

Article

Selling Genocide II: The Later Films

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1. Introduction

In the first article of this series,¹ I pointed out the difference between using propaganda to advertise a political brand (i.e., a political party or ideology) and using it to sell specific governmental policies or programs. The Nazis, masters of deceitful propaganda, used it for both purposes. However, my focus there (and here) is on the use of film propaganda specifically to sell the policy of making Germany (and later Europe generally) *Juden-frei* (i.e., devoid of Jewish people and culture). This anti-Semitic campaign changed rapidly from expulsion to extermination as the regime's mission evolved. I employed Hans Speier's classic sociological study of types of war to suggest that the Nazis' campaign against the Jews (unlike their wars against France, England, and Russia) was from the start an "absolute war"—one with genocide as its goal. I then asked: What sort of propaganda is likely to be utilized to sell genocide?

There, I offered a two-pronged hypothesis to answer that question. First, propaganda aimed at arousing support for or tolerance of genocide would employ the standard psychological mechanisms used in ordinary marketing and propaganda, such as contrast, reciprocity, social proof, authority, association (both positive and negative), and salience, as opposed to unusual or unique psychological mechanisms. Second, the focus of the message would be on arousing feelings of difference of, disgust for, and danger from the targeted group.

I found that the earlier two major anti-Semitic films *Robert and Bertram* and *Linen from Ireland* (both released in 1939) were

¹ Gary James Jason, "Selling Genocide I: The Earlier Films," *Reason Papers* 38, no. 1 (Spring 2016), pp. 127-57.

drenched with the message that Jews are profoundly different from non-Jews (especially “Aryans”) physically, culturally, and morally. These differences were all portrayed as differences for the worse, that is, that Jews are physically ugly as well as culturally and morally inferior. Finally, the films try to induce in the viewer the feeling that Jews are dangerous in lusting after political and financial power as well as Aryan women, and in disguising themselves as ordinary citizens while in fact giving their allegiance to their fellow Jews. This last message is strongly conveyed in the two earlier films, despite the fact that they were comedies.

The three anti-Semitic propaganda films I shall examine here all appeared in 1940 and were produced at the explicit behest of Joseph Goebbels. Each of the three Nazi-controlled studios was asked to produce an anti-Semitic propaganda film. Saul Friedlander holds that Goebbels wanted to counter three British films that appeared in 1934, but all of which sought to *criticize* anti-Semitism.² Thus all of the 1940 German propaganda films were what might be called “reversal remakes,” in which an original story is twisted in the new film, so that the new version conveys the opposite of what the original movie conveyed.

The first film released, originally named *The Rothschilds*, was soon recalled for reworking, and appeared renamed as *The Rothschilds' Shares in Waterloo* after the release of the second film, *Jew Suss*. I will first review *The Rothschilds' Shares in Waterloo*, then *Jew Suss*, and finish up by reviewing *The Eternal Jew*. In each case, I will show how the feelings of difference, disgust, and danger are conveyed, as well as draw some contrasts between the later films and the earlier ones. My thesis is that between the two earlier 1939 anti-Semitic propaganda films and the three 1940 ones, there was a massive increase on the virulence of attacks upon the Jews. I show this by a close analysis of the later films in comparison with the earlier ones. The propaganda intensified because with the onset of the war, the Nazi regime apparently decided that it has to eradicate the Jews. This shift from pressuring Jews to emigrate to killing them was caused not merely by a hardening of their ideological position, but also by the need to confiscate Jewish assets to pay for the war.³

² “The Eternal Jew,” *Wikipedia*, accessed online at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Eternal_Jew_\(1940_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Eternal_Jew_(1940_film)).

³ For a defense of the claim that the Nazi regime was funding its war machine (and delivering material goods to its citizens), see Gotz Aly, *Hitler's*

2. *The Rothschilds' Shares in Waterloo*

We'll start with *The Rothschilds' Shares in Waterloo* (*Die Rothschilds Aktien auf Waterloo*) (hereafter *Rothschilds*).⁴ This film was intended to amplify anti-Semitism, as well as arouse hatred of the English by advancing the theory that England was (in Goebbels's phrase) "Judafied," that is, that the English were "the Jews among Aryans." It was put into production in 1939, after the British declaration of war against the Germans. The message of the film was muddled by the sympathetic portrayal of some of the English characters, however, so the Nazis pulled the film and reworked it. By the time it was re-released, the much more popular *Jew Suss* was out and the war against Britain had stalled. Still, the film sold nearly as many tickets as *Robert and Bertram* and *Linen from Ireland* combined.⁵

Rothschilds opens with an intertitle telling us that the film—based on historical fact—takes place in the year 1806. Prince William of Hesse has to flee Napoleon's troops. He stores part of his fortune with a Jewish agent, Mayer Rothschild, in Frankfurt am Main. The film aims to explain how "the International Jewish House of Rothschild founded its power with the [Prince's] money and thus paved the way for the Jewish [take-over] of England."

A precis of this complex film is in order. It opens with Prince William visiting Mayer's house in the Jewish district of Frankfurt. He deposits 600,000 pounds in British government bonds bearing a 5% interest. After haggling over the fee, William leaves, and Mayer tells his younger son James that these bonds will be sent to his older son Nathan (who runs the Rothschild operations in London) to "invest in England." The money reaches Nathan at his opulent London home.

Beneficiaries: Plunder, Racial War, and the Nazi Welfare State (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006).

⁴ The original 1934 Hollywood production of this movie is available on the Internet, as is the 1940 Nazi reversal remake. The Hollywood version can be viewed online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfsqmfRyT_I. The Nazi version can be viewed online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sM-t28B4dgM>.

⁵ David Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema 1933-1945* (London: I. B. Taurus & Co. Ltd., 2007), p. 269.

We cut to a club, and meet the film's other main characters: the biggest British bankers Turner and Baring; Lieutenant Clayton, an honest soldier; Turner's wife Sylvia; and Baring's daughter Phyllis. We learn that Phyllis and Clayton are in love, but Baring disapproves because Clayton is not wealthy.

The action starts with Nathan learning from his industrial spy, Bronstein, that there is going to be war with Napoleon and that the English are to send troops to Spain under General Wellington. The British government is going to auction off gold to London's big bankers, who will be tasked with moving that gold from London to Wellington's army headquarters to pay for the army's expenses. Nathan, who we find is a parvenu disdained by the other British bankers, wins the bidding war by using the bonds sent by his father. The other bankers go to Treasury Minister Herries to complain about the "Jewish stranger" intruding into their circle. Herries responds by asking whether Nathan used illegal means or has insufficient funds, and reminds them that these auctions are open to everyone; they shouldn't be so sensitive to "one Jew."

The bankers leave disgruntled, and we next see Nathan in Herries's office. Herries and Nathan haggle over Nathan's fee for shipping the gold to Wellington's army. When Herries observes that this is the first time Nathan has done business with the British government, Nathan sanctimoniously replies, "All for my country . . . I'm English," to which Herries sarcastically rejoins, "Since when?" Herries tells Nathan to meet with Wellington to work out the details of shipping the gold.

