ritual murder myths against the Jews in Reformation Germany documented an interesting accusation against the Jews that is germane to this analysis. He described a broadsheet commemorating the renovation of the anti-Semitic painting of the alleged ritual murder of Simon of Trent in 1474 under the arch of the Bruckenturm Gate in Frankfurt. The renovation and the broadsheet were done in 1678. The broadsheet depicts two rabbis. One is sitting on a sow, the other is

eating its feces. Hsia notes: “[T]he eating of feces reflects the popular belief that devils fed on feces, a motif that appears frequently in Luther’s writings” (p. 213). There is thus a link between Jews, rats, and feces, not only in the mythology of the culture but also in the writings of one of its leading religious figures. St. Ambrose in the 4th century mentioned that the Jews’ soul was made of shit (Victor, personal communication, 1997). This image suggests an allusion to homosexuality as well.

There is another line of analysis of the rat image that connects it to sexuality: the rat as carrier of disease and thus linked to syphilis. Hitler (1925), in *Mein Kampf*, devoted a good deal of attention to syphilis as he equated it with big cities, prostitution, and Jews (see pp. 246–257). He referred to the “Jewification of our spiritual life and the mamonization of our mating instinct” (p. 247), and he linked sex, syphilis, money, and Jews with a demonic force (see Gilman, 1991 for a more extensive discussion of the link between Jews and syphilis). The Jew-rat here is equated with a fecal penis that penetrates the body politic anally and spreads poison into it. The homosexual link is made much more explicit here.

The point here is not to label Hitler a “rat person” or to assert that all who watched this film share these particular fantasies and psychological conflicts. One cannot conclude that most German bystanders were psychotic in any clinical sense. Even the Nazi leaders who were clinically examined were not psychotic (Zillmer, Harrower, Ritzler, & Archer, 1995). My contention is that propaganda played a role in creating a group fantasy in which many people in Europe shared to one degree or another. This group fantasy involved the idea that Jews must be killed to usher in a new age in Europe.

Many scholars have pointed out a change in anti-Semitic ideology in 19th century Germany. Christian anti-Semitism had left conversion as a means of atonement for the Jews. Modern German anti-Semitism became exterminationist based on a scientific racial theory from which there was no conversion (Gilman, 1991; Goldhagen, 1995). The role of the propagandist was to link deep unconscious individual needs—particularly self-esteem regulation and identity stability—to these shared group fantasies through manipulation of the existing beliefs about Jews in European culture. Shared affect and fantasy, along with mutual identification with an idealized leader, led to shared ideology and concerted political action. Thus we cannot say that the film represented any particular individual fantasy but rather that the film attempted to create and justify an attitude toward Jews based on already existing anti-Semitic myths as well as shared affect and fantasies generated by the film itself. What was new was the power of mass communication to transmit these ideas widely and with the stamp of authority of “reality” as dictated by the state. If it was in a “documentary” feature film,

it must be true. The propagandist attempted to create and exploit mutual fears, sense of threat, and demoralization in this endeavor. The worst fears about the Jews were confirmed in a “scientific” way.

In the analysis of dreams in clinical psychoanalysis, sometimes a series of dreams dreamed on the same night will reveal their latent meaning more obviously in the successive dreams before waking. I believe this principle may apply to the understanding of the link between the rat scenes and the butchering scenes in the film. In the scenes of ritual slaughter, the cannibalistic theme becomes much more explicit.

The Jew as rat is transformed into the idea of Jew as vampire, required to live on the blood-letting of his victims for survival. Again in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler (1925) made this explicit:

Now the Jew begins to reveal his true qualities. . . . Even though the rage of the people against the eternal blood-sucker, it does not in the least prevent him from reappearing in a few years in the place he had hardly left. (p. 310)

The actual Jewish kosher butchering laws were construed by the Nazis as evidence of the bloodthirsty desires of Jews and thus can be understood as linked to the medieval myths of the Jewish ritual murder of Christian children and the use of their blood in religious ritual (Hsia, 1988). Hsia’s study documented the blood libel accusations back to the 12th century with the alleged martyrdom of the English boy, William of Norwich, in 1148. He documented the myth that Jews needed Christian blood, particularly that of male children, for “preparing matzo, anointing rabbis, for circumcision, in curing eye ailments, in stopping menstrual and other bleedings, in preventing epileptic seizures, removing bodily odors, and to ward off the evil eye, to make amulets, love potions, and magical powder, and to paint the bodies of the dead” (p. 2). These myths abounded in European culture well into the 18th century. This same myth was the excuse for a pogrom in Kielce, Poland, after the end of World War II and the defeat of the Nazis! The Nazis paid special attention to kosher butchering as evidenced by the fact that the German parliament passed the laws against koshering on April 21, 1933, Hitler’s birthday.

