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THESIS

**THE INFLUENCE OF ANTI-SEMITIC IMAGERY
AND RHETORIC IN GERMANY DURING
THE EARLY TO MID-20TH CENTURY**

by

Michelle G. Smith

March 2021

Thesis Advisor:
Co-Advisor:

Donald Abenheim
Carolyn C. Halladay

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Michelle G. Smith
Civilian, Department of the Navy
BS, Florida State University, 1997

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March 2021**

Approved by: Donald Abenheim
Advisor

Carolyn C. Halladay
Co-Advisor

Afshon P. Ostovar
Associate Chair for Research
Department of National Security Affairs

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ABSTRACT

Propaganda imagery and rhetoric has played a role in mass persuasion leading to an escalation of political violence connected to ethnic hatred as found in Germany in the 20th century—and beyond. By examining the anti-Semitic rhetoric and imagery used in Nazi Germany, this study examines the propaganda of racial hatred as a mechanism for gaining domestic political power—and then for launching a systematic strategy of mass-murder of Europe’s Jews. While the Nazis employed the most modern means available to disseminate their anti-Semitic propaganda, the message resonated with the long-standing and deep-seated hatred of Jews in Germany and Europe. Both the ideas and the methods continue to influence right-wing extremism today in Germany and elsewhere; as such, this study revisits the origins and effects of anti-Jewish propaganda in the Third Reich with an eye toward the continuing relevance of this analysis.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
A.	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION.....	1
B.	LITERATURE REVIEW	3
C.	POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES	9
D.	RESEARCH DESIGN	9
E.	THESIS OVERVIEW AND DRAFT CHAPTER OUTLINE	10
II.	EARLY ANTI-SEMITISM IN CENTRAL EUROPE	11
A.	LUTHER’S ANTI-SEMITIC IMAGERY	15
B.	17TH THROUGH 19TH CENTURIES IN GERMANY	19
III.	PROPAGANDA AND ANTI-SEMITISM.....	27
A.	USING ANTI-SEMITIC PROPAGANDA TO BUILD A POWER BASE	27
B.	USING ANTI-SEMITIC PROPAGANDA TO DEVELOP SYSTEMIC EXCLUSION.....	32
IV.	CONTEMPORARY HISTORY OF ANTI-SEMITIC IMAGERY AND RHETORIC.....	39
A.	ANTI-SEMITIC NAZI IMAGERY	39
B.	ANTI-SEMITIC RHETORIC AFTER THE NAZI ERA.....	49
V.	CONCLUSION	53
	LIST OF REFERENCES.....	59
	INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	65

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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Cartoon Depicting Jews as Rats Thrown Out of Germany.....	12
Figure 2.	Emperor Heinrich VII Affirms the Privileges of the Jews of the Holy Roman Empire and their Permission to Live in his Lands.	13
Figure 3.	Jews Nursing on a Swine and Eating its Excrement.....	17
Figure 4.	Caricature of a Farmer and Jewish Money Lender at a Calculating Table, Circa 1531.....	18
Figure 5.	Brawl between Jews and Christians during the anti-Jewish Riots in Hamburg 1835.	20
Figure 6.	Johann Michael Voltz anti-Jewish Riots in Germany Cities, 1819.	20
Figure 7.	Charles Leandre, Rothchild 1898.	21
Figure 8.	Caricature of a Jew.....	23
Figure 9.	Jewish Politicians of the Weimar Republic Stabbing Germany in the Back.	25
Figure 10.	Children's Book Showing Der Sturmer (anti-Jewish Newspaper by Leading Nazi Julius Streicher) Being Displayed in Village and Town Centers.....	41
Figure 11.	Jew Greedy for Money.....	43
Figure 12.	Jew Cheating German.	44
Figure 13.	School Children Drawing Jews.....	46
Figure 14.	Film Poster for Eternal Jew.....	47
Figure 15.	Jewish German Wearing Traditional Kippa.	53

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“The human capacity for subjective victimhood is apparently limitless, and people who believe that they are victims can be motivated to perform acts of great violence.”

—Timothy Snyder,
Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin (2010, 400)

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I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the role of mass persuasion and the escalation of political violence connected to ethnic hatred as found in Central Europe in the 20th century. Nazi propaganda was used to shape both a new totalitarian structure of ideas, thoughts, and doctrines and to create a new form of government that celebrated racial superiority and perpetual warfare; the regime eventually chose mass murder as the basis of national policy. After the end of World War I, Germany was ruined and on the brink of collapse. A charismatic Adolf Hitler was elected and promised he would recreate the great Germany of antiquity. The German populace was indoctrinated to believe in the story of the “villains” (Jews), during the time the final solution (Holocaust) was enacted, so that they could not distinguish reality from the propaganda. The relevant question then as now asks how to decipher racist propaganda for totalitarian ends and the use of the “big lie.”¹ This thesis aspires to build on the record of the former understanding of the nature of totalitarian propaganda as it examines racist lies that propagate violence on a mass scale.

Specifically, how did the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (abbreviated in German as NSDAP) and its organizations use anti-Semitism as a propaganda tool to coalesce their power? In addition, how did this racial hatred evolve in the course of the regime from being an outside radical party to a force that dominated the continent of Europe? Specifically, this thesis asks in which ways did Nazi ideology and its application to mass persuasion in the form of popular opinion proceed from a customary hatred of the Jewish people as it had existed since ancient times to a systematic exclusion from civil life, and finally, to mass murder? Moreover, how did the party use this vilification to build its power base first in Germany, and then in Europe, which then culminated in the Holocaust?

A. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

By examining the method of propaganda used in Nazi Germany and Hitler’s Europe, this study examines the role of racial hatred as a mechanism of domestic political

¹ David Welch, *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 3.

power in German history and also as a means of German and Axis aggression in the conquest of much of Europe and its racial reordering in warfare. This thesis explores the Nazis' systematic use of anti-Semitic propaganda to secure their power over Germany in the period from 1920 until 1939. This topic is well-studied but took on new relevance in 2019 due to the resurgence of racism, integral nationalism, and anti-Semitism in Europe and beyond. Even today in the United States, an unprecedented number of Jews have been violently murdered in politically inspired crimes of hate based on Nazi ideas or the poorly disguised imitation of Nazi ideas in the 21st century.

Propaganda is not necessarily something only used by the villains of history. Jowett points out that the Allied powers in World War I successfully used propaganda to make the German people complacent and susceptible to outside information, which would inspire the man who created the Nazi regime. "Hitler praised the British in *Mein Kampf* by stating that they understood propaganda was so important as it had to be handled by professionals."² In fact, once the war ended, and Hitler was retained in the military in the face of the revolutionary situation in Munich of 1919–1920, he became a kind of technical expert in political affairs among nationalist splinter groups.³ Hitler's thought on propaganda and how it could be utilized would be a recurring and major theme in the period 1920–1933, and of course, from 1933 until 1945 in the regime itself. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler described "five cardinal rules for successful propaganda:"⁴

The first is to avoid abstract ideas and appeal instead to the emotions of the people. The second rule is to employ constant repetition of just a few ideas using stereotypical phrases and avoiding objectivity. The third rule is to put forth only one side of the argument. The fourth rule is to constantly criticize enemies of the state. The fifth rule, and the one that will be examined in more detail, is to identify one special enemy for special vilification.⁵

² Garth S. Jowett and V. J. O'Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*, 6th ed. (London: Sage Publications, 2015), 234.

³ Thomas Weber, *Becoming Hitler: The Making of a Nazi* (United States of America: Hachette Book Group, 2017), 83.

⁴ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999), 177.

⁵ Hitler, 177–183.

The Nazis did not merely vilify Jews; they made the systematic annihilation of them central to their wartime goals. They sold this version to the German public-and others-through relentless propaganda, which seized on ages old prejudices and relatively recent “innovations” in hate.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on Nazi propaganda is vast and the following section presents a generalization. The first question addressed is how is propaganda used as tool of the state in both democratic and non-democratic contexts? Propaganda was critical to the Nazi party, both when it was democratically elected in the period of 1923–1932, and again, when it became a single-party totalitarian organization in 1933–1938. Dietrich Orlow states that the Nazis engaged in a frantic saturation of campaigning from the very beginning, and especially, in the period from 1930–1932 when it was brought to power finally by Paul von Hindenburg’s inner circle and due to its response to the electoral impasse of the time.⁶ In the form of the *Sturmabteilung* (SA, brown shirts), Nazi supporters went door-to-door to explain their message.⁷ Political literature was tirelessly distributed to the people. Cities, town, and villages were plastered with posters promoting a better Germany.⁸ Everywhere Germans saw energetic and young Nazis working for the cause, and eager for change, whereby the party portrayed the other parties as hidebound and maladroit at mass persuasion.⁹ Goebbels and his fellow propagandists understood that for propaganda to work, it had to reach the people at the most elementary emotional level of life or death, of blood and soil, and hope and despair, which the Nazis said was most important through the use of martyrs.¹⁰ Goebbels wanted film, newspaper, oral conversation, and radio as tools to create loyalty to the regime and utilized these tools to promote anti-Semitic claims to

⁶ Dietrich Orlow, *The History of the Nazi Party: 1919–1933* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press 1969), 83.

⁷ Orlow, 31.

⁸ Orlow, 350.

⁹ Orlow, 351.

¹⁰ Henry Ashby Turner Jr., *Hitler’s Thirty Days to Power: January 1933* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1996), 116.

keep the fire burning. The main argument based on Nazi racial doctrine was that Jews were engaged in an international effort to wipe Germany and the Germans from the face of the Earth, which finally left Hitler's Germany by the years 1941–1942, no choice but to engage in mass murder as a part of total war. To the Nazis, first the disenfranchisement, and later, the killing of the Jews, would be a form of self-defense of the people's community.

However, Nazi propaganda was also brutal. Sometimes, it could be harsh and be transformed into a violation of civil rights for racial imperatives. For example, the Nazis then turned their policies, rules, and laws inward for the betterment of the Aryan population. The women, however, had their central place in the regime if not always in the party itself. They were seen as the pillar of the home and family as a part of racial doctrine and all traditional female gender-specific roles that came with it. Hitler declared, "Providence has entrusted to women the care of this, her very own world, and only upon it can man's world be fashioned and constructed."¹¹ A woman was tirelessly instructed to become an ideal woman to be the helpmate of her husband, as well as the guardian of the race through motherhood. Hitler took this notion further by issuing several reproductive laws: Procreation Order and Marriage Health Law, as well as banning contraceptives.¹² The propaganda created demand for laws to enforce the people's community and the racial doctrine that reinforced the ideals of the propagandist message.

Both indirect propaganda and measures of repression can be seen in the Nazi propaganda against the Jews. The Nazi regime spared no effort to convince the people of the global and biological danger posed by the Jews. In their everyday lives, Germans were constantly bombarded by anti-Semitic posters, publications, radio, and film messages. At school, children were taught of the evil influence of the Jews. What followed is that many Germans were convinced that the Jews posed a dangerous threat. In addition, Epstein notes that when Hitler made decisions, it became the so-called Fuhrer Orders, and it was law.¹³

¹¹ Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann, and Marion Kaplan, "When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany," *German Politics & Society*, no. 20 (1990): 102, JSTOR.

¹² Bridenthal, Grossmann, and Kaplan, 103.

¹³ Catherine Epstein, *Nazi Germany: Confronting the Myths* (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2014), 35, ProQuest.

Ultimately, anti-Semitism was central to National Socialism and critical to understanding the Nazi party, according to the leading scholars in the field.¹⁴

David Vital clearly shows that the reason that Jewish identity is important is due to a long history of conflict between Judaism versus the hatred of Jews that in the 19th century became ensnared in integral nationalism.¹⁵ A Jew could not be also be the patriot of a nation, this argument ran—a person could either be Jewish or French—but not both.¹⁶ Following the French Revolution, the Jews in France steadily gained emancipation and equal citizenship throughout most of Europe, which, in turn, starting in the period after 1873, led to backlash and finally reached a climax of exclusion and a reversal of enfranchisement when the Nazi regime took hold in Hitler's Europe.

Vital states, “nationalism in France was not only the case among those nations that tended to view themselves in “organic” or “ethnic” terms by the mid-19th century and later, where Jews clearly could never be accepted as equal citizens.”¹⁷ In this view of ethnic, national or *völkisch* (blood and soil) idea, most nations would never be able to accept the Jews as equal as they would stand apart.¹⁸ This blood-and-soil imperative of integral nationalism as visible in France, or Austria, to say nothing of Russia, soon became the so-called Jewish question in the latter 19th century. Vital felt that even in those states where Jews were emancipated, they were never truly seen as equal citizens as the cases of Dreyfus and others showed circa 1880 and later when mass politics embraced the hatred of the Jews as a kind of “pernicious aliens.”¹⁹ This turn to disenfranchisement left the Jews as a people apart not only politically but also socially. Vital spends a great deal of time documenting

¹⁴ David A. Vital, *A People Apart: A Political History of the Jews in Europe 1789–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Jeffrey Herf, *Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 248–249, ProQuest Ebook Central; Sander Gilman and Steven Katz, *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 216; Alon Confino, *A World without Jews: The Nazi Imagination from Persecution to Genocide* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 202, ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁵ Vital, 962.

¹⁶ Vital, 963.

¹⁷ Vital, 963.

¹⁸ Vital, 962.

¹⁹ Vital, 799.

anti-Jewish sentiment that suffused European politics throughout this period, which left the Jews isolated politically and also in society.²⁰ According to Vital:

Jews constituted ‘a people apart’ not only ontologically, but also by non-Jewish design. This fact was as true in the Western part of Europe, where limited integration made possible by emancipation tended to de-emphasize Jewish distinctiveness, as it was further East, where Jews remained more obviously alien and anti-Semitism constituted a more fundamental axiom of state policy.²¹

These old, underlying ideas of Jewish “otherness” are critical to understanding how the Nazis were able to tap into pre-existing prejudices and fears; the Nazis did not create anti-Semitism, but they supercharged fears of the “others” who could then be blamed for all that was wrong in German society.²² This long tradition of elitist and popular anti-Semitism can also be seen in the highly useful work of *The Jewish Enemy*, where Jeffrey Herf postulates such a tradition allowed for the eventual persecution of the Jews in World War II.²³ By tracing the roots of anti-Semitism and how Hitler with propagandist techniques masterfully created the perfect enemy, Herf’s work covers the ideologies and desires of key figures in the time period leading up to World War II.²⁴ Herf stated that the Dresden Jewish philologist, “Victor Klemperer²⁵ recognized that anti-Semitism was not only a set of prejudices and hatreds but also an explanatory framework for historical events.”²⁶ Herf clearly states that Nazi propaganda “trumpeted innocence and self-righteous indignation and turned the powers relations between Germany and the Jews upside down...in such radical antisemitism all riddles were solved, all historical contingency was eliminated, and everything became explicable.”²⁷ Herf examines various

²⁰ Vital, 160.

²¹ Vital, 166, 969.

²² Ruth Gay, *The Jews of Germany: A Historical Portrait* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 20–21.

²³ Herf, *Jewish Enemy*, 3.

²⁴ Herf, 185.

²⁵ Entry for July 20, 1944 in Victor Klemperer, *I Will Bear Witness 1942–1945*, trans. Martin Chalmers (New York: Knopf, 2000), 335, quoted in Herf, *Jewish Enemy*, 2.

²⁶ Klemperer, 4.

²⁷ Klemperer, 6.

themes that the Nazis included concerning the “international Jewry,” as well as its far-reaching influence into all aspects of businesses that was blamed for Germany’s circumstances after World War I.²⁸ Herf postulates that the Nazi’s propaganda towards the bad tides of the war lost all touch with reality and created a mythological world in which “the Jews were guilty of everything.”²⁹ This mythological world clearly depicted the Nazi’s propagandist objective in differentiating the Jews from Germans or “us” versus “them.”

Sander Gilman and Steven Katz focus on the chronological portrayal of the Jews from ancient to modern times.³⁰ The authors argue two main points. The first argument is that anti-Semitism, which may be dormant in western culture, surfaces during times of crises. The second is the role of Christianity and its portrayal of the Jews or Judaism in the New Testament, which has created the stereotype of the villain, a Jew in various roles as money mad, sex-mad, and general disrupter of the organic order of society with the elites and those who follow the elites.³¹ The first argument can be explained by going back to the Age of Enlightenment and the Age of Reason/Science, during which the idea of ethnic purity emerges first as a principle of the biological world and then makes its way into politics.³² In this time period, nations became important, and “scientific” anti-Semitism ideas emerged that Jews had alien ideas and were of impure blood.³³

Their second argument clearly depicts a separation of friend versus enemy, when referenced in a religiously based antagonism against the Jews but is offset by the societal Jewish separation; the depiction of the Jews in traditional attire and with a prayer schedule, which separates them from the Christians.³⁴

In the same line, Alon Confino states that the Nazis drew on this us-versus-them narrative as they tried to create a new society in the form of a racial-biological imperative

²⁸ Herf, *Jewish Enemy*, 184.

²⁹ Herf, 8.

³⁰ Gilman and Katz, *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, 15.

³¹ Gilman and Katz, vii.

³² Gilman and Katz, 7.

³³ Gilman and Katz, 38.

³⁴ Gilman and Katz, 81.

of a so-called Aryan nation.³⁵ As such, Nazi anti-Semitism required a new legend of hate and conflict.³⁶ The Nazi ideology had to build itself up by referencing past German greatness on a racial basis that was made to contrast with the defeat and the unwanted republic. Confino states that to accomplish this fact, a new/old history would have to be written in which the Jews were treated as the enemy:

Nazism saw itself as a radical, novel historical departure, it paid particular attention to the past, that protean and essential factor of life in all societies. The more radical the break with past conduct and morality—as the Nazis set out to build an empire based on the systematic persecution and extermination of groups of people—the greater the need for a new national story to make sense of what was happening. According to this story the Jews reflected a historical past—historical origins, to be exact—that needed to be extirpated in order for a new Germany to arise. To create a Nazi civilization, a new European order and form of Christianity, Jewish civilization had to be removed.³⁷

Omer Bartov states the extermination of the Jews was chiefly a product of propaganda, as the narrative of the Jews as villains led to the rise of a bureaucracy and paramilitary organizations dedicated to exterminating them.³⁸ In line with Confino, Bartov emphasizes the role of anti-Semitism in driving the Nazi party's politics, but instead of focusing on the fantasy of the Jews as a powerful enemy, it instead postulates that anti-Semitism was necessary to the success of the Nazi ideology.³⁹ Yet, even with the strength of this propaganda, Bartov points out that Germans would throw food to starving Jews as acts of kindness, based on the German's Christian beliefs.⁴⁰ Despite these acts of charity, however, Bartov argues that Nazi propaganda was unique in being utilized as the state's main objective to dehumanize an entire people into a slaughterhouse on a continental scale:

Never before, or after, has a state decided to devote so many of its technological, organizational, and intellectual resources to the sole purpose

³⁵ Confino, *A World without Jews*, 6.

³⁶ Confino, 5.

³⁷ Confino, 5–6.

³⁸ Omer Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust: Disputed Histories* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), xvii, ProQuest Ebook Central.

³⁹ Bartov, xviii.

⁴⁰ Bartov, 134.

of murdering every single member of a certain category of people in a process that combined the knowledge acquired in mass industrial production with the experience of waging total war. This was a novel phenomenon: striving to produce corpses with the same methods employed to produce goods. In this case, however, destruction was the goal of production, not its opposite.⁴¹

C. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The present study argues that the strength of German anti-Semitism was the main element in the Nazi party gaining support in late 1920s. Seeing the Nazi regime as a national religion, Hitler used anti-Semitism as the key to Nazi Party gaining support.⁴² Hitler attempted to create a fantasy world in which Germany would be an all-homogenous, all-powerful nation. Hitler stated in February 1928, “that we are the bosses here; if he [the Jews] behaves well, he can stay—if not, then out with him.”⁴³ Germany and the establishment of a socially and racially homogenous community remained the goal, although being nothing more than a utopian fantasy in their mind. Hitler did not brainwash his followers, but instead manipulated them by rousing his listeners to nationalist ecstasy. This study explores the creation of support through propaganda.

I hypothesize that the Nazis narrowed their propaganda focus on dehumanizing one group, as well as identifying the Jews as both sub-human and the cause of all Germany’s problems. By removing the Jews—the “problem”—the Nazis were able to strengthen their vision of the ideal perfect society, and then attempt, through the Final Solution, to bring this vision to life.

D. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis uses a multitude of primary, as well as secondary sources, to evaluate and appraise the hypothesis. Film, graphic imagery, and speeches are the primary source for this paper. Secondary sources include published books and academic articles.

⁴¹ Bartov, 135.

⁴² Jeremy Noakes, “Hitler and the Third Reich,” in *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, ed. Dan Stone (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 48.

⁴³ Harold J. Gordon, *Hitler and the Beer Hall Putsch* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 135.

This thesis aims to examine and analyze historical cases systematically. The thesis briefly summarizes anti-Semitism imagery, rhetoric, and philosophy. By examining the propaganda in Germany during the Nazi regime, the study highlights similarities and discrepancies regarding the influences this media contributed to the movement. The evaluation of this thesis is intended explicitly to examine and weigh the causes and effects of anti-Semitic images and rhetoric that has withstood the test of time. Once identified, the interdependencies between the evaluated continuities and discontinuities are analyzed to bolster the paper's conclusion, which includes recommendations for a more in-depth evaluation of anti-Semitic propaganda and its similar effects that can possibly be created in the future.

E. THESIS OVERVIEW AND DRAFT CHAPTER OUTLINE

The thesis is structured into five chapters. Following the introduction (Chapter I), Chapter II reviews the early history of anti-Semitic imagery and rhetoric. The first section focuses on the period of Luther, and the second section focuses on the 17th–19th centuries. Chapter III explores propaganda and anti-Semitism. The first section focuses on how the Nazi's built a power base and the second on using anti-Semitic propaganda to create systematic exclusion. Chapter IV examines the contemporary history of anti-Semitic imagery and rhetoric. The first section focuses on Nazi, Germany, and the second section focuses on current times. Chapter V draws comparisons and discusses continuities and discontinuities of anti-Semitism imagery and rhetoric, and then ties the research together by providing an analysis and revealing important continuities.

II. EARLY ANTI-SEMITISM IN CENTRAL EUROPE

While the Nazis employed the most modern means available to disseminate their anti-Semitic propaganda, this hatred of the Jews has much deeper roots in German and European history. Anti-Semites of the 19th and 20th centuries made much of the distinction between their “Scientific race hatred and old-fashioned anti-Semitism that was couched in religious terms.”⁴⁴ Still, clear continuities persisted across the centuries, and this chapter explores these long-standing images to show the persistent and evolution of anti-Semitism in Germany. The propaganda message (Figure 1) clearly depicted in the following picture is a repeated message that portrays the Jews like rats similarly worthy of extermination.⁴⁵ This theme had festered and evolved to reach this cinematic climax with the Nazis; however, its roots are easily traced back in German history.

⁴⁴ William Brustein, *Roots of Hate: Anti-Semitism in Europe before the Holocaust* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 95–96.

⁴⁵ Imogen Wall, “Look Back and Learn: The Evian Conference,” *The New Humanitarian*, November 18, 2015, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2015/11/18/look-back-and-learn-evian-conference-1938>.



Figure 1. Cartoon Depicting Jews as Rats Thrown Out of Germany.⁴⁶

The antipathy of Christians to the Jews (Figure 2) was observed at least as early as the 13th century with the Christian church's attempt to convert the Jews en masse.⁴⁷ For example, in the 1290s, Dominican preachers invaded Sabbath synagogue services to harass and convert.⁴⁸ Another example was the inquisitor Bartolomeo who, with royal permission, almost obliterated the Jewish community of southern Italy because Christians were seen observing Jewish days of worship, rather than the church-sanctioned Christian ones.⁴⁹ This conversion effort could be viewed as a way to eliminate Jews from Europe, or a form of "ethnic cleansing" in the late-20th century vernacular.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Source: Wall. Photo by Das Klein Blatt in 1939.

⁴⁷ Gilman and Katz, *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, 96.

⁴⁸ Gilman and Katz, 97.

⁴⁹ Gilman and Katz, 98.

⁵⁰ Andrew Bell-Fialkoff, "A Brief History of Ethnic Cleansing," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 110–21, doi: 10.2307/20045626. Specifically, refer to page 111.



Figure 2. Emperor Heinrich VII Affirms the Privileges of the Jews of the Holy Roman Empire and their Permission to Live in his Lands.⁵¹

Indeed, faith—or a very particular interpretation of Christian doctrine—informed this older anti-Semitism. In the view of the time, the Jews of the Old Testament should have vanished, at the latest, with the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem so that the children of the new age (and the New Testament) could take their rightful place as God’s preferred people.⁵² For failing to do their historic duty and disappear when their destiny had been fulfilled, then, the Jews represented, in the words of Gilman and Katz, a “new unnatural, satanic, and inimical to the welfare of Christendom.”⁵³

It is worth noting that the Spanish Jews who sought to escape the Inquisition were welcomed in several Central European empires, where their descendants later experienced

⁵¹ Source: Kerice Doten-Snitker, “How Anti-Semitism Was Used to Gain Political Power in Medieval Germany,” *Stroum Center for Jewish Studies*, February 26, 2019, <https://jewishstudies.washington.edu/jewish-history-and-thought/anti-semitism-medieval-germany-ashkenaz-political-power/>.

⁵² Gilman and Katz, *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, 98.

