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Jung And Antisemitism

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Jung's activities and ideas have been the subject of intense criticism from the 1930s to the present day, but he has not lacked his ardent defenders. That defence has usually taken the form of testimony to the absence of antisemitism in his dealings with Jewish colleagues. Jung, it has been affirmed, was particularly generous in support of those colleagues who were experiencing practical difficulties in the 1930s because of their Jewish origins. As an analyst, Jung was apparently adept at putting patients in touch with their ethnic and religious antecedents; severance of such links with their consequent psychological strain was a common and problematic feature for many sophisticated European Jews so that, from the viewpoint of his addressing and alleviating their tensions Jung's work may even be regarded as "pro-semitic". Such at least has been a large element in the conventional defence of Jung by his admirers. However, before coming to some conclusion concerning this defence, it is necessary to look at the relevant historical data.

In 1933 Jung took on the Presidency of the General Medical Society for Psychotherapy. This was a professional body with members from several countries, but primarily based in Germany and coming under Nazi control. Jung claimed that he took this post expressly to defend the rights of Jewish psychotherapists, and he altered the constitution of the GMSP so that it became a fully and formally international body. Membership was by means of national societies with a special category of individual membership. Jews were already barred from membership in the German national society and so had to join as individuals. (To put this in context, it should be noted that Freud's books had been burnt, and he was officially banned in 1933.)

Jung was also editor of the *Zentralblatt*, the society's scientific journal. According to Jung, this was a strictly "pro forma" appointment, and he remained geographically (and presumably ideologically) distant from the editorial offices. He also maintained that he did not know of pro-Nazi statements of principles that were inserted in the *Zentralblatt* by Professor Goering (a cousin of the Reichsmarschall), who had been made president of the dominant German section. Jung's own editorials and articles in the *Zentralblatt*, extracts of which are quoted below, have also been a reason why he has been accused of pro-Nazi sympathies during this period. According to Geoffrey Cocks in *Psychotherapy in the Third Reich*, Jung's ideas had "official approval" and, as a result, "German psychotherapists did all they could to link Jung's name with their own activities". [1] Jung's work was in fact cited by German racial theoreticians and appeared in official Nazi bibliographies of the period.

In an interview on Radio Berlin in 1933, Jung stated:

As Hitler said recently, the Fuhrer [sic] must be able to be alone and must have the courage to go his own way. But if he doesn't know himself, how is he to lead others? That is why the true leader [Fuhrer, again] is always one who has the courage to be himself, and can look not only others in the eye but above all himself.... Every movement culminates organically in a leader, who embodies in his whole being the meaning and purpose of the popular movement. [2]

And in his paper, *The State of Psychotherapy Today* (1934), Jung wrote:

Freud did not understand the Germanic psyche any more than did his Germanic followers. Has the formidable phenomenon of National Socialism, on which the whole world gazes with astonishment, taught them better? Where was that unparalleled tension and energy while as yet no National Socialism existed? Deep in the Germanic psyche, in a pit that is anything but a garbage-bin of unrealizable infantile wishes and unresolved family resentments.

In the same paper, which clarifies the somewhat cryptic language above, Jung asserted (about Jews): "The 'Aryan' unconscious has a higher potential than the Jewish." "The Jew who is something of a nomad has never yet created a cultural form of his own and as far as we can see never will, since all his instincts and talents require a more or less civilized nation to act as host for their development." "The Jews have this peculiarity with women; being physically weaker, they have to aim at the chinks in the armour of their adversary." Jung also warned against "applying Jewish categories indiscriminately to Germanic and Slavic Christendom". [3]

A similar observation occurs in a footnote to the *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, first published in 1928 and republished in 1935: "It is a quite unpardonable mistake to accept the conclusions of a Jewish psychology as generally valid". [4] In *Zentralblatt* editorial he wrote that "the differences which actually do exist between Germanic and Jewish psychology and which have been long known to every intelligent person are no longer to be glossed over." [5] In a letter to his pupil Dr Kranefeldt in 1934, Jung wrote:

As is known, one cannot do anything against stupidity, but in this instance the Aryan people can point out that, with Freud and Adler, specifically Jewish points of view are publicly preached, and as can be proved likewise, points of view that have an essentially corrosive character. If the proclamation of this Jewish gospel is agreeable to the government, then so be it. Otherwise there is also the possibility that this would not be agreeable to the government. [6]