An intertitle reads, "The Jew mints the gold, seeks and finds access to the leading circles of England," and we see Nathan arrive at Wellington's home. Nathan warns him that as the gold moves from England through Europe to Wellington's Spanish headquarters, many hands will touch the gold, and some of that gold will stick to every one of those hands. While Wellington calls this "organized fraud," the viewer has little doubt that he will go along with the scheme.

After a scene in which we see Wellington's army marching from London with crowds cheering, Nathan now sends word to Mayer to arrange smuggling routes to get the gold to Wellington's base in Spain. This Mayer does, which involves setting up James with banking operations in Paris. When James evinces fear—he will, after all, be helping smuggle gold to France's enemy—Mayer assures him that Paris has many Jews, and Jews always protect Jews.

After an intertitle that reads, “The Jewish International [Network] goes to work,” we watch the gold move from city to city, with Mayer’s agents all taking shares of it. Only half of the original amount reaches Wellington, who also takes a cut. We find out that while Clayton has been away at war, Phyllis has had his child, been expelled from her father’s house, and has unknowingly been supported by Nathan (who has designs on her).

An intertitle next takes us to Paris in 1811. The French Minister of Justice has discovered that James has been smuggling gold out to Wellington, but instead of arresting James, he demands a 15% cut for himself. We cut to London where Bronstein and Nathan are talking about Napoleon’s invasion of Russia. After a scene where we see Nathan once again try to enter British high society (this time by having a lavish banquet), only to be humiliated by Turner (who arranges a banquet nearby at the same time), we see Crayton enter Turner’s house and tell Sylvia that the war is over. Sylvia tells him that Phyllis has had his son, and he joyously joins them.

Another intertitle tells us that while Napoleon was defeated at Leipzig, the “powers of money” continued the fight in London. We learn that during the war, Nathan has risen in wealth and power from his manipulation of money.

We next see Bronstein telling Nathan that Napoleon has returned to France and is marching on Paris. Nathan learns that the English will again send its army under Wellington against Napoleon. Nathan goes to Wellington’s house and finds Clayton there, waiting to reenlist. Nathan tells Wellington that they can make money again, this time from the stock market, but Nathan will need a man close to Wellington’s army to report on events. Wellington agrees, and Nathan then convinces Clayton to be that man. After Clayton leaves, Nathan tells his agents to spread out over Europe and that the first to report who wins the war will be rewarded. As the agents depart, an intertitle pronounces “All for money. While nations bleed on the battlefields, huge speculations are being prepared at the stock exchange in London.”

We see Baring reading the newspaper headlines to the other bankers, that the Prussians (England’s allies) have crossed the Rhine to engage Napoleon. Turner tells the bankers to buy government bonds. When the bankers learn that Wellington’s army will fight Napoleon somewhere near Brussels, Turner tells them to keep buying bonds, even though they have noticed Nathan isn’t buying any. When Nathan

learns from Clayton via carrier pigeon that the battle has commenced, Nathan tells his assistant to sell all the bonds they have.

Meanwhile, Clayton, watching the ferocious battle, is told by the pigeon handler that they are only there to help Nathan make money. Clayton, enraged, frees the pigeons and goes to join the fight. However, another of Nathan's agents, Ruthworth, who is staying in a Belgium port town, learns that Napoleon has lost and goes to London to inform Nathan. Nathan now recognizes his chance. He tells his agents to spread the rumor that Napoleon has won, and Nathan is sick with grief and stress. As the other bankers panic and dump their bonds at low prices, Nathan surreptitiously buys all he can get. At the end of the trading day, he learns that he has netted 11 million pounds from his rigged game and driven the other bankers broke. He gloats and crows, "My Waterloo!"

At the end, we see Mayer return the original loan to Prince William, the 600,000 pounds in bonds plus the agreed-upon 5% interest. The Prince observes that this amounts to very little, and asks Mayer what the Rothschilds' made off the capital. Mayer replies that "honor has always been the strictest principle in the Rothschild house," to which the Prince sarcastically responds that "nothing is more disgusting than one pickpocket lying to another."

We then see Nathan in Herries's office. Nathan smirks and shows Herries on a map of Europe the extent of the Rothschilds' influence: Nathan in London, brother Salomon in Vienna, brother Carl in Naples, brother James in Paris, and father Mayer in Frankfurt. On a blank piece of paper, Nathan draws lines connecting these cities with Gibraltar and Jerusalem, and we see the Star of David. When Herries asks whether Nathan wants to open a branch in Jerusalem, Nathan replies, "The other way around, dear Herries. We are the branches of Jerusalem."

The film ends showing the Star of David imposed over Britain, and an intertitle tells us, "By the completion of this film, the last of the Rothschilds have left Europe as refugees. The struggles against their accomplices in England, the British plutocracy, continues."

The anti-Semitic messages in this film are many. They fall into the leitmotifs of difference, disgust, and danger.

Regarding physical appearance, the film portrays Jews as different and disgusting in many scenes. For example, Mayer tells his assistant, Hersch, not to worry about getting wet (a dig at the supposed lack of hygiene among Jews); Sylvia tells her husband that Nathan "looks different" from the other bankers; Bronstein, who is slovenly, is

told by Nathan that his children will learn to clean themselves; and Jewish agents on the continent who are moving the gold often appear in caftans, caps, and beards.

Now consider culture. Jews are portrayed as having different and disgusting cultural values. To begin with, the Jews in this film are presented as being universally focused on material wealth in numerous scenes. Mayer tells James, "Remember, my son, you can only make a lot of money with a lot of blood." Jewish agents greedily take half of the gold as it moves through Europe. Several intertitles proclaim: "The Jew mints the gold"; "The Jewish International goes to work"; and "All for money. While nations bleed on the battlefields, huge speculations are being prepared at the stock exchange in London." Nathan bribes people to get him information on Waterloo, so that he can rig the stock market. Bronstein cheats the English Ruthworth out of a reward, and Nathan gloats over the millions he has cheated other dealers out of (by spreading false rumors).

In terms of moral principles, Jews are portrayed in various scenes as dishonest, sneaky, manipulative, and deceitful. Examples include the following. Mayer finds out surreptitiously that Prince William has English bonds. Nathan is shown giving gifts to Sylvia, so as to ingratiate himself into the banking community, and to Phyllis, apparently hoping to seduce her. James lies to the French about where the gold is going. Nathan tells an assistant to send 9,000 guineas to Paris, after we just saw that Wellington was forced to write a receipt of 10,600 guineas. Nathan sanctimoniously claims devotion to "his country" England, to the derision of Herries. Turner points out to Herries that the Rothschilds work against France in Britain, and against Britain in France.

