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## **ABSTRACT**

### **WICKEDNESS IN HIGH PLACES: A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE FILM *HITLER'S CHILDREN***

**by  
Alicia Pearlette James**

The premise of this investigation is that propaganda works best when presented through a fictional work rather than through factual documents. The fact/fiction combination of the non-fiction book, *Education for Death: The Making of the Nazi* (1941) and the fictional feature-length film, *Hitler's Children* (1943) is used to illustrate how film propagandists use camera angles, lighting, music, dialogue, narration, storyline, footage from other films, and cinematic conventions to dramatize and emphasize several scenes from the book. Attention is also paid to scenes in the film that dramatize government war aims, as supplied by the Bureau of Motion Pictures of the Office of War Information. An analysis of the book and film reveals that propaganda, especially when conveyed through fiction, works best when it reinforces and builds upon the viewer's pre-existing beliefs.

**WICKEDNESS IN HIGH PLACES:  
A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE FILM  
*HITLER'S CHILDREN***

**by  
Alicia Pearlette James**

**A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of  
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**APPROVAL PAGE**

**WICKEDNESS IN HIGH PLACES:  
A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE FILM  
*HITLER'S CHILDREN***

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THIS PAPER IS DEDICATED TO:

My ever-faithful Heavenly Father

who is always with me even when I try to hide from Him

My mother, Ruth Elizabeth Norfleet James,

who has reread this paper as much as I have

My sisters Cecile, Tynelle, and Glennis

My brothers-in-law Clifton and James

My nieces Ruth, Nicole, Rachel, Hillary, and Jasmine

My nephews Francisco, James and David

My cousin Basil Alexander Browne

My godmother Flora Eldeca Smith

My aunt Louise Marie Norfleet Whitehouse

And to all my teachers and friends

past and present

IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

Cyril Edmund James - my father

Maude Alicia Browne - my paternal grandmother

Jessie Pearl Holland Norfleet - my maternal grandmother

James Henry Norfleet - my maternal grandfather

Edna Browne Leid - my great aunt

Lillian Fraser Soden - my godmother

Lelia Ann Norfleet McCleave - my aunt

Jean Barrow James - my aunt



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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood,  
but against principalities, against powers,  
against the rulers of the darkness of this world,  
against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

*(Ephesians 6:12)*

This thesis investigates how the creators of the feature length film *Hitler's Children* (1943) used the cinematic and narrative conventions of the time to dramatize Gregor Ziemer's nonfiction book, *Education for Death: The Making of the Nazi* (1941). I will examine in detail how the filmmakers used camera angles, lighting, music, dialogue, narration, storyline, footage from other films, and cinematic conventions to dramatize and emphasize the central theme of Ziemer's book—that to truly win World War II, America would not only have to defeat the Nazis, but would also have to win back the hearts, minds and very souls of the German youth (*Hitler's Children*; Ziemer 193-200).

My premise is that propaganda works best when presented through a fictional work rather than through factual documents. The fact/fiction combination of *Education for Death: The Making of the Nazi* and *Hitler's Children* echoes how other social issues have been made more personal to the general public through the use of fiction. Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, made slavery real to many people who would have never touched or believed an abolitionist paper (Stowe viii, 484). Charles Dickens'

novels personalized the plight of London's poor, while John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* did the same for the migrant farm workers of the America's Great Depression (Hornstein 145, 497). While nonfiction writers had written about all of these social issues long before they became the subjects of fiction, it was the power of imaginative literature that finally motivated the public at large to seek a solution to the problem in question (Hornstein 145, 497; Stowe viii, 484). But why did the fiction succeed where the nonfiction had failed?

I believe that one of the best ways to answer this question is to examine in detail how certain scenes from the nonfiction book, *Education for Death*, were recreated for dramatic effect in the fictional feature-length film, *Hitler's Children* directed by Edward Dmytryk for RKO. While I plan to examine a number of the scenes in the film for their propagandistic value, I will pay particular attention to those film scenes that have a counterpart in the book.

This will be done by presenting first the scene as it appears in *Education for Death*, and then as adapted for use in *Hitler's Children*. The two versions will then be compared, noting their differences and similarities and the adaptation analyzed for its rhetoric elements. The motion picture scenes without corresponding book scenes will then be analyzed for rhetoric elements.

Before an analysis of the film itself, I will look at the institutions that determined what Americans saw—and did not see—on the motion picture screen, namely the Hollywood Studio System, the Production Code Administration, and the Motion Picture Branch of the Office of War Information.

### 1.1 The Hollywood Studio System

No one has yet advanced an argument in support of producing a picture known in advance to be doomed to domestic exhibition exclusively.

*Motion Picture Herald*, August 14, 1943 (Koppes 113)

In his book, *The Hollywood Studio System*, Douglas Gomery states that the Hollywood studio system owes its start to a three-part strategy developed by Famous Players-Lasky; a strategy that allowed Famous Players studio to dominate the motion picture industry as no other film company had or would (4).

Famous Players-Lasky's three-part strategy was as follows:

1. Promote the movie stars instead of the studio.

This strategy allowed the studio to promote its films as unique products.

While customers may not remember the name of the studio that produced a particular film, they would remember the name of a performer they enjoyed watching, and would return to see that performer in another film.

By placing popular stars under contract, the studio improved its chances of making consistently high receipts at the box office.