⁵³ Gilman and Katz, 97.

the worst ravages of the Holocaust.⁵⁴ In the feudal period, the Jews in Europe—particularly in Central Europe—were literally a people apart, living behind ghetto walls, easily visible by their distinctive garb, and highly regulated by law and convention in their interactions with the gentile communities around them.⁵⁵ This difference fueled some of the more lurid—and long-lasting—anti-Semitic images. For example, as scholar anti-Semitic scholar Jeremy Cohen points out, Christian Europeans charged the Jews with “ritual murder, the blood libel, as well as the accusations that Jews desecrated the host and poisoned wells.”⁵⁶ To the extent that any prejudice can be said to have any sort of reason at its core, the often-repeated accusation of ritual murder reflects at least somewhat the fear wrought of unfamiliarity with Jewish religious slaughter and food preparation requirements. An example of this prejudice is seen particularly in the rumor that the Jews poisoned wells, which caused the Black Death. While false, this myth shows the emergence of anti-Semitism in Germany.⁵⁷

Martin Luther, known as the father of the Protestant Reformation, stands out as an implacable anti-Semite for his theologically infused loathing of the Jews. At first, he tried to show that the Jews should be treated kindly, and that on hearing of the teaching of Christ, they would be converted. In 1523, he stated:

If I had been a Jew and had seen such dolts and blockheads govern and teach the Christian faith, I would have sooner have become a hog than a Christian. They have dealt with the Jews as if they were dogs rather than human beings; they have done little else than deride them and seize their property. When they baptize them, they show them nothing of Christian doctrine or life, but only subject them to popishness and mockery... If the apostles, who also were Jews, had dealt with us Gentiles as we Gentiles deal with the Jews, there would never have been a Christian among the Gentiles.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jews and Its Relation to Modern Anti-Semitism*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2002), 102.

⁵⁵ Vital, *A People Apart*, 253–254.

⁵⁶ Jeremy Cohen, “Traditional Prejudice and Religious Reform: The Theological and Historical Foundations of Luther’s anti-Judaism,” in *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, ed. Sander Gilman and Steven Katz (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 98.

⁵⁷ Gilman and Katz, *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, 2.

⁵⁸ Martin Luther, “That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew,” trans. Walter I. Brandt, in *Luther’s Works, Vol. 45, Christians in Society II*, ed. Walter I. Brandt (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962), 200–201.

Though Luther first argued for the kind conversion of the Jews, this conversion was not successful, and the Jewish population refused to convert. Luther then changed his stance. When the mass conversions of the Jews did not materialize, Luther stated:

I hope, will furnish a Christian (who in any case has no desire to become a Jew) with enough material not only to defend himself against the blind, venomous Jews, but also to become the foe of the Jews' malice, lying, and cursing, and to understand not only that their belief is false but that they are surely possessed by all devils. May Christ, our dear Lord, convert them mercifully and preserve us steadfastly and immovably in the knowledge of him, which is eternal life. Amen.⁵⁹

A. LUTHER'S ANTI-SEMITIC IMAGERY

Luther used four main types of imagery when talking about the Jews: animals, blood, money, and appearance that could be mixed. Martin Luther created an anti-Semitic book, *On the Jews and Their Lies*.⁶⁰ In it, he accuses the Jews of intending to steal the Christians from the true religion.⁶¹ Luther insisted that the Jews were no longer God's chosen people and gave evidence to this testimony with a distortion of bible stories, such as "Moses was unable to reform the Pharaoh by means of plagues, miracles, pleas, or threats; he had to let him drown in the sea."⁶² Passover was when God went on to kill all firstborns of Egypt, but the Jews were protected from God's wrath by a special mark drawn in blood on the door.⁶³ Rather than the traditional view of the Jews being protected from slaughter, Martin Luther viewed this celebration as an "ugly manifestation of hatred of mankind, all mankind other than the Jews."⁶⁴ Luther's hatred of the Jews knew no bounds. In his view, the Jew's breath "stinks with lust for the Gentiles' gold and silver, for no nation under the sun is greedier than they were, still are, and always will be, as is evident from

⁵⁹ Franklin Sherman and Helmut Lehmann, eds. *Martin Luther's Works, Volume 47: The Christian Society IV* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 293.

⁶⁰ Sherman and Lehmann, 293.

⁶¹ A. J. Deus, *Holy Enemies of Freedom: How Martin Luther Unleashed the Beast of Anti-Semitism* (Vancouver, BC: Missing Element Publication, 2020), 412.

⁶² Martin Luther, *On the Jews and their Lies*, trans. Martin Bertram (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 58.

⁶³ Exodus 9:10.

⁶⁴ Luther, *On the Jews and their Lies*, 62.

their accursed usury.” Indeed, Luther portrayed the Jews as people with the never-ending appetite for money and riches. Luther also criticizes the leaders for allowing the Jews to gain control over their wealth. Luther states:

German princes and rulers sat there and snored with mouths hanging open and permitted the Jews to take, steal, and rob from their open money bags and treasures whatever they want until they were beggars with their own money. Thieves would be hanged, but when a Jew steals and robs 10 tons of gold through his usury, he is more esteemed than God himself.

For Luther, the central problem began with the Jews refusing to accept Jesus as the Messiah. Because they viewed themselves as God’s chosen people, they looked down at any non-Jews as “poor worms.”⁶⁵ To Luther, this double outrage meant that the persistence of Jews on earth threatened humanity by offending the Lord. Thus, Luther argued that the Jews are “dreary dregs, this stinking scum, this dried up froth, this moldy leaves and boggy morass of Jewry should merit...are nothing but rotten, stinking, rejected dregs of their father’s lineage.”⁶⁶ Luther utilized symbolism and figurative speech (Figure 3) to further the gap between the Jews and the Christians, for example, by portraying the Jews as “a sow that wallows.”⁶⁷ Luther chose his metaphor with malicious purpose, likening Jews to the animal whose flesh they were forbidden by their faith from eating. Luther states:

Shame on you, here, there, or wherever you may be, you damned Jews, that you dare to apply this earnest, glorious, comforting word of God so despicably to your mortal, greedy belly, which is doomed to decay, and that you are not ashamed to display your greed so openly. You are not worthy of looking at the outside of the Bible, much less of reading it. You should read only the bible that is found under the sow’s tail, and eat and drink the letters that drop from there. That would be a bible for such prophets, who root about like sows and tear apart like pigs the words of the divine Majesty, which should be heard with all honor, awe, and joy.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Luther, 75.

⁶⁶ Luther, 76.

⁶⁷ Luther, 89.

⁶⁸ Luther, 95.



Figure 3. Jews Nursing on a Swine and Eating its Excrement.⁶⁹

Tellingly, the very City Church in Wittenberg, where Luther the Reformer preached radical Christian equality among men, is adorned by a gilded “*Judensau*” relief; an image of the Jews shoving straw in the mouth of a massive pig and collecting golden coins from its backside. Similar motifs (Figure 4) adorn banks and other public spaces in Central Europe and reflect the long-standing association of Jews with money trading, schemes and

⁶⁹ Source: *Vom Schem Hamphoras und vom Geschlecht Christi* (Of the Unknowable Name and the Generations of Christ) written by Martin Luther in 1543, several months after publishing his infamous anti-Semitic book *On the Jews and their Lies*.

swindles, and filth.⁷⁰ Luther stated that the Jews “were a heavy burden, a plague, a pestilence, a sheer misfortune for our country, and if they could leave to their land, the sooner the better.”⁷¹ Luther is not solely to blame for his anti-Semitic views, but he is the catalyst that keeps the fables alive. He gives purpose to the fables by blaming the Jews for all the Christian woes and troubles. This blame is expounded on generation after generation and keeps the divide between us and the Jews.



Figure 4. Caricature of a Farmer and Jewish Money Lender at a Calculating Table, Circa 1531.⁷²

⁷⁰ Gilman and Katz, *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, 431.

⁷¹ Deus, *Holy Enemies of Freedom*, 435.

⁷² Source: “This Woodcut Shows a Farmer and a Jewish Money Lender at a Calculating Table,” Alamy, accessed February 9, 2021, <https://www.alamy.com/this-woodcut-shows-a-farmer-and-a-jewish-money-lender-at-a-calculating-table-image247182171.html>. This woodcut shows a farmer and a Jewish money lender at a calculating table taken January 1, 1531.

B. 17TH THROUGH 19TH CENTURIES IN GERMANY

In the 17th century, the Jewish community resurged in Germany, and modernized amid the Jewish Enlightenment (the Haskalah) and Emancipation. The Haskalah is a movement that started as early as 1770 and ended around 1881 in Germany following the European Enlightenment, and broadened the Jews intellectually and socially so they would assimilate into the Western society.⁷³ The term *haskalahh* derives from the Hebrew word *sekhel*, which translates to “the intellect.”⁷⁴ Vital states that the:

haskalah had borrowed from the European Enlightenment proper was a mode of thought that subjected virtually all matters of contention to the test of universal quality, content, application, and significance.... The European Enlightenment had tended therefore to neglect the specific and be drawn towards the secular. Anxious to draw from the great stores of ideas, attitudes, programmes, and techniques on which the doors of the Enlightenment proper had opened, they were never sure what they might decently adopt and apply to the largely hermetic culture of the Jews themselves.⁷⁵

Mendes-Flohr concurs that “the *haskalah* to establish it as a movement whose internal logic and implicit purposes were secular, anticlerical style and drive would be explicit.”⁷⁶ Mendes-Flohr quoting Mendelssohn, states that “Jews of good conscience to remain observant and faithful to the tradition.”⁷⁷ While the *haskalah* asserted their wish for equal rights, it does not come without a surge of riots (Figures 5 and 6) expressing the opposition to granting of these civic and economic opportunities for the Jews.⁷⁸ The followers of this Haskalah were also called *maskilim*, and they wanted to have equal rights in German society.⁷⁹

⁷³ Vital, *A People Apart*, 136.

⁷⁴ Louis Jacobs, “Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment,” *Jewish Learning Newsletter*, accessed September 7, 2020, <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/haskalah/>.

⁷⁵ Vital, *A People Apart*, 136–137.

⁷⁶ P. Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980, 1955), 252–253.

⁷⁷ Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz, 131.

⁷⁸ Vital, *A People Apart*, 33.

⁷⁹ Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World*, 254.



Figure 5. Brawl between Jews and Christians during the anti-Jewish Riots in Hamburg 1835.⁸⁰



Figure 6. Johann Michael Voltz anti-Jewish Riots in Germany Cities, 1819.⁸¹

The Emancipation occurred toward the end of the 18th century, which constituted a new definition of Jewish social positions through political and economic reforms that had

⁸⁰ Source: "A History of Antisemitism in Germany since the 18th Century," Brewminate, December 20, 2018, <https://brewminate.com/a-history-of-antisemitism-in-germany-since-the-18th-century/>.

⁸¹ Source: Cała, *Jew the Eternal Enemy?* 73.

taken place.⁸² The Jewish Emancipation had arrived with substantial political, social, and economic features experienced by the rest of the civil society. Chapman states, “It is by no means unusual to find successful entrepreneurs with a lust for business, but in the case of the Continental Jewish families the psychological need for achievement and the attainment of higher status by innovation and creativity seems to have been greater.” The Jewish financier Rothchild (Figure 7) is a great example. This rapid acceleration of the Jews, however, was welcomed by some non-Jews but clearly opposed by others.

This resistance resulted from the emergence of the affluent and successfully bourgeoisie Jews in Germany.⁸³

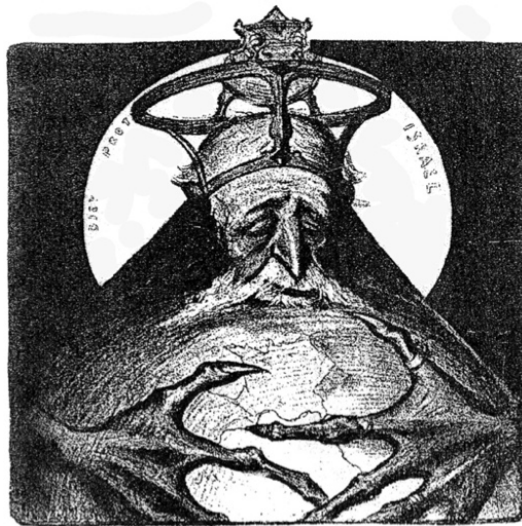


Figure 7. Charles Leandre, Rothchild 1898.⁸⁴

The bankruptcy of several other bankers left Rothchild with no competitors in the bullion market during the Napoleonic Wars.⁸⁵ Chapman states that Rothchild was the banker for the war; all bills were paid from the Rothschild houses in Frankfurt and Paris to

⁸² Vital, *A People Apart*, 31.

⁸³ Albert S. Lindemann, *The Jew Accused: Three Anti-Semitic Affairs (Dreyfus, Beilis, Frank 1894–1915)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 10.