The psychoanalyst Martin Bergmann (1992) has given a complex analysis of the blood libel accusations and their place in anti-Semitic myth. He contended that the actual child sacrifice that was practiced in the ancient world was forbidden in the early Jewish religion but replaced by animal sacrifice. The *akedah*, the binding of Isaac in preparation for sacrifice, is the cornerstone of his analysis. That God spared Isaac represents the giving up of infanticidal and cannibalistic practices but these wishes remain in the Jewish and Islamic circumcision and in the Christian Eucharist. Martyrdom and ritual become the replacements for human sacrifice. In commenting on Bergmann’s analysis, Ostow (1996) contended that the story of *akedah*

and the ritual circumcision in Judaism and Islam serve to reduce the filicidal impulses between fathers and sons and reinforce the bond between them.

Ostow continued his analysis by concluding that if primitive infanticidal cannibalistic impulses recur in every generation, “the rituals and rules . . . can be interpreted as part of the effort to keep the archaic impulses repressed, to prevent the consumption of meat that has not been drained of blood, but yet to make the symbolic exhibition of blood effective in propitiating the Divinity” (p. 75). He closed his analysis in this way:

Michael Bodemann has suggested that in the Middle Ages these ritual procedures for draining meat of its blood were perversely misinterpreted as a method of *obtaining* blood for ritual purposes. If red wine symbolizing blood is drunk at the Mass, why should Jews not harvest blood for their rituals? And if animal blood was acceptable, would not the blood of Christian children be even more acceptable. Reverting to Bergmann’s argument, the Jew has devised rituals to repress and prevent cannibalistic impulses—but the antisemite interprets these rituals as a method of indulging these impulses. (p. 93)

Langmuir (1990) suggested that the blood libel is related to the acceptance of the doctrine of transubstantiation by the Church at the 4th Lateran Council in 1215. The link between ritual murder and the crucifixion became that the Jews needed Christian children to recrucify Jesus every year by substitution (Victor, personal communication, 1997).

In the film, the propagandist interprets the kosher butchering in exactly this way, tapping already existing myths about the Jews as ritual murderers and particularly as the murderers of God by crucifixion. As mentioned earlier, the title of the art show, the book, and this film all link up with the idea of the cruelty of the crucifixion and thus with Christian anti-Semitism through the legend of the eternally wandering, punished Jew. Bergmann’s and Ostow’s analysis of anti-Semitic myth provide another link to the assertion that the deeper level of emotional feeling, which the propagandist is attempting to tap, involves infanticidal and cannibalistic feelings. These serve as the justification for the Nazis’ own infanticidal and cannibalistic wishes to murder the Jewish children of God to bring about the rebirth of a purified Germanic state. This fantasy was enacted in the crematoria of the camps in occupied Poland.

The regressive nature of the political propaganda film enhances the sharing of fantasies and creates the conditions for the evolution of group fantasies (Arlow, 1982; Bion, 1959; Hartman & Gibbard, 1974b). The motive for the sharing of fantasies is both individual and social. The individual motive is to reduce distress and psychic conflict. The social motives include the group formative regression described by Scheidlinger (1967) as necessary for group cohesion and effectiveness. Freud (1921) first described the phenomenon of identification among members of the group with the leader as crucial to cohesion and concerted effort. In propaganda individual regres-

sion and the group formative regression are both exploited. The charismatic leader, group, or ideology offers a message that speaks overtly and subliminally to the feelings of threat and demoralization shared in the group. Individuals relinquish personal identity for a new group identity to find relief from individual and group conflict in the experience of group solidarity and cohesion (Hartman & Gibbard, 1974a).

Several types of shared group fantasies have been identified in studies of small self-analytic and therapeutic groups (Bion, 1959; Hartman & Gibbard (1974b). The shared group fantasy promoted in *Der Ewige Jude* can be termed apocalyptic in accord with Ostow's (1996) analysis of anti-Semitic myth. Ostow has identified the apocalyptic fantasy in this way:

The [apocalyptic] revelation is the myth that is circulated by the leader, that is presumed to originate from a divine source. . . . [T]he anticipated result of the militant campaign [against the enemy] constitutes the rebirth, the millennium, the divine reward. However, in addition, the mobilization, effecting mass mutual identification and love, and crediting the leader's promise of salvation, is itself experienced as a rebirth. (p. 165) The succession of the expectation or wish for death and destruction by the hope for rescue and rebirth, I consider the apocalyptic pattern of thinking. (p. 85)

Ostow linked the apocalyptic dreams and fantasies of psychoanalytic patients, the specific religious scriptural revelations of St. John the Divine, anti-Semitic myth in general, and Nazi ideology in particular. He felt that the destruction of the Jews was essentially apocalyptic in that this destruction was the means by which the 1000-year purified German Reich was to be reborn.