2. Distribute the films both nationally and internationally.

By developing cost effective distribution networks, Famous Players was able to economically surpass its rivals in the industry. Expanding its networks into foreign markets strengthened its stranglehold on its market share and allowed Famous Players to crowd out many of its smaller rivals.

3. Dominate “exhibition through ownership of a small number of first- and some second-run picture palaces in major metropolitan areas.”

By owning the large first-run motion picture theaters in the large metropolitan areas, Famous Players was able to capture the bulk of any region’s box office proceeds. (4-5, 9, 12)

Noting Famous Players studio’s success, the other studios soon followed its lead, and, by 1929, eight studios dominated the American motion picture industry—five major studios (Famous Players-Lasky, now called Paramount; Loew’s, the parent company of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer; Warner Brothers; Fox, and Radio-Keith-Orpheum), and three minor studios (Universal, Columbia and United Artists). Their ability to command the marketplace forced their smaller rivals out of business and made it difficult, if not impossible, for new studios to gain a foothold in the industry. By 1929, the Big Eight “had successfully turned the US movie industry into a smooth running, profitable trust.” (2, 4-6)

However, while this three-part strategy strengthened and stabilized the motion picture industry, it also made it very dependent on foreign markets. Forty percent of the industry’s revenues, even after the advent of sound on film, came from oversea markets in Asia, Latin America, and Europe (Koppes 21). Europe was by far the largest market, with American films capturing ninety-five percent of the British market and seventy percent of the French market (Jowett 68). Foreign markets were not only valuable for first-run movies, but also for the re-release of older movies no longer being shown in the United States (Koppes 21).

With so much revenue coming from foreign markets, Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, in their book, *Hollywood Goes to War*, say that most of the motion picture studios were reluctant to do anything that would jeopardize this source of income. Films dealing with Hitler, Mussolini, or the Spanish Civil War in any realistic or thoughtful manner were sure to be banned overseas and were guaranteed to attract the ire of the strong isolationist faction in the United States. Therefore, the industry tended to shy away from political subjects that the other media were tackling. After all, the motion picture industry is a business, and in a capitalist society, the goal of a business is to make a profit (13, 15, 21).

The economic upheavals caused by the industry's upgrade to sound and the Great Depression further encouraged the studios to choose profit over social or political controversy (Vaughn 57). Heavily dependent on investment bankers, the studios were loath to do anything that would make them less attractive as an investment; they had to stay profitable (57-58). If that meant ignoring the events taking place in Europe to keep their overseas markets open, then so be it (Perlmutter 20).

However, in the late 1930s, as fascism and Nazism slowly spread across Europe, the overseas markets of the United States motion picture industry had begun to dry up and, by 1940, they were no longer a significant source of income (Koppes 22). Its overseas markets gone, Hollywood finally caught up with the rest of the world and joined the fight against fascism (22).

Even so, according to Tom Perlmutter in his book, *War Movies*, in the late 1930s, Hollywood was still very cautious in how it dealt with the war in Europe. Two of the first motion pictures to deal with the Spanish Civil War, *The Last Train From Madrid*

(1937) and *Blockade* (1938) never identified the factions involved in the conflict; nor did they examine the reasons behind the conflict. The Spanish Civil War was simply used as a backdrop to the melodramas imposed over it (20).

In 1939, however, Warner Brothers produced *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* (1939); this film left no doubt as to who the enemy was (Koppes 27; Perlmutter 20). Based on a true event, the capture in New York City of a nest of Nazi spies and their subsequent conviction, *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* portrayed Nazi Germany as a genuine threat to the United States (Koppes 27-28). As expected, the film was banned in Germany, Italy and Spain (30). Neutral countries, such as Ireland, Switzerland, Holland, Norway and several Latin American countries, also refused to show it (30). Even London refused to show it until “several derogatory references to Hitler” were removed (30).

Despite the market loss, however, the dam had been breached, and more anti-Nazi films began to trickle out of Hollywood: Charlie Chaplin’s classic, *The Great Dictator* (1940) satirized Hitler and his regime, exposing many of the regime’s evils; *Four Sons* (1940) depicted a family being torn apart by the sons’ differing political views regarding Nazism; *Escape* (1940) and *I Married a Nazi* (1940) contrasted good and bad Germans, bad Germans being those who supported the Nazi regime, while *The Mortal Storm* (1940) addressed “the Jewish question in Germany” (Koppes 31-23, 34-35; Perlmutter 20).

The reaction to these films was mixed; while Chaplin’s *The Great Dictator* grossed \$5 million worldwide, *The Mortal Storm*, produced by MGM, angered the Nazi regime so much, all MGM films were immediately banned in Germany and in all of its occupied countries (Koppes 32; Perlmutter 20). Germany later banned all American films, and Italy, its ally, did the same (Koppes 34). Their lucrative European markets

now gone, the American motion picture studios, already anti-fascist in political persuasion, began producing anti-fascist films on a regular basis (34, 43).

According to Koppes and Black, however, the troubles of the studios were not over; they still had to contend with the fury of the American isolationists. The American isolationists had been watching the motion picture industry since the early 1930s and were becoming irritated by the increasingly militaristic tone of American films. *Sergeant York* (1941), a fact-based film in which a young man, after much prayer and contemplation, changes from a conscientious objector into a World War I war hero, was the last straw. The film proved very popular and the United States Army used its popularity to good advantage; any man coming into a recruiting center received an eight-page pamphlet on the real Alvin York as an added incentive to enlist (37-40).