⁸⁴ Source: Cała, *Jew the Eternal Enemy?* 73.

⁸⁵ S. D. Chapman, “The Establishment of the Rothschilds as Bankers,” *Jewish Historical Studies* 29 (1982): 180, JSTOR.

London.⁸⁶ Chapman quotes John Charles Herris (a British financier) “Rothchild of this place had executed the various services lately entrusted to him in this line admirably well, and though a Jew, we place a good deal of confidence in him.”⁸⁷ By 1818, the Rothchilds had inserted themselves into the banking realms in dealing with several nations’ governments. One of these loans was the Prussian loan of 1818, which:

Rothchild may be said to have been the first introducer of foreign loans...for, though such securities did at all times circulate, the payment of the dividends aboard which was the Universal practice before this time, made them too inconvenient an investment for the great majority (of men) of property to deal with. He not only formed arrangements for the payment of the dividends on his foreign land, but made them still more attractive by fixing the rate in sterling money and doing away with all the effects of the fluctuations in the exchanges.⁸⁸

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the Jews were dismissed as certainly not superior to the non-Jewish community and were called the “other.” Vital states, “the matter of Jews from the middle of the eighteenth century until the nineteenth century...in reports and comments by superior officials noted the literary delineation of Jewish characters, Jews tended to be dismissed as an incorrigibly inferior lot.”⁸⁹ Toward the rise of the late 19th century, anti-Semitism was again on the rise. Lindemann stated that to understand the relationship between these two groups, it is crucial to understand the “rise of the Jews.”⁹⁰ Lindemann states to understand this rise, it is critical to see the social success and material comforts of the Jews.⁹¹ The Jews in the late 19th century experienced an emergence of the Jewish bourgeoisie, and as such, started to achieve civil equality.⁹² The 19th century prejudices and practices extended into the 20th century as seen in Figure 8.

⁸⁶ Chapman, 180.

⁸⁷ Chapman, 180–181.

⁸⁸ Chapman, 184–185.

⁸⁹ Vital, *A People Apart*, 31.

⁹⁰ Lindemann, *The Jew Accused*, 11.

⁹¹ Lindemann, 10.

⁹² Lindemann, 10–11.



Figure 8. Caricature of a Jew.⁹³

Post-1918 Germany was a time ripe to sow the conditions of racial theory and political reality started to converge. Four historical factors lead to this convergence: defeat of 1918 and Jewish behavior in World War I; the Versailles Treaty and its peace conditions; the Jewish stereotype as a revolutionary; and finally, the Jews who were caricatured as a capitalist.⁹⁴

Katz summarizes that:

to account for the disaster that occurred, this community required another, alternative explanation, and they found one readily at hand. The nation had been betrayed from within by...the Jews. It was the Jews, the disloyal aliens par excellence, who, with the aid of their corrupt leftist puppets, had consciously administered the fateful stab in the back which had undermined Germany's ability to wage a successful war.⁹⁵

⁹³ Source: Alina Cała, *Jew the Eternal Enemy?* (Warsaw, Poland: Jewish Historical Institute, 2012), 72 <https://www.jhi.pl/en/publications/4>.

⁹⁴ Gilman and Katz, *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, 228.

⁹⁵ Gilman and Katz, 228.

Walter Rathenau, a Jewish politician, was critical in the organization of the war economy following the end of World War I. With the Treaty of Versailles, which left unrealistic conditions on the Germans, the people rebelled by stating that no true German would accept such terms.⁹⁶ Rathenau, the German-Jewish Foreign Minister in 1922, was quoted as saying, “We Germans are obligated by our signature, by the honor of our name that we have placed under the treaties. We will fulfill and we will go to the limit of our ability in order to preserve the honor of our name, which stands affixed to the treaties, and we recognize their binding character even though they do not express our wishes.”⁹⁷ He felt honor bound to accept the terms of the treaty on behalf of Germany, which created a bigger anti-Semitic complaint against the Weimar Republic. This very support of the treaty was seen as an act of treason (Figure 9).⁹⁸ The voice of Jewish Emancipation notwithstanding, a separation between Aryans and Semites remained in society, in which the “otherness” of the Jews was pointedly discussed. The term “Revolutionary Jews,” as they were accused of being, was based on an accusation that their “sworn purpose was to undermine the established order and its values, replacing them, in turn, with a Jewish form of government which would invert the economic and power relations between Aryan and Semites.”⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Peter H. Merkl, *The Making of a Stormtrooper* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 27.

⁹⁷ David Felix, *Walther Rathenau and the Weimar Republic: The Politics of Reparations* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), 115.

⁹⁸ Felix, 116.

⁹⁹ Gilman and Katz, *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, 235.



Figure 9. Jewish Politicians of the Weimar Republic Stabbing Germany in the Back.¹⁰⁰

Katz states it is impossible for a Jew due to national history to ever be seen as a loyal, integral member of the nation.¹⁰¹ He argues:

according to the logic of extreme racial anti-Semitism, the Jew's meta-political nature is a telling symptom of his normative standing outside the ordinary universe of obligations and rights normally imposed by national criteria and definition. Not belonging to any polity (other than that of the Jewish people), the Jew feels no obligations to any civic morality, and thus, conversely, he exists outside the accepted realm of human rights.¹⁰²

These anti-Semitic ideals would be expounded to state that the Jews would seek to reverse the process of emancipation gained by the French Revolution.¹⁰³ This ideal was a bigger plan to cause political exclusiveness, *Judenfrage*, by creating a meta-biological issue that would lead to a genocidal rather than national exclusivity.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Source: "Writing the Dolchstoßlegende in English," Common Infirmities, August 25, 2019, <https://commoninfirmities.com/2019/08/25/writing-the-dolchstoslegende-in-english/>.

¹⁰¹ Gilman and Katz, *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, 239.

¹⁰² Gilman and Katz, 239.

¹⁰³ Donald L. Niewyk, *Socialist, Anti-Semite, and Jew: German Social Democracy Confronts the Problem of Antisemitism, 1918–1933* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 25–27.

¹⁰⁴ Niewyk, 25–27.

Gombrich writes, “In which there is a virtuous young Germany fought manfully against evil schemers, above all the Jews...This gigantic persecution mania, this paranoiac myth that held the various strands of German propaganda together.”¹⁰⁵ Lindemann states, “since the days of Moses and Pharaoh, it has been, time after time, this perceived threat has provoked hatred and violence against the Jews.”¹⁰⁶ Katz states that “the final coalescence of these two vectors after 1933 was neither fore-ordained nor historically inevitable, but rather one of the fecund possibilities that a traumatized and exhausted post-war Europe generated.”¹⁰⁷ This background laid the framework for the Nazi regime to flourish on dehumanizing the Jews into objects and necessary rats that needed to be exterminated.

¹⁰⁵ Ernst Hans Gombrich, *Myth and Reality in German War-Time Broadcasts* (London: Athlone, 1970), 34.

¹⁰⁶ Lindemann, *The Jew Accused*, 12.

¹⁰⁷ Gilman and Katz, *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, 227.

III. PROPAGANDA AND ANTI-SEMITISM

Stemming from Hitler's experiences in World War I, he attached enormous importance to propaganda to gain power. Hitler and the Nazi party experimented with multiple forms of propaganda, including speeches, symbols, and media against for example Bolsheviks. To captivate the German public with a terrifying enemy that had to be destroyed, the Nazis turned the focus of their propaganda on anti-Semitic messaging. While Nazi propaganda started out as gentle persuasion campaigns toward the Jews, it escalated first to societal pressure, then to policies and encouraged actions, then to strict laws that served to deepen the divide between Jews and Germans.¹⁰⁸ Finally, propaganda was used to create the "Jewish question" and also how to solve it. Specifically, Hitler used propaganda to elicit wild enthusiasm and intense hatred for the Jews, and in this system of propaganda, there was no place for rational understanding.¹⁰⁹

Thus, anti-Semitic propaganda helped Hitler build his power base and achieve his goals of creating a greater Germany. This chapter examines this deadly dynamic, in which Nazi, anti-Semitic propaganda inspired a divergent form of persecution, genocide.

A. USING ANTI-SEMITIC PROPAGANDA TO BUILD A POWER BASE

Any discussion of how the Nazi party used propaganda to build its power base starts with World War I. The historian Jowett argues that for the first time, World War I introduced a major shift in warfare, from a focus on winning battles to a focus on winning the story of the war as told through the media.¹¹⁰ This national narrative both demanded and inspired the modern practice of propaganda.

Indeed, Great Britain represented the nation with perhaps the most sophisticated civil society, commercial potential, and pool of ready talent for the new chapter of

¹⁰⁸ Charles Bracelen Flood, *Hitler: The Path to Power* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989), 53.

¹⁰⁹ Jowett and O'Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*, 230.

¹¹⁰ Jowett and O'Donnell, 232.

propaganda in total war during World War I.¹¹¹ British propaganda tried to set the character of the war (democracy versus tyranny) using symbols, words, and, above all, the mass communications of the age.¹¹² The British used propaganda to generate a volunteer force, as they did not have a conscription policy. Therefore, the focus was on patriotism and painted the Germans as a force that must be stopped while emphasizing the fear of being taken over.¹¹³ Additionally, food was used as the most popular subject of propaganda, as its appeal had become an obsession with the starving German soldiers and civilian population.¹¹⁴ The success of British and Entente mass persuasion, in turn, left an enduring impression on the defeated Central Powers and especially on the unknown soldier of this war in Munich: Adolf Hitler.¹¹⁵

Once in power, Hitler used the same propaganda techniques as the British and then perfected them in the creation of the Nazi regime.¹¹⁶ Hitler appointed Joseph Goebbels as the Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda because he shared the same ideas and values for the agenda. Goebbels differentiated between public enlightenment and propaganda; public enlightenment “was fundamentally defensive and evolutionary. It does not hammer or drum. It is a moderate tone, seeking to teach. It explains, clarifies, and informs. It was a patient art. Propaganda, on the other hand was active and revolutionary.”¹¹⁷ Evans quotes Goebbels as stating, “The secret to propaganda is this: to fill a person completely with the ideas of propaganda, without him even noticing that he has been filled with them.”¹¹⁸ An example of this propaganda can be seen with the creation

¹¹¹ Welch, *The Third Reich*, 10.

¹¹² Jowett and O'Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*, 230.

¹¹³ Jowett and O'Donnell, 238.

¹¹⁴ Jowett and O'Donnell, 238.

¹¹⁵ Jowett and O'Donnell, 233.

¹¹⁶ Jowett and O'Donnell, 234.

¹¹⁷ Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 259.

¹¹⁸ Joseph Goebbels, quoted in Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (London: Penguin, 2003), 87.

of a national, “Aryan” community, as the racially pure Germans who would bring back the glory days.¹¹⁹

Propaganda was so important to Hitler that he discussed rules for successful propaganda in *Mein Kampf* even before he had achieved any political prominence.¹²⁰ These rules were a recurring theme utilized in the Nazi regime by Goebbels. In addition to these rules, Hitler enacted Manifesto of Twenty-Five in *Mein Kampf*, which “included the union of all Germans in a Great Germany, the abolition of the Versailles Peace Treaty, the demands for colonies, the removal of Jews’ citizenship rights, and the prevention of the non-German immigrants.”¹²¹ This Manifesto served as the beginning of his plan to eradicate all Jews from Germany.

Hitler’s propaganda utilized multiple methods, including his own speeches, the Nazi party symbols, and several forms of media. Hitler’s propaganda ideals were centered around himself in the role as the savior of the Nazis, in a new religion that would lead Germany to a period of greatness. Hitler worked toward becoming the *Führer* (leader) by exhibiting a “charismatic authority.”¹²² To address these perceived threats facing German civilization, Hitler offered himself as a savior. Hitler repeatedly hinted to his own claims of grandeur and greatness, barely disguised by allusions, in particular, to Bismarck and Frederick the Great.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Peter Longerich, *Goebbels A Biography*, trans. Alan Bance, Jeremy Noakes, and Lesley Sharpe (New York: Random House, 2015), 158.

¹²⁰ The first rule was to “avoid abstract ideas and appeal instead to the emotions of the people. The second rule is to employ constant repetition of just a few ideas using stereotypical phrases and avoiding objectivity. The third rule is to put forth only one side of the argument. The fourth rule is to constantly criticize enemies of the state. The fifth rule, and the one that will be examined in more detail, is to identify one special enemy for special vilification.” Jowett and O’Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*, 235.

¹²¹ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 215–216.

¹²² Max Weber defines “charismatic authority as the perceptions of heroic mission and presumed greatness in the leader by his ‘following;’ the tendency to arise in crisis conditions as an ‘emergency’ solution; the innate instability under the double constant threat of collapse of ‘charisma’ through the failure to meet the expectations of ‘routinization’ into a ‘system’ capable of reproducing itself only through eliminating, subordinating, or subsuming the ‘charismatic’ essence.” Ian Kershaw, *Hitler, the Germans, and the Final Solution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 99.