Many scenes portray Jews as dangerous. There are intertitles reading: "the International Jewish House of Rothschild founded its power with the Prince's money, and thus paved the way for the Jewish [take-over] of England"; "The Jew mints the gold, seeks and finds access to the leading circles of England"; "The Jewish International goes to work"; "All for money. While nations bleed on the battlefields, huge speculations are being prepared at the stock exchange in London"; and "The Jewish high finance is earning, the people pay, and lose." The message here is that Jews form an international gang that is conspiring to rule the world. Mayer reassures his son James that Jews will always protect fellow Jews. This scene reinforces the anti-Semitic shibboleth that Jews are clannish and will work against the "host" society. James deceives the French Ministers about helping to fund

Wellington's army. This scene suggests that Jews disloyally conspire to acquire power at the expense of the rest of society. Nathan funds the new King of France after forcing him to appoint James an agent of the French Treasury Ministry. Again, the danger portrayed is of Jews conspiring to take over the government. Nathan boasts that he has earned enough money to buy England and that his successful manipulation of the stock exchange was his Waterloo. This insinuates the power of the international Jewish banking cartel. A smirking Nathan connects the cities that have Rothschild banks with Jerusalem, which shows a Star of David, boasting "We are the branches of Jerusalem." This purports to show the extent to which the major international European banks are already tools of the Jews.

A new element is also present in *Rothschilds* that the 1939 films lacked: the subtext of Jewish exploitation of German soldiers. The film portrays the initial capital which the Rothschilds used to build their fortune (i.e., the Prince's 600,000 pounds in English bonds) as having been wrung from the blood of the Prussian soldiers, who had been "rented out" to fight foreign wars. Moreover, Nathan's manipulation of the English stock market was made possible by what the film portrays as the Prussian victory over Napoleon at Waterloo.

Two final points regarding this film are worth noting. First, its power as propaganda was limited by both internal and external factors. Internally, it aimed at savaging both the British and the Jews, specifically by showing the "Judaification" of the British, but this had some problems. The Nazis made the film about the time Britain declared war on Germany, and appeared in its first version in July of 1940. The film did indeed present the English, especially the English bankers, as being generally vile. However, while in theory there is no reason why one propaganda film cannot target two groups simultaneously, in this film several of the English characters are portrayed sympathetically, even after the film was withdrawn and redone. Examples include the ordinary Englishman Ruthworth (cheated by Bronstein), as well as the manipulated Phyllis and Clayton. This undercuts the intended anti-British tone.

Moreover, the British, whom the viewer is encouraged to despise, are portrayed as themselves viciously anti-Semitic. Led by Turner, the bankers repeatedly shun, ridicule, collude against, and humiliate Nathan. If viewers are encouraged to hate a nationality that is virulently anti-Semitic, doesn't that possibly incline the viewers to sympathize with the Jews? Indeed, seeing Nathan humiliated but resolved to elevate his people might well have aroused some sympathy

for him in the audience. Finally, while the Jewish characters are shown as being greedy and pocketing money as it moves from London to Spain, so do Wellington, the French customs agents, and even the French Minister of Police. This would incline at least some viewers to think that perhaps not only Jews but in fact everyone is greedy.

Externally, the war against Britain commenced in the summer of 1940, and by the time the film was re-released, the air war (the Battle of Britain) was being decisively lost by the German Luftwaffe. Thus, the subtext of the film, namely, that the English under Wellington were inferior warriors who had to be rescued by the Prussians, rang hollow in the face of the English victory in the battle.

The second point worth noting is that a general theme central to *Rothschilds* (one that we'll see recurs in *The Eternal Jew*) is that the most prominent bankers in the world form a powerful conspiratorial network—often called the “illuminati”—that is not loyal to any country, but only loyal to itself and seeks world domination (a “New World Order”). Numerous conspiracy theories are built around this paranoid conceit. This conspiracy theory existed before the Nazi regime (and indeed exists to this day),⁶ But the Nazis simply equated the illuminati with the Jewish bankers. As Jonathan Neumann puts it, “Any conspiracy theory that connects a tiny portion of the population . . . with exploitative banking practices is susceptible to anti-Semitic undertones.”⁷

3. *Jew Suss*

The 1940 Nazi production of *Jew Suss* (*Jud Suss*) was a reversal remake of the eponymous 1934 British movie, which starred German émigré actor Conrad Veidt.⁸ The Nazi propaganda film was

⁶ This is not uncommon even now, as the reader can verify by reading the comments that accompany the YouTube presentation of *Rothschilds*.

⁷ Jonathan Neumann, “Occupy Wall Street and the Jews,” *Commentary*, January 2012, p. 27.

⁸ The 1934 British production can be accessed online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xfGHMmfyMAk>; the 1940 Nazi production can be accessed online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOvYT11kRYM>. For a detailed discussion of the British version, see David Sterritt, “Power aka Jew Suss (1934),” in Turner Classic Movie weblog (2015), accessed online at: <http://www.tcm.com/this-month/article.html?isPreview=&id=410440%7C409944&name=Power-aka->

produced by famous German director Veit Harlan. It was by all reckoning the most powerful of the films (as I explain below), and richly illustrates the leitmotifs under discussion.

The film's opening shot is of a Star of David with a menorah in front, after which we see an intertitle reading, "The events in this film are based on historical facts." The story takes place mainly in the city of Stuttgart (in the state of Württemberg) in the 1730s. The main characters include Karl Alexander, the new Duke; Sturm, the head of the State Council; Dorothea, Sturm's beautiful daughter; and Faber, Dorothea's fiancé and Secretary to the Council. We open with Sturm swearing in the new Duke, the oath requiring the Duke to work with the State Council for the good of the people. The Duke is driven to the palace while being cheered. At the palace, we see the Duke kiss his wife (promising her a regal gift soon). Surveying the cheering crowd, he tellingly murmurs, "My people! My land!"

We move to the Jewish Quarter in Frankfurt where we meet the other main characters. The Duke has sent a representative to meet with Suss Oppenheimer ("Jew Suss"), a wealthy gold and jewelry merchant and money-lender, in order to buy the Duchess her promised gift. Levy, Suss's assistant, lets the representative in, while a number of stereotypical Jews look on from the street. Suss (also stereotypically dressed and bearded) opens a large safe filled with treasures and shows the representative a pearl necklace. Suss offers it on credit, but only if the Duke will deal with him in person. The representative reminds Suss that Jews are legally banned from Stuttgart, and his looks brand him, but Suss counters that the Duke can give permission for Suss to visit and Suss can change his looks so as to appear Gentile. The representative says it will be arranged. At a State Council meeting, the representatives are upset that the new Duke has demanded a new opera/ballet house and a personal guard (in effect, his own private army). The council votes (with Faber collecting the ballots). Meanwhile, Suss (clean-shaven and well-dressed) enters town, having been given a ride by Dorothea (to whom he shows great, if unrequited, attraction). He first stops at Sturm's house, where Faber recognizes him and suggests he leave by the next coach. Suss replies that he is staying on business and asks Faber whether he can recommend a good inn. When Faber says no inn will take Jews, Suss looks at him with hatred.

Jew-Suss.

We next see the Duke admiring the pearls. He tells his aide, Remchingen, to have Suss come in. Suss flatters the Duke and wins him over by dumping gold coins on his desk and agreeing to finance what the Duke wants (which the State Council had refused to do). We next see ballerinas practicing, and the Duke has Remchingen summon one of them to meet him. Suss gives his ring to the Duke to give the young ballerina as a bauble. Remchingen informs the Duke that he is now in debt to Suss for 350,000 talers. Suss arranges with the Duke to lease the city roads for a decade, during which time Suss will fix them in exchange for the tolls he can collect from the people. Suss points out to the Duke that Kaiser Leopold of Vienna also has a “money-making Jew” and that “power is money.”