Angered by the overtly interventionist message of *Sergeant York*, and the army's use of its popularity, the isolationists, lead by Senator Gerald P. Nye, convened a special subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce on September 9, 1941, to investigate what they claimed to be the pro-interventionist stance of the motion picture industry. The issue that angered the isolationists the most was the fact that, unlike the other media, which had given the isolationist viewpoint some exposure, the motion picture industry had presented only the interventionist side. And since the pro-intervention studios controlled the industry, the isolationist knew that their view would never make it to the motion picture screen unless the studios were forced to do so. So, the special subcommittee was convened to act as a platform for isolationist views and to expose the eight studios' monopoly of the industry (Koppes 17, 18, 39-42).

However, Senator Nye failed to take into consideration that the world had changed since 1936, the first time he tried to loosen the stranglehold the eight studios had on the industry. Three-fourths of the American public now saw Hitler as a threat to American security and agreed with President Franklin D. Roosevelt that the United States should provide “all aid short of war” to the Allies. When Nye began his attack on the motion picture industry, his line of inquiry did more harm than good to the isolationist cause (Koppes 18, 19, 39-41).

Nye believed that the reasons for the industry’s perceived interventionist leanings were:

- a. That the studio heads, the majority of whom were Jewish, would naturally want to attack a regime that attacked their fellow Jews.
- b. That the industry, having many members of foreign birth, mostly from Britain, would naturally be pro-British and pro-intervention.
- c. The Roosevelt administration was encouraging the industry to make pro-intervention movies.
- d. The industry was run by a handful of men that allowed only their viewpoint to be expressed. (40-41)

Koppes and Black say that the studios were ready for Nye’s attack, however. They had hired former 1940 presidential candidate Wendell Willkie to plead their case before the committee (18, 42). Abandoning the traditional defense of the industry that motion pictures were “purely entertainment” and therefore devoid of social and political subject matter, Willkie accused Nye of un-American thinking and questioned the legality of the hearings (14, 43).



Willkie stated that

if the Committee feels that the racial and geographic background of American citizens is a condition to be investigated, there is no need for the investigation . . . We frankly state that in the motion-picture industry there are in positions both prominent and inconspicuous, both Nordics and non-Nordics, Jews and gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, native and foreign-born. (Koppes 43)

As to government intervention in Hollywood, Willkie fiercely denied that the Roosevelt administration had anything to do with the industry's pro-Allies position (43).

The motion picture industry and its executives are opposed to the Hitler regime . . . we make no pretense of friendliness to Nazi Germany . . . Frankly . . . the motion-picture industry would be ashamed if it were not doing voluntarily what it is now doing in this patriotic cause. (43)

As far as the studios were concerned, the movies they made accurately portrayed the events taking place in Europe. They stated that one had only to examine the content of the other media to see the truth of this (43).

Regarding equal time for the isolationist viewpoint, what would the isolationists have the studios do, Willkie retorted? For every film lampooning Hitler, should there also be a film lampooning Winston Churchill (43)?

When Ernst McFarland, the lone interventionist chosen to sit on the committee, asked Senator Nye which films, and what elements of these films, he had found to be particularly objectionable, Nye not only had trouble remembering exactly which films he

had seen, but could not remember the plots of those he remembered seeing. In fact, Nye sabotaged his own position by admitting that he had found *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* to be an “exceedingly good” motion picture (43-45).

The isolationists had lost. Nye’s performance at the hearings had made him appear anti-Semitic, xenophobic, ignorant of the issues, and nonchalant about the danger posed by Hitler. In contrast, the studios with their well-defined anti-fascist agenda and ethnic diversity appeared to be the true defenders of America’s freedom and security. On September 26, 1941, the hearings were adjourned. They were officially cancelled on December 8, 1941, the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor (45).

The United States was now at war, and Hollywood, proudly noting that the chemical composition of film was similar to that of smokeless gunpowder, eagerly opened fire on the Third Reich (Doherty 86; Koppes 45).

## **1.2 The Motion Picture Production Code**

Classical Hollywood cinema might be flippantly defined as a Jewish-owned business selling Roman Catholic theology to Protestant America.

(Doherty 5)

The Motion Picture Production Code of 1930 was the culmination of a decades-long struggle between the motion picture industry and the civic and religious groups, mostly Catholic, that sought to control it (Vaughn 39).

According to Koppes and Black, the motion picture industry had always had an aura of unwholesomeness about it. Motion pictures owed their existence to the working class immigrants of the East Coast. Many of the men who would later run the great Hollywood studios had had their start among the working class: Paramount's Adolph Zukor had sold furs; MGM's Samuel Goldwyn had made gloves; Carl Laemmle of Universal had sold clothing, while Louis B. Mayer had run a burlesque house. Using their marketing skills, and the techniques of vaudeville as a guide, these future studio moguls had been able to understand and exploit the wants and desires of the urban poor (3-5; 8). As a result, they were able to turn a novelty into a full-scale and highly profitable industry (Koppes 4-5; Moley 17).

However, when motion pictures began to move from the urban areas to the nation as a whole, from the East and Midwest to the West, and to change from a mostly Protestant-owned industry to a mostly Jewish-owned industry, motion pictures came to be seen as a threat to traditional Judeo-Christian and middleclass values (Koppes 4; Moley 25-26; Vaughn 39). In its move from the nickelodeon peep shows to the motion picture palaces, the motion picture industry had made its product, and the ideas contained therein, accessible to anyone, young or old, who could afford the price of admission (*Film* 235; Moley 17-18; Vaughn 39-40).