¹²³ Thomas Kuhne, “The Pleasure of Terror: Belonging through Genocide,” in *Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany*, ed. Pamela E. Swett, Corey Ross, and Fabrice d’Almeida (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 239.

Hitler's success lay not only in his message, but also in its remarkable delivery. He was a sensational speaker who possessed the ability to sway the public to believe his false arguments as the truth.¹²⁴ Hitler would emphasize his points through loud accents and use practiced gestures to accentuate his words. For many Germans, Nazism was a new religion that promised salvation.¹²⁵ The Führer was the messiah. As explained by Konrad Heiden, Hitler's rise to power provided "the ability to give the Germans something that even the traditional religions could no longer provide; the belief in a meaning to existence beyond the narrowest self-interest."¹²⁶

This approach to propaganda was not an accident. As Hitler stated in a speech at the Hamburg National Club, "The masses did not want intellectual ideas; rather, what they desired was a faith, because the broad masses of people are blind and stupid and don't know what they are doing...the masses have a primitive view and what abides is a feeling of hatred."¹²⁷ Hitler did not brainwash his followers, but instead manipulated them by rousing his listeners to nationalist ecstasy.

If the Nazi regime as a national religion, anti-Semitism was a pivotal factor in Hitler's plan to gain support in society for the Nazi party.¹²⁸ Hitler stated in February 1928 "that we are the bosses here; if he [the Jew] behaves well, he can stay-if not, then out with him."¹²⁹ The myth of a socially and radically homogenous community in Germany remained, although it was nothing more than a utopian fantasy.

In addition to Hitler's skills as an orator, his speeches took place in front of the Nazi symbol. Hitler used the rituals and symbolism to inspire terror, as well as awe in the community.¹³⁰ The key symbol of the Nazi party was the swastika. The Nazi party logo

¹²⁴ *Triumph of the Will*, directed by Leni Riefenstahl (1935; Berlin, Germany: Documentary, 2011).

¹²⁵ Epstein, *Nazi Germany*, 35.

¹²⁶ Jürgen Matthäus, "Historiography and the Perpetrators of the Holocaust," in *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, ed. Dan Stone (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 215.

¹²⁷ Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (New York: Harper 1952), 91.

¹²⁸ Noakes, "Hitler and the Third Reich," 48.

¹²⁹ Gordon, *Hitler and the Beer Hall Putsch*, 135.

¹³⁰ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Meridian Books, 1958), 312.

was a masterpiece of propaganda.¹³¹ The party banner was a black swastika in a white circle on a red background. White was the color of German nationalism, red the color of socialism, and the swastika, among ancient Hindu symbols, represented the sun.¹³² Merkl states that German nationalism had long popularized the swastika to mean “unconquerable or the strong one from above.”¹³³ This symbol was bold, simple, and suggestive to all.

Nazi symbols were not only present at Nazi speeches, but were also used in the media. In the 1940s, people flocked to the cinema to watch movies and escape from everyday life.

Print media, including newspapers, leaflets, and posters were also utilized. Moore explained that the reams of newspaper articles presented to the German people presented a propaganda image of concentration camps as a place of stern discipline but with fair treatment.¹³⁴ “This deluge of print propaganda served a dual purpose of deterrence against any opposition to the Nazi regime and won popular support for the Nazi state.”¹³⁵

The Nazis believed that the living spoken word was even more powerful than the dead word of print. Radio was the medium of power for the Third Reich. It was the direct word of a living person talking, breathing, and thinking. Jowett specified that radio was so important that they produced a cheap, one channel radio set for the masses and then slowly introduced the mandatory installation of radios with loudspeakers in most public venues.¹³⁶

In sum, the Nazi party used all types of propaganda, including speeches, symbols, films, radio, and print media.¹³⁷ The German people were inundated with the anti-Semitic Nazi message. Hitler’s focus on propaganda shaped what the German people thought of themselves, the Jews, and the new regime. By using propaganda to build his power base,

¹³¹ Merkl, *Political Violence under the Swastika*, 39.

¹³² Merkl, 39.

¹³³ Merkl, 59.

¹³⁴ Paul Moore, “And What Concentration Camps and Those Were! Foreign Concentration Camps,” in *Nazi Propaganda in Journal of Contemporary History* 45, no. 3(July 2010): 656.

¹³⁵ Moore, 650.

¹³⁶ Jowett and O’Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*, 242.

¹³⁷ Turner, *Hitler’s Thirty Days to Power*, 108.

Hitler was then able to take anti-Semitic messages and use them to implement an escalating system of discrimination.¹³⁸

B. USING ANTI-SEMITIC PROPAGANDA TO DEVELOP SYSTEMIC EXCLUSION

The Nazi party did not start out with the final solution. Instead, the Nazi party used propaganda to develop first, a common foe to blame for the troubles of Germany, and then took that foe and developed an increasingly systematic exclusion of the Jews from German civil society, which then developed into a final solution to exterminate all Jews from Nazi controlled areas.

Despite Hitler's anti-Semitic writings in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler originally focused his public speaking on vilified Marxists, of whom he hinted were the reason for Germany's woes.¹³⁹ It is important to note that Hitler made no mention whatsoever of the Jews before his speech in the Hamburg National Club, prior to becoming the Führer.¹⁴⁰ His first aim was the total and complete annihilation of Marxism. Kershaw suggests that in Hitler's view, three values remained decisive when it came to the fate of people: the value of the lineage, the value of the personality, and the people's drive for self-preservation.¹⁴¹ In Hitler's eyes, the German/Aryan people's need for self-preservation was an overriding concern that would lead to the implementation of laws and policy that would exclude any deemed non-German, to include both the Marxists and the Jews, as well as the gypsies, homosexuals, and disabled.¹⁴²

The German phrase of "land, blood, and soil" is useful to understand how Hitler framed the propaganda message for self-preservation of the German soul and

¹³⁸ Turner, 120.

¹³⁹ Flood, *Hitler*, 47.

¹⁴⁰ Randall L. Bytwerk, "Grassroots Propaganda in the Third Reich: The Reich Ring for National Socialist Propaganda and Public Enlightenment," *German Studies Review* 33, no. 1 (2010): 104, JSTOR.

¹⁴¹ Kershaw, *Hitler, the Germans, and the Final Solution*, 99.

¹⁴² Flood, *Hitler*, 20–21.

civilization.¹⁴³ When using the phrase “land, blood, and soil,” it is important to note that the wrongdoing of which Hitler was accusing the Jews was not so much against factual takeovers of land, but more of a takeover of the German society’s soul.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, while Hitler spoke about the question of territory and land policy, it was the undertones of attacks on the German way of life that led to his gains in influence during the period from 1926–1928.¹⁴⁵

However, the discussion of land and soil also included an economic component. German suffered both the devastation of its lands and the burden of reparations following World War I, which led to a serious economic depression. This aspect is seen in Hitler’s speech on December 16, 1925, when he characterized the “acquisition of land and soil” as the best way to mold German fate in economic terms.¹⁴⁶ Hitler deemed that the German resurgence must travel the path of economic upswing to establish a pinnacle of German civilization.¹⁴⁷

Though Hitler started with the Marxists as a foe, he transitioned to arguing that three values were present in the Aryan race that were mortally endangered by the three vices of the Jewish people.¹⁴⁸ The main argument was that Jews were engaged in an international effort to wipe Germany and the Germans from the face of the earth, which left Germany no choice; to the Nazis, killing the Jews would be a form of self-defense.¹⁴⁹ Anti-Semitism was a key feature of Hitler’s speeches. He continued to argue that the Germanic race was biologically superior. Racial purity was the basis for national health and survival; the intermixing of races brought about social decay. Hitler raged on about the Jews, claiming that Bolshevism was a Jewish strategy for world domination. The campaign

¹⁴³ Jost Dulffer, *Nazi Germany 1933–1945 Faith and Annihilation*, trans. Dean Scott McMurry (Great Britain: Arnold, 1996), 90.

¹⁴⁴ Dulffer, 103.

¹⁴⁵ Dulffer, 4.

¹⁴⁶ Kershaw, *Hitler, the Germans, and the Final Solution*, 53–54.

¹⁴⁷ Kershaw, 60.

¹⁴⁸ Kershaw, 53.

¹⁴⁹ Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 243.

against the Jews and the incessant theme of vilification expounded on the motto that the end justified the means, if it would ensure a better Germany.¹⁵⁰ This anti-Semitism can be seen with his remarks made in his speeches at the Munich beer halls, where the Jews were credited with being “masterminds behind financial capital, polluters of the people, and the subversive doctrine of Marxism.”¹⁵¹

The strength of German anti-Semitism was the key factor in the Nazi Party gaining support; it was not by accident. The Nazis engaged in a frantic saturation campaign.¹⁵² The Nazis gave passionate speeches at rallies. Goebbels and his fellow propagandists understood that for propaganda to work, it had to reach the people at the interpersonal level, which the Nazis said was the most important one.¹⁵³ Goebbels wanted film, newspaper, oral conversation, and radio as tools to create loyalty to the regime.¹⁵⁴ As described in the previous section, the Nazi party directed magazines, newspapers, and radio to promote anti-Semitic claims to keep the fire burning and it was the perfect venue to expand their propaganda, especially their message of anti-Semitism to the average German. Joseph Goebbels even commissioned three anti-Semitic films: *The Rothchilds*, *The Eternal Jew*, and *Suss the Jew*.¹⁵⁵

By controlling the media, Goebbels continuously pressured German society, so that if an average person complained against the Nazi party, the party members would be alerted and apply pressure so that the person would complain less and less for fear of being caught and silenced.¹⁵⁶ This societal pressure was a form of gentle persuasion that was essential to the Nazi propaganda, “The Nazi Party wanted enthusiastic assent rather than forced compliance. Most Germans had no direct contact with the state’s repressive organs.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁰ Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 263.

¹⁵¹ Bruce Campbell, *The SA Generals and the Rise of Nazism* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 56.

¹⁵² Orlow, *The History of the Nazi Party*, 351.

¹⁵³ Turner, *Hitler’s Thirty Days to Power*, 116.

¹⁵⁴ Longerich, *Goebbels A Biography*, 153.

¹⁵⁵ Longerich, 468.

¹⁵⁶ Longerich, 401.

¹⁵⁷ Bytwerk, “Grassroots Propaganda in the Third Reich,” 107.

The goal was to create a society where “to be German means to think and act in National Socialist ways, and that the German greeting is simply an open and complete affirmation of the Fuhrer...No one wanted to be against Adolf Hitler.”¹⁵⁸ However, this type of pressure, persuasion, and propaganda was not enough to create Hitler’s vision of a unified greater Germany. Since not all Germans embraced Hitler’s vision of Germany, the Nazi party started to enact policies and laws to make Hitler’s vision come true.¹⁵⁹

In 1933, the Nazi party started by issuing an emergency decree for the “protection of people and state.”¹⁶⁰ The propaganda values of this decree allowed the Nazis to suppress any publications not considered friendly to the Nazi cause. This decree suspended all personal liberties that the former republic had guaranteed. The government then had the right to hold individuals in protective custody. The next move occurred when the party used the traditional day of May 1, which paid homage to the workers, and proclaimed it as the “Day of National Labor” that gave workers this day as a paid holiday, “The Nazi’s turned a holiday intended to celebrate worker solidarity into a demonstration of loyalty to the nation.”¹⁶¹ The book burnings followed, in which university students made lists of what they considered un-German authors and ransacked the libraries for their works. This book burning marked the “apogee of the Gleichschaltung (the process of Nazification) of culture.”¹⁶² While not an official policy, the book burning was, in Goebbels’s view, the means to accomplishing the goal of controlling the press, as well as forming propaganda for the party. His view was that “people should think uniformly, react uniformly, and place themselves body and soul at the disposal of the government.”¹⁶³

The Nazis turned their policies, rules, and laws inward for the betterment of the Aryan population. The generation of anti-Semitic propaganda fed into the creation of laws.

¹⁵⁸ Bytwerk, 106.

¹⁵⁹ Longerich, *Goebbels A Biography*, 306.

¹⁶⁰ Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards: A Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 48.

¹⁶¹ Burleigh, 48.

¹⁶² Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, 101.

¹⁶³ Lisa Pine, *Hitler’s “National Community”* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2007), 105.

