

INFLAME



U-HIGH HISTORY JOURNAL

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Dear Reader--

Welcome to Vol. IV Issue 1 of U-High's history and economics Journal, *InFlame*! Dedicated to publishing excellent student papers written in history and economics, Inflamm is published twice annually, once in the Winter and once in the Spring. This issue marks our second of the year, and the fifth overall for the journal. Both issues will be published online as well as a limited print release of the entirety of Vol. IV.

All U-High students are eligible to submit papers written during their high school career. Submissions are reviewed anonymously by our student board composed of eight members. Please see page 4 for submission guidelines — we look forward to reading your papers!

Happy Reading!

The Inflamm Board

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Table of Contents

Mission Statement.....	4
Submission Criteria.....	4
Der Ewige Antisemit (The Eternal Anti-Semite): Nazi Film Propaganda’s Influence on the Holocaust, Willis Weinstein.....	5
The Secrets of African and African American Quilts, Alina Cui.....	40
The Relationship between the Development of Ballistite and the Service of Herbert Kitchener at the Advent of the First World War, Samuel Morin.....	53

Mission Statement

We are a student-run journal dedicated to publication of work in history and economics. We wish to promote scholarly discussion by providing students a forum in which to publish and share work with their peers. Our editorial staff works directly with authors at each stage of the publication process. As a journal, we hold ourselves to a high standard of excellence. We value honest academic research and strong theses. We look for papers of a high quality that demonstrate a clear understanding of the material, draw meaningful conclusions, and present new and interesting ideas. Our goal is to foster a community that encourages thoughtful and creative writing in history and economics.

Criteria for Submission

All submissions must be written by a U-High student during their tenure at U-High for a history and economics class or independent study course. Papers must meet the following formatting and length criteria:

- Between 4 and 20 pages in length
- Include proper citations (footnotes/endnotes and works cited list) in Chicago Turabian format (guidelines [here](#))
- Include a cover page which contains: title, author name, class for which paper was written
- Double spaced
- 1 inch margins
- 12 pt., Times New Roman font
- Header with author last name, page number
- Submitted as in Microsoft Word or as a PDF
- Illustrations, maps and tables are welcome but should be properly cited

All submissions are reviewed anonymously by the student board. No decisions may be repealed, however all students are encouraged to revise and resubmit their papers if not accepted. An InFlame editor will provide general feedback with notification of rejection to guide revision. No special consideration is given to papers that have received external recognition. InFlame typically publishes between 3-5 papers an issue.

Submissions should be sent to inflammesubmissions@gmail.com. Questions about any of our policies should be directed to inflammejournal@gmail.com. See InFlame's [grading rubric](#).

Der Ewige Antisemit (The Eternal Anti-Semite): Nazi Film Propaganda's Influence on the Holocaust

By: Willis Weinstein

In a city where over 450 homicides occurred in the year 2015, one often wonders what can drive so much killing. Tragically, many societal factors lead to the high rates of violence in Chicago, but perhaps more depressing is that this figure represents only a fraction of the killing in our state, our country, our world, and human history. One often wonders what has driven the violence and genocides that have occurred and still do. There is no one cause which can answer this question. However, in examining violence on a grander scale throughout history, there is one common element: difference. Genocides and mass killings across the world, whether racial, cultural, or religious in motive, often stem from ignorance and fear of the differences between groups.

In recent memory, the Holocaust—the systematic extermination of Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, political dissidents, Jehovah's Witnesses, and other declared enemies of the Nazi regime—is an important part of human history. What drove the Germany of the 1930s and 1940s to such hate and violence? This is a tough question to answer. An attempt to dissect how people were motivated to this attitude of hate and violence yields strongly to one answer in particular: propaganda. The definition of propaganda has changed much over time, and this is partially because of the efforts of the Nazis. After WWI, propaganda was known as “political activity used by states at war.”¹In the modern era, however, the word has a distinctly negative connotation, implying lies, slander, or prejudice. This is because the Nazis used propaganda in all of these ways, convincing the German populace that minorities, such as Jews, were the root of

¹Nicholas John Cull, David Holbrook Culbert, and David Welch. *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopedia, 1600 to the Present*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2003, 438-9.

all of Germany's failures. Following the Great Depression and Germany's loss in World War I, this resonated with the German people. Adolf Hitler, leader of the NSDAP, promised a solution. Hitler claimed he could restore Germany to its former glory, and achieve a strong, purely German union. This union would be made of only pure ethnic Germans, forming a tight-knit community. Along the way, purportedly impure, subhuman people, like the Jews, would have to be gotten rid of. While Hitler and some Germans did initially want this, it was a goal of the Nazi regime to make the extermination of the Jews the desire of all Germans. Of course, propaganda was how that was achieved.

Within propaganda, one medium stuck out as particularly effective: film. Movies were available to all; a common form of entertainment, it was through mastering the art of movie propaganda that the Nazis put the Holocaust into motion. To achieve their goal of a pure German union, in culture and in reality, the Nazis utilized film through subtle ways that catered to subconscious and existing prejudices. Anti-Semitism was no new concept, but the Nazis used specific film techniques and content to bring this prejudice to the surface.

Like many other regimes, Nazism relied on the political tools of the cult of personality and the national myth—ideas which romanticize a nation's founding story, glorify its people, and revere its leader as a veritable saint. By using these nationalistic social and political mechanisms, a nation's people feel empowered and invincible. It was the Nazis' use of these techniques that made their political campaigns appealing to Germans. The nation had emerged from World War I with a battered economy and a diminished sense of national pride. Hyperinflation forced citizens to use paper currency to fuel their stoves rather than to buy bread. Political parties maintained power in the streets with paramilitary groups and gangs of thugs. Pro-Democratic coalitions lacked the ability to maintain cohesive factions and work together. As the Nazis would

have Germans believe, Weimar Germany was a hell-scape that would only receive salvation by getting behind the Nazi party.² In retrospect, it is clear that the “essential appeal and success of the Nazis lay in their claim to be a national people’s party that could bind and heal German society,” which had yet to be achieved previously.³ A nationalistic philosophy like Nazism could be viewed as a balm to the nation’s wounds, a steroid for German patriotism, and a shovel to unearth deep seeds of hate. The means by which the Nazis communicated this message was propaganda.

Without a doubt, propaganda was one of the most crucial tools in the Nazi’s accession to power. The Nazis placed incredible value on its capabilities, and with good reason. It was the dependable method of disseminating and solidifying Nazi ideology, and extremely malleable to party aims. Perhaps this is why the invisible hand of propaganda is evident when dissecting any era of the Nazi regime.

In Nazi Germany, propaganda was omnipresent. Whether in leaflets, the 1936 Olympics, the Max Schmelling v. Joe Louis bouts of 1936 and 1938, or the Nuremberg rallies, the Nazi Regime’s power centered on its image.⁴ In seemingly each calibrated action, the state aimed to showcase its glory to the German people and the world. As soon as the Nazis came to power in 1933, “...the Nazis launched a programme of subtle conditioning and indoctrination of their own people.”⁵ The first organization to accomplish indoctrination was the Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda (the Reich Ministry for Public Enlightenment), established March 13, 1933. At the head of this organization was Joseph Goebbels, the Reich Minister of Propaganda, a skillful and cynical man who joined the NSDAP after struggling as a journalist,

² Ronnie S. Landau, *The Nazi Holocaust*. Chicago, Illinois: Ivan R. Dee, 1992, 75.

³ Ibid, 105.

⁴ Cull, Culbert and Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion*, 380.

⁵ Landau, *The Nazi Holocaust*, 119.

writer, and dramatic adviser. Originally a supporter of Gregor Strasser, a prominent leader in the early days of the NSDAP, Goebbels sided with Adolf Hitler during an internal party struggle in 1926, and advanced in the party hierarchy, becoming the Berlin Head of the NSDAP later the same year.⁶ As a party member, Goebbels was a fantastic orator, who masterfully "...exploited the freedom that a democratic society granted even its fiercest enemies," and also turned *Der Angriff*, the party newspaper, into a powerful propaganda weapon as its Editor.⁷ Elected to Parliament in 1928, Goebbels served as the NSDAP's propaganda leader beginning in 1929, and turned the Nazis into a political force by organizing demonstrations to disrupt democratic order. Before Goebbels even "...became Minister of Propaganda he was probably the first modern election campaign manager. He couldn't yet get any direct influence on the press, newsreels or the radio, but he realized that it is enough to offer a great spectacle if you want to appear in the news."⁸

Goebbels' skill and talent truly lay in his abilities as Propaganda Minister. It is interesting that although he struggled as a creative before entering the NSDAP (as an amateur painter, like Hitler), Goebbels flourished in communication after devoting himself to the party. Although it is tragic that his work was not devoted to better purposes, Goebbels truly mastered creating convincing communication with the Nazis: he turned propaganda into an art form of sorts. In one of his first speeches he declared that "...the new ministry would be responsible for the mobilization of mind and spirit in Germany."⁹ His efforts went towards the creation of the *Völksgemeinschaft*, the idea and aspiration that Germany could one day become great again,

⁶ Cull, Culbert, and Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion*, 150.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Felix Moeller, *The Film Minister: Goebbels and Cinema in the "Third Reich."* 1st ed. Stuttgart/London: Edition Axel Menges, 2000, 7.

⁹ Cull, Culbert, and Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion*, 425-6.

under “one people, one empire, and one leader.”¹⁰ Goebbels knew that the collective German population hurt after the catastrophe of World War I, and they wanted to get out the harsh reality that they were confined to. He presented Nazism as an escape from Germany’s woes, and the means to achieve a bright future. Goebbels aimed to “keep people content,” giving his propaganda an “...undeniable modern touch. An agitator against Bolshevism, democracy and liberalism, and a preacher of hate, Goebbels did not merely threaten people or make them obey his message, he also calculated the effects of entertainment sanitized of any forbidden or subversive qualities.”¹¹ Put simply, Goebbels used entertainment to convince and create the ideological *Völksgemeinschaft* that was his magnum opus. Through his work, Goebbels paved the way for killing of millions of supposedly “inferior” people, and, perhaps just as unspeakably, a population apathetic towards these events. Although the Holocaust is an undeniable part of human history, it only could have happened as an

“...end product of a cumulative process of depersonalization (robbing the Jews of a sense of legal personality and individuality) and, later, or dehumanization. They were increasingly cut off from their German non-Jewish neighbors and their feelings of isolation and vulnerability were consequently intensified, hastening the collapse of their morale and inner resources. The growing distance—social, economic, legal, and psychological—between a Jew and a Gentile helps explain how the Nazis could ‘remove’ a community virtually without protest from the rest of the population.”¹²

This process was made possible because Goebbels “...knew how to seek out and express the hidden feelings of his audience, hammering away at the idea of the uniqueness of the German people and stressing the way in which their destiny had been betrayed by their leaders and was now threatened by the two great evils of communism and a Jewish world conspiracy.”¹³ Thanks

¹⁰ Ibid, 166.

¹¹ Ibid, 151.

¹² Landau, *The Nazi Holocaust*, 119.