According to Stephen Vaughn, the very characteristic that made film so attractive as a potential propaganda tool caused some to attack it as a corrupting force, namely, the ability of film to communicate ideas to a mass audience. The fact that many of the studio heads were Jewish only added fuel to the fire, as many critics harbored anti-Semitic

sentiments which led them to view the then current movie themes as anti-Christian (39-40).

The concerns of the critics were not assuaged by the advent of The Jazz Age. From 1918 to 1928, American youth rejected many of the established codes of social behavior (Moley 25). Subjects such as sex, drug use, birth control, criminal violence, abortion, suicide, and race relations, heretofore considered taboo, were being discussed openly in books, on the stage, and on the motion picture screen (Moley 25-26; Vaughn 40).

When criticized that their films were immoral, the studio heads were quick to point out that their films dealt with the same issues found in other entertainment vehicles, such as books and plays. Since motion pictures were entertainment vehicles, like books and plays, the studio heads asked, should they not also be allowed to explore the same topics as the other media (Koppes 13-15)?

The answer was a resounding no. Books and plays were by their nature self-limiting, the critics countered (*Film* 235; Vaughn 39). Books had limited readerships, and plays were usually accessible only to adults (*Film* 235; Vaughn 39). Movies, however, were a form of mass entertainment, that

made ideas previously restricted to comparatively small groups of readers and urban theatergoers accessible to virtually everyone by projecting them on film screens everywhere, from the largest city to the smallest village. (Vaughn 39)

Motion pictures, with their moving images and recorded sounds, were considered to be more seductive, and therefore more dangerous, than books and plays; motion pictures

were considered to be in a different category altogether, at least as far as the critics were concerned (41-42).

The motion picture industry, however, continued to argue that motion pictures, as an art form, had the right to explore the same topics as the other art forms, and that motion pictures were protected by the First Amendment (39-40). Unfortunately for the studio moguls, the United States Supreme Court did not agree.

In 1915, the Supreme Court ruled that the motion picture industry was a business “pure and simple” and therefore not protected by the First Amendment (Koppes 13). This meant that state and local governments could dictate to theater owners what could and could not be shown in their jurisdictions (13). With the ruling of the Supreme Court to back them up, those critical of the current trends in motion pictures demanded that the studio heads clean up their act voluntarily, or risk further government intervention. (13-14).

In response to this public outcry, Raymond Moley, author of *The Hays Office*, tells us that the studios established the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, also known as the Hays Office, after William Harrison Hays, the man hired to run the organization (32). The MPPDA was to act as a trade association that would

foster the common interests of those engaged in the motion picture industry in the United States, by establishing and maintaining the highest possible moral and artistic standards in motion picture production, by developing the educational as well as the entertainment value and the general usefulness of the motion picture, by diffusing accurate and reliable information with

reference to the industry, by reforming abuses relative to the industry, by securing freedom from unjust or unlawful exactions, and by other lawful and proper means. (36-37)

To bring about these reforms, Hays set four goals for himself and the MPPDA:

1. To keep the industry free from governmental censorship
2. To make the industry more and more self-regulatory
3. To increase the public demand for quality pictures by increasing their interest in and understanding of the industry
4. To improve relations between the various factions of the motion industry, many of whom mistrusted each other intensely (44)

Moley states that since the early 1920s, the industry had been trying to formulate guidelines to assist filmmakers in deciding which topics were suitable for the screen and which were not. On June 19, 1924, the motion picture industry leaders agreed to be bound by a set of guidelines developed by Hays called the *Formula*. The *Formula* allowed the MPPDA to review books and plays the studios wanted to adapt for film before actual production began. However, it did not permit the MPPDA to reject the material submitted or to penalize any studio that disregarded their suggestion not to adapt the submitted material for the screen. Nor did the *Formula* specifically state what topics were considered unacceptable for production. Nevertheless, the *Formula* was a step toward self-regulation, and each year from 1924 to 1926, the number of rejected properties decreased in number (58-59).

In 1926, however, motion pictures began to speak, and the demand for new pictures and new material to base them on increased dramatically. Under pressure to

meet the demand, the studios found ways to bypass the boundaries set by the *Formula*. This was not hard to do since compliance with the *Formula* was voluntary and the *Formula* could be applied only to screenplays based on material previously presented in books, stories or plays. Thus, the MPPDA could do little to stem the onslaught of objectionable original films (61-63).

Fearing a resurgence in the call for government regulation of the industry, Moley says that Hays, based in New York, sent Jason Joy, a member of the MPPDA's public relations team, to California to talk to civic groups and to state and municipal censor boards to identify what they found objectionable in the films they rejected. Armed with this information, Joy returned to New York, and the MPPDA used his information to develop the next set of regulatory guidelines, the eleven *Don'ts* and the twenty-six *Be Carefuls* (63-64).