Earlier, in 1918, Jung had written that the Jew "is badly at a loss for that quality in man which roots him to the earth and draws new strength from below. This chthonic quality is to be found in dangerous concentration in the German peoples.... The Jew has too little of this quality - where has he his own earth underfoot." [7] However, in the "Rejoinder to Dr Bally", Jung says: "I must confess my total inability to understand why it should be a crime to speak of Jewish psychology." Jung also asserts that "psychological differences obtained between all nations and races." [8]

I know my readers will not be expecting something comprehensive in a short study, but I still want to say a few words about what is *not* covered so that it is clear the omission is deliberate. I do not make much of psychobiography, of the facts of Jung's inner and outer life, his dreams, his father-complex, the scars of the break with Freud, his ambition, his shadow problem, his Swiss bourgeois mentality and so forth. Nor do I devote much space to personal testimonies that show that Jung could not have been antisemitic and that he had a positive attitude to Jews and helped many achieve a relationship with their Jewishness for the first time. For a while, I worried that these omissions - that is, Jung's psycho-pathology and the evidence of people who knew him, neither of which should be ignored - added up to a failure of feeling on my part. But gradually I have come to see that the true failure of feeling is found when the personal dimension is given too much weight or used to close an awkward issue once and for all.

to ask is whether there is something in the deep, fundamental structure of Jung's thought, in its heart or essence, that made it inevitable that he would develop a kind of antisemitism. When Jung writes about the Jews and Jewish psychology, is there something in his whole attitude, his "take," to use the colloquialism, that just had to lead to antisemitism? Is there something to worry about?

My brief answer, in contradistinction to that of many other leading Jungian analysts, is "yes" and my hope is that by exploring the matter as deeply as we can, a form of reparation will ensue. I believe that many strengths and subtleties of analytical psychology are being lost - not just because of the alleged Nazi collaboration and antisemitism, but also because of the evident inability of many Jungians to react to such charges in an intelligent, humane way. This permits the Freudian establishment, and the rest of the civilized world, to continue to ignore the pioneering nature of Jung's contributions, and hence the work of post-Jungian analytical psychologists.

I am going to start in the middle of things, with Adolf Hitler and his ideas about the Jews. It is far too general and facile to see Hitler's theorizing about the Jews solely as racist. There is also a comprehensive political and historical theory, and it is hard to disentangle the racial and political ideas. The political dogma certainly employs a racial viewpoint, but Hitler's racism also has a political format, one that uses a *nationalistic* vocabulary and focuses on the idea of the nation.

The modern idea of nation stems from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The idea gradually arose that nationality was a natural possession of everyone and that a person could participate in civic and political life only as part of a nation. Just as political allegiance had hitherto not been determined by nationality so civilization was not regarded as nationally defined. During the Middle Ages, civilization defined itself religiously and, in the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods, the classical cultures of Greece and Rome became the yardsticks. When civilization started to be defined on the basis of nationality, it was felt for the first time that people should be educated in their own mother tongue, not in the language of other civilizations. Poets and scholars began to emphasize cultural nationalism. They reformed the national languages, elevating them to literary status and delved deep into the traditional past. The modern nation state, with its central administration facilitated by rapid communication, is different from previous forms of political organizations.

Hitler regarded all history as consisting of struggles between competing nations for living space and, eventually, for world domination. The Jews, according to Hitler, are a nation and participate in these struggles, but their goal, quite directly and in the first instance, is world domination. This is because the Jews do not start off with possession of living space, of an identifiable, geographical locality; it has to be the world or nothing. In fact, for Hitler, the nationalism of the Jews is really "de-nationalism, the bastardization of other nations". [9] The Jewish nation achieves its goal of world domination by denationalizing existing states from within and imposing a homogeneous "Jewish" character on them by its *inter-national* capitalism and its equally *inter-national* communism. So, in Hitler's thinking, there is a struggle between wholesome nationhood and its corrupting; enemy, the Jews. [10]

Jung, too, was interested in the idea of the nation, and he makes innumerable references to "the psychology of the nation" and to the influence of a person's national background. He says that "the soil of every country holds [a] mystery.... There is a relationship of body to earth." [11] For example in 1918, Jung asserted that the skull and pelvis measurements of second-generation American immigrants were becoming "indianized" [12] It can be seen that even in such craziness, Jung was not thinking along racial lines, for the immigrants from Europe and the indigenous Indians come from different races. No, living in America, living on American soil, being part of the American nation, these are what exert profound physiological and psychological effects. "The foreign land.. has assimilated the conqueror," says Jung, and his argument is not based on race but on earth and culture as the matrix from which we evolve. [13] Earth plus culture equals nation.