¹³ Cull, Culbert, and Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion*, 151.

to their propaganda department headed by Goebbels, the Nazis could create their

Völksgemeinschaft, a

“Germany that draws on mystic origins and consists of a hotchpotch of Teutonic culture, fairy-tales and legends—leaving out all the historical facts. The National Socialists ideology’s fatherland values are projected back into the past in time, and asserted in space far beyond the borders of Germany to the north and east. This was done so persistently that it is still bubbling away in the depths of our collective unconscious.”¹⁴

The Nazis were to be perceived as the key to achieving a new, beautiful Germany that had never been achieved before. It would unite everything that made Germany great, past and future, creating an Empire built of only the very best. At the same time, however, Goebbels reminded Germans that achieving the Völksgemeinschaft was no easy task. Goebbels convinced Germany that groups like Jews stood in the way of German paradise. This, in turn, unearthed values of hate towards the Jews or apathy toward their fate, and thus the successful attainment of the Final Solution.

It is important to remember that although the Nazis were extremely innovative and successful propaganda-makers, they did not invent anti-Semitism. “Rather, the Holocaust was perpetrated by an ideological clique in power which relied upon the deep-seated but largely ‘passive’ anti-Semitism of much of the population.”¹⁵ The Nazis shaped an imagined version of Germany and how Germans should view themselves, like how Hollywood created an “...image of the limitless freedom of the individual, sustaining democratic value in the farthest outreaches of the Wild West or the narrow canyons of the big city streets, with the Colt, if necessary.”¹⁶ In telling Germans they had a potential to lift themselves out of their mire, and find better times under the leadership of the NSDAP, Nazis gave the Germans hope, and what they wanted after

¹⁴ Moeller, *The Film Minister*, 7.

¹⁵ Landau, *The Nazi Holocaust*, 208.

¹⁶ Moeller, *The Film Minister*, 7.

enduring devastation of the First World War and the Great Depression: big parades, smiling children, brave armies.

Keeping the population content and hopeful was important to the NSDAP for a few reasons. One, they hoped to eventually achieve a pan-German empire across Europe. Two, if the people were happy with the government, they would follow its orders and make its goals their goals. The Jews were seen as the obstacle to the Volksgemeinschaft, and thus needed to be excised for the Nazis to achieve their supreme end goal. Thus, it was the Propaganda Ministry's job to tell Germany that a paradise was attainable, but only if they got rid of subversive and contaminating elements. This paper focuses on the Propaganda ministry's goal of villainizing the Jews. To do this, the Nazis' best strategy was creating propaganda which was not heard, but seen.

Though film was a crucial weapon in the arsenal of Nazi propaganda, it had a storied history in Germany before it was appropriated by Hitler's regime. The motion picture became widely popular in 1895, which marked a transition from merely projecting moving images on screen to stories with complex plot. In making this transition, film itself became a vehicle for propaganda, albeit unintentionally. Each film is steeped in the idiosyncrasies of its home country and filmmaker, and as such "every feature film—good or bad; lavish or Spartan in its production values; frivolous or earnest—is loaded with cultural propaganda for the country that produced it."¹⁷ However, films can also have overt "...specific content sought by the film director, slipped in by the screenwriter, or specifically called for by the advertising agency,"¹⁸ which was certainly the case under the Nazis. Over one-sixth of the 1,097 feature films produced in the Nazi era fell into this overtly propagandistic genre, called Film Politik. While not all of these films

¹⁷ Moeller, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion*, 129.

¹⁸ Ibid.

were Staatsauftragsfilme, (state-commissioned films), they still fall under the category of Tendenzfilme, or films with Nazi propaganda. The total composition of these films consisted of approximately one-half romances and comedies, one-quarter dramas and one quarter other genres like crime thrillers and musicals. However, it could be said that all of these films were Tendenzfilme, given the pre-censorship process which ensured all films were in accordance with the government's propaganda aims at the time.¹⁹

Although the Nazis believed the Weimar era was a misstep for Germany, they certainly borrowed many of its filmic traditions and devices to further their own propagandistic aims. The Nazis "...blended popular genres—costume dramas, and comedic and romantic comedies—together with filmic techniques—commentaries, visuals, and sound—in order to maintain audience interest,"²⁰ which was a crucial part of the success of their propaganda. On the whole, the Nazis had to invest little to no effort into making films more popular. Weimar films like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919) and Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1926) had earned acclaim for "innovative techniques and ...reflection of society and culture."²¹ During cinema's infant stages, "...before World War One—the popularity of film was initially among the lower class strata of society. Film was entertainment for the 'common people,' which became an 'art substitute' for the proletarian masses. Thus, the economic characteristics of individual patrons played a major role in cinematic development, because audiences were key to the industry's success. Without people spending their earnings in theaters, the film industry would cease to exist.

It is vital to acknowledge the synonymous rise in film popularity and the changing spending patterns among the working classes—namely, their increase in disposable income. This

¹⁹ Ibid, 130.

²⁰ Stacy F. Kaufeld, *The Image of the Jew under National Socialism Anti-Semitic Film Propaganda, 1939-41*. Ottawa: Library and Archives Canada, 2006, 19-20.

²¹ Ibid, 7.

sudden rise in real wages invariably led to an increase in leisure time.”²² Due to industrialization at the turn of the century and improvements to manufacturing, many entrepreneurs and workers alike benefitted. In industrialized countries across the globe, like the United States or Germany, workers benefitted from the more efficient factory processes which increased their salaries, and thus the quality of personal lives. Between 1900 and 1913, the German working class had a 13 percent rise in nonessential spending and working hours dipped, so laboring Germans had far more time and money to enjoy mass entertainment.²³ In 1910, there were 1000 theaters in Germany, and by 1919 there were 2836; the size of theaters themselves also grew to hold larger audiences. As a result of film’s increased popularity, “film began to transcend class boundaries and became increasingly identified as a ‘national culture,’ rather than a form of entertainment for the lower classes.”²⁴

On the whole, film was already popular when the Nazis took power, one of the many reasons it made an extremely valuable propaganda tool to the NSDAP. Much like Hitler’s beliefs in propaganda, film was about popularity. In a way both films and propaganda have the same audience and goals: to appeal to as many people as possible, and to appeal to the senses. For films, the appeal to the senses is for commercial and entertainment purposes, but for propaganda, an appeal to the senses meant a means of conquering the masses by forcing “...a doctrine on the whole people.”²⁵ In Hitler’s opinion, propaganda would bring facts and processes to the attention of masses with emphasized significance. Good propaganda concentrated on as few points as possible and repeated them over and over again, focusing on core emotions like love and hate.

²² Ibid, 21.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid, 21-2.

²⁵ Cull, Culbert, and Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion*, 244, 321.

Through this process, according to Hitler, propaganda would achieve results “almost beyond our understanding.”²⁶

It is no surprise that because of the commonalities between propaganda and early film’s purposes, Hitler and Goebbels liked the medium. To fully maximize the potential of film, Goebbels took great interest in observing movies, both domestic and foreign, for the purpose of personal entertainment and field research. He had intense feelings on film, and would often write impassioned reviews in his diaries to reflect and think about films he saw. However, he often lacked a balanced perspective and composed his analyses with overt political tones. On the 1931 film *M*, Goebbels wrote, “[s]aw *M* by Fritz Lang. Fabulous. Against humanist stupidity. For the death penalty. Well made.”²⁷ Goebbels also greatly appreciated the value of audio and overall quality of American films he saw. In an entry on December 12, 1940, Goebbels wrote of *Gone with the Wind*, “You have to see it more than once. We should take it as an example.”²⁸ ²⁹ At the same time, though, he believed that for Nazi propaganda films had to be uniquely German to succeed, and thus disliked Weimar cinema for accepting American influence. Despite his political scruples, Goebbels even went so far as to take notes on Soviet filmmakers, complementing filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein for his ability to capture the Russian zeitgeist and stating that one who watches his propaganda film *Battleship Potemkin* becomes a communist, albeit momentarily.³⁰

Before any of these influences could be manifested into filmic propaganda, the Nazis set up a complex bureaucracy of approval and censorship. Goebbels’ web began with the

²⁶ Ibid, 244.

²⁷ Moeller, *The Film Minister*, 30.

²⁸ Ibid, 34.

²⁹ Kaufeld, *The Image of the Jew*, 9.

³⁰ Moeller, *The Film Minister*, 27.

establishment of the aforementioned Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda (RMVP) in March of 1933. The RMVP was the first ministry of its kind in Germany, and it was tasked with aligning the people with Reich policy to create a powerful Fatherland. Hitler enumerated the RMVP's duties as creating the "spiritual direction of the nation,"³¹ a blank check for Goebbels to manipulate German media outlets as he pleased. The RMVP was one of three propaganda wings of the regime. The other two wings were the Reichspropagandadaamt (Central Propaganda Office or CPO) and the Reichskulturkammer (Reich Chamber of Culture or RKK). The RMVP and the CPO, which were less visible to the public, would often work together as one office, as many of their respective organizations and responsibilities corresponded closely. Nonetheless, the RMVP was the "...main policy and decision-making body, providing direction and delegating responsibility to the numerous subordinate agencies that were under its control.

The most important of these was the RKK. The RMVP "...set itself the task of reeducating the population for a new society based on National Socialist values."³² The RKK, formed July 14th 1933, acted as the "umbrella organization for individual arts sections."³³ The RKK worked closely with the Filmkredit Bank GmbH (Reich Film Bank or FKB) established June 1, 1933, which incentivized movie production by making state funds to filmmakers available at attractive interest rates.³⁴

All artists, musicians, filmmakers, and writers had to be members of the RKK. This ensured that all art was scrutinized by the RKK and strategically purged the film industry, which the Nazis thought was dominated by Jews.³⁵ The RKK had 7 sub-categories, including one

³¹ Cull, Culbert, and Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion*, 353.

³² Ibid, 355.

³³ Moeller, *The Film Minister*, 44.

³⁴ Ibid, 36.

³⁵ Kaufeld, *The Image of the Jew*, 8.

specifically made for films, the Reichsfilmkammer (Reich Film Chamber) and the Reichsfilmdramaturgie, which served to “prevent emerging potential errors in good time, so that correction work is not started when the film is already finished, but when it is started. In this way, the big censorship of a film is reduced to a minimum, but the state’s involvement in the film is maximized at the moment when work on the film is about to start in the studio.”³⁶ The Nazis also experimented with Kunstausschüsse (artistic committees) but ultimately failed at this.

While these organizations dealt with the commission and incentivizing of films, the Nazis also had an extensive apparatus and history of film censorship. The Reichslichtspielgesetz (Reich Moving Picture Law) adopted May 16 1934 was key to the Nazification of the film industry and how “Ministry reconciled the association between propaganda and entertainment”³⁷ by ensuring each filmmaker was only creating Nazi-approved works. In paragraph seven, the law states that “[t]he license [to make films] is denied if the examination proves that showing these films endangers the essential interests of the state of public order or security, or offends National Socialist, religious, moral or artistic feeling, to have brutalizing or immoral effects, or to endanger Germany’s reputation or Germans’ relations with foreign states.”³⁸ Thanks to the Reichslichtspielgesetz, the Nazis could rest assured all media circulating in theaters was Nazi-approved, creating a cultural blockade against any media which hurt the regime. Culturally speaking, there was no voice of dissent against the government. Anyone who tried to criticize the Nazi regime had their ability to make films taken away. Essentially, any media circulated within Germany’s borders had to be pro-Nazi media, ensuring that the regime had an untarnished image. With no one to critique the state’s image in the media, the Nazis had a much easier time

³⁶ Moeller, *The Film Minister*, 47.

³⁷ Kaufeld, *The Image of the Jew*, 13.