Unlike the *Formula*, the *Don'ts* and *Be Carefuls* told producers what they could and could not do, and what was and was not acceptable. This, Joy suggested, would help the producers avoid expensive editing after the film was completed, for unlike silent films, editing sound films was very costly. Scenes deemed objectionable by the local and state censor boards would have to be re-shot, greatly increasing the cost of a film. It was therefore more economical to cut the offending scenes before the movie was shot. The producers agreed, but since the *Don'ts* and *Be Carefuls* still left the producers a great deal of leeway as to how to handle certain topics, a producer could follow the guidelines and still make an objectionable film. Clearly, something else was needed. (64, 67)

In 1929, Hays met with Martin Quigley, publisher of *The Motion Picture Herald*, who told Hays of an idea he had for bringing the motion picture studios under control.

Quigley felt that the studio heads might be more willing to comply with the guidelines if they understood the reasoning, the underlying philosophy, of the guidelines. Hays agreed and encouraged Quigley to develop his idea into a useable code. Thus encouraged, Quigley, in conjunction with Daniel J. Lord, a Jesuit priest, composed the document that formed the basis for the *Motion Picture Production Code of 1930* (68, 69, 70).

The *Production Code of 1930* had two parts: 1) the *Code*, a summary of the document written by Quigley and Lord, and 2) the *Reasons*, the original document as written by Quigley and Lord detailing the underlying philosophy of the *Code*. The summary mentioned topics not found in the original document and incorporated some of the elements found in the *Don'ts* and *Be Carefuls*. It explained exactly how objectionable subjects should be handled. (70-71)

Gerald Gardner in *The Censorship Papers* states that the specific areas covered by the *Production Code* were:

01. Crime - crime was not to be glorified in any way and wrongdoers were always to be punished
02. Brutality - excessive, protracted scenes of cruelty were not to be shown
03. Sex - marriage and family life were to be upheld
04. Vulgarity - no double meanings or vulgar expressions
05. Obscenity - no obscene gestures, dances, words, or sexual actions
06. Blasphemy and Profanity - God referred to only in prayer and with respect; no swear words
07. Costumes - no nudity, unless in a documentary showing the customs of a specific culture, and no suggested nudity



08. Religion - the clergy and religious ceremonies of all religions, as well as the religions themselves, were to be treated with respect
09. Special Subjects - bedroom scenes, drinking, hangings, electrocutions, surgical procedures, interrogation methods
10. National Feelings - a motion picture should not incite bigotry or hatred between people of differing religions, races or nationalities, and all national flags, political figures, and ethnic groups should be represented fairly  
[This element of the Code was a major stumbling block to filmmakers in the years prior to the United States entrance into the war (Koppes 15). Joseph Breen, anti-Semitic, anticommunist and the head of the Production Code Administration, favored the far right and did all he could not to offend the Axis powers of Europe before the United States entered the war (22).]
11. Titles - the title of a motion picture cannot be vulgar, obscene or indecent or violate any other part of the code
12. Cruelty to Animals - animals were not to be treated harshly and animal scenes were to be done under the guidance of an American Humane Association representative (208-212).

On March 31, 1930, the members of the MPPDA accepted the *Code* and agreed to abide by it (Moley 70). But, as with the other guidelines, their compliance was short lived, as the MPPDA had no way of enforcing its decisions (77).

According to Koppes and Black, the Great Depression caused the studios to become more daring in their exploration of sensuality, drugs and violence as they competed for the dwindling discretionary income of their patrons. In theatres across the

country, movie patrons were titillated by the sensuality of Claudette Colbert's suggestive milk bath in *Cleopatra* (1934), and Hedy Lamar's nude swim scene in *Ecstasy* [sic] (1932); intrigued by the use and enjoyment of marijuana by the starlets in *Murder at the Vanities* (1934); shocked by the brutality of the Southern prison system as depicted in *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* (1932), and by the violence exhibited in the ubiquitous gangster films, such as *Scarface* (1932). Even more scandalous to some was the idea presented in *Gabriel over the White House* (1933), that the establishment of a quasi-fascist dictatorship might help end the depression (13).

The critics, especially the Catholic organizations, had had enough. In 1934, the Catholic bishops threatened to organize a nationwide boycott of motion pictures if the studio heads did not comply with the *Code*. Hays, fearing that a successful boycott would lead to government intervention, hastily agreed to the demands of the bishops, and determined to bring the Big Eight into line with the *Code* (Koppes 14).

Raymond Moley states that on July 1, 1934, the MPPDA established the Production Code Administration and chose Joseph Breen to head it. The PCA would act as the enforcement division of the MPPDA; it would be the responsibility of Breen and his staff to make sure that film producers adhered to the Code not only in letter, but in spirit as well (82-83).

The MPPDA had had enough of the studios' evasive maneuvers. The MPPDA would leave them no leeway this time. No member of the MPPDA would be allowed to distribute or exhibit any film not bearing the approval of the PCA. A producer who disagreed with the PCA's decision could appeal to the directors of the MPPDA, but the MPPDA's decision would be final. Any member studio that did not comply with the

decision of the PCA and the MPPDA would be fined \$25,000. The MPPDA was determined to tame the motion picture monster before the government did, but would their strategy work this time? (82-83)

Yes, for two reasons. First, adherence to the *Code* would forestall government censorship (57). The studio heads knew that if the nationwide boycott proved to be a success, the next step would probably be another attempt at government-supported censorship, the very thing the MPPDA had been created to stop (Moley 81; Vaughn 42). With public opinion turning against them, the studio heads decided that it was time to further submit to the decrees of the MPPDA (*Film* 241; Moley 80-83).