The effect of all the taxes on the citizens is that their food prices rapidly inflate. But we learn from Sturm that “the Jew did . . . buy the Duke his [personal army],” so he advises his family to “be careful.” Two incidents testify to Suss’s increased power. First, a blacksmith refuses to pay a toll for the road past his house, and Suss has part of the man’s house knocked down. When Suss later drives by with his Aryan mistress beside him and gloats, the blacksmith attacks the carriage with a hammer.

Second, we see Suss organize a ball, inviting all of the town’s young women. Suss has the youngest girls dance for the Duke; while the Duke toys with a seventeen-year-old, Suss forces his attentions on Dorothea. Sturm takes her home, while Faber and a few other young men start shouting insulting rebukes at Suss, including the taunt that Suss “gambles for Württemberg. A Jew plays for your daughters and the Duke holds the bank!”

Suss complains to the Duke and reports the blacksmith’s attack, but presents it as though the Duke is being attacked. He warns that as long as Jews are banned from the city, the Duke will continue to be attacked. The Duke agrees to allow Jews into the city and orders the blacksmith to be executed.

We subsequently see the blacksmith hanged (while Suss and his blonde mistress watch). We then see a horde of dirty and shabbily dressed Jews entering the city. These events outrage the people and spur the Council to action. A group of councilmen goes to the palace and confronts the Duke, telling him that the people want all of the Jews, especially Suss, expelled. One of them quotes Martin Luther’s admonition that “after the Devil thou hast no worse foe than a real Jew.” The Duke, angry that the Council is “terrorizing” him, shouts “Your Luther is nothing to me!” He threatens to arrest the Councilmen

and orders them to leave. After they are gone, he calls in Suss and wonders aloud how to handle the Council. Suss advises replacing the Council with a new cabinet of “trusted persons” (i.e., flunkies). When the Duke says that this is a dangerous path, for it courts civil war, Suss urges him to “trust the stars,” saying that there is an expert astrologer who can read the stars for the Duke.

Suss then uses his Rabbi, Loew, to con the Duke. Suss suggests that Loew tell the Duke “the truth our [i.e., the Jewish] way,” and work in to what he tells the Duke the Duke’s motto, “He who dares.” When they meet, in response to the Duke’s question about whether the stars are “favorable” to his plan to eliminate the Council, Loew replies cryptically that the stars neither favor nor oppose the action, but will “obey he who dares.” The Duke falls for the charade and, believing that he is fated to win, tells Suss to prepare the new cabinet.

Suss offers Sturm the position of Chairman of the new cabinet, and Suss offers to marry Dorothea. Sturm angrily refuses both offers, and that night allows Faber to marry her. Upon learning this, an enraged Suss has Levy charge Sturm with treason. Sturm is arrested and brought in front of a rigged court headed by Levy. Sturm defies the court and is jailed.

At Sturm’s house, Von Roeder informs Faber and Dorothea that Sturm is imprisoned by the Duke. Von Roeder and Faber then go to the Council meeting. The Council votes to resist with force the Duke’s takeover. At the palace, the Duke knows of the Council vote and declares the State Council dissolved.

Von Roeder goes to the palace to give the Duke a final warning, but is turned away. The Duke bemoans the resistance, so Suss proposes hiring troops from a neighboring city. The Duke initially rejects the idea, but when crowds gather outside the palace, he agrees to the proposal, wondering where the money to pay for the troops will come from. Suss tells him that the Jews in the city will contribute. Rabbi Loew allows Suss to address the congregation, who tells them that they need to collectively pay so that the Duke will be the absolute ruler and will protect them forever.

There is now open rebellion. Faber rushes to join Von Roeder and they discover the Duke’s plan to bring in foreign troops. Faber volunteers to get past the armed guards and warn the countryside that they only have three days before the foreign troops arrive, but he is captured. Meanwhile, the Duke, afraid of the coming civil war, follows

Remchingen's suggestion to go to the Kaiser's ball in another city and return after a few days as absolute tyrant.

Suss is now firmly in charge. He has Faber tortured, but when Dorothea arrives at the palace to petition for mercy for her husband, Suss has her listen to Faber's cries as he is tortured. Suss says he will let Faber go, if she consents to have sex with him. She gives in and Faber is freed, but she runs through the woods wild with shame and drowns herself. Faber finds the body and brings it to the palace doors.

Von Roeder and Faber ride to the Kaiser's ball and confront the Duke and Suss. When Faber tells the Duke that Suss had him tortured and raped Dorothea, driving her to suicide, Suss begins to fight him. At this point, the Duke collapses and dies from a heart attack. Without the Duke to protect him, Suss is arrested. The movie ends with Suss in a dock. He is found guilty of all charges, and Sturm reads the law, "Whenever a Jew mingles his flesh with a Christian woman, he should be hanged." We then see him dangling in a cage, begging for his life, until he dies. The judge orders all Jews expelled from Württemberg.

Let us turn to the issue of the power of the film as an anti-Semitic propaganda piece. While Hitler preferred *The Eternal Jew* (reviewed below) because it purveys its message directly and in detail, Goebbels felt it was so crude and harsh that many viewers were put off by it. Goebbels felt that *Jew Suss* was excellent because the message was subliminal, that is, covered up by an interesting story, good acting, and an effective score. He wrote in his diary after seeing the film for the first time, "An anti-Semitic film of the kind we could only wish for. I am happy about it."⁹ Heinrich Himmler also loved the film, ordering members of the police and SS to watch it. It was shown to all SS units and Einsatzgruppen before they were deployed in the East, as well as to the non-Jewish populations in areas where Jews were being rounded up.¹⁰ It was also a favorite shown at Hitler Youth events.

It is easy to see why Goebbels and Himmler were so happy with this film. For the three leitmotifs (difference, disgust, and danger) are not just present in this film, they are elaborated to monomaniacal intensity.

⁹ Holocaust Education and Archive Research Team, "Jew Suss" (2015), accessed online at: www.HolocaustResearchProject.org.

¹⁰ Ibid.

First, let's examine the theme of physical appearance. Many scenes portray Jews as both different and disgusting in their looks. For example, in the opening scene in the Jewish Quarter in Frankfurt, we first see Levy and the two Jewish men across the street all with caps, caftans, and beards. The one in the window with an eye-patch is especially repellent, and he is seated next to a disheveled, provocatively dressed woman. These three Jewish characters look similar, and this was deliberate. The same actor, Werner Kraus—the German film industry's equivalent of America's Lon Chaney, that is, a character actor capable of appearing in many different guises—played all three characters. He also played two other Jewish speaking roles (including Rabbi Loew) and perhaps eight of the non-speaking Jewish roles as well. The film's director, Harlan, said he did this deliberately “to show how all these different temperaments and characters—the pious patriarch, the wily swindler, the penny-pinching merchant, and so on—were all ultimately derived from the same [Jewish] root.”¹¹ The effect is subliminally to reinforce the anti-Semitic shibboleth that all Jews are essentially alike.