³⁸ Ibid.

passing racial laws or other implementing other forms of discrimination. This theme remained consistent throughout the censorship process.

One of these processes, “the preliminary examination, or *Vorzensor*, was of the utmost importance to the Reichlichtspielgesetz. This pre-censor process involved the Reich Film Advisor evaluating all drafts of every film. His job included ‘prevent[ing] in time the treatment of themes contrary to the spirit of the times,’”³⁹ thus ensuring that each film on a Nazi screen did not hurt the government’s reputation. Before being publically released, films had to be sent to a board, usually containing Goebbels and occasionally Hitler. Films screened by this board had to be given official approval before being publically released. As a result of the censorship, the government ensured no films undermined the NSDAP’s goals, but ultimately, the regime was more concerned with ensuring the media was full of pro-Nazi films rather than keeping anti-Nazi films off the silver screen.. The Nazis manifested this philosophy of encouraging pro-Nazi films through Prädikate (Distinction Marks), which were established in paragraph eight of the Lichtspielgesetz,

“which stated that the censorship office determined what Prädikat individual films received. There were various distinction marks established under the regime, but films that attained the highest accolade were deemed to be both ‘politically’ and ‘artistically’ especially valuable. Ideally, films were to reflect Hitler’s ideological views, and the censorship system was to guarantee the achievement of this programme. Thus, if films were both entertaining and ideologically correct, they automatically received the top Prädikat. Interestingly, after 1938, cinemas could not refuse to play them. Of course, this was another control method introduced by the Propaganda Ministry to ensure that the so-called ‘undesirable’ elements within the Reich would not be victorious in this apparent cultural struggle.”⁴⁰

By creating a reward system of distinction marks, the NSDAP incentive the creation of pro-Nazi media. This could attract filmmakers in two ways. One, it would reward filmmakers

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 15.

who made films with pro-facist overtones by giving them a distinction mark. As a result, supporting the Nazis in the media was rewarded. Secondly, for those filmmakers who were more concerned with making artistically sound work, it forced them to kowtow to the Nazis in order to receive recognition for their works. Either way, the Nazis possessed a stranglehold on films. Anybody who wanted to be recognized for their work had to sing the praises of the party, or face censorship and a lack of acknowledgment for their art.

No matter how many pro-Nazi films were in circulation or how many anti-Nazi films had been censored, the Reich could not control how the people perceived them, but they tried their best to anyway. The RMVP thus banned artistic criticism to further strengthen their grip on the film industry. As a result,

“no longer would audiences interpret films for themselves. Instead, the control the regime gained over all aspects of the filmmaking process through the Reichsfilmkammer, Lichtspielgesetz and the banning of artistic criticism ensured that the Ministry interpreted films for the audience. This final step—banning artistic criticism—was key for solidifying their control over the film industry, as both Hitler and Goebbels realized the importance of this medium in conveying ideological concepts to the German population. Therefore, as of 27 November 1936, what Goebbels labelled a ‘commentary on the arts—simply a rehashing of the film’s plot and narrative—replaced any evaluation of criticism of films. The Ministry sought to reinforce the National Socialist ideological direction of the film industry through the establishment of the Reichskulturkammer, the introduction of the new Reichslichtspielgesetz, the setting up of the Filmkreditbank, and the ban on artistic criticism.”⁴¹

Through banning criticism, the RMVP essentially rendered the Nazi regime untouchable. It would be impossible to criticize art that supported the Nazis, and by extension, the Nazis themselves. As a result, the furthest discussion of propaganda films was a summary, or praise. In this way, there was no published outlet for people to denounce the Nazis. Certainly, people could harbor personal negative opinions about the Nazis in their films, but not publicize these opinions, or they would face punishment. In this way, people had no way to unify against the Nazi’s

⁴¹ Ibid, 16-17.

prejudiced films, and thus no way to resist the Nazis. In terms of the media, the German people were imprisoned by their government.

Furthermore, the Nazis also excluded Jews from attending movies as part of the 1935 Nuremberg Laws, which could solidify the philosophies of anti-Semitism in the minds of gentile Germans. With no Jewish people in a theater to protest or point out the invalidity of anti-Semitic propaganda, hateful Nazi notions could be circulated unopposed in the minds of German viewers. In this way, “movie-going became politicized. Film theorist Sabine Hake argues that ‘through the practice of a racially segregated audience, movie going was transformed into a powerful tool of nation building and racial politics.’”⁴² Each time a German stepped into a movie theater, they intensified anti-Semitism and shifted closer to the racist beliefs of the Nazi government.

Clearly, the Nazis, like any totalitarian regime, wanted to ensure that the media was under close watch, so that political dissent was avoided, and people were kept in line with the government’s goals and ideologies. These goals and ideologies were the same for all propaganda: the establishment of the *Völksgemeinschaft*. By creating a sterile, Nazi-washed, *übermensch*-obsessed culture and media, the Nazis impressed their idealized vision of society onto what German citizens absorbed every day. The Nazis wanted to villainize and erase undesirables, like the Jews, from German culture, so that people would be ready and willing to erase them from real life. The goals of Nazi cinema were equal parts glorifying a pure Germany and painting Jews as devils. The Nazis cultivated a utopian image of a super-Germany that once existed but was lost in the struggles of modernity. It was only attainable if the people made their best interests those of the NSDAP. Specifically,

⁴² Ibid, 19.

“To achieve the establishment of the *Völksgemeinschaft*, the Propaganda Ministry worked to differentiate between the Nazi thoughts on Jews and what they believed embodied so-called ‘true’ German virtues. The National Socialist state claimed, through its propaganda efforts, that Jewish efforts in the nineteenth century to seek economic and social modernity had destroyed the idyllic community of the past. In what Jeffrey Herf labelled ‘reactionary modernism’ the Nazis idealized the past ‘expressing longings for a simpler, preindustrial life.’ National Socialist propaganda, according to Herf’s concept, claimed that Germany needed to be safeguarded from the negative changes associated with modernity. And under Hitler’s Germany, these negative changes were largely associated with the Jews.”⁴³

By harkening back to an idyllic past, the Nazis created a sense of longing and nostalgia among the German people. As a ruler, Hitler promised Germany a return to these supposedly glorious days of old, where the land was bountiful and the people were virtuous. However, what stood in the way of this German utopia, free of modern complexity, were the Jews. Through economic wrongdoing and social change, the Jews had tarnished Germany, in the Nazis’ view. The NSDAP attempted to convince people that the Jews were responsible for the loss of a once beautiful Germany. To return to this once harmonious era in Germany history, where the *Völksgemeinschaft* ruled, the Jews had to be exterminated.

The Nazi Film Industry rested on existing Weimar film techniques which had been proved popular through the test of time, and pre-existing anti-Semitism which was very much in existence during inter-war Europe. For many Germans, a *Völksgemeinschaft*, a literal “community of the people,” was desirable. They wanted a unified, strong nation with economic stability, regardless of creed or religion. The Nazis convinced the people that the path to a strong Germany was synonymous with the systematic destruction of the Jews. As a unified political coalition promising stability and unity, the NSDAP appealed to many people as a way out from the struggle of previous decades. Germans formed a sort of hive mind, attuning their needs and beliefs to that of the Führer, because they believed he could grant them the promise of a bright

⁴³ Ibid, 17.

future so long as they did what he wanted. What Hitler wanted was this Völkisch German spirit: a mix of early Nationalistic writing, 19th century racial theory, anti-Semitism, and Social Darwinism, all of which manifested themselves into the “Nazi cultural revolution” disseminated through Reich Cinema.⁴⁴ In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler notes, “[t]he function of propaganda is to attract supporters... Propaganda will consequently have to see that an idea wins supporters... Propaganda tries to force a doctrine on the whole people... Propaganda works on the general public from the standpoint of an idea and makes them ripe for victory of this idea.”⁴⁵ Certainly, the Germans elected Hitler to leadership because they were eager for change, and “ripe for victory.” However, when Germans elected Hitler, it was not with the expectation that their national problems would be solved by a specific and systematic destruction of Jews and other groups. The conclusion that Jews must be removed from German society in order to make Germany great again was only made possible through propaganda. In posters, films, or books, propaganda told Germany that a bright future lay ahead over a road paved with Jewish bodies. Once this idea won support, it changed the public view, making Germans receptive to ethnic cleansing, as they believed the “victory of this idea” would bring them a prosperous nation.

Since Germans were “ripe for victory,” or wanting Germany to succeed, they would support any idea which promised them a successful future for their country. Given film’s popular nature, it was the ideal vehicle to deliver propaganda to the masses. When the Nazis presented the Jews as an impediment to a better Germany, anti-Semitism reasserted itself. Statements like “[t]he Volk were stable and settled—the Jews were wandering and rootless; the Volk was spiritual; the Jews were materialist; the Volk was the epitome of a healthy rural life; the Jews

⁴⁴ Ibid, 10.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 11.

embodied the decadence and corruption of the city,”⁴⁶ made the Germans desperate to remove the Jewish obstacle which prevented them from finally enjoying a stable, happy life.

Although the Nazis wanted Germans to come away from their films with the conclusion that pure Germans must unite and exterminate the Jews, they certainly did not present their information this way. Goebbels and his Ministry realized that the best propaganda film effectively blended Nazism and entertainment in a way that “reflected the ambience of National Socialism instead of loudly proclaiming its ‘ideology.’”⁴⁷ To work, film propaganda had to be popular. The RMVP and “the film industry needed to understand the relationship between entertainment and ideology. Goebbels realized that propaganda was best when people did not realize they were being fed propaganda.”⁴⁸ As a result, his films borrowed from successful Weimar-era filmmaking techniques and, like today, were well-produced and visually-appealing. Goebbels realized that “aesthetic quality was crucial to maintaining audience interest.”⁴⁹ As a result, many of the Weimar genres, like costume dramas, were influential not only for their aesthetic quality, but because they provided an “escapist fantasy” to the German people, much like Nazism itself.⁵⁰ With regard to the success of an anti-Semitic film, Kaufeld states, “the question of success versus failure is not necessarily indicated by which film made the most money or was seen by the most viewers, although it does not totally discount profit or viewership. Rather, success and failure are determined by which film best constructed the negative image of the Jew.”⁵¹ Kaufeld is correct in stating that a film had to include demonizing depictions of Jews in order to be considered a “success” in the eyes of the NSDAP. However, a

⁴⁶ Ibid, 17-8.

⁴⁷ Cull, Culbert, and Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion*, 132.

⁴⁸ Kaufeld, *The Image of the Jew*, 12.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 7.

⁵⁰ Cull, Culbert, and Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion*, 166.

⁵¹ Kaufeld, *The Image of the Jew*, 2.

successful film also had to appeal to audiences on an aesthetic and entertainment level, otherwise audiences would not see the film in the first place.