Second, when the studios were converting from silent filming to sound filming, they had borrowed large sums of money from bankers who saw the motion picture industry as a prime investment (Vaughn 57). With the coming of the Great Depression, the studios' dependence on the banks increased, and as a result, the bankers began to demand more of a say in the running of the industry (57-58). These bankers, spurred on by the desire to secure their investment in the industry, encouraged the studios to adhere to the *Code* as a means of stabilizing the motion picture industry, and as a means of avoiding government intervention (58-59). Towards this end, the banks agreed with the PCA not to back any picture that had not received the PCA's seal of approval; thus, the studios had no choice but to comply with the demands of the PCA (57).

The motion picture monster had been tamed and would remain tamed until 1952 when the United States Supreme Court declared that motion pictures were protected by the First Amendment and therefore could no longer be censored (64).

### 1.3 Hollywood and the Office of War Information

Tell all the truth but tell it slant,  
Success in circuit lies . . .

Emily Dickinson

On June 13, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into existence the Office of War Information and named Elmer Davis as its head. The OWI was an amalgamation of four agencies: the Foreign Information Service became the core of OWI's Overseas Branch, while the Office of Government Reports, the Division of Information of the Office of Emergency Management, and the Office of Facts and Figures were absorbed by OWI's Domestic Branch (Koppes 58-59).

As America's major propaganda organization, OWI had three duties:

1. To develop campaigns to enhance the American public's understanding of the war both at home and overseas;
2. To act as a clearinghouse for all government information activities, and
3. To act as a liaison between the various media and the United States government (59).

The Bureau of Motion Pictures, once a part of the Office of Government Reports, and headed by Lowell Mellett, was transferred, along with Mellett, to the Domestic Branch of the newly created OWI, and assigned the task of overseeing all motion pictures, both government and private. From its Washington-based offices, the BMP supervised the creation of all government propaganda shorts, while the Hollywood office, headed by Nelson Poynter, acted as a link between the Hollywood studios and the OWI

(59). The Hollywood office of the BMP also produced its own films and distributed films produced by other government agencies (Winkler 57). Its main contact in Hollywood was the War Activities Committee, an organization composed of Hollywood producers, actors, directors, labor unions, and theater owners established to nurture mutual cooperation in support of the war effort (McClure 164).

President Roosevelt believed that motion pictures could be one of the most effective means of informing and entertaining United States citizens (Jowett 311). Since approximately eighty million people—two-thirds of the American population—attended the movies on a weekly basis, motion pictures seemed to offer an excellent way to mobilize the country behind the war effort (Koppes 1, 64; Jowett 311).

OWI's head, Elmer Davis, agreed with Roosevelt's assessment of the motion picture as a propaganda vehicle:

The easiest way to inject a propaganda idea into most people's minds is to let it go in through the medium of an entertainment picture when they do not realize that they are being propagandized.

(Koppes 64)

To the delight of both Roosevelt and Davis, the leaders of the motion picture industry were more than eager to proffer their assistance, as they had no doubt that their motion pictures would be of value to the war effort (Koppes 11; 43). After all, the studios asked, did not the Axis forces ban all American movies in countries they conquered (Wanger 109)? Obviously, the Axis realized and feared the power of American motion pictures (109). But what did the government want to tell the people and just how much propaganda would the American public tolerate?

The members of the Roosevelt administration remembered all too well the backlash that had occurred after World War I regarding the propaganda activities of the Committee on Public Information (Koppes 48, 50). Established in April 1917 by executive order of President Woodrow Wilson, the Committee on Public Information came to be known as the Creel Committee, a testimony to the overpowering personality of its chairman, George Creel (48). Seeing the activities of the committee as a huge advertising campaign, with American intervention in World War I as the product, Creel organized a propaganda campaign the likes of which has never been duplicated (Koppes 48; Winkler 3). Through the use of posters, pamphlets, Four Minute Men—a network of volunteers that gave patriotic speeches in movie theatres during intermissions—and the new medium of film, Creel was able to stir up such hatred and hysteria that everything German became anathema to the American people (Doherty 89-90; Winkler 3).

Portrayed as barbaric Huns, Germans appeared intent on conquering the world for their own selfish ends. German spies, the CPI hinted, were everywhere. Anyone voicing the least sympathy for anything German might well be a traitor in disguise. (Winkler 3)

The motion pictures of the World War I era reflected this anti-German sentiment. While anti-German hysteria ran rampant in the streets of America, motion picture patrons paid to watch anti-German feature films: *Joan the Woman* (1917), *The Little American* (1917), and *Till I Come Back to You* (1918), three films in which Mary Pickford risked rape at the hands of the barbaric, savage Huns; *Hearts of the World* (1918), one of the first fiction films to use actual war footage for authenticity and impact; *To Hell With the Kaiser!* (1918), *The Kaiser, Beast of Berlin* (1918), and *Escaping the Hun*, three films in

which invading Huns were shown raping Belgian virgins and killing Belgian babies (Fyne 2; Doherty 91; Winkler 3).

Disillusionment replaced war fever at the end of World War I, however, and many Americans accused the British and the CPI of having used deceptive propaganda to draw America into the war (Rhodes 139; Winkler 3). The word *propaganda* acquired a sinister connotation, a connotation that seemed justified by the role propaganda played in the rise of fascism in 1930's Europe (Rhodes 139; Winkler 3). Having lived through the horrors of trench warfare, most Americans were determined never to go to war again (Fyne 6; Jowett 67). As a result, the United States Congress dissolved the Committee on Public Information on June 30, 1919, and the motion picture industry's excursion into war propaganda came to a standstill (Jowett 67).