However, at the moment we introduce the idea of nation, depth psychology just cannot remain untrammelled or uncontaminated by economic, social, political and historical factors. For "nation" is an economic, social, political and historical construct - and a relatively modern one at that. For example, the German nation, as a recognizable cultural and political phenomenon, did not exist before the rise of Prussia at the end of the eighteenth century. [14] If we analyse German nationalism (or any other nationalism), we find that there is much more involved than emphasis on the geographical unit. We find some kind of ethical principle, or at least ethical expression, and this is usually couched in comparative (and self congratulatory) terms: our soldiers are the bravest, the quality of our family life is the finest, we have special rights, we have special responsibilities, we have a unique relationship to higher forces, our apple pie is the greatest, our upper lip the stiffest. In other words, nationalism always involves a form of psychological expression and self characterisation, and therefore nationalism requires the services of psychologists.

It is my contention that, in C.G. Jung, nationalism found its psychologist. But in his role as a psychologist of nationhood, his role as a psychologist who lends his authority to nationalism, Jung's pan-psychism (his phrase) ran riot. This refers to the tendency to see all outer events in terms of inner dynamics, and it led Jung to claim that the nation is a personified concept that corresponds in reality only to a specific nuance of the individual psyche. [The nation] is nothing but an inborn character.. Thus in many ways it is an advantage to have been imprinted with the English national character in one's cradle. You can then travel in the most Godforsaken countries and when anybody asks "Are you a foreigner?" you can answer, "No, I am English". [15]

In spite of the humour, there is no hard evidence that Jung's approach to the concept of nation is fundamentally metaphorical or "mythological".

Let me draw some conclusions from the above. First, a crucial aspect of Hitler's thinking is that the Jews represent a threat to the inevitable and healthy struggle of different nations for world domination. Second, Jung's view is that each nation has a different and identifiable national psychology that is, in some mysterious manner, an innate factor. At first sight, juxtaposing these two points of view might seem innocuous, or pointless, or even distasteful in itself. It is certainly not my intention to make a straightforward comparison of Hitler and Jung. But if we go on to explore the place of the Jews in Jung's mental ecology, to find out where they are situated in his view of the world, then the juxtaposition of the two points of view takes on a far more profound significance. For my aim is to see whether there is anything in the essence of Jung's thought, anything in its underlying structure and assumptions, that must lead him into the kind of antisemitism we are concerned with here.

My perception is that the ideas of nation and of national difference form a fulcrum between the Hitlerian phenomenon and Jung's analytical psychology. For, as a psychologist of nations, Jung too would feel threatened by the Jews, this strange so-called nation without a land. Jung, too, would feel threatened by the Jews, this strange nation without cultural forms - that is, without *national* cultural forms - of its own, and hence, in Jung's words of 1933, requiring a "host nation". [16] What threatens Jung, in particular, can be illuminated by enquiring closely into what he meant when he writes, as he often does, of "Jewish psychology". His use of the term is dramatically inconsistent.

There is Jewish psychology meaning the psychological characteristics, prejudices and assumptions of a "typical" Jewish person. Jung argues that everybody is affected by their background and this leads to all kinds of prejudices and assumptions - "every child knows that differences exist" [17] One can agree or disagree with Jung's various statements about the typical Jew, but there is a second use by Jung of this term "Jewish psychology". It has another and more provocative implication. Here, he is referring to systems of psychology developed by Jews such as Freud and Adler, systems that claim universal applicability and truth. Such a psychology is a "leveling psychology" (Jung's words) in that it undermines the idea that there are psychological differences between groups of peoples such as nations. [18] Such a psychology is wrong to apply "Jewish categories . . . indiscriminately" and, Jung goes on to note, one should not make the "unpardonable mistake [of] accepting the conclusion of a Jewish psychology as generally valid" [19]

Jung is saying that Jewish psychoanalysis attacks the idea of psychological differences between nations. Jewish psychoanalysis therefore occupies a place in Jung's mind analogous to the place occupied in Hitler's mind by Jewish international capitalism and Jewish international communism. The great fears are,

actively, "levelling" and "denationalizing". Jung and Hitler do not say the same things about the Jews, of course, but the levelling aim of Jewish psychology the denationalizing aim of Jewish political and economic activity represents a similar kind of threat to each of them. So each develops a similar kind of obsession. For Hitler, this takes the form of an obsession with a Jewish "spirit", functioning as a pestilential bacillus, undermining the very idea of nation. For Jung, this takes the form of an obsession with a Jewish psychology, capable of being imposed on all other ethnic and national psychologies, bringing them all down to the same level.