Indeed, the best type of film for accomplishing the long-term goals of creating the Volksgemeinschaft and eliminating the Jews was one that was poignant, but subtle. In keeping with the “seen, but not heard,” principle of propaganda, these movies were not outright in their anti-Semitism so that they could be popular and disseminated to as many Germans as possible. Since Weimar films had been quintessential German entertainment, the most effective films involved anti-Jewish sentiment injected into a Weimar-esque production. As a result, the “...the close correlation between the Imperial and Weimar and Nazi periods worked to strengthen the National Socialist use of film for propaganda purposes.”⁵²

Although the Nazis wanted to use film as a tool to indoctrinate people in the ideology of the NSDAP, it took a while to achieve the recipe for effective propaganda. Goebbels quickly “realized it was more advantageous to reflect what the Nazis believed to be a pre-existing notion of reality. Indeed, in the months immediately following the Nazi takeover, the Propaganda Ministry and film industry were slow to grasp the importance of feature films that were a “sequence of badly made, high melodramatic pictures depicting heroism and eventual martyrdom of idealized [N]ational [S]ocialists.”⁵³ The 1933 trilogy of films, *SA-Mann Brand*, *Hitlerjunge Quex* and *Hans Westmar*, fall under this category of heavy-handed Nazi glorification. Films like these lacked audience interest and Goebbels himself called them “out of touch with the spirit of the time” and “faded and shapeless films.”⁵⁴ Leni Riefenstahl, actress, dancer, filmmaker, turned this trend around as a director of some of Nazi German’s most crucial and “aesthetically striking

⁵² Kaufeld, *The Image of the Jew*, 21.

⁵³ Ibid, 23.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 9.

propaganda films.”⁵⁵ After meeting Hitler in 1932, she directed *Victory of Faith* in 1933. Thanks to Riefenstahl’s editing, *Victory of Faith* created a new propaganda style, which illustrated “the Führer’s power and charisma.”⁵⁶ Her other films, *Triumph of the Will* (1935), *Day of Freedom* (1935), and *Olympia* (1938) all were impressive due to their usage of shot-reverse shot patterns, but *Triumph of the Will* and *Olympia* garnered special attention. *Triumph of the Will* was so well-made that it went on to win Best Documentary at the 1935 Venice Film Festival and Gold medal at the 1937 World’s Fair in Paris.⁵⁷ The beauty of the film to the Nazis was it was extremely adaptable. Provided it kept audiences engaged with entertainment and still indoctrinate with subtle ideology, a film could serve whatever propagandistic purposes the Nazis needed, whether garnering support for the war, displaying how impressive their 1936 Olympic games were, or stirring up anti-Jewish sentiment. It was an all-purpose tool for indoctrination.

Between 1939 and 1941, the Nazis used the film industry’s popularity and adaptability as a propaganda tool to create four anti-Semitic films: *Robert und Bertram* (1939), *Der Ewige Jude* (1940), *Die Rothschilds* (1940), and *Jud Süß* (1940), which used techniques of the past in order to indoctrinate Germans with anti-Jewish sentiment, which the films *Der Ewige Jude* and *Jud Süß* did most effectively, and are most well-known as a result. To achieve this efficacy in communication and popularity,

“Filmmakers under National Socialism employed three filmic devices—commentary, visuals and sound—that were borrowed from Weimar and manipulated for their own Nazism’s self-promotional purposes. These techniques, combined with genres, were central to maintaining the popularity of film, while subtly indoctrinating the masses with the use of swastikas and marching soldiers. In his monumental study of the psychology of German film in the 1920s, Siegfried Kracauer explained the similarities in editing practices between the Weimar and Nazi periods, as well as the manipulation of certain filmic devices used by the National Socialist regime. Thus, these key devices allowed the

⁵⁵ Cull, Culbert, and Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion*, 352.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Nazis to exploit the popularity of cinema for their propagandistic ends. Furthermore, Kracauer explained that the use of each mechanism reinforced the indoctrination efforts of the regime.”⁵⁸

These techniques within the films not only increased popularity because of their stylistic commonality with the loved films of the Weimar Republic, but they also had specific value to the Nazis as they cemented the messages of hate which they wanted to implant in viewers. Specifically,

“...Kracauer argues that commentary—third person narration—is an important tool for bridging the gap between subtle and obvious propagandistic efforts. This technique strengthened the visualization of content that might otherwise be ambiguous. In other words, the commentary was in place to guide the audiences’ visual experiences. Under these circumstances—oppressive regime, propaganda and anti-Jewish sentiment—narration became an important tool. Normally filmmakers tried to engage the spectator, and establish a sort of discourse with the audience. By using commentaries, the Ministry ensured that the viewers would not analyse the film’s content, and would simply accept the authoritative so-called ‘voice of God’ narration included in them. An excellent example of the National Socialist exploitation of commentary is the anti-Semitic documentary, *Der ewige Jude*, where the narrator reinforced the audience’s visual experience which it observed on screen.”⁵⁹

Essentially, narration was a road map for propaganda films. While watching a film with commentary, viewers are engaged both auditorily and visually. They might see pictures of a ghetto on screen and hear the words “The ghetto is the home of filthy Jews.” With their eyes and ears hard at work absorbing the film, audience members do not have time or mental space to analyze the validity of what they see on screen. As a result, the commentary works like the “voice of God”—people take what the voice says as fact, without compromise. While the voice-overs of Nazi films were important, they were certainly not the only important technique that improved film quality and indoctrination, and were less crucial than

“...the imagery the NSDAP used to exploit several psychological factors He [Kracauer] claims that the visuals in Nazi films were aimed at the subconscious and the nervous

⁵⁸ Kaufeld, *The Image of the Jew*, 24.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 24-5.

system, while constant motion was used to reinforce the direct control and power of the Nazi regime. This is important to understanding how the National Socialist film industry exploited visuals in an effort to reinforce its ideological beliefs. In both *Die Rothschilds* and *Der ewige Jude*, maps were used as a visual technique to instill in the audience the anti-Semitic notion of a world conspiracy and lack of Heimat (Homeland) which refers to the anti-Semitic notion of the Jew's nomadic lifestyle and desire to take advantage of other peoples...Contrasting is the second effect that Kracauer suggests was integral to reinforcing Nazi film propaganda. The NSDAP identified 'Aryan' Germans as opposite of the negative image that they constructed of the Jew. In order to illustrate this on film, the National Socialists used contrasts to demonstrate the differences between the two disparate characters."⁶⁰

Essentially, the Nazis visually conveyed the ideology they wanted to spread in their propaganda films. The NSDAP wanted Germans to believe that Jews were different, conspiratorial, and distinctly un-German. What better way to do this than a map, and juxtaposed images? By using third-person narration and a map or contrast, viewers would see Jews as an ugly, threatening, parasitic mass. This mass had no true homeland, just hosts that it would suck the life out of for sustenance. The Nazis hoped to convince the Germans with their maps and contrasted images that Jews were veritable lice nesting within German's borders.

The last technique the Nazis used to add poignancy and viewership was sound, which underscored the meaning of images, and made the film more engaging. Sound

"...allowed filmmakers to maintain the film's popularity, while buttressing the anti-Semitic content. The NSDAP contrasted Jewish music with European music in *Jud Süß* in an effort to construct the Jew as the 'Other.' Kracauer suggested that music is important because it underpins the visual presence in any films...The second important development of sound was the so-called 'talkie,' which paralleled the NSDAP's rise to power. Sound in films under the Nazis was important for two reasons. The trend of internationalization began overshadowing traditional aspects of German culture."⁶¹

Sound not only made propaganda films more modern and watchable, but it enabled the NSDAP to reinforce their idea of the Jews as malicious outsiders through contrast. By juxtaposing traditional German music with traditional Jewish music, German viewers see Jews

⁶⁰ Ibid, 25-6.

⁶¹ Ibid, 27.

as different and foreign. Additionally, the presence of music totally engages the viewer's attention, much like third-person narration does when combined with the film's visuals. In this way, the viewer is not only engaged, but invested auditorily and visually in the idea that Jews are different. Sound as well allowed for talking pictures, which were amazingly popular, and of course, are still used today. A downside of talkies, however, was their international nature. Since Goebbels wanted to use sound as an element of films, but resented the foreign influence within German films and Germany as a whole, he strived to create a uniquely German talkie, which could reinforce

“...an illusion of national cohesion. Audiences would feel part of a community, and sense of belonging would usurp any impression of alienation that was a product of increasing internationalization. Film theorist Lutz Koepnick argues that Goebbels intended to use the film industry internationalization. Film theorist Lutz Kopenick argues that Goebbels intended to use the film industry to create a ‘hegemonic spectatorship’ giving a sense of belonging for those citizens of Germany considered a part of the *Völksgemeinschaft*. For social outsiders, especially Jews, the national community established through spectatorship further isolated them from Germanic culture.”⁶²

Through creating the German talkie, Goebbels took the filmic embodiment of Nazi ideology to its logical extreme. Certainly, it is one matter to illustrate the imaged difference between German Jews and German gentiles through juxtaposition on screen. But by creating a talkie spoken in German, with German actors, German production staff, and with a “German” story, the film embodies the dream Nazis’ had. An “all-German” country. This not only gave citizens a taste of what Hitler had in mind, but rallied Germans together through hegemony. Films like these brought citizens together through their aggressive German-ness, unifying those who supported Hitler, and at the same time, breeding hate for those “outsiders” who did not support him. The German talkie was poetry in motion: a glimmer of a future Germany under

⁶² Ibid.

Hitler that also served as a rallying cry for Nazi supporters. It was, in fact, propaganda exactly as Hitler stated: getting support for an idea and making the people ripe for the idea's victory.

It was the usage of these techniques that made *Der Ewige Jude* and *Jud Süß* the most effective of the Nazi's anti-Semitic films, and thus perhaps the most well-known today. *Der Ewige Jude*, directed by Fritz Hippler, dissected the ghetto and the role of the Jews in Germany and the world, relying heavily on striking visuals and the usage of contrast to indoctrinate Germans with a sense of horror and disgust towards the Jewish community. As mentioned before, the image of a global map to show the supposed "rootlessness" of Jews makes them seem loyal to nobody but their own kind, and thus untrustworthy and dangerous. The film trade magazine, the *Illustrierte Film-Kurier*, used stills and visual arrangements from the movie to contrast the appearance of "Aryans" and Jews.⁶³ The more pronounced features and dark hair are especially noticeable in comparison to the softer features and lighter colored hair of the "Aryans." One still (Figure 1) contains two bearded Jews looking sternly into the distance, while a clean-shaven man with Westernized appearance looks on in horror. The image creates a sense of fear, and the enlarged proportions of the Jew's faces give them a monstrous appearance.

Another still (Figure 2) from the movie contrasts two men in "Jewish" and "assimilated" clothes, the Jewish outfits consisting of beard and yarmulke, while the assimilated outfits have the men clean shaving and wearing suits. Several other stills in the magazine contain profiles of Jewish men exhibiting the physical stereotypes of beards and large noses. This contrast was meant to isolate and alienate the Jewish and Gentile communities by painting the two as inherently different and playing on the Nazi trope of being aware of the deceiving, clean-cut appearance of the sly, untrustworthy "camouflaged Jew," whom only the true "Aryan" can

⁶³ "Der Ewige Jude." *Illustrierte Film Kurier*, November 27, 1940, 2.

recognize.⁶⁴ This theme of contrast is crucial to the movie, for one of the primary goals of *Der Ewige Jude* was to inform Germans that the assimilated, a Westernized Jew was the the real threat to Germany, “not through the external characteristics of race, but more through concealing his Jewishness through assimilation.”⁶⁵ The film isolates the Jews from the Germans as part of a dehumanizing process. By portraying Jews as an alien adversary, everyday Germans became afraid of them. As the Nazis desired, the natural reaction to such a horrid smear campaign would be disgust and a desire to remove the impure Jewish element from an otherwise pure community.