These laws, in turn, supported further propaganda efforts for a unified Aryan race. Welch states, “many Germans viewed the new laws as stabilizing and necessary measures to limit Jewish influence and intermarriage.”¹⁶⁴ For example, the Nazi Regime advocated racial hygiene measures for “raising the standard of health in the nation.”¹⁶⁵ These measures served to provide a pseudo-scientific justification for medical experiments on all those deemed undesirable.¹⁶⁶

By distinguishing between laws for Aryans and Jews, they furthered propaganda efforts to develop a good “us” and a bad “them.”¹⁶⁷ Aryan-focused laws created a further gap between Jews (who were by this point expendable) and Aryans, who were to create the ideal German race and society. In this way, anti-Semitic propaganda served not only to control the Jews, but also the rest of the German citizenry. Hitler came to see his purpose as redeeming Germany, and the world, through the elimination of the Jews. He would harbor a pathological anti-Semitism until his dying day.¹⁶⁸

For example, Evans states that the propaganda ideals were centered on order, manliness, heroism, and domination, all stereotypical male characteristics.¹⁶⁹ The women, however, also had their place in the regime. They were seen as the pillar of the home and all traditional female gender specific roles that came with it.¹⁷⁰ Hitler declared, “Providence has entrusted to women the care of this, her very own world, and only upon it can man’s world be fashioned and constructed.”¹⁷¹ A women’s role was tirelessly generated to become an ideal woman and helpmate of her husband. Hitler took this further by issuing several reproductive laws: Procreation Order and Marriage Health Law, as well as banning

¹⁶⁴ Welch, *The Third Reich*, 96.

¹⁶⁵ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 217.

¹⁶⁶ Dulffer, *Nazi Germany 1933–1945*, 218.

¹⁶⁷ Herf, *Jewish Enemy*, 6–10.

¹⁶⁸ Richard Bessel, *Political Violence and the Rise of Nazism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 135.

¹⁶⁹ Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, 101.

¹⁷⁰ Evans, 103.

¹⁷¹ Bridenthal, Grossmann, and Kaplan, “When Biology Became Destiny,” 102.

contraceptives.¹⁷² In other words, the Aryan's woman's duty was to procreate. In contrast, Jews were often sterilized to prevent their reproduction.¹⁷³ Such laws that promoted an Aryan standard that discriminated and segregated the Jews only led to more anti-Semitic feelings among Germans.¹⁷⁴

As anti-Semitic feeling grew even stronger, the "Jewish question," of what to do with the remaining Jewish population, arose, "racial propaganda convinced the German population that a Jewish question existed."¹⁷⁵ In a newsletter from October 1943, the Nazi party addressed the Jewish question and explained it as:

The Jewish question has been solved in Germany. That does not mean that one no longer needs to talk about it. The Jews are responsible for this war. It is impossible to talk about this war without also mentioning the Jewish question. That means they are responsible for all the misery, sorrows, discomforts, privations, burdens, and toils that it has brought for the German people... We must always remember that there will be anti-Jewish world revolution after this war that will destroy the influence of Jewry in the entire world and thereby enable a lasting peace.¹⁷⁶

Ultimately, Hitler decided upon the final solution as the answer to the Jewish question. To achieve this solution, Nazi propaganda established "the idea that the Jews were basically to be suspected of revolutionary and subversive ambitions, and that killing them during the war was therefore a kind of social prophylaxis."¹⁷⁷

Individuals in concentration camps themselves were also propagandized as dangerous and trying to undermine the vision of the Führer. Himmler claimed that the camp prisoners were "the dregs of criminality, of people who have taken the wrong path... There are people there with hydrocephalus, people who squint, people with deformities, half-Jews, a mass of racially inferior material."¹⁷⁸ Bytwerk points out that "the German people

¹⁷² Bridenthal, Grossmann, and Kaplan, 105.

¹⁷³ Dulffer, *Nazi Germany 1933–1945*, 219.

¹⁷⁴ Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, 135.

¹⁷⁵ Welch, *The Third Reich*, 97.

¹⁷⁶ Bytwerk, "Grassroots Propaganda in the Third Reich," 116.

¹⁷⁷ Dulffer, *Nazi Germany 1933–1945*, 168.

¹⁷⁸ Peter Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 360.

knew that the Gestapo and concentration camps existed, but even those with doubts about this or that aspect of National Socialism encountered propaganda that told them things they wanted to believe, both about themselves and their nation.”¹⁷⁹ Moore quotes from Klaus Drobishch and Gunther Wieland that the “identifying goal as to ‘snuff out all resistance’ on the part of the populace” was a part of the explanation for the camps.¹⁸⁰ Moore argues that this viewpoint was consistent with propaganda material identifying the camps as punishment for political agitation, but also for the more widespread acts as of patronizing Jewish businesses.¹⁸¹ Thus, propaganda enabled the final solution by making genocide palatable to Germans.

In conclusion, propaganda was the driving force that not only helped bring Hitler to power and shape the Nazi regime, but also provided the means to justify the final solution. Hitler understood from the beginning the value of propaganda and the Nazi party embraced all his ideas, and then used multiple forms of propaganda types to sway the public into creating a greater German society. The German populace was given enough propaganda over a period of time that they became desensitized to any and all acts of detrimental behavior by the Nazis, which they were told was for the betterment of the Third Reich and the regime of the Aryan population. The people lived in their cities, went on with their daily lives, but never really interacted with those “lesser than communities.” They were told these actions were for the betterment of the motherland, for a purer race, so the “villains” were viewed as expendable since all deeds were for the greater good.

¹⁷⁹ Bytwerk, “Grassroots Propaganda in the Third Reich,” 117.

¹⁸⁰ Moore, “And What Concentration Camps,” 655.

¹⁸¹ Moore, 656.

IV. CONTEMPORARY HISTORY OF ANTI-SEMITIC IMAGERY AND RHETORIC

The Nazis' Third Reich relentlessly and consistently used anti-Semitic imagery and rhetoric day in and day out over an extended period of time to condition a nation into widening a gap that Herf describes as "us" versus "them."¹⁸² Hitler's propaganda machine used the propaganda message of the villainous Jews bombarding German culture. Many alternative, radical right groups are still using this message today. Anti-Semitic propaganda in the Nazi regime expressed the ideal of a supreme "Aryan" race, and with the use of eugenics, it clearly identified anyone who did not fit into that mold. The Nazis classification of all Jews as "other," not "us," furthered the societal gap.¹⁸³ Jews were attacked whether they had assimilated into society or not. Jowett clearly gives an example of the power of anti-Semitic imagery. *The Eternal Jew* (a Nazi era film from 1937) is still being utilized by many neo-Nazi fascist groups as a way to prescreen its potential members as to the accurate account of Jewish life in prewar Europe and to distinguish those persons who already have preexisting Nazi ideals from the rest of the German citizens.¹⁸⁴

This chapter explores how Nazi Germany's anti-Semitic propaganda was pounded into the minds of the German population during the rise of the Third Reich to categorize Jewish citizenry as "the other," and eventually "the un-human." This chapter details the different types of anti-Semitic imagery and rhetoric used by the Nazi party. The Third Reich suffused these various types of anti-Semitic imagery and rhetoric into the German populace.

A. ANTI-SEMITIC NAZI IMAGERY

The Nazis controlled the use of propaganda in all facets of life, from art to newspapers, film, and books. The Nazis clearly distinguished this message into four main types of anti-Semitic imagery: animals, blood practices, money, and appearance. During

¹⁸² Herf, *Jewish Enemy*, 184.

¹⁸³ Gilman and Katz, *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, 6.

¹⁸⁴ Jowett and O'Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*, 267.

the Nazi regime, anti-Semitic imagery and rhetoric came through various modes of distribution: fine art, newspapers, books, film, posters, and radio.

Guerin states, “art was supposed to show the idealized life of a German/Aryan peasant living a stylized “better existence;” The Nazis were masters of the image as entertainment and also proficient in the production and use of images to survey, categorize, terrorize, and mark out their victims for destruction.”¹⁸⁵ The Jews were not depicted in fine art, as they were not considered part of the German society. Fine art was used to rewrite history and showcase the Aryan supreme race. Adam states, “The Nazis had images of Hitler in shining armor, the depictions of bare-footed peasants marching under rainbows, or the bloodless renditions of battle scenes.”¹⁸⁶ This new art would become the new “Aryan” narrative by trying to show a past, present, and future unified and strong Germany.

As opposed to fine art that depicted an imperial race of Aryan, anti-Semitic messages were seen displayed all over Germany and none more visible then in the *Parole der Woche Wandzeitungen* (Word of the Week wall newspapers), which epitomized an approach of utilizing rhetoric with imagery to promote the perfect Aryan societal message. Herf states, “German wall newspapers were a unique combination of newspaper editorial, political leaflet, political poster, and tabloid journalism, employing modern techniques of reproduction and directed at a society whose daily rhythms were characterized by walking mass transit.”¹⁸⁷ The message of the Word of the Week varied but was often used as a tool of repeating the same deliberately false Nazi propaganda message. *Parole de Woche* conveyed a clear message:

Juda wants world domination...This system of chaos, extermination and terror was conceived and led by the Jews. It is the action of the Jewish race. Through subversion and propaganda, world Jewry attempts to gather the uprooted and racially inferior elements of all peoples together in order to lead an extermination battle [Vernichtungskampf] against everything

¹⁸⁵ Frances Guerin, *Through Amateur Eyes Film and Photography in Nazi Germany* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 3.

¹⁸⁶ Peter Adam, *Art of the Third Reich* (New York: Harry N. Abrams Publisher, Inc., 1992), 42.

¹⁸⁷ Herf, *The Jewish Enemy*, 14.

positive, against native customs and the nation, against religion and culture, against order and moral.¹⁸⁸

Similarly, the *Der Stürmer* (The Attacker) distributed cartoons depicting anti-Semitic caricatures to promote anti-Jewish propaganda, as seen in Figure 10.¹⁸⁹



Figure 10. Children's Book Showing *Der Stürmer* (anti-Jewish Newspaper by Leading Nazi Julius Streicher) Being Displayed in Village and Town Centers.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Herf quoting Bestand (collection) 712 (Plakate), Wandzeitung (Posters, wall newspaper) Parole der Woche, published by the NSDAP, Reichspropagandaleitung, Munich, no. 1692, Folge (series) 30, Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz.

¹⁸⁹ "Nazi Propaganda and Culture," History @ The Brookvale Groby Learning Campus, accessed February 13, 2020, <https://history-groby.weebly.com/germany-1919-1963-democracy-and-dictatorships.html>.

¹⁹⁰ Source: "Photograph Number: 40036," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed February 13, 2021, <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1069775>. Page from the anti-Semitic German children's book, "Trau Keinem Fuchs..." (Trust No Fox in the Green Meadow and No Jew on his Oath).

In addition to the propaganda mediums of art and newspapers, books were also utilized to spread the anti-Semitic message that reflected the use of animal imagery of the Jew, which was frequently used by the Nazis. The book, *The Mongrel*, describes more than a dozen stories of dangerous animals each providing an unflattering, untruthful comparison to the Jews. Various animals symbolized the Jews: poisonous snakes, grasshoppers, hyenas, bloodsuckers, tapeworms, and bacillus. The Nazis' use of destructive animals that needed to be eradicated was the perfect metaphor that depicted the action that needed to be taken against the evil Jew. Steicher states:

Enlightenment alone, however cannot solve the Jewish question. A folk that knows the Jew must also have the strength to ruthlessly act against the world enemy. Just like the snake threat is only then totally removed, if the poisonous snakes are totally cleaned out, so is the Jewish question only then solved, if Jewry is destroyed. Mankind must know that in the Jewish question there is only a hard either-or, for: If we do not kill the Jewish poisonous snake, then it will kill us!¹⁹¹

These stories can compare Jews to a plague of locusts that have come to devour all the goods and land of non-Jewish people. In the *Mongrel*, the Jews are also depicted as "The Scourge of God,"¹⁹² a swarm of hungry people intent on invading German lands. These stories were utilized in Nazi Germany as a necessary tool for the final solution or that of depicting a united nation willing to fight against any Jew or anyone who thinks like a Jew.

In propaganda books, the Nazis expounded on Jewish barbaric practices that showcased religious blood practices and correlated them to their thirst for the blood of Christians.¹⁹³ The Nazis described kosher slaughter practices and other Jewish religious rituals as inhumane, even ghoulish.¹⁹⁴ This ideal of bloodlust is often depicted as Jews gloating over their dead prey. This imagery is reinforced with the racist rant that the Jews

¹⁹¹ Julius Steicher, *The Mongrel*, English ed. (Scotts Valley, CA: Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2017), 50.

¹⁹² Steicher, 26.

¹⁹³ Steicher, 25.

¹⁹⁴ Steicher, 27.

are a murderous people.¹⁹⁵ *The Mongrel*, states, “Anger, envy, hatred, rage, Are in the blood of the Jew, Towards every people on the Earth who do not belong to the Chosen. He kills animals and men; His blood lust knows no bounds. The world can only recover, when it is rid of the Jew.”¹⁹⁶

The Nazis used the stigma of the Jews’ love for money to villainize them further for the reason behind Germany’s financial situation. They promoted this propaganda in books by touching the hearts of the hard-working Germans, who had to rise from the devastation of World War I.

Figure 11 showing the Jew amassing his gold illustrates the stereotypical Jew.