Sensing the pacifistic trend in public opinion, the motion picture industry started to make anti-war films that portrayed the horrors of war as experienced by the soldiers (Doherty 94). The classic *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930), which won an Academy Award for its director Lewis Whitestone, was such an anti-war film (93-94). This film described World War I from the benign German point of view. Gone were the images of the barbarous Huns, women in constant danger of being raped, and butchered babies (Fyne 2; Doherty 91). In their place were the images of handsome, naive young men who had been led to believe that war was an adventure, men who seemed too young to die (Fyne 7). The young men in the film could have been American men, and no doubt, many a World War I veteran seeing the film identified fully with the hero's feelings of alienation upon returning home and his climactic denunciation of all war (6). These memories, along with the economic and social upheavals brought about by the

Great Depression, only served to increase the American public's desire to remain neutral in the coming war (7).

All hope of staying out of the new war was destroyed, however, by the sneak attack of December 7, 1941. The question was no longer how to stay out of the war, but rather how best to mobilize the American people to fight the war that had come to them. The OWI had to find the answer.

There was one point Elmer Davis was adamant about regarding the type of propaganda the OWI would be producing; unlike the propaganda of the fascist dictatorships, American propaganda would speak only the truth (Koppes 59; Rhodes 144). True, it would be the truth as interpreted by the OWI, but it would be the truth nonetheless (Rhodes 144). But exactly what truths did the OWI want motion pictures to reflect?

According to Koppes and Black, during the first year of the war, the studios tended to use the war solely as a backdrop for their regular fare of gangster pictures, musicals and comedies. OWI believed that these pictures added little to the public's understanding of the government's war aims. So, in 1942, Nelson Poynter, head of the BMP's Hollywood Office, issued the *Government Information Manual for the Motion Picture Industry*, which outlined OWI's vision of the war. This manual explained to the filmmakers exactly what topics the OWI wanted them to deal with in their films and provided filmmakers with seven questions and five categories (60-69).

The seven questions were:

1. Will this picture help win the war?



2. What war information problem does it seek to clarify, dramatize or interpret?
3. If it is an “escape” picture, will it harm the war effort by creating a false picture of America, her allies, or the world we live in?
4. Does it merely use the war as the basis for a profitable picture, contributing nothing of real significance to the war effort and possibly lessening the effect of other pictures of more importance?
5. Does it contribute something new to our understanding of the world conflict and the various forces involved, or has the subject already been adequately covered?
6. When the picture reaches its maximum circulation on the screen, will it reflect conditions as they are and fill a need current at that time, or will it be out-dated?
7. Does the picture tell the truth or will the young people of today have reason to say they were misled by propaganda?

[It was this question that caused the OWI reviewers the most concern regarding the subject matter of *Hitler's Children*. They feared that the American public would view it as a revival of the Hun baiting of World War I. In the end, however, the reviewers decided to approve the film for production stating that the film “exposed a little understood aspect of the Third Reich and that the role of good Germans indicated that ‘Germans basically are

decent human beings who appreciate freedom.” (Koppes 298)]  
(66-67)

The five categories were:

1. Why We Fight . . . “Show democracy at work . . . in the community, the factory, the army” . . .
2. The Enemy. The enemy was not the entire German, Japanese, or Italian people, nor even the ruling elites. “The enemy is many people infected with a poisonous doctrine of hate, of might making right” . . .

[*Hitler’s Children* fell into this category, as it was one of the first films to explore how the youth of Nazi Germany were being indoctrinated with Nazi ideology, and to explore the oppressive nature of the Nazi regime. (Jeavons 122)]

3. The United Nations. Thirty nations were allied against the Axis . . . The Allies should be given their due; the U.S. should not be shown winning the war single handedly . . .
4. The Home Front . . . The movies should show everyone sacrificing cheerfully for the war . . .
5. The Fighting Forces . . . The agency hoped movies could stress all components of the armed forces, whether glamorous or not, show the careful training of G.I.’s, and prepare the public for casualties. (67-69)

These guidelines from the OWI were in effect a second production code for the industry, a code whose aims on occasion conflicted with the aims of the PCA's code. For while the function of the PCA's code was to remove overtly political material from motion pictures, the function of the OWI's code was to insert it. This function was hard to accomplish, however, because, like the early PCA, the OWI had no way of enforcing its guidelines, and the studios often ignored its suggestions (69).

In 1943, however, the BMP, now under the leadership of Ulric Bell, joined forces with the Office of Censorship, which agreed not to license any film for overseas distribution that had not been approved by the BMP. Like the PCA before it, the BMP had gained control of the Hollywood studios by taking control of the purse strings (112).

## CHAPTER 2

### PLOT SUMMARY OF *HITLER'S CHILDREN*

*Hitler's Children* takes place in pre-World War II Berlin, and the film revolves around the attempts of Professor Nichols (Kent Smith) to rescue his assistant, Anna Muller (Bonita Granville), a former student of Nichols, from a Nazi labor camp. During his quest to free Anna, Nichols is exposed to the various methods being used by the Nazis to bring about their so-called New Order.