Although *Der Ewige Jude* was certainly poignant in its anti-Semitic rhetoric, it was nowhere near as effective or successful as *Jud Süß*. Directed by Veit Harlan, *Jud Süß* tells the story of Joseph Süß Oppenheimer, a Jewish moneylender from Frankfurt, who lives there despite a city law barring Jews from entry. When the Duke of Württemberg, Karl Alexander, is unsatisfied with his modest lifestyle, he calls upon Süß to provide him with funds for royal entertainment, such as an opera and a ballet. Süß schemes the Duke, who is unable to pay Süß back. Instead of payment, Süß asks the Duke for a the right to tax roads. Over time, Süß enacts a reign of terror, levying ridiculous taxes on every aspect of life, punishing citizens harshly, and lifting the ban on Jews. He attempts a coup d’etat and rapes Dorothea, a woman who Süß met on the way to the city. From the trauma of her rape, Dorothea kills herself, and her husband, Faber, the film’s protagonist, helps to oust Süß and secure his execution.⁶⁶

Although *Jud Süß* was “National Socialism’s ultimate cinematic construction dealing with the ‘Jewish Question’”⁶⁷ it went through several directors and scripts before it arrived at the final Veit Harlan version. One previous script was called “‘crudely’ anti-Semitic—a filmic

⁶⁴ Kaufeld, *The Image of the Jew*, 80.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 64-5.

⁶⁶ “Jud Süß.” *Illustrierte Film Kurier*, 1940, 1-3.

⁶⁷ Kaufeld, *The Image of the Jew*, 61.

adaptation of Julius Streicher's *Der Stürmer*.”⁶⁸ To Goebbels, who knew that propaganda had to be subtle, this was a poor choice for an effective film. As a result, a guarantee of efficacy was achieved when Harlan was appointed to the project.⁶⁹ Despite the overall subtle approach of Harlan, the film was still rife with film techniques to paint an offensive and demonizing pictures of Jews. Harlan used

“...Jewish music as a somewhat ‘alien’ sound, which usually supplemented the images of an ‘alien’ location—the ghetto. For example, Jewish music is employed in scenes that are dominated by Jewish extras—who are the only members of the cast that are actually Jewish. This is important for the analysis of *Jud Süß*, because it is one of the only sequences in the film where actual Jews are utilized to play Jewish characters...Authentic Jewish music is employed near the beginning of the film as the Star of David, an eight-branched candelabra and an Orthodox religious figure appear. The ‘alien’ music compliments the appearance of three key Jewish images on screen, which enhances the anti-Semitic effect.”⁷⁰

By using music, Harlan not only engaged his audience, but isolated the Jews and branded them as evil at the same time. A German unfamiliar with Jewish music would likely find it unpleasant to the ear and unfamiliar. This amplified the Jew's “alien” qualities, and added more detail to the Nazi's portrait of Jews as encompassing all evil. Certainly, as *Der Ewige Jude* attempted to prove, Jews looked different, but Harlan wanted his audience to leave the theater thinking Jews sounded different too.

Harlan's usage of visuals in *Jud Süß* were just as important as the sound. The choice of actors, as mentioned before, used the Weimar technique of contrast to make the film a better production and cement the notion that Jews were hostile invaders in Germany. Süß, played by Ferdinand Marian, had physical features typically associated with Jews: darker hair, a darker complexion, and pronounced features. In contrast, the protagonist, Faber, portrayed by Malte

⁶⁸ Ibid, 69.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 26-7.

Jäger, had blonde hair, blue eyes, and soft features, all physical characteristics associated with “Aryans.”⁷¹ These physical differences place an “ideal German” as a protagonist, and a Jew as a villain, which is exactly the image and message Harlan wanted viewers to take away from the film. It reinforces the idea that the Jews threatened Germany, and could only be defeated by a pure German. In this way, Faber is an embodiment of the NSDAP Volksgemeinschaft fantasy. Süss, as well as the other Jews in the film, represent the Nazi nightmare.

When portraying Jews in the film, Harlan used existing anti-Semitic stereotypes, “such as the ‘hooked-nose,’ caftan and beard; the supposed distinction between the Eastern Orthodox Jews (Ostjude) and the assimilated Western Jews, the fundamental connection linking Jews with money, and the erotic representation of Jews as sex deviants. It was Harlan’s intentions to demonstrate that Jews personified all the above-mentioned characteristics.”⁷² By using pre-existing anti-Semitism, Harlan’s propaganda becomes more effective: it seems more based in reality and truer to viewers. A film confirming their prejudices and beliefs works to make their hatred of Jews stronger. In a conversation with Faber, Süss mentions he has traveled the world, another reinforcement of the stereotype that Jews are “rootless” and disloyal to their home nation.⁷³

Harlan’s use of film techniques, like dissolves, fades and contrasts, helped buttress Jud Süss’s

“anti-Semitic content. The film’s most important ‘dissolve’ sees the stereotypical looking Ostjude, Oppenheimer, with his caftan and beard transformed into a clean-shaven gentile with a more Western appearance. Prior to this dissolve, the duke’s representative—a character known only as Von Remchingen—was concerned that Süss would easily be recognized because of his ‘Jewish’ features—peas, caftan and beard. Oppenheimer, in

⁷¹ Ibid, 83.

⁷² Ibid, 78.

⁷³ Ibid, 82.

his sly and mysterious manner, reassured Von Remchingen that he will take care of his outward characteristics that ‘make him Jewish.’ This was the film’s most creative dissolve because it warned contemporary audiences, ‘The Jew has two faces: his ghetto face (which does not lie about his subhuman nature) and his city face (which is no less harmful despite its deceptive appearance).’ The scene essentially warned Germans to be weary of the assimilated Jew. Hitler also discussed the threat posed by the assimilated Jew. He emphasized that regardless of outward appearance, the Jew remained a Jew because of his blood.”⁷⁴

Again, Harlan uses the theme of contrast to introduce the Jew as a dangerous invader. He is a dangerous invader not only because he is malicious, but because he can disguise himself. By showing Süß change from Jew to gentile like magic, he scares anti-Semites. It is one thing to fear something you can see, but another thing to fear something you can not. Seemingly each aspect of his film was specially calibrated to strike anti-Semitic fear into the hearts of Germans, and make the Jews the enemy of everything good. Perhaps scariest to Germans was not that Jews were the embodiment of everything bad for Germany, but that Jews could hide themselves among the populations, like shape-shifters. In the view of the NSDAP, the Germans had not only to fear the known German menace—but the unknown as well.

Looking at the *Jud Süß* edition of the *Illustrierte Film-Kurier*, one can see a hand-picked selection of stills which embody the fear of Jews that Harlan meant to cultivate. The magazine’s cover (Figure 3) is an extreme-close up of Marian as Süß. His dark bark beard, wild hair, and greedy, almost lecherous gaze affirm the stereotypes of Jews as greedy and sexually deviant. The title of the film is in sharp, stark letters, which add to the fear that Marian’s image is meant to create. It is as if the viewer stares right into the eyes of a monster. Another still (Figure 4) from the magazine has Dorothea in an elegant dress staring disapprovingly across the page at two bearded Jews, arms full of treasure, who gaze at her in a scared way. The Jews look like thieves, who, knowing their guilt, stare at Dorothea in a fearful manner. The image makes Jews look

⁷⁴ Ibid, 79.

doubly bad, as they not only steal, but steal despite knowing the evil of theft. A different photograph (Figure 5) has a close up of Süß stroking Dorothea's chin, who looks deeply afraid of him. One might say that Süß looks he is taking sexual advantage of Dorothea without her consent, much like the Jews raped Germany in the Nazi's eyes. All these visuals serve to make Jews appear as terrible, diabolical criminals. While these images do exhibit popular stereotypes, as Harlan intended, one wonders how effective they truly were at propagating an anti-Semitic message which could pave the way for the NSDAP implementation of the Final Solution.

The answer to this quandary is that it can be hard to tell. Under an authoritarian government, especially one where artistic criticism was banned, media outlets and governmental figures can often be skewed or blatantly lie. However, by looking at some sources, such as personal diary entries, government reports, selected writings, and using careful analysis, one can see that these films did indeed generate the response they sought to. The wording in the two issues of the *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* is one example. Even though both issues of the magazine were forced to be summaries by law, they nonetheless used offensive, biased language and slandered Jews. The *Der Ewige Jude* issue makes an unabashed comparison of Jews to rats. The issue states Jewish migration has “a striking parallel to those we see in the hiking trails in the rats”⁷⁵ and rats are “parasites and toxic carrier among the animals, as it is the Jews among the people.”⁷⁶ The *Jud Süß* issue notes Süß turned Württemberg into a “land of milk and honey,”⁷⁷ and “secretly, like a thief stole over to the Württemberg to show the Duke how to get money.”⁷⁸ Despite their obligation to be unbiased, the magazine articles called Jews rats and played on the

⁷⁵ “Der Ewige Jude”, 1.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ “Jud Süß”, 4.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

stereotype of rootlessness, loyalty to other Jews, and greed. The magazine articles had no need to be rife with anti-Semitic slander but were published this way anyway after the film's release.

Although both films had an anti-Semitic backlash, *Jud Süß* was more successful and effective than *Der Ewige Jude*. Government reports, such as the Sicherheitdienst (SD) reports and internal government security service reports indicate the mediocre reception of *Der Ewige Jude*. On the whole, the

“...movie-going public was not impressed with this film. Assertions like ‘We’ve seen Jud Süß and we’ve had enough of this Jewish filth,’ were recorded in the SD Reports. Furthermore, comparing attendance records for *Jud Süß* and *Der ewige Jude* also accounts for audience disappointment with unashamed political propaganda. Whereas 20.3 million people paid to see the former, it was estimated that not even one million people paid to see the latter film.”⁷⁹

Other SD reports talked about the scene of Jews arriving in Württemberg after Süß lifted the anti-Jew laws. The reports “...detailed the audience response to this particular scenes as one of the most powerful. In fact, many commented that this scene was so convincingly real that that anti-Jewish demonstrations resulted in Berlin audiences chanting, ‘Ban the Jews from the Kurfürstendamm!’ and ‘Throw the last Jews out of Germany.’”⁸⁰ Yet another SD report detailed reponses to the rape of Dorothea scene, which “...was a major source of disgust for many who attended the film. Women could be heard yelling phrases such as ‘Dirty pig Jew,’ ‘You Jewish swine!’ and ‘Filthy Jew boy!’ in spontaneous response to the rape scene.”⁸¹

Government reception to the film was also extremely positive. Indeed, “for Goebbels and the Ministry of Propaganda, it was also the pre-eminent film dealing with the ‘Jewish Question.’ In fact, *Jud Süß* received the regime’s highest rating from the film Prüfstelle—‘politically and artistically especially valuable’—which appeared in newspapers and trade publications within

⁷⁹ Kaufeld, *The Image of the Jew*, 18-19.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 70.

⁸¹ Ibid, 74.

days of the 24 September 1940 premiere.”⁸² Goebbels himself commented on the film itself, noting it was ““a huge success, a work of genius. Exactly the kind of anti-Semitic film we wanted.””⁸³ and ““this film is as good as a new political programme. Proof that films can exert influence and provide inspiration completely in line with our ideals.””⁸⁴ What made the movie so successful was its implementation of scandalous and controversial anti-Semitic propaganda in a subtle, Weimar-influenced format. In this way, Germans absorbed the ideas that Jews were dangerous outsiders and monsters who, if not killed, would steal the livelihood and wealth of the German people. Films did not directly cause nationwide hate in Germany, but certainly films played a large role in cultivating public hate and fear of Jews.