Figure 11. Jew Greedy for Money.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Julius Steicher and Ernest Hiemer, *Poisonous Mushroom (Jews!)*, English ed. (1916), 14.

¹⁹⁶ Steicher and Hiemer, 10.

¹⁹⁷ Source: Steicher and Hiemer, 15.

Jews were stereotyped as having long-reaching arms, figuratively and literally, regarding international banking with the goal of earning and keeping money.¹⁹⁸ The image illustrates the message of a possible interpretation that by purchasing this rich fabric you will transform into a person of wealth and status. In turn, the rich Jew is someone who thrives to sell lies, cheat, as well as seduce with flattery to take advantage of good hardworking German women by manipulating them out of their hard-earned money.¹⁹⁹ Various publications and images also focused on “Jewish schemes” enacted against the German people. One such scheme depicts how Jewish traders cheat the common citizen. Figure 12 shows a seedy Jewish salesman with a prominent hooked nose selling a red rich fabric to a blond German peasant woman. Remembering the preceding images in which grotesque and altered images are seen that represented what the Jews looked like, this study now explores the physical characteristics of Jews that the Nazis weaponized in books against this population.



Figure 12. Jew Cheating German.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Herf, *The Jewish Enemy*, 184.

¹⁹⁹ Steicher and Hiemer, *Poisonous Mushroom (Jews!)*, 16.

²⁰⁰ Source: Steicher and Hiemer, 8.

The Nazis created their ideal master race, Aryan, and anyone not belonging to this race was subhuman in appearance. Many Nazi scientists studied and believed in eugenics, a pseudo-science by which they believed Jews could be distinguished from Aryans based on physical aspects of their appearance.²⁰¹ The Nazis promoted this idea of eugenics and appearance in many propaganda mediums; books, however, provided “short stories” that were easily accessible to the German people. The *Poisonous Mushroom* was one such book that clearly illustrates the analogy of a Jew to a poisonous mushroom, hard to distinguish from a normal one, and if the wrong one is picked, then the person can die.²⁰² This book describes to the German citizen how to identify clearly a Jew from a German.²⁰³ The stage is set in an elementary school; all students are depicted as blond-haired boys and various Jewish images are depicted on a blackboard in the background.²⁰⁴ As shown in Figure 13, a small boy is at the blackboard drawing a figure six. Steicher states, “One can tell a Jew by his nose. The Jewish nose is bent at the tip. It looks like a figure 6, so we will call them Figures sixes.”²⁰⁵ The book continues its description of the physical differences between the German man and the Jew.

²⁰¹ Ute Deichmann, *Biologists under Hitler* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 17.

²⁰² Steicher and Hiemer, *Poisonous Mushroom (Jews!)*, 3.

²⁰³ Steicher and Hiemer, 3.

²⁰⁴ Steicher and Hiemer, 4.

²⁰⁵ Steicher and Hiemer, 4.

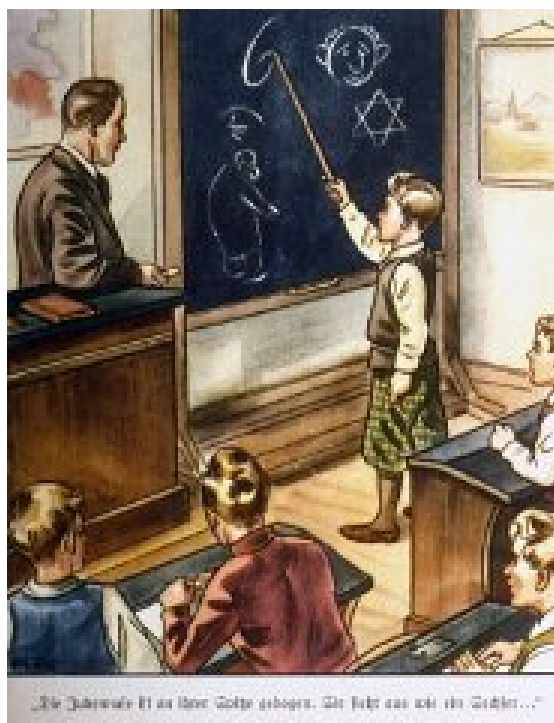


Figure 13. School Children Drawing Jews.²⁰⁶

The Nazis used anti-Semitic messages in their motion pictures but none as clear as the film *Jud Suss*, which depicted Jewish greed. Veit Harlan directed *Jud Suss*, which was released on September 24, 1940. This movie depicts an ambitious Jewish businessman who captures the position of treasurer to the Duke of Wurttemberg. He promises an already corrupt duke more riches than is even obtainable.²⁰⁷ The Jews scheme to draw the duke's kingdom to the brink of a civil war as he alienates his people. The biggest outrage in the movie is the Jew who rapes an innocent German girl, all the while torturing the girl's father and her intended.²⁰⁸ This crime is too much for the Duke who dies of a sudden heart attack and the assembly tries to sentence the Jew to death for his actions against the Christian woman. Another example of this propaganda is the narration of *The Third Reich in Color*, in which Guerin translates the title and action as "Poland, 1941. The camera pans across

²⁰⁶ Source: Steicher and Hiemer, 5.

²⁰⁷ "Jew Suss," 1934, BFI National Archive, video, 1:44:02, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMTHwuQnIKA>.

²⁰⁸ BFI National Archive.

various Jews, the voice-over tells us we are seeing from the perspective of the Jew-hating German behind the camera: The Poles have a thin Germanic layer. The Jews are the most disgusting things imaginable. If Poland had lasted any longer, everything would be lice ridden. A clear masterful hand is needed here.”²⁰⁹ Then the film pans over a busy sidewalk where various Jews are just seen walking, talking to each other, while buying and selling materials; the Jews in everyday life.²¹⁰ As shown in Figure 14, this political message appeals to the masses in times of crisis; it sells a plausible solution of blame.

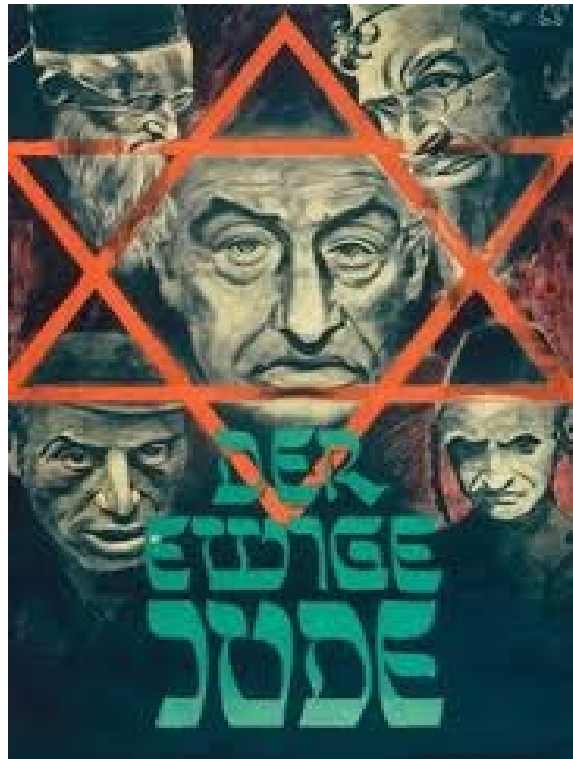


Figure 14. Film Poster for Eternal Jew.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ Guerin, *Through Amateur Eyes*, 164–165.

²¹⁰ Guerin, 164–165.

²¹¹ Source: “The Eternal Jew [Der ewige Jude], Film Poster (September 1940),” German History in Documents and Images, accessed February 13, 2021, https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_image.cfm?image_id=2331.

Another example is the film *The Eternal Jew*, directed by Fritz Hippler (1940), which undoubtedly is one of the most effective of all the Nazi propaganda films.²¹² This film was shown as a documentary on a prolific scale to the German people depicting Jews as cultural parasites only concerned with sex and money. This film is another example of the powerfulness of the Nazi propaganda and its creeping influence over the German people. The movie compares Jews to rats; rats carry diseases and devour all resources.²¹³ It reaffirms the Jewish ritual of butchering cattle, as well as reinforces the material reiterated in the *Poisonous Mushroom*.

Matthaus admitted that the Third Reich propaganda had presented the Fuhrer as the dominant head of Germany. “Germany, it was assumed, had been run like an army, thoroughly organized, hierarchically structured and based on the rigid mechanics of order and compliance. The system of mass murder was structurally no different from organized German society as a whole; its operators were a remarkable cross-section of the German population.”²¹⁴ Wodak further expounds, “the Fuhrer-state represented the “people’s will” more efficiently and more truthfully than the liberal parliamentarianism of Weimar. Thus, the national-socialist Fuhrer continuously emphasized and thus legitimized that they acted on behalf of *the* people, as saviors, sent as messenger by some mythical *persona*.”²¹⁵ Hilberg postulates, “In order to cope with whatever moral inhibitions, they might have, the participants in the process were subjected to different mechanisms of repression and rationalization based on the assumption that Jews were inferior and the “Jewish Question” has to be dealt with sooner or later, one way or another.”²¹⁶ The Rosenstrasse protest was one of the few Jewish protests held in Nazi Germany. Intermarried German women to Jewish men, who had been arrested, based on the Nazi’s racial policy, started this protest.²¹⁷ Joschka Fisher (former German Foreign Minister) quoted in Stoltzfus states, “There were

²¹² Jowett and O’Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*, 263.

²¹³ German History in Documents and Images, “The Eternal Jew.”

²¹⁴ Matthäus, “Historiography and the Perpetrators of the Holocaust,” 198.

²¹⁵ Ruth Wodak, *The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean* (London: Sage Publications, 2015), 10.

²¹⁶ Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (London: Holmes & Meir, 1985), 98.

²¹⁷ Hilberg, 120.

demonstrations, public protests against random arrests, first dozen, then hundreds, then thousands of women, who demanded in unison “Give us back our men!”²¹⁸ This protest, which lasted for one week, held back the Nazi regime, as the Nazis could not truly fire on Aryan women.²¹⁹ The end result was that 1,700 Jews were released.

B. ANTI-SEMITIC RHETORIC AFTER THE NAZI ERA

Despite the thorough discrediting of National Socialism and its racial agenda in the aftermath of World War II, anti-Semitic imagery—some of it taken over directly from the Nazis, though much of it is updated for contemporary media. Anti-Semitism is alive and well in modern Germany—and, indeed, throughout the West. Matthäus conveyed that the idea of the German people’s guilt never entered in the Allies’ pronouncement of the Nazi crimes.²²⁰ The Nuremberg proceedings defined the charges of individual crimes into distinct contexts against the Nazis who were in positions of power versus the ordinary Germany citizen. Matthäus states, “beyond the sense of personal guilt, widespread disregard for historical responsibility and the urge to prepare for the future led a German society, after the war, to dispose of the problem of Nazi crimes together with the entire chapter of the nation’s history.”²²¹ Blickle theorizes whether authoritarian leaders already had such clear messages of villainizing a group of people that they were ready to use during the time of crisis, or that in a crisis, such villainization would appeal to the masses.²²²

Following the end of the World War II and the Nuremberg trials, the horrors of the Holocaust had shocked the world and these representative countries wanted to ensure that these human rights were not violated again. After the Nuremberg trials, it can be argued that the German people chose to proceed with life as normal as the stain of bloodshed did not affect any of them personally. Peter Fritzsche quoted one Holocaust survivor, Eugen

²¹⁸ Nathan Stoltzfus. *Resistance of the Heart: Intermarriage and the Rosenstrasse Protest in Nazi Germany* (New Brunswick, NJ, and London: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 1–4.

²¹⁹ Stoltzfus, 5.

²²⁰ Matthäus, “Historiography and the Perpetrators of the Holocaust,” 199.

²²¹ Matthäus, 198.

²²² Kristian Blickle, *Pandemics Change Cities: Municipal Spending and Voter Extremism in Germany, 1918–1933*, Federal Reserve Bank of New York Staff Reports, Staff Report No. 921 (New York: Federal Reserve Bank of New York, 2020), 25.

Kogon, who “noted that the majority of his compatriots denied any deeper involvement in historical guilt and dismissed the Nazi era as an anomalous and isolated interlude in German history.”²²³

After World War II, Germany was divided into an East and West. West Germany identified itself as an evolved state separate from the Third Reich and embarked on an ambitious process of de-Nazification. According to Mazower, West Germany “had a great deep antipathy to ideological politics. There was a widespread feeling that “all -isms are now wasms”...capitalism and conservatism proved more tenacious than in the dark days of Nazi occupation.”²²⁴ In contrast, East Germany (1949–1990/German Democratic Republic) was part of the eastern bloc controlled by the Soviet Union.²²⁵ It declared itself to be a totally new Germany, unfettered by the guilt of Germany’s anti-Semitic past.²²⁶ This ideology was in line with the anti-Semitic campaign carried out by Stalin throughout Eastern Europe.²²⁷ Hannemann states, “the GDR distorted the Nazi past. State ordained anti-fascism was an attempt to reconcile a population.”²²⁸ Gilman postulates that the division of East and West Germany with the Berlin wall was seen by some to be a sort of punishment for the Holocaust.²²⁹ He states, “the incompleteness of both West and East Germans of coming to terms of the past. By the association between the absence of a period of true mourning among the Germans-after 1945—meant that the reconstruction of both Germanys took place without having to deal, except in the most extrinsic manner.”²³⁰

Yet, this persistent anti-Semitic message kept festering in society. An article titled “The Baseball Bat Years” shows how this Nazi propaganda has survived through the years.