The polarizing attitude set in motion by cognitive and emotional regression also included these death-rebirth, evil-good, Jew-Aryan dichotomies. Unacceptable oral and anal sadistic wishes as well as male homosexual and female rape fantasies of individuals can be readily externalized onto rats and then onto Jews to create in-group cohesion, shared ideology, and then shared action in the war against the Jews and the war against the Allies. The Christian legend of the eternally wandering Jew is essentially a story about revenge, and revenge is at the heart of the Nazi vision of the apocalyptic triumph over Jewish diabolic evil. The equation of the Jew with the devil was not a new invention of the Nazis (Trachtenberg, 1944). They merely wove this myth into their ideology. At its core, the aim of the film is to dehumanize the Jews and to describe a rationale for their destruction.

CONCLUSION

Recent observation indicates how difficult it is to convince men to commit mass murder even in war or to convince a large population to

acquiesce to it. David Grossman (1995), a former U.S. Army psychologist, described how, after the bloody American Civil War Battle of Gettysburg, 90% of the 27,574 muskets recovered from the battlefield were loaded. Because 95% of the soldiers' time was spent loading, he concluded that most of the soldiers in this battle were not trying to kill their enemy. He also observed that it becomes easier to kill when people are trained to do so by conditioned reflex, where an enemy can be demonized by political or racial propaganda, when group pressure is especially intense, or when a leader who orders the killing is especially respected or feared. Derek Miller (1975), a psychoanalyst, in a study of adolescent murderers found that when the killer was able to dehumanize his/her victim prior to the killing, he/she was able to kill with little guilt or fear. Victims became like dolls or mannequins.

In Claude Lanzmann's film, *Shoah* (1995), two death camp survivors describe how they were forced to dig up the dead bodies of 90,000 fellow Vilna Jews with their bare hands so that they could be burned and thus leave no trace. They described the following:

The Germans even forbade us from using the word corpse or victim. The dead were blocks of wood, shit with absolutely no importance. Nothing. Anyone who said corpse or victim was beaten. The Germans made us refer to the bodies as *Figuren*, that is, as puppets, as dolls, or as *Schmattes*, which means rags. (p. 9)

Lanzmann (1995) also documents that at Auschwitz-Birkenau the SS referred to victims as pieces. In talking to members of the Jewish "special detail" for the disposal of corpses, an SS man asked, "How many pieces are left?" (p. 145). Human beings became products in the assembly line of death. Here the connection between dehumanization and murder seems the starkest.

The purpose of *Der Ewige Jude* was to demonize and dehumanize the Jewish people to justify their extermination. It was also to convince the audience of the rightness and inevitability of this position. The psychological steps that the film takes involve creating and exploiting a situation of threat, potential threat, or demoralization setting in motion a cognitive and emotional regression in the individual viewer. Individual identity (Erikson, 1950) and the sense of a cohesive self is threatened. This condition renders logical thought irrelevant and cognitive polarization involving mechanisms from early development and extreme psychopathology holds sway. This "paranoid process" also enhances the sharing of fantasies and a group formative regression leading to commonly held group fantasies as shared solutions to threat and demoralization. The success of the propaganda hinges on whether the charismatic leader or ideology speaks to the underlying needs of the group at the time the propaganda is offered. Within this group process, attitude change is effected. Just as Freud (1921) observed,

in the group with a charismatic leader the individual's ego ideal is altered, and a new ideological position may be held.

Propaganda messages span levels of functioning from the large group to the depths of individual psychic conflict. The emotions aroused by the message of ethnic prejudice involves the core of the identities of individuals and of groups. Propaganda messages involving anti-Semitism subliminally touch deep individual issues of self and identity cohesion, death and rebirth, and sadism and masochism, and their attendant anxieties, homosexuality, rape, and felt losses. The propagandist makes use of certain words such as enemy, bloodsucker, mongrelization, purity of blood, and the like, which tap individual fantasies as well as historical myths as providing a shared solution to threat and loss. These words act as triggers for shared fantasies, creating powerful group events and movements. In the process, one's values and attitudes may change in the face of what is perceived as a group normative solution.

In *Der Ewige Jude*, the propagandist portrayed the Jews as hated animals, feared disease, and as inhuman/subhuman excrement according to a "scientific" racial theory: evil personified. When this view was combined with an already existent Christian anti-Semitism, such a rationale may have made it easier for the Nazis to carry out the logistical plans for mass murder. We know that this was the intent of the Propaganda Ministry because this film was shown first to the Nazi elite, and then to concentration camp guards, to the Wehrmacht, to the Einsatzgruppen, and other units of the military to improve their "morale" (Welch, 1983). We also know that millions of Jews were killed. It seems logical then that this film played its intended part in the near destruction of European Jewry. It is also possible that the decision to make the film coincides with the determination to annihilate the Jews, indicating that the decision was made sooner than it has been thought to have been made (Hornshoj-Moller, 1996).

As Bion (1959) observed, the sharing of unconscious fantasies in groups can be irrational and ultimately self-defeating. Yet such shared fantasy can promote group cohesion and effective work. The most mature solution is when groups can harness these irrational forces to real-world efforts to create a more productive and caring world without having to create enemies to be destroyed for our own group's well being and for our own sense of identity and self-esteem.

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