Although it is well-known for the mass murder of the Jews, this was a step in a larger process for the Nazis: the revitalization of a wounded nation battered, bruised, and subjugated in the early 20th century. To many, the Nazis were a crutch to stand up from despair, and a way to recover from a tumultuous fall. As tragic and wrong as it was, the Nazi dream of a “new Germany” was inherently tied to the fantasy of the *Völksgemeinschaft*: a community of true Germans expanding across Europe, free of inferior non-Aryans, like Jews, gypsies, and homosexuals, that had caused the country’s past downfall. A common misconception of the NSDAP is that they lived for the death of the Jews; this is not entirely true. They lived for the supposed glorification of Germany, of which the systematic extermination of Jews was a tragic byproduct. The NSDAP regarded the Jew “as opposite in values to ‘Aryans’” and the “scapegoat for all of Germany’s ills.”⁸⁵ To convince people of this however, the Germans utilized propaganda through all means possible. A crucial medium for this was film. By inserting subtle

⁸² Ibid, 97.

⁸³ Moeller, *The Film Minister*, 99.

⁸⁴ Kaufeld, *The Image of the Jew*, 98.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 76.

propaganda which capitalized on existing anti-Semitic prejudices and utilizing Weimar-era filmic aesthetics, the Nazis managed to create a feeling of anger towards the Jews among cinema goers. With this feeling achieved, the party could achieve its Final Solution for the Jews without public outcry, and in the long term, the creation of the *Völksgemeinschaft*.

As sad as it is, the principles of hate and prejudice underscoring the Nazi regime are part of human nature. Try as one might, violence and prejudice are inherent parts of man's identity. Though society has progressed since the Nazi regime, militant groups like ISIS still wage faith-based wars, and American politicians support measures for Muslims to be banned from entering the United States. It is a tragic fact that although time has changed since the Nazis, prejudice is alive and well. In the present day, there are few things one can do to honor and remember the millions of lives lost in the Holocaust, but one thing is for sure. Although the media of today attempts to be objective, it has many biases and agendas that one can not see as a viewer. By being aware of the news, politics, opinions, and media one consumes, one can take a step away from ignorance, and ensure that the Holocaust, although a tragedy, is not a lesson to humanity in vain.

Appendix

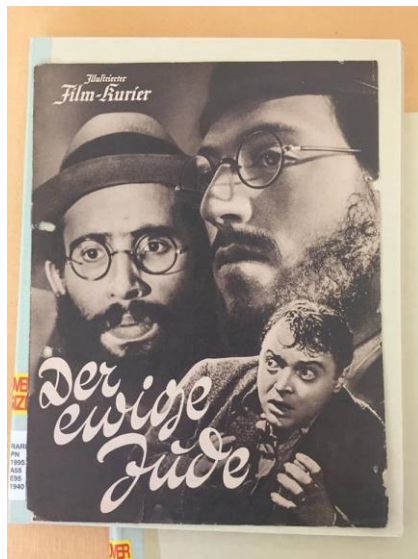


Figure 1



Figure 2

Figure 3



Figure 4



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The Secrets of African and African American Quilts

By: Alina Cui

When African and African American culture is brought up, discussion usually centers on song or dance. Rarely is the subtle art of quilt making introduced as an example of African and African American culture. Traditionally, quilting is associated with white women who lived during the late colonial era. The rarity of surviving quilt work and the bias that African American needlework is inferior to European needlework has resulted in academia overlooking the importance and prevalence of quilts in African American culture. In African American communities, quilts traditionally play a key role in passing on culture and family history. This is especially true for women, who have used quilt making historically as a path to empowerment.

From their very origins, African and African American quilts were deeply rooted in religion and myth. According to legend, the nsidibi signs on Adire cloth painted by Yoruba women were given to the women by the goddess of wealth and fertility. Kuba cloth was woven with designs that resemble the central African Kong cosmogram. In Nigeria, Ejagham women resist-dyed Ekpe cloth with secret society signs. The tradition of secret society signs probably began with the Poro and Sande secret societies, where the “level” of a member determined the knowledge received. Only Elders possessed all the knowledge. These secret societies used the secret signs to identify themselves and each other. This tradition of symbolism is continued to this day in African American culture, often manifesting in quilts.⁸⁶

Many of the techniques, symbols, colors and other aesthetic elements of African American quilts originated in African textile tradition. African quilts were designed to convey

⁸⁶ Jacqueline Tobin and Raymond G. Dobard, *Hidden in plain view : the secret story of quilts and the underground railroad* (New York: Double Day, 1999), 9-10 and 38-40

messages. Creators used abstract, geometric designs that could be read quickly and clearly from a distance. Their choice of bright colors was very deliberate. Africans believed that spirits were attracted to bright colors, such as blue and white which together created a protective power. For extra protection, herbs were sometimes put in the middle layer of a quilt due to their perceived power. This explains why many African and African American quilts are blue and white.⁸⁷ Another common quilt color was red. Red and white were the colors of the Shango, a religious cult in Nigeria.⁸⁸ African quilts often have a complex, “off-beat” pattern. This was done deliberately because the frequency and complexity of patterns directly correlated with the owner’s position and wealth. For example, the quilts of kings and priests had a huge variety between strips. This variety in color and pattern can be seen in improvised African American quilts.⁸⁹

When drawing connections between African and African American quilts, it is important to avoid falling into the morphological fallacy. This occurs when similarities are only drawn via sight, for example between colors or symbols. However, the “strip technique” used by West African men to create the cloth is similar to African American quilts. The strip technique is generally considered the original quilting technique, and its influences can be seen deep into the history of other African and even African American quilts. The strips were created on small portable looms, and then sewn together to create “strip quilts”. It is likely that the strip technique was first invented by the Mande people and spread throughout West Africa via Mande Dyula

⁸⁷ Tobin and Dobard, *Hidden*, 41-50.

⁸⁸ Gladys-Marie Fry, *Stitched From the Soul: Slave Quilts from the Ante-Bellum South* (New York: Penguin Group, 1990), 47.

⁸⁹ Maude Southwell Wahlman, “African Symbolism in Afro-American Quilts,” *African Arts* 20 (1985): 69, Accessed October 18, 2015, doi: 10.2307/3336568.

traders.⁹⁰ In African culture, strips were closely linked with spirits. The Yoruba wore ceremonial Engungun costumes made of strips to honor their ancestors and entertain spirits. The pattern of a quilt was supposed to affect ancestral power and spirits. To quote Kongo scholar Fu-Kiau Bunseki, in improvisation “every time there is a break in pattern it is the rebirth of ancestral power in you.”⁹¹ It was also commonly believed that evil spirits could only follow straight lines. Therefore, a strip quilt with imperfect lines would distract the spirit, keeping the owner safe.⁹² Similar to strip quilts is the “lazy gal” quilt common in the African American South. This quilt consisted of broad vertical stripes. The similarity in technique allows a connection to be drawn between African and African American quilts. Looking at a quilt created by Ozella McDaniel Williams, an African American quilt maker, the patterns on “strip quilts” very closely resemble a plaid pattern. It should be noted though, that her quilt is not an exact replica of West African quilts.⁹³

In the New World, the repertoire of quilt makers expanded, creating creolized symbols while still upholding African traditions. This creolization is known as “code-switching,” a technique common among African Americans, who integrated African culture, such as strips or symbols, into traditional European quilts. In practice, this often resulted in quilters improvising on European quilt designs. The quilts often told the “code” of African American culture, including Bible stories, family lore, and more. This represents the “double consciousness” of African Americans.⁹⁴ Many African American quilts can be seen with Christian writing, Islamic writing and indigenous signs. These quilts maintain the tradition of clear, structured geometric

⁹⁰ Ibid., 68.

⁹¹ Paul Arnett and William Arnett, *Souls Grown Deep: African American Vernacular Art of the South* (Atlanta: Tinwood Books, 2000), 68.

⁹² Fry, *Stitched*, 65-7.

⁹³ Tobin and Dobard, *Hidden*, 9-10 and 38-40.

⁹⁴ Arnett and Arnett, *Souls*, 68 and 71-6 and 483-7.

shapes and freely chosen fabric and colors. These quilts were created with the fragmented technique, a newer method similar to the strip technique. Some Southern African Americans carried on the African belief that fragmented quilts could ward away ancestral spirits that haunted them because the spirits would be distracted by the unpredictability of the quilt. Therefore, quilts adopted an important role as a protective bedcover. In addition to acquiring new religious meaning, these quilts maintained the African tradition of secrecy. Many traditions, stories and secrets were communicated and passed down through quilts.⁹⁵ African Americans lost contact with much of their culture when crossing the Middle Passage, so quilts were an important way to maintain some connection with the past.

Despite commonalities among African American quilts, to assume that there is a unified way to identify them is incorrect. Some have suggested that the six major characteristics of an African American quilt are vertical strips, bold color, large design elements, asymmetry, multiple patterning and improvised rhythm.⁹⁶ Although this is true in many instances, it also creates certain stereotypes about African American quilts, such as the inability of African American women to sew small stitches, which is untrue.⁹⁷ In the words of one who interviewed Belle Robinson, a former slave quilter from Kentucky, “She was working on a quilt and close investigation found that the work was well done.”⁹⁸ Hattie Thompson, a former slave from

⁹⁵ Tobin and Dobard, *Hidden*, 10 and 35.

⁹⁶ Roberta Horton, *Calico and Beyond: The Use of Patterned Fabric in Quilts* (Concord: C&T Publishing, 1986), 44.

⁹⁷ Fry, *Stitched*, 10-12

⁹⁸ “WPA Quotes about Quilters,” Runaway Quilt Project, accessed November 19, 2015, <http://runawayquiltproject.org/methodology/quilt-quotes/wpa-quotes-about-quilters/>.

Arkansas, also recalled, “Mama helped quilt. She was a good hand at that. They made awful close stitches and backstitched every now and then to make it hold.”⁹⁹

Slaves generally created two types of quilts: appliqué quilts and patchwork quilts. Appliqué quilts were likely brought over by the slaves from Benin in West Africa. These quilts usually included animals that symbolized characters from traditional African stories. Patchwork quilts had more of the traditional image of a quilt. These quilts used the West African “strip technique.” Despite these differences, the general composition of the quilts was fairly similar. Each quilt had three layers. The top layer was created with the finest cloth the slaves had, ranging from used sugar sacks to old clothes to new fabric. This layer would be plain, pierced or appliquéd. Most of the variation between quilts occurs on this layer. The middle layer consisted of filling. This layer was generally created with irreparable clothes, bits of raw cotton or wool and leftover thread. The bottom layer, or lining, was created with anything slaves could get their hands on. The three layers were then stitched together to complete the quilt, using a method called “ticking.” Oftentimes the quilt would be dyed with different plants to add color.¹⁰⁰

Quilt making played such an important role in African American culture that some of the slaves’ biggest social events were quilting parties (also known as quilting bees). These quilting parties served as a social outlet for slaves and a way of quickly producing warm quilts. Warm blankets were of the utmost importance, as oftentimes masters did not give slaves any blankets.¹⁰¹ At most quilting parties, three to twelve quilts were created, depending on the number of quilters. Along with the quilting at these events, there was also eating, drinking,

⁹⁹ “WPA Quotes about Quilt Construction,” Runaway Quilt Project, accessed November 19, 2015, <http://runawayquiltproject.org/methodology/quilt-quotes/wpa-quotes-about-quilt-construction/>.