Other scenes also push the theme that Jews are physically different and repellent. For example, when we first meet Suss, the Duke's representative says that “anyone could tell you're a Jew.” Also, Faber recognizes Suss as Jewish, even though Suss “fixed his looks.” In addition, hundreds of Jews are shown as dirty and disheveled when entering the city.¹²

Second, even more numerous are the scenes portraying Jews as having a different and inferior culture. The idea that Jews focus on material wealth and an egoistic lifestyle is conveyed by many scenes. For example, Suss's office has a sign that reads “Coins and Jewelry”; Suss's safe is filled with silver, gold and jewelry; Suss pours gold coins on the Duke's desk; Suss tells the Duke that “power is money”; Suss tells the blacksmith that he (Suss) owns the road; Suss and his Jewish agents use their taxing power to impoverish the citizens; Suss

¹¹ “Jud Suss (1940 film),” *Wikipedia*, accessed online at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jud_S%C3%9F_\(1940_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jud_S%C3%9F_(1940_film)).

¹² The film also conveys the message that the difference between Jews and non-Jews is discerned by Jews as well. We see this in the scene where the Jewish man in the window asks, “Who is that goyische-looking prig?” We also see this in the scene where Suss says he will change his looks and when he compliments Faber's “discernment.”

enjoys winning money in cards, gloating “money has no smell”; Suss tells the Duke to hire soldiers, which the Duke labels “A Jew’s way of thinking”; and Suss is seen to have been involved with the Duke’s younger wife, which prompts the Duke to observe that Suss only cares about his own interests and profits. This portrayal takes an especially sinister turn when Suss rapes Dorothea, after trying to buy her favor with a ring.

The view that Jewish culture doesn’t share the romantic view of love (in contrast with the “Aryans”) is conveyed in numerous scenes. Faber shouts, “A Jew plays for your daughters,” and Suss procures young women for the Duke. Suss gives money to his mistress, tries to buy Dorothea’s affection before raping her, and is confronted by the Duke for having an affair with the new Duchess. In vivid contrast are the numerous scenes of the pure, romantic love between Faber and Dorothea—at the piano, at the altar, in her father’s house, as he gets ready to take part in the revolt, and when she hears him being tortured.

The theme that Jewish culture is clannish and “cosmopolitan” (i.e., identifying with “their own people” rather than the country in which they reside) is conveyed by a wide variety of scenes. For example, Suss brags to Levy, “I shall open the door for all of you. You’ll wear velvet and silks, tomorrow or the day after”; Suss tells Dorothea that his “homeland” (*heimat*) is the world; Jews move into Stuttgart *en masse* and Suss tells Loew that he has nearly turned Stuttgart into Israel; Suss instructs Loew to tell the Duke “the second truth” (implying that Jews say one thing to each other and another to Gentiles); Suss proposes to hire troops from another city to fight the Duke’s people; and Rabbi Loew appears frightened that Jews will be soldiers (in a Gentile civil war), but urges his congregation to pay so that the Duke can hire foreign troops to put down his own people. Most strident in pushing the theme that Jews are clannish is the scene in which a desperate Dorothea cries, “My father in Heaven,” only to hear a vindictive Suss tell her to “Pray to your God But . . . we Jews have one too.”

Third, the theme that Jews have different and degenerate morals—specifically, that Jews are generally dishonest, devious, and manipulative—is also conveyed in numerous scenes. Suss changes his appearance to gain entrance to the city, Suss gets the Duke to lease him roads to pay off debt, Levy tells the farmer who is complaining about the taxes just to raise prices on the citizens, Suss destroys half of the blacksmith’s house because it encroaches on the road Suss controls;

Suss encourages Loew to deceive the Duke about the Duke's chances for success in eliminating the State Council; and Levy twists logic and law to find a way to destroy Sturm in a kangaroo court. The message that Jews are manipulative is certainly conveyed in all the scenes where Suss manipulates the Duke by appealing to his materialistic desires for money, power, and sex.

In a country as uniformly Christian as was Germany, the scene of Suss tempting Sturm with the offer of worldly power must have been especially resonant. For prominent in the New Testament is the story of Satan's temptation of Jesus in the desert. The Third Temptation is Satan's offer to Jesus of worldly power in exchange for Jesus's allegiance to Satan. Indeed, the scenes portraying Suss as using temptation as a tool for manipulation would subliminally (if not consciously) literally demonize him—Satan being the Tempter. Similarly, by portraying Suss as a pathological liar reinforces the view of Suss as Satanic—Satan being the Father of all lies. Demonizing Suss by extension demonizes Jews generally.

This film introduces a new message in the attack on alleged Jewish values, namely, that Jews are cowardly. A number of scenes convey this message: Levy, so tough when he has power, cowers in fear when the outraged citizens break down the palace door; Loew fears Jews being soldiers; and Suss begs for his life prior to being hanged. These scenes sharply contrast with the courage displayed by many of the non-Jewish figures: the blacksmith faces hanging without a whimper, Sturm tells Suss that he (Sturm) fears neither dungeon nor death, Faber faces torture bravely, von Roeder fights fearlessly, and the rebellious townspeople are brave in the face of professional troops.

Finally, just as in the 1939 films reviewed earlier, Jews are portrayed as being dangerous to non-Jewish Germans. Yet Suss isn't merely a villain like Biedermeier and Ipelmeyer (in *Robert and Bertram*) or Kuhn (in *Linen from Ireland*). He is a super-villain like Professor Moriarty (in the Sherlock Holmes stories), Lex Luther (in the Superman comics), or the Joker (in *The Dark Knight*). That is, Suss has all the lust for money and financial power that the Jews of the earlier films had, but with even more intensity. Suss also wants political power. While Biedermeier, Ipelmeyer, Kuhn, and Rothschild all obviously want to bed beautiful "Aryan" women, Suss appears to have had any number of gentile women. And while Kuhn and Nathan Rothschild tell their assistants that they are working to open the door for Jews to enter mainstream society, Suss uses his power to empower massive numbers of Jews to enter the city. A clear message of the film

is that Jews are dangerous in power; when they are in power, they use their positions to benefit “their” people, not the people of the “host” country. This is a message about what “dual loyalty” really means: Jews in power are only superficially loyal to the host country; their real loyalty is to the Jewish people.

Also worth noting is how Suss’s greed in squeezing steep taxes out of the farmers and merchants rapidly causes steep inflation of food prices. This subliminally conveys the message that Jewish financial machinations are the cause of inflation. To a German public that doubtlessly had vivid recollections of the Weimar Republic’s hyperinflation (1921-1924) deeply ingrained in their memories, this message had to have aroused fear.

The alleged danger of racial pollution is also pushed in *Jew Suss*. This is portrayed by Suss’s actions: he has an “Aryan” mistress, seduces the Duke’s new young wife, shows interest in the young girls in the palace, and pursues and rapes Dorothea.