²²³ Eugene Kogon quoted in Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 107.

²²⁴ Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 290–291.

²²⁵ Mazower, 289.

²²⁶ Gilman and Katz, *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, 385.

²²⁷ Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 326.

²²⁸ Raiko Hannemann, “Anti-Semitism in Post-War East Germany (GDR),” *Remembering Today*, accessed November 2, 2020, <http://remembering.today/anti-semitism-in-post-war-east-germany-gdr/?lang=en>.

²²⁹ Gilman and Katz, *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, 374.

²³⁰ Gilman and Katz, 375.

Hendrik Bolz, a young rapper born in 1988 in East Germany, describes a neo-Nazi culture with shaved heads, and phrases, such as Heil Hitler and shut up Jew, as the dominant culture of his youth.²³¹ The most intriguing notion of this article is that the author goes on to explain that it was not an isolated occurrence, but more importantly, the documentation of a way of life and culture for the youth of the baseball bat (a weapon being used to inflict terror and submission by neo-Nazis).²³²

Propaganda, anti-Semitic imagery, and rhetoric employed by the Nazis “indicated the seriousness with which psychological warfare was being waged.”²³³ These kinds of techniques eventually led to the attempted genocide of a people apart (the Jews). According to Herf:

reversing cause and effect, Nazi propaganda projected the subjectivity of a regime racing toward war and mass murder onto its defenseless victim. In doing so, the Nazi leaders publicly asserted that the connection between the war and the policy of mass murder was one of necessity, of cause and effect, rather than of coincidence of timing and geography or of opportunity seized when offered. Projection and paranoia were the handmaidens of aggression and genocide.²³⁴

The German populace was becoming indoctrinated to believe in this propaganda story that was narrated to them. The “Eternal Jew” mirrored the ideal Nazi movement, which is represented in the film narration, “just with ritual slaughter National Socialist Germany, has made a clean sweep of all of Jewry. Jewish thinking and Jewish blood will never again pollute the German nation.”²³⁵ The final solution was planned using a methodical method to dehumanize the people and make them objects. Anti-Semitic propaganda in the Nazi regime expressed the ideal of a supreme “Aryan” race using eugenics.

Nazi ideology and its anti-Semitic propaganda persuaded the German people to take a historical hatred of Jews to create scapegoats for all the nation’s woes. Hitler

²³¹ Von Christian Bangel, “The Baseball Bat Years,” Zeit Online, November 11, 2019, <https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/2019-11/neo-nazis-youth-east-germany-after-berlin-wall-english>.

²³² Bangel.

²³³ Jowett and O’Donell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*, 274.

²³⁴ Herf, *Jewish Enemy*, 264.

²³⁵ You Tube, “1940 Nazi Anti-Semitic Propaganda.”

attempted to create a fantasy society of a superior Aryan race; the only way this ideal could be maintained was to exterminate anyone (Jew) who were the villains.²³⁶ Ultimately, the German public was given enough propaganda over a period of time that they became desensitized to Nazi oppression, which they were told was for the betterment of the Third Reich and the regime of the Aryan population.

²³⁶ Deichmann, *Biologists under Hitler*, 58.

V. CONCLUSION

In September 2019, while many Jews were gathering in synagogues across Europe, and the world began to celebrate the beginning of Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), a white supremacist targeted a synagogue in Halle.²³⁷ This attack, according to Kirsten Grieshaber, was “one of the most violent and overt anti-Semitic acts in postwar history, which caused shockwaves across Germany, which considers protecting its Jewish minority of about 200,000 a special responsibility after the Nazi genocide of 6 million Jews.”²³⁸ The attack clearly unsettled German Jews. For example, Felix Klein (Commissioner for Jewish Life and Fight for Anti-Semitism in Germany) “warned Jews against donning the kippa in parts of the country following a rise in anti-Semitism.”²³⁹



Figure 15. Jewish German Wearing Traditional Kippa.²⁴⁰

Since 2018, some 1,646 hate crimes against Jews have occurred in Germany, a 10-percent increase from previous years, as well as an increase of physical attacks (from 37 to 62).²⁴¹ Israeli’s President Reuven Rivlin asserted that these statistics represent “an

²³⁷ Kirsten Grieshaber, “Yom Kippur Synagogue Attack Leaves German Jews Still Uneasy,” *Washington Post*, September 26, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/yom-kippur-synagogue-attack-leaves-german-jews-still-uneasy/2020/09/26/9e28d598-ffcf-11ea-b0e4-350e4e60cc91_story.html.

²³⁸ Grieshaber.

²³⁹ “German Jews Warned Not to Wear Kippas after Rise in Anti-Semitism,” BBC News, May 26, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-48411735>.

²⁴⁰ Source: BBC News.

²⁴¹ BBC News.

admittance that, again, Jews are not safe on German soil...we will never submit, will never lower our gaze and will never react to anti-Semitism with defeatism, and expect and demand our allies act in the same way.”²⁴²

Now that the world is in the throes of another crisis, notably amid the Corona pandemic, once again the Jews are being painted as the villains. Axelrod quotes Josef Schuster, head of the central council of Jews in Germany, who states “anti-Semitism on the internet, on the streets, in schools is commonplace for Jews in Germany...supporters of do not even shy away from revitalizing the Holocaust.”²⁴³ Axelrod goes on to state that an athletic trainer Max Brym was verbally assaulted in a park. Brym was wearing a jacket with the Star of David logo [and he] heard “You Jewish pigs are to blame! You Jews did this with the Corona! You Jewish Bastard!”²⁴⁴

Josef Schuster, president of Central Council of Jews, makes clear the centuries old anti-Semitism in Germany from the 17th century to present. He states that Jews are held responsible for the spread of the corona virus and are compared to the medieval narrative of rats being the cause of the plague.²⁴⁵ Schuster states, “When drastic changes are taking place, for which there are no easy explanations, it’s often the case that culprits are sought. Jews were labelled as scapegoats blamed for poisoning wells.”²⁴⁶ These very thoughts and ideas are a pattern of anti-Semitic rhetoric resurging into present day.

This study has shown that old, underlying ideas of Jewish “otherness,” are critical to understanding how the Nazis were able to tap into pre-existing prejudices and fears; the Nazis did not create anti-Semitism, but they super charged fears of the “others” who could then be blamed for all that was wrong in society.²⁴⁷

²⁴² BBC News.

²⁴³ Toby Axelrod, “Germany Reports Highest Number of Anti-Semitic Crimes since 2001,” Jewish Telegraphic Agency, May 28, 2020, <https://www.jta.org/2020/05/28/global/germany-reports-highest-number-of-anti-semitic-crimes-since-2001>.

²⁴⁴ Axelrod.

²⁴⁵ Kate Connolly, “German Leaders Fear Rise of Anti-Semitic Conspiracy Theories Linked to COVID-19,” *The Guardian*, July 21, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/21/german-jewish-leaders-fear-rise-of-antisemitic-conspiracy-theories-linked-to-covid-19>.

²⁴⁶ Connolly.

²⁴⁷ Gay, *The Jews of Germany*, 20–21.

Nazi propaganda was used to shape both a new totalitarian structure of ideas, thoughts, and doctrines, as well as create a new form of government that celebrated racial superiority and perpetual warfare; the regime eventually chose mass murder as the basis of national policy.²⁴⁸ National policy however did not affect the daily lifestyle of the general population: If you do not understand the struggle, it is not a part of your reality or daily life reminder. Anti- Semitic propaganda in the Nazi regime expressed the ideal of a supreme “Aryan” race; they used eugenics to identify anyone who did not fit their ideal mold. Jews, who did not fit that mold, were ridiculed and harassed for not assimilating into the society. Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda is what led many Germanys to commit heinous crimes, or even turn a blind eye at what was being done to the Jews.

However, the story of the Nazi propaganda machine has continued to churn out hate in Germany, as elsewhere in the West, at an alarming pace. Thus, the current surge of violence in Germany, according to Bernard Lewis, “needs to be viewed as a part of the larger tapestry of racism and antisemitism that has been tolerated. Governments are more likely to tolerate racist and sectarian attacks against minorities when they are framed as protests against real or imagined wrongs by those minorities or inter-minority conflicts, whether the targets are Jews, or illegal immigrants.”²⁴⁹ After World War II, in contrast to European institutions’ lack of directly addressing Anti-Semitism, European nations tried Nazi criminals for human rights violations and not anti-Semitic racism. The best example of this tragic irony is, in 1961, Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, had Eichmann taken from Argentina and brought to Israel for trial by the District Court of Jerusalem to answer for the charge of his principal role in the “Final Solution” extermination of the Jews.²⁵⁰ Ben-Gurion stated, “Let world opinion know this, that not Nazi Germany alone was responsible for the destruction of six million Jews of Europe. We want the nations of

²⁴⁸ Welch, *The Third Reich*, 6.

²⁴⁹ Bernard Lewis, *Semites, and Anti-Semites* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1987), 22–23.

²⁵⁰ Hannah Arendt, “Eichmann in Jerusalem-I,” *The New Yorker*, February 16, 1963, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1963/02/16/eichmann-in-jerusalem-i>.

the world to know...and they should be ashamed.”²⁵¹ In Ben-Gurion’s view, the entire world had been complicit in sweeping anti-Semitism under the rug.

In sum, this thesis examined the ways in which Nazi ideology and its application to mass persuasion in the form of popular opinion proceeded from a customary hatred of the Jewish people as it had existed since ancient times to a systematic exclusion from civil life, and finally, to mass murder. In the previous pages, this thesis built on the record of the former understanding of the nature of totalitarian propaganda as it examines racist lies that propagated violence on a mass scale.

The NSDAP and its organizations used the tool of anti-Semitic rhetoric and imagery to coalesce their power base. Anti-Semitism symbolizing racial hatred has long been a historical conflict between Judaism and the rise of nationalism in Germany. Anti-Semitic rhetoric and imagery bombarded the German people on a mass scale with the lie that the Jews were the enemies, vermin, blamed for all Germany’s troubles therefore needing to be exterminated; the German populace was indoctrinated with anti-Semitic propaganda in regard to the narrative of the villainous (Jews). As the German people believed the portrayal of Jews as villains, eventually, the Nazis desensitized them to any persecution acts as long as it would lead to a greater homogenous German (Aryan) race. The Nazi’s anti-Semitism philosophy of utilizing the Jews as a scapegoat for all the nations woes, strengthen and unified their national identity that Hitler militarized. Hitler’s ideal of superior homogenous race combined with the military would lead to the takeover of several European nations.

Racist propaganda used the “big lie” of Jews as the great villains who were to blame for everything to achieve totalitarian control over a population. Sadly, this use of anti-Semitic propaganda is not just a story from a history book; it remains a problem today, as seen time and time again with anti-Semitic racism in Germany.

The rise of anti-Semitism has been growing exponentially since the 1990s.²⁵² In 2012, HC Strache (leader of the FPÖ) while in Austria not Germany, reimaged an old

²⁵¹ Arendt.

²⁵² Axelrod, “Germany Reports Highest Number of Anti-Semitic Crimes since 2001.”

American caricature into an anti-Semitic message that could have been seen in the Nazi regime in famous newspaper the *Der Sturmer*.²⁵³ As recently as 2018 in Germany, anti-Semitism is getting louder. Germany is now facing a crisis in the current pandemic that is reviving and exacerbating these very anti-Semitic views found during the Third Reich.²⁵⁴ The corona virus is causing protests and demonstrations with Protestants using slogans stating that the Rothchilds are to be blamed for this virus.²⁵⁵ The current evolution of anti-Semitic propaganda does not manifest as grotesquely as in the past but remains just as insidious today.

As this thesis showed, such anti-Semitic “big lie” propaganda can trigger those who believe it to new acts of greater violence against Jews. Ultimately, the power of propaganda and media cannot be underestimated and should not be ignored.

²⁵³ Wodak, *The Politics of Fear*, 13.

²⁵⁴ Blickle, *Pandemics Change Cities*.

²⁵⁵ “Anti-Semitism in Germany Increased Due to Coronavirus Protests,” DW, January 9, 2020, <https://www.dw.com/en/anti-semitism-in-germany-increased-due-to-coronavirus-protests/a-54775939>.

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