¹⁰⁰ Fry, *Stitched*, 12-13 and 43-5.

¹⁰¹ “WPA Quotes About Quilt Construction.”

storytelling, game playing, gossiping, singing, dancing and courting. The courtship element of these parties is often mistakenly overlooked. These parties actually served as a rare opportunity for people to meet each other. Gifting a thimble or thread was often used to indicate romantic interest.¹⁰² For many adolescents, the time while the adults were quilting was their only time to have fun with people their age. Interviews show former slaves remembering these events with fondness. In the words of H.B. Holloway, a former slave from Arkansas, “Dancing, candy pulling, quilting, – that was about the only fun they would have.”

There were two main types of quilting parties: elaborately planned ones, usually for Christmas and the end of Harvest, and impromptu ones. These parties always took place in winter when there was less work to do. The quilt making portion of these parties was usually competitive. Four women formed a team. They worked on a quilt together, with one person at each corner. The first team to finish their quilt received some kind of a prize.¹⁰³ It is important to note that masters were usually very supportive of these parties. They sometimes hosted these parties to show off the skills of their slaves to other plantation owners. For parties hosted by slaves, it was generally agreed that the master’s permission had to be obtained.¹⁰⁴ These parties were so supported, in fact, that sometimes black and white women would work on the same quilt.

Through these parties, quilt making became a form of empowerment for African American women. Women were able to speak and pass down histories through their quilts. Despite being illiterate, Harriet Powers, a quilter and slave from Athens, Georgia, was able to

¹⁰² Fry, *Stitched*, 65-79.

¹⁰³ “WPA Quotes about Quilting Parties,” Runaway Quilt Project, accessed November 19, 2015, <http://runawayquiltproject.org/methodology/quilt-quotes/wpa-quotes-about-quilting-parties/>.

¹⁰⁴ Fry, *Stitched*, 65-79.

record historical events with remarkable literacy through quilts.¹⁰⁵ The way that history was portrayed in quilts spoke volumes about the experiences of African American women. The complicated, often improvised aesthetics of the quilts paralleled their non-linear history. The different rhythms in their quilts also allowed them to combine different cultures and makes sense of the different communities in which they existed.¹⁰⁶

Young girls learned family history and the techniques of quilt making from their elders, who would often tell stories while quilting. Women could create designs speaking to their perspectives on this history. Through storytelling, many African American grandmothers assumed the position of the matriarch because they were the recorder of family history and carried much wisdom through the generations. Seeing a woman in such a position of power likely affected the way children viewed gender relations.¹⁰⁷ The importance of storytelling is rooted in African culture, where knowledge was considered power. Being able to tell religious stories and sew protective designs was highly revered.¹⁰⁸ Sewn into quilts is the emotion of African American women, their highs and their lows, their joys and despairs.

Although many men attended these events, the women planned the party and were in charge. There were women-only parts of the party where stories were secretly shared. In addition to sharing their stories, women were empowered to voice their opinions on the present. Women would openly critique culture via quilt making.¹⁰⁹ Quilt making provided a space of and for women, enabling them to vocalize that which they would never otherwise consider. These

¹⁰⁵ Fry, *Stitched*, 3-8

¹⁰⁶ Elsa Barkley Brown, "African-American Women's Quilting," *Signs* 14 (1989): 926, accessed November 3, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3174693>.

¹⁰⁷ Olga Idress Davis, "The Rhetoric of Quilts: Creating Identity in African-American Children's Literature," *African American Review* 32 (1998): 71-75, accessed November 3, 2015, doi: 10.2307/3042269.

¹⁰⁸ Wahlman, "African Symbolism," 70.

¹⁰⁹ Arnett and Arnett, *Souls*, 69-70.

critiques manifested in visions of what they hoped the world could and would be. This escape and room to dream proved invaluable for women trapped in the life of a slave. Former slave women spoke at great lengths about the importance of quilt making to them in interviews by the WPA.¹¹⁰ Through storytelling and sharing dreams of the future, quilting brought slave women and abolitionist women together. During the time of the Underground Railroad, the quilts produced by the black and white women were sold to raise money to support the network.¹¹¹

Quilts were also used as a method of communication as well as fundraising during the era of the Underground Railroad. Because of this, they are known as “freedom quilts,” an important symbol of hope.¹¹² To make these quilts, quilt makers combined African symbols and Masonic signs to send messages and give direction to safe houses, not unlike the African secret societies. The patterns served as mnemonic devices to help slaves memorize directions for how to escape. There were ten quilts total. Based on a replica of the Monkey Wrench quilt, it can be concluded that each quilt was covered in a single repeating symbol to represent one step. The quilts were placed one at a time on a fence that everyone on the plantation could see. This method of secret communication was never discovered because quilts were put on fences to be aired out. The quilters who made these quilts used a numbering-knotting system rooted in African rituals called the Underground Quilt Code. A reading of the quilt code would be, “There are five square knots on the quilt every two inches apart. They escaped on the fifth knot on the tenth pattern and went to Ontario, Canada. The monkey wrench turns the wagon wheel toward Canada on a bear's paw trail to the crossroads.” The “five knots two inches” pattern is likely rooted in minkisi, power

¹¹⁰ Fry, *Stitched*, 9 and 79-83.

¹¹¹ Floris Barnett Cash, “Kinship and Quilting: An Examination of an African-American Tradition,” *The Journal of Negro History* 80 (1995): 31-2, Accessed October 18, 2015. doi: 10.2307/2717705.

¹¹² Davis, “The Rhetoric of Quilts, 71-5.

objects created by the Bakongo people of the Kongo. Knots were also important to the African secret society Kufong. Members would knot a string or vine to communicate with each other. The number five was significant in African culture, appearing in Ibo tradition, Hausa charms, Bakongo power, and more. In the case of the Underground quilts, the five knots were supposed to invoke the protection of ancestors and the Almighty God. Therefore, the designs were created not only to convey directions but to also serve as symbols of protection. Harriet Power's quilts are a good example of these Underground quilts. Her quilts featured Fon symbols from Benin in West Africa, Kongo symbols from Central Africa, Christian symbols and Masonic symbols.¹¹³

Quilt making was a route to freedom for slave women outside of the Underground Railroad as well. Although not initially recognized as an important trade, weaving and sewing became highly sought after skills. Nineteenth century Southern newspapers often advertised for skilled female slaves. Although weaving was traditionally a man's activity in Africa, men were expected to do heavy labor on plantations. Thus, the weaving jobs went to women. The ability to sew, quilt or weave skillfully usually translated into additional income. The ability to sell seamstress services and quilts served as an alternative path to freedom. Slave women like Elizabeth Keckly, who eventually became a dressmaker for Abraham Lincoln's wife, were able to save enough money to buy freedom. The ability to sew well directly correlated with a woman's ability to create quilts, as most seamstresses spent their free time in the evening creating quilts.¹¹⁴ At the very least, these special skills resulted in higher status on the plantation. Because of this, slaves often competed with each other to show off their abilities to the master. Oftentimes, if a slave could sew they could be freed. Examples of this include the will of David

¹¹³ Tobin and Dobard, *Hidden*, 68-154.

¹¹⁴ Fry, *Stitched*, 14-31.

Brown from Somerset County Maryland, dated July 19, 1697, the will of Thomas Fluornoy, the will of Amanda Cousins, all of whom gave their slaves freedom upon death.

Despite the importance of quilts to African American women, there are not many records on African American quilts or the women who created them. There are a few reasons why few quilts and little information on their creators remain. Few slave women were recognized for their quilt making due to the fact that at the outset quilt making was generally considered a hobby to be done in spare time rather than a trade. In addition, not many African American quilts have survived over the centuries due to fires, theft by Northern soldiers, sale for extra money and overuse. The instability of slaves' lives contributed to these losses as well, for many slaves had to leave their quilts behind during a sudden departure.

Little is known of the process used to make quilts. Quilting was usually not done in front of plantation owners, so it would have been difficult to record even if plantation owners so desired. There is little literature on African American quilts, and the surviving pieces of literature are heavily biased. Early researchers assumed that slave quilts were lower quality than white quilts, with uneven stitching, lower quality cotton, inferior backing and cottonseeds in the lining. Many researchers also assumed the more elaborate quilts were created under the guidance of the plantation mistress, and that slave women were too busy to make their own intricate designs. The opposite is true. Slaves often circumvented their mistress' guidelines by finding subtle ways to improvise, often integrating images of the sun, snakes and the Congo cross.¹¹⁵

Despite being, for the most part, unacknowledged for the past few centuries, quilt making continues to carry cultural significance. Women such as Ozella assume the role of the secret keeper and continue to sew stories of the past into their quilts. Although outsiders may never be

¹¹⁵ Fry, *Stitched*, 3-9 and 42.

able to fully understand the meaning within African American quilts, even attempting to learn about quilts results in a new understanding of history: through the eyes of African American women.

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The Relationship between the Development of Ballistite and the Service of Herbert Kitchener at the Advent of the First World War

By: Samuel Morin

The relationship between the development of ballistite by Alfred Nobel and the guidance of Great Britain by Herbert Kitchener during the advent of World War I is uncanny but undeniable. Nobel's ballistite was a smokeless substitute for the commonly used black powder that helped eliminate two issues, the lack of visibility and the exposure of soldiers due to smoke. Plagiarized by a pair of English chemists, this invention was subsequently sold to the British government, which set about developing its military technology. The smokeless propellant was then used in the British .303 cartridge, however the velocity increase associated with the new propellant led to further tweaks of the ammunition, resulting in the creation of the highly effective soft nosed bullet in India. The soft nose design made its way to the Sirdar's army in Northern Africa, where it helped Herbert Kitchener effectively take back the Sudan and make a name for himself. Kitchener was hailed as a national hero. After fifteen years of military and administrative success, spurred by his triumph at the battle of Omdurman in Sudan, he was promoted to Secretary of War for Great Britain. In this position, he radically altered the country's perception of World War I and helped them prepare for a drawn out war with an enormous and highly successful recruiting campaign.

Toward the end of the 19th century, innovation was occurring at a pace never seen before. This innovation, while heralded positively as the beginning of a new age, brought with it a new focus on military technology. Military technology companies sold and profited their products to both sides of a dispute, constantly releasing slightly more efficient weapons, which nations adopted in order to keep pace with their rivals.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Barbara Wertheim Tuchman. *The Proud Tower: A Portrait of the World Before the War 1890-1914* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 256.

Alfred Nobel was one of the most important and beneficiary figures in this age of innovation. Nobel, born in 1833, was greatly influenced by his father's experimentation with different chemical compounds, specifically with nitrocellulose, with which his father had run a successful explosives business.¹¹⁷ In 1862, Nobel placed nitroglycerin, an explosive substance, in a firmly stoppered glass tube inside of a metal tube filled with black powder and ignited it with a fuse, resulting in a large explosion. This invention eventually evolved into dynamite, a product that brought great prominence and wealth to Nobel because of its use in mining and war. In 1888, he developed a form of smokeless powder called ballistite. Ballistite eliminated two major issues confronted in combat with the use of traditional black powder, a lack of visibility and the exposure of soldiers due to smoke. This invention, while poised to make a large impact in every European nation, was promptly imitated by Sir Frederick Abel, an advisor to the House of Commons who had kept Nobel's nitroglycerin away from England.¹¹⁸ Abel, along with a chemist named James Dewar, stole Nobel's ballistite recipe, made some minor changes to it, and rebranded it as "the Committee's modification of Ballistite," later shortened to cordite. Nobel straightaway sued the pair, losing his case in both the low and appeal courts, costing him £30,000 and reducing the value of the ballistite patent to almost nothing.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, ballistite, or rather its cousin cordite, had made its way into the British military where it would impressively alter the way war was conducted up through World War I.