Of all five of the German anti-Semitic propaganda movies under review here and in my previous article in this series, *Jew Suss* was undoubtedly the most popular. It grossed about 6.5 million Reich marks, but cost only 2 million to make.¹³ It was the sixth most popular film made during the Third Reich. Perhaps the biggest reason for this is that the director was highly accomplished and the movie cast were popular film stars. As film historian Linda Schulte-Sasse puts it, “If you want to understand the movies that people actually paid to go and see, Veit Harlan is the one. He was the Steven Spielberg or James Cameron of his era, and so you have to imagine ‘Jew Suss’ as a movie with Meryl Streep, Jack Nicholson and Brad Pitt.”¹⁴

Her point is apt. The movie was viewed by 20.3 million Germans. In 1940, Germany had 80 million people, counting Austria and the Sudetenland, including about 52 million adults. That means upward of 40% of all German adults saw this picture (assuming no repeat ticket purchases). Compare that to Spielberg’s adult-oriented hit *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), which sold domestically about 46 million

¹³ Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema 1933-1945*, p. 269.

¹⁴ Quoted in Larry Rohter, “Nazi Film Still Pains Relatives,” *The New York Times* (March 1, 2010), accessed online at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/02/movies/02suss.html>.

tickets.¹⁵ There were about 271 million Americans at the time of that film's release, of which about 213 million were adults, which means that about 20% of all American adults saw the movie (assuming no repeat ticket purchases). That gives you an idea of the success of *Jew Suss*: it was roughly *double* the hit *Saving Private Ryan* was, measured by ticket sales per capita.

4. *The Eternal Jew*

Let us finish by examining *The Eternal Jew* (*Der ewige Jude*) (or *The Wandering Jew*, depending upon your translation).¹⁶ The film was done in documentary style and was directed by Fritz Hippler, who faced charges after the war for making it. The film has three broad focuses: negatively portraying Jewish ghetto life, attacking various values supposedly characteristic of Jews, and criticizing Jewish religious customs.

The film opens against the backdrop of ominous music, with the title card reading: "A documentary film from DFG based on an idea by Dr. E. Taubert." The man referred to here was Eberhard Taubert (1907-1976), a lawyer and committed Nazi who worked in Goebbels's propaganda ministry and wrote the screenplay. It then shows the message, "The civilized Jews we know in Germany give us but an incomplete picture of their true radical character. This film shows actual shots of the Polish ghettos. It shows us the Jews as they really look . . . before concealing themselves behind the mask of civilized Europeans." The film's narrator—popular German actor Harry Griesse—tells us that the Polish campaign (the 1939 invasion) has taught Germans the real nature of the Jews, and that "there's a plague here—a plague that threatens the health of the Aryan people."

We cut to a Jewish home, which is filthy and neglected, with flies swarming as the men at the table (with beards, dark clothes, and hats) get up and pray. We are told that the Jews are not poor, but choose to live this way and "horde" their wealth. A shot of the street shows Jews bartering, which we are told is all Jews do, because they don't like work: "[Judaism] makes cheating and usury a divine duty."

¹⁵ Pamela McClintock, "Steven Spielberg's Top 10 Box Office Successes," *The Hollywood Reporter* (June 2015), accessed online at: <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/steven-spielberg-s-top-10-803126>.

¹⁶ *The Eternal Jew*, accessed online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CIQp31Oyn70>.

We see “Aryan” workers deriving joy from honest work and then, by contrast, a Jew counting money. The narrator assures us that Jews are “a race of parasites.” We see scenes from 1918 (when Germany lost WWI) showing disorder in the streets and are told that in Germany’s times of trouble, Jews—especially Bolsheviks—“knew how to terrorize a great and tolerant nation.” Furthermore, we are told, while the “Aryan” Germans suffered economically, “immigrant Jews acquired fantastic riches not through honest work, but through usury, swindle and fraud.”

The film then pushes the theme that Jews are rootless, and shows a world map that displays the alleged movement of Jews out of the Mideast around the Mediterranean into modern Europe. We are shown another map and told that the spread of the Jews was mirrored by the spread of the rat. We are told that rats destroy food and spread disease wherever they go as we watch swarms of rats crawl all over each other eating grain from sacks. In the most infamous scene from the film, while we are told that rats represent sneakiness and destruction, just as do the Jews, we cut from seeing the rats to a view of Jews in Ghetto streets. The film then cites without evidence bizarre figures about the role of Jews in crime, such as that in 1933 Jews were 1% of the world’s population but “accounted for” 98% of all prostitution.

We next see a Jew with a beard and then without, while the narrator tells us that Jews, especially German Jews who have intermarried with Aryans for generations, can be difficult to distinguish from Aryans. Then we are shown scenes from the 1934 American movie about the Rothschilds, where the patriarch of the family, Mayer, has his family hide their wealth from the tax collector to show that Jews use money to control the “host” company.

The film turns to the alleged Jewish destruction of healthy culture: music, art, even science. Under Jewish influence, “Germany’s cultural life was niggerized and bastardized.” As the film shows pictures of classic art as “European-looking,” we are told, “we now know the Hebrews of the Bible could not have looked like this.” Instead, we see Polish Ghetto Jews, all in Orthodox dress. We also see footage of the Jewish slaughter of animals by slashing the animals’ throats. We hear that “European science” condemns this practice, but “Jewish law has no love for animals in the Germanic sense.” (Of course, the film never shows us “Aryan” slaughter-houses.) *The Eternal Jew* displays the decree passed and signed into law by Hitler outlawing such practices: “And just as with ritual slaughter, National

Socialist Germany has made a clean sweep of all Jewry, Jewish thinking and Jewish blood will never again pollute the German nation. Under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, Germany has raised the battle-flag against the eternal Jew!”

The film ends with Hitler speaking before the Reichstag in January 1939. It is in this speech he uttered his infamous warning, “Should the international finance Jews inside and outside Europe push people into another world war, the result will not be a victory of Jewry, but the destruction of the Jewish race in Europe.” Hitler is applauded in the chamber and saluted adoringly outside.

As in the others we have discussed so far, this film pushes the message that Jewish physical appearance, culture, and values are all different and disgusting. However, since *The Eternal Jew* is a documentary-style film, it has broader power to create or amplify feelings. In addition to showing the viewer pictures of Jews and Jewish life, it can make claims and cite figures directly. That is, the visual images are interpreted and underscored by verbal narrative.

Regarding physical appearance, the film conveys difference and disgust through the scenes of the ghettos—after, of course, the Nazis had forcibly concentrated Polish Jews into them. Numerous scenes show how Jews differ in dress and (with the men) facial hair. Their alleged lack of hygiene and general dirtiness is suggested by the scenes of the squalor of their homes, especially the shots of Jews eating in a kitchen swarming with flies. This portrayal of Jews as dirty is verbally underscored by the narrator’s claims that these Jews aren’t poor, but choose to live in homes that are “filthy and neglected” because they “horde” their money.

The film again conveys difference and disgust with respect to Jewish culture. The scenes of bartering in the ghetto allegedly show that bartering (as opposed to “honest” or “regular” work) characterizes Jewish life. No footage at all is shown of Jews engaged in other economic activities, such as teaching, farming, performing skilled trades, and so on. In other words, Jews are all portrayed as “middlemen” in an economy, with the Nazi pejorative connotation of the middleman as some kind of economic parasite. These scenes are underscored by the narrator’s comments throughout: “Seldom are Jews found doing useful work”; “These Jews don’t want to work, but barter”; “The Jew buys and sells but produces nothing”; and Jews moved to German cities “not to work in the factories—they left that to the Germans.” Statistics cited in the film purport to show that Jews

were underrepresented in the “working class” (i.e., laborers) and overrepresented in business and professions.