My hope is that all analytical psychologists would work together on what these reflections might mean for their common humanity, their intellectual integrity and their identity as Jungian analysts. As far as the future is concerned, I believe it would help if they (and others within depth psychology) were to cease expanding the national boundaries of the psychological kingdom and try to work co-operatively with their colleagues in the social sciences. This means stopping the abuse of authority in advancing definitions of the "typical" innate psychology of this or that group - Jews, Germans, African-Americans, homosexuals, women. We should think seriously of abandoning Jung's method here. [20] What he did was to assemble lists of characteristics, taken as inborn, and use the lists to make a definition: definition of Jew, definition of German, it is exactly the same method that he used to define the psychological attributes of the two sexes. The emphasis is upon what a Jew *is*, not upon what being a Jew *is like*. The emphasis is on defining or predefining differences, but not on the experience of living out of difference. Just as with the sexes, we find Jung importing his ethos of complementarity so that any two opposite lists combined produce an absolutely wonderful-sounding "wholeness". In Jung's writing, Jew and German seem to constitute two halves of a whole: rational sophisticated, erudite city-dweller complementing irrational, energetic, earthy peasant-warrior.

If one were to abandon Jung's method, then one might be able to revalue what he was trying to do. For, make no mistake about it, alongside the many problems with Jung's ideas about nation, race and religion, there are also the seeds of a marvelously useful approach to difference. Even if Jung's method and ideology are suspect, his intuition of the importance of exploring difference remains intact. We can preserve a connection to Jung's intuition of the importance of difference but unhindered by excessive dependence on complementarity.

Then analysts could expressly ally themselves to so-called marginal or minority groups. They could contribute their limited but profound expertise to the achievement of the goals of such groups. The only thing analysts are good at is getting people to experience and express consciously what they implicitly know but have not yet thought or felt. Analysts could employ their skills and their capacity to work with the inexpressible in an exploration of the psychological experience of being a Jew, German, African- American, homosexual, woman, man. They could assist in getting behind the defensive stereotypes imposed by a threatened dominant culture as they probe the nature of difference itself. It is truly subversive work, breaking the modern veto on the discussion of national and racial difference. But it has to be done.

It is crucial that what differences there are between nations or between races or between classes or between sexes are not predefined. The analyst is not an authority or teacher who has "a priori" knowledge of the psychological implications of the patient's ethnic and cultural background. Rather, the analyst is a mediator who enables the patient to experience and express his or her own difference. Such an analyst can revalue and support Jung's impassioned rejection of the imposition of the psychology of one group upon another. Jungians have some reparation to make and have much to offer.

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Notes

1. Geoffrey Cocks, *Psychotherapy in the Third Reich* (Oxford, 1985).
2. Quoted in *C.G. Jung Speaking*, ed. W. McGuire and R. Hull (London, 1978).
3. C.G. Jung, "The State of Psychotherapy Today", *Collected Works* (Routledge), vol. 10 (1934) (hereafter, *Collected Works* is implied; date is original publication).
4. "The Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious", vol. 7 (1928).
5. Vol. 10 (1934).
6. Quoted in *International Review of Psycho Analysis*, 4 (1977), 377.
7. "The Role of the Unconscious", vol. 10 (1918).
8. vol. 10 (1934).
9. Quoted in S. Graham, *Hitler, Germans and the "Jewish Question"* (Princeton, NJ, 1948), p. 94.
10. See S. Haffner, *The Meaning of Hitler Hitler's Uses of Power: His Successes and Failures* (New York, 1979).
11. "The Role of the Unconscious", vol. 10 (1918).
12. "The Role of the Unconscious", vol. 10 (1918).
13. "Mind and Earth", vol. 10 (1927).
14. See H. Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism Introduction* (Oxford, 1967).
15. "The State of Psychotherapy Today", vol. 10 (1934).
16. "The State of Psychotherapy Today", vol. 10 (1934).
17. "Rejoinder to Dr Bally", vol. 10 (1934).
18. "Rejoinder to Dr Bally", vol. 10 (1934).
19. "The Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious", vol. 7 (1928).
20. For a fuller account and critique of Jung's methods, see my *The Plural Psyche: Personality, Morality and the Father* (London, 1989), especially chaps. 1 and 6.

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