Traditional lead bullets, when cast from commonly used soft alloy, would deform when hitting their target, resulting in a wound that was larger than the diameter of the bullet itself. The introduction of cordite changed this. Cordite was more powerful than black powder and produced a higher velocity. Because of this, bullets needed to be jacketed in order to prevent lead fouling in the

¹¹⁷ J. Erik Jorpes. *Alfred Nobel* (London: British Medical Journal, 1959), 2.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, 5.

¹¹⁹ Rodney Carisle. *Scientific American: Invention and Discovery: All the Milestones in Ingenuity-from the Discovery of Fire to the Invention of the Microwave Oven* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2004), 256.

bore, the interior of the gun barrel.¹²⁰ The modified .303 Mark II ammunition became the standard munitions for all British soldiers using the Lee-Metford rifle, the standard-issue rifle at that time. In India the adaptation to a full metal jacket was shown to be detrimental because the bullets were less capable of inflicting meaningful harm on a target. During the 1895 Chitral Campaign, the British officers noticed that tribal warriors, even after receiving multiple gun wounds, would recover after standard medical care treatment. The Mark II bullets fired from the Lee-Metfords produced clean wounds smaller than the diameter of the physical bullet, which resulted in little inflammation. Furthermore, these bullets drilled through bone rather than fracturing it. In response to these discoveries, the Adjutant-General of India, Major-General Gerald de Courcy Morton, recommended that experimentation be done with these bullets. Soldiers overcame the issues by partially stripping the bullet's nickel jacket and exposing the ogival point of the head, allowing the bullet to expand upon impact and to create a larger wound than the .312 inch (7.92 mm) bullet diameter.¹²¹ These bullets were called "dum dum bullets," named after the Dum Dum Ammunition Works in Calcutta. The Mark II jacket, however, did not cover the base of the bullet and sometimes led to the jacketing being left inside the barrel, which rendered the rifle useless. This prompted the development of the Mark III, Mark IV and Mark V .303 British rounds, which shared the altered design of the "dum dum," but included a jacket that covered the base.¹²² These subsequent models were produced in Britain, yet retained the name "dum dum bullets," and were used by the British army¹²³ until their

¹²⁰ Kaushik, Roy. *The Army in British India: From Colonial Warfare to Total War 1857-1947* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 88.

¹²¹ Munn & Co. Publishers, "English Dumdum Bullets," *Scientific American Supplement*, no.1180 (1898) : 18915.

¹²² Kaushik, 89.

¹²³ D. Killingray. "Imperialism and War: Essays on Colonial Wars in Asia and Africa," in *Imperialism and War: Essays on Colonial Wars in Asia and Africa*, ed. J.A. de Moor and H.L. Wesseling, (The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1989), 155.

ban at The Hague Convention of 1899.¹²⁴ The Mark IV round was particularly successful in the annihilation of the Ansar, specifically at the battle of Omdurman.

Besides recovering the land previously taken by the Mahdist army in 1885, one of the only successful indigenous counterattacks to British imperialism, the British had another goal in their campaign to retake the Sudan, maintaining the balance of power in Europe. During the nineteenth-century competition for African colonies among European nations, the Italians had decided to take over Abyssinia, a region comprising modern day Eritrea and the northern half of Ethiopia. Their decision had no merit beyond the fact that the region was there for the taking and was met with disapproval by the Abyssinian people and their emperor, who launched a counterattack in 1896. This reprisal was successful, and the Abyssinian warriors massacred the wounded Italians and castrated the prisoners. This defeat resulted in strategic repercussions. Italy was a member of the Triple Alliance, along with Austria and Germany, who were concerned with the advances of France and Russia, two states regarded as having expansionist ambitions in the Balkans and along the North African shore.¹²⁵ Great Britain, while not being a member of the alliance, was also concerned with French and Russian ambitions and hoped to maintain a balance of power in Europe. Lord Salisbury, the British Prime Minister, felt that the Italian defeat weakened the Triple Alliance and thus was willing to assist the Italians in diverting the Khalifa, the Ansar's leader, away from an alliance with the Abyssinians (which he had already proposed). Furthermore, ever since the Belgian Government refused to take over the Congo State from their King, there was an increasing danger that France would fill the void. If this happened, it would be almost impossible for Great Britain to prevent France from gaining territory around the Upper Nile, a move that would threaten to the

¹²⁴ *Hague Convention (III), Opening of Hostilities* (The Hague, International Conferences (The Hague), October 18, 1907).

¹²⁵ Robin Neillands. *The Dervish Wars: Gordon and Kitchener in the Sudan 1880-1898* (London: John Murray Publishers Ltds., 1996), 174-175.

independence of Egypt and the idea of a British Trans-African Empire.¹²⁶ An agreement for a British advance up the Nile into the Sudan was made and the Earl of Cromer, Consul-General of Egypt, gave Major-General Herbert Horatio Kitchener instructions in April of 1896.¹²⁷

The recapture of the Sudan from 1896 to 1899 culminated in the Battle of Omdurman, where British infantry laid waste to the Ansar. Herbert Kitchener, who was made Sirdar, commander-in-chief of the Egyptian forces, in 1892, saw the conquest of the Sudan as his chance to make a name for himself.¹²⁸ His infantry consisted of twenty-five thousand men, two-thirds of them Egyptian or Sudanese, and they were outfitted with the most advanced military technology of the day. In fact, although the Ansar's ruler, the Khalifa, "had numbers on his side and warriors of unmatched courage, [he] had no answer to the late-nineteenth-century firepower and technology that General Kitchener was bringing against him."¹²⁹ The Khalifa had ordered the assembly of his entire army, totaling fifty-five thousand men, but only one-third fought with rifles, stolen from previous victories against the British, while the other two-thirds relied on edged weapons. The Battle of Omdurman began on September 2nd, 1898, and in the words of famous war journalist G.W. Steevens, "it was not a battle but an execution."¹³⁰ The Anglo-Egyptian infantry opened fire at two thousand yards, and within moments the desert was carpeted with the bodies of fallen Ansar. None of them got within a half-mile of the Anglo-Egyptian line. In all, the Ansar lost more than twenty-six thousand men at Omdurman, a casualty rate of around fifty percent. There were only forty-eight men killed and three hundred and eighty two wounded in Kitchener's army, a testament to the effect of modern weapons.

¹²⁶ The Patriotic Association. *The Soudan, 1882 to 1897: a memory and a nemesis : the story of Gordon and the great betrayal, with a history and maps* (Westminster: Simpkins, Marshall & Company, 1897), 5.

¹²⁷ Neillands, 175.

¹²⁸ Ibid. 197.

¹²⁹ Donald Featherstone. *Omdurman 1898: Kitchener's Victory in the Sudan* (London: Osprey, 1993), 81.

¹³⁰ Robin Neillands. *The Dervish Wars: Gordon and Kitchener in the Sudan 1880-1898* (London: John Murray Publishers Ltd., 1996), 206.

The conquest of the Sudan, an uncompromised success, had a great effect on Kitchener's status, catapulting him into the highest ranks of the British military. When he returned to London, he was received like a hero, and given the title "Lord Kitchener of Khartoum." He would hold a number of offices in the Sudan, South Africa, and India before being promoted to Secretary of War in 1914 at the advent of World War I, a position in which he would accomplish his greatest achievement: the creation of the largest army in his country's history.¹³¹ When Kitchener accepted his position, Great Britain had no army besides the Expeditionary Force, which was made up of 150,000 men. Britannia had no trained civilians and no functioning logistical framework for conducting war.¹³² With Kitchener's efforts, "[s]ome 5,704,000 men served in the army during the First World War, compared to 3,788,000 between 1939 and 1945," and of those men, 2,466,719 had voluntarily enlisted.¹³³ Kitchener was able to accomplish this feat because of his dominance in the War Cabinet. His command of this committee is demonstrated by Lloyd George David, future Prime Minister:

In 1914 he was practically military dictator and his decisions upon any questions affecting the war were final. The Members of the Cabinet were frankly intimidated by his presence because of his repute and his enormous influence amongst all classes of the people outside. A word from him was decisive and no one dared to challenge it at a Cabinet meeting.¹³⁴

With this domination, Kitchener was able to effectively plan for what he believed was going to be a drawn-out conflict. In fact, the idea that the war would last at least three years differed greatly from the opinions of most leading political and military officials of the period. It was Kitchener, above all, who convinced the government and the people that they must prepare for a war of attrition, an idea that stemmed from his experience helping to lead a drawn-out war with the

¹³¹ Peter Simkins. *Kitchener's Army: The Raising of the New Armies, 1914-1916* (South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Military, 2007), 33.

¹³² Henry D. Davray. *Lord Kitchener, his work and his prestige* (London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1917) 70.

¹³³ Simkins, xiv.

¹³⁴ A. J. Smithers. *The Fighting Nation: Lord Kitchener and His Armies* (London, Leo Cooper, 1994), 146.

Boers in South Africa. Furthermore, he emphasized that the war would not be won by sea power but instead by land battles, and that Britain must “be prepared to put millions of men in the field and maintain them for several years.”¹³⁵ On August 7th, 1914, Kitchener began the massive campaign that would prepare Great Britain for the lengthy war ahead. He was the face of the war and was featured prominently on influential pieces of war propaganda, acting as a catalyst for recruitment. Herbert Kitchener died when his boat, the *HMS Hampshire*, struck a mine while on a diplomatic mission to Russia on June 5th, 1916. Great Britain mourned the loss, and he was recognized for his achievements by Lord Salisbury, who said that “I am certain that in history it will be regarded as one of the most remarkable achievements of the kind that has ever been accomplished, and I am bound to say, and I will say in all sincerity, for that achievement Lord Kitchener is personally entitled to the credit.”¹³⁶ By this time, Kitchener had alienated most of his colleagues, who found him impossible to work with. His act of raising a suitable army and focusing Great Britain on a drawn-out conflict are undeniably significant factors that contributed to Britannia’s success in World War I.

Nobel’s invention of ballistite and the subsequent innovations that occurred with British military technology dramatically helped Herbert Kitchener’s army retake the Sudan. The use of higher velocity bullets with increased stopping power was responsible for the sheer slaughter of the Ansars and the low number of deaths in the Anglo-Egyptian army. The success at Omdurman was one that spurred Kitchener’s career, giving him a reputation associated with victory and eventually leading to his promotion to Secretary of War at the beginning of World War I. As Secretary of War, Kitchener was able to drastically change Great Britain's outlook on the upcoming war and help the British people prepare for a lengthy conflict. His recruitment campaign was by far the most

¹³⁵ Ibid, 187.

¹³⁶ Davray, 62.

successful in British history, ultimately altering the path that Great Britain took during the Great War and increasing its success against the Central Powers.

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