Unlike the two 1939 films and the other two 1940 films discussed above, this film seeks to arouse a new antipathetic feeling about Jewish culture: that it is degenerate. The feeling that Jews are psychologically and culturally degenerate is reflected in scenes of modern art (contrasted with classical art), images of pornography (which the film associates with Jews), and footage of *avant garde* German films of the time (which Jews were supposedly responsible for). The assertions made clarify and amplify the message that Jews cannot fathom the “purity and neatness of the German concept of art.” The Jew, “without roots of his own, has no feeling, and what he calls art must gratify his deteriorating nerves—the stench of disease must pervade it, it must be unnatural, perverse or pathological.” Furthermore, “[i]n the guise of scientific discussion, [Jews] tried to direct mankind’s healthy urges down degenerate paths.”

Regarding Jewish values, we again see the image portrayed that Jews are dishonest, sneaky, manipulative, and deceitful. The feeling that Jews are dishonest and greedy is pushed by the shots of Jews trading and counting money, along with the scenes of the Rothschilds hiding their money to evade the tax man.¹⁷ These scenes are underscored by numerous explicit claims: “Jewish morality . . . claims that unrestrained egoism of every Jew to be divine law”; “His religion makes cheating and usury a divine duty”; “How [Jews] get [money] makes no difference [to them]”; the Jews are “a race of parasites”; “The Jew is a perpetual sponger”; and “Jews acquired fantastic riches not through honest work, but through usury, swindle and fraud.” All of this is buttressed by statistics allegedly showing that criminals are disproportionately Jewish.

In addition to conveying such ideas about Jews, *The Eternal Jew* reflects the antipathetic feeling that Jews are cruel. This feeling is pushed in part by scenes of the celebration of Purim, calling it a “feast of revenge.” More prominently, the feeling that Jews are cruel is seen in the powerful footage of kosher slaughter, where animals thrash

¹⁷ Ironically, the scenes showing the Rothschilds hiding their wealth from the tax man are in fact taken without attribution from the pro-Semitic fictional American film made about the Rothschilds in 1934 (and shown in Britain). In that film, while the Jewish banking family is hiding wealth from the tax collector, it is because the tax being collected is a tax targeting only Jews, and hence is discriminatory and unjust.

about after having had their throats cut. Narration underscores the imagery: “[Jews] let the animals bleed to death while conscious.”

Let us move on to the leitmotif of danger. *The Eternal Jew* puts more explicit focus on arousing the feeling that Jews are dangerous. First, it reflects the theme that Jews have dual loyalty, an accusation found in the other four films as well. This feeling is promoted by scenes showing the Rothschilds moving to various cities in Europe and becoming citizens, but retaining their core clan loyalty, as well as scenes of New York, called the center of world Jewish capitalism. The notion of “dual loyalty” thus involves the notions of clannishness and cosmopolitanism.

Along with the danger of “dual loyalty,” the film advances the idea that Jews are trying to achieve world power. This is presented most bluntly in a scene in which a rabbi instructs his class of young boys: the narrator tells us, “But it is not religious instruction—the rabbis are not peaceful theologians but political educators. The politics of a parasitic race must be carried out in secret.” The Jews want to control the planet, the Nazi propaganda line had it, but the Party line here was somewhat schizophrenic, with two strands.

One strand is the Nazi hatred of their arch-competitors, the Bolsheviks. This strand of the narrative pushes the view that the Bolsheviks are Jews and they work by destroying a country’s political and economic institutions. This danger is highlighted by the footage of the demonstrations and chaos of the era after 1918, when we are told that the Jews “saw their chance” and took control of the government. Even more radical Jews advocated “a revolt against everything, incitement of the masses to class warfare and terrorism.” The tiny population of Jews was nearly able to bring down a great nation by being unified and organizing the rabble: “[Jews] knew how to terrorize a great and tolerant nation.”

The second strand is the Nazi view that the Jews have awesome financial power. This is the main message in the footage of the Rothschilds, especially the picture of the numerous other (presumably) Jewish banking families. It is emphasized in the narrative that this banking power enables the Jews to “terrorize world exchanges, world opinion and world politics.”

Notice the similarity and difference between the accusations here. On the one hand, the Bolsheviks are Jews who wish to destroy capitalism and nationalism, and they do this by terrorizing a nation. On the other hand, the greedy uber-capitalist international Jewish bankers

who wish to take over all world capitalism do this by terrorizing world markets.

The Eternal Jew adds a new feature not seen in the other four films under discussion. The feeling of danger is conveyed by the use of the potent image of the rat. Rat images are used to elicit the explicit view of Jews as two things: parasites in and of themselves (disease *agents*) and carriers of disease (disease *vectors*).

The notion that Jews are economic parasites, living off the hard work of the “host” nation—note the sly use of “host”—is raised repeatedly throughout the film. They are alleged to be parasites in that they take resources from the host nation without themselves creating resources. This notion is present at the outset, where the narrator intones that when “we Germans look at the ghetto now we no longer see the most . . . comical of the questionable ghetto figures—this time we recognize that there’s a plague here—a plague that threatens the health of the Aryan peoples.” It recurs in the various scenes of Jews bartering, with claims such as “the Jew buys and sells but produces nothing” relying on the populist economic fallacy of the middleman, that is, that people who buy from the immediate producer and sell to the ultimate end-user (consumer) are somehow parasites. This fallacy is to this day common among many economically illiterate people, despite being debunked in the mid-1800s by Frederic Bastiat.¹⁸ Moreover, the idea that money-lenders are evil parasites is common to all of the Abrahamic faiths, and is an economic sophism widespread to this day.

The notion that Jews are vectors of disease¹⁹—specifically, genetic bearers of “racial pollution”—is pushed in the scene showing

¹⁸ Frederic Bastiat, *Selected Essays on Political Economy* (Irvington-on-Hudson, NY: Foundation for Economic Education, 1995 [1848]).

¹⁹ “Pathogen stress theory” may give additional insight into the power of the anti-Semitic message to the German public that Jews are disease vectors. Under this theory, much of human culture can be explained by behavioral immune responses, that is, patterns of behavior evolutionarily selected to enable animals to ward off infections (by viruses, bacteria, fungi, or parasites). For example, in an ant colony, sick ants will often leave and die outside the nest; only a small minority of ants carries out the dead, which seem to be behavioral immune responses.

The theory holds that geographic regions that have more infectious diseases (such as tropical regions) have a higher degree of pathogen stress, and this has cultural effects not just on narrow areas (such as food choice—most spices are potent germicides, and most tropical cultures favor spice

how Jews can “pass” for “ordinary” Germans, when the narrator says that even aristocratic Jews who have intermarried with Aryans for generations remain foreign bodies threatening the host nation.

While Hitler viewed *The Eternal Jew* as the best of the anti-Semitic propaganda films, Goebbels viewed it as lacking subtlety.²⁰ It appears to have been the least successful of the group of 1940 anti-Semitic propaganda flicks, selling by one estimate²¹ about one million tickets, or about 1/20th as many as did *Jew Suss*. Whether that is due to its drawbacks as a film, because it was released right after *Jew Suss*, or because people generally hated Jews so much by then that they didn’t want to see films about the Jewish Problem anymore (as at least one report by the SS on audience reaction suggested), is difficult to say. Some film scholars have been dismissive of the effectiveness of *The Eternal Jew* since it is (to modern eyes at least) a transparent pseudo-documentary with baseless charges against Jews. For example, Larry Rohter calls the movie “a notorious screed,” contrasting it with the much bigger hit *Jew Suss*.²² But *The Eternal Jew* was often shown in schools and at youth group meetings, so it had an influence far beyond its commercial showing. It is banned in Germany to this day.

foods), but on the tendency of the culture to be xenophobic and ethnocentric: “Keeping strangers away might be a valuable defense against foreign pathogens And a strong preference for in-group mating might help maintain a community’s hereditary immunities to local disease strains.” See Ethan Watters, “The Germ Theory of Democracy, Dictatorship, and All Your Most Cherished Beliefs,” *Pacific Standard Magazine* (March 3, 2014), accessed online at: <http://www.psmag.com/health-and-behavior/bugs-like-made-germ-theory-democracy-beliefs-73958>. While Germany is not a tropical country, the theory suggests that the 1918 Flu Pandemic (which killed up to a half-million Germans) may have heightened public receptivity to the message that Jews are bringers of disease.

Whether this theory will ultimately be proven true, only time will tell, but it is worth noting here. My thanks to Ryan Nichols for pointing out this theory to me.

²⁰ “The Eternal Jew.”

²¹ Ibid.

²² Rohter, “Nazi Still Pains Relatives.”

5. Comparison of the Earlier and Later Films

Having examined in depth five major Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda films, I will observe both similarities and differences between the two groups of films. With regard to the similarity of messaging, I hypothesized that in order to arouse the antipathy necessary to get a large percentage of the public to support (or at least tolerate) the systematic extermination of an out-group, the in-group leaders will need to arouse *specific* antipathetic feelings, namely, difference, disgust, and danger. First, leaders of the in-group try to persuade their members that the out-group is systematically different in major ways: appearance, culture, and especially shared moral values.

Second, the in-group leaders will try to arouse disgust toward the out-group. After all, I might as an American tourist view the Irish, say, as being significantly different, but view them as charming, that is, different in ways that are perfectly fine in their own right. To feel that a group is different is not perforce to feel that they are inferior or bad. That takes more effort, so it is necessary to get the in-group to view the out-group additionally as ugly in appearance, inferior in culture, and evil in values.

Third, it isn't enough even that the in-group view the out-group as both different and disgusting. A person might view beggars or the homeless as different and repellent, but not want to expel them, much less torture and murder them *en masse*. The in-group leaders must also inculcate the feeling that the out-group members are existentially dangerous to the in-group. That is, in-group propaganda must arouse the feeling that the out-group intends to take over, dominate the out-group, and take the in-groups' females for mating (thus producing more out-group members).

Despite the five films sharing these similarities, there are differences worth noting. Recall that the two earlier films were comedies: *Robert and Bertram* was a musical comedy and *Linen from Ireland* was a romantic comedy. I suggested that they were thus inherently limited in the degree to which they could stress danger. It is difficult to make people feel afraid and amused simultaneously.

The later three films, in contrast, are not at all comedies. *Jew Suss* and *Rothschilds* are both docu-dramas based on true historical events and people, as is stated clearly at the beginning of each film. *The Eternal Jew* is a documentary. Consequently, the later films are more capable of pushing the feeling of danger, which is caused by the sense of authority conveyed by the narrator's tone.

Moreover, if we compare *The Eternal Jew* with all four of the other films, we see an illustration of a point I made in a previous article,²³ namely, that we judge the degree to which a given film is irrational propaganda along a number of dimensions, such as transparency of purpose and truthfulness of content. Looking at *Robert and Bertram* and *Linen from Ireland*, one obvious reason they are propaganda is that while they appear as harmless entertainment, they were in fact intended to deepen the audience's anti-Semitism. In this they exemplified Goebbels's maxim that good propaganda doesn't appear to be propaganda. In contrast, *The Eternal Jew* is clearly labeled as a documentary, and from the opening it is clear that it is meant to persuade us that Jews and Judaism are evil.

Yet, regarding truthfulness, since they are purely fictional, the two comedies are not full of falsehoods as such. Documentaries, however, can be evaluated for factual accuracy. On this score, *The Eternal Jew* fails grotesquely, so on that basis alone it can be viewed as propaganda in the most pejorative sense. It is full of falsehoods, including the following: (1) Jews forced to live in ghettos are Jews as they "really look." (2) Jews who live outside the ghetto try to disguise themselves. (3) Polish Jews didn't fight the German invasion or otherwise didn't feel the pain of war. (4) Jews choose to live in ghettos and were not forced to move there *en masse* by the Nazis themselves. (5) Jews are generally wealthy. (6) Jews choose to live unhygienically. (6) Jews were not barred from many if not most professions historically. (8) Jewish morality is egoistic and approves of cheating. (9) Jews never make and derive satisfaction from making beautiful and useful things. (10) Jews produce nothing. One could add dozens of other examples.

Consider next the psychological mechanisms employed. In the earlier films, we see a heavy use of negative association, contrast (of Jews with "Aryans"), social proof (showing the townspeople supporting the "Aryans"), and sympathy (for the Aryan lovers imperiled by the manipulation of the wealthy Jews, and, in *Linen from Ireland*, for the humble local linen makers). All of these mechanisms are used in the later films as well. Certainly, Jews are again contrasted with "Aryans" and found wanting. We are also urged to feel sympathy for the English bank customers who lose their savings and the soldiers who suffer "horrific casualties" (in *Rothschilds*), the suffering citizens

²³ Gary James Jason, "Film and Propaganda: The Lessons of the Nazi Film Industry," *Reason Papers* 35, no. 1 (July 2013), pp. 203-19.

taxed ruthlessly by Suss (in *Jew Suss*), and the ordinary German citizens who find their country “sold out” (in *The Eternal Jew*). Especially egregious is the use of negative association in *The Eternal Jew*: the cut from scenes of Jews crowded together to the scenes of rats crawling all over each other is association of the crudest and most manipulative sort.

6. Future Work

At the end of our extended analysis of Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda films, two questions can be raised that shall be the basis of future projects. Both of them concern the effectiveness of this sort of propaganda.

The first question concerns the generality of the thesis I’ve put forward, namely, that to manufacture support for an absolute war against an out-group, in-group leaders need to foment feelings of difference, disgust, and danger toward the out-group. This thesis seems clearly to be supported by the case of Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda films, but are there other cases of propaganda films from other times and cultures that support the thesis?

The second question concerns the true causal effectiveness of the Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda campaign. The evidence I have presented is purely internal. Looking at the content of the Nazi anti-Semitic films shows that they indeed put forward strong messages that Jews are different, disgusting, and dangerous. But is there any external evidence that the propaganda campaign succeeded? That is, although the Nazis were able to wage genocide against European Jewry, did their propaganda campaign really help them win support for their actions? Or was the anti-Semitic campaign in reality causally irrelevant, with the regime achieving its goals by applying its police power to implement its policies?