Anna is a German-born American attending the American Colony School in Berlin. While at the school, Anna and her then teacher, Professor Nichols, befriend Karl Brunner (Tim Holt), an American-born German, and a member of the Hitler Youth, attending the adjacent Nazi-run Horst Wessel Schule. Anna and Karl's friendship is cut short, however, by Karl's increasing involvement in the Hitler Youth and the approaching war.

Years pass, and Anna becomes Professor Nichols's assistant at the American Colony School. During a Memorial Day celebration at the school, the Gestapo arrives to remove "undesirable" students and those of German blood. Even though Anna is a teacher and an American citizen, she is included in those to be removed. When Anna and Professor Nichols protest, they are taken to see the Gestapo lieutenant in charge, who turns out to be Anna and Professor Nichols's old friend, Karl Brunner.

At first, Anna is happy to see Karl, but soon realizes that he is not going to help her. Still in love with Anna, Karl hopes to convert her to Nazism by making her realize that, since she was born in Germany, her loyalty should be to the Fuehrer and Germany, not America. Anna is sent to a labor camp to be re-educated.

Anna cooperates with her captors at first, and becomes a trusted member of the labor camp staff. But Anna starts to rebel after Karl brings Nichols to visit her in the labor camp. Seeing Nichols's reaction to the activities taking place in the labor camp and in the rest home, she recalls her desire to fight for what she believes to be right, namely, democratic freedom. Therefore, when Karl tells Anna that he has recommended her for admittance to a special program at a Nazi university, Anna makes her true beliefs known. Horrified, Karl warns Anna of the danger to them both if she should make good on her threat to refuse the position.

Unmoved by Karl's plea, Anna refuses the position and is sent back to the labor camp, not as a staff member, but as part of the labor corps this time. She is forced to do manual labor and is also expected to bear a child for the State.

Knowing that she could never do this, Anna runs away from the camp, but is quickly recaptured. Because of her continued defiance, Anna is sentenced to public flogging and forced sterilization.

As a test of his loyalty to the Reich, Karl is ordered to officiate at Anna's flogging. Karl fails the test, however, as his love for Anna proves stronger than his love of Hitler and Nazism, and he stops the spectacle after Anna receives two lashes instead of the ten she had been sentenced to receive.

As a result of his disloyalty and her steadfast disobedience, Karl and Anna are charged with treason and sentenced to death. At their trial, which is being broadcast live throughout all of Germany, Karl denounces Nazism, and is immediately shot in the courtroom for his efforts. Anna, in turn, is shot running to his side. Karl and Anna die hand in hand, finding the freedom in death they were denied in life.

## CHAPTER 3

### TWICE TOLD TALES

In this chapter I will examine the scenes from Gregor Ziemer's, *Education for Death*, that were adapted for use in the film, *Hitler's Children*. Each section is subdivided into three subsections. The first section contains the scene as presented in *Education for Death*. The second section contains the scene as adapted for *Hitler's Children*. The third section contains an analysis of the rhetorical elements of the film, noting the underlying propaganda principles and the cinematic techniques used by the filmmaker to evoke the desired emotional response from the audience.

#### 3.1 Hitler Youth Rally

While this scene occurs towards the end of the book, it is the opening scene of the film, and is reprised at the end of the film. Acting as a frame for the main storyline, this scene sets the tone for the rest of the film, and illustrates an oft-used theme of American anti-Nazi films, that is, that Nazism is akin to a new religion and that Adolf Hitler is its malevolent deity (Shull 223-224). It also illustrates how American filmmakers used the film propaganda techniques of the Nazi filmmakers against them (Doherty 27).

##### 3.1.1 Hitler Youth Rally - *Education for Death* (Ziemer 119-121)

There were other occasions on which I experienced at first hand the power the Party exerts over young German boys. One stands out because the setting was the top of a venerable old mountain in Central Germany, the Brocken; part of Goethe's *Faust* plays there.

It was the night of 20 June, *Sonnenwende*, Festival of the sun. My Ministry letter had again proved effective; I was guest of an official who accompanied the Jungbann that was being rewarded for having done especially good work. It had the highest status in an ideology examination given all over Germany.

The reward was the permission to celebrate the Sun Festival on the hallowed mountain top.

We had driven up the Brocken by car. The boys arrived early in the evening by special army trucks. Usually they walked when they visited historic spots, walks of a hundred miles not being unusual; but time had been pressing.

The ceremonies began after the sun set, and lasted until midnight. A huge bonfire of pine logs, reminiscent of pagan celebrations, was set ablaze about ten o'clock. The boys squatted in a circle around the fire. For more than an hour they sat there listening to Nazi Jungvolk leaders urging them to dedicate their lives to a man who was the savior of all, Adolf Hitler.

Occasionally the boys were ordered to rise. They danced about the fire as if they were preparing for a ritual. As they danced, they sang; the songs sounded like medieval battle hymns, songs the youngsters of the Children's Crusade might have shouted.

After the songs came more addresses, more glowing eulogies of Hitler, Goering, Himmler, and Goebbels.

Then came the final song. The melody sounded familiar. I realized the boys had adopted and adapted the tune of *Fridericus Rex*, the defiant old military march of Frederick the Great.

I wrote down the words:

*Adolf Hitler is our savior, our hero.*

*He is the noblest being in the whole wide world.*

*For Hitler we live,*

*For Hitler we die.*

*Our Hitler is our Lord*

*Who rules a brave new world.*

It rhymes in German. They sang it in unison, they repeated it in harmony. Its stirring tones went far out into the night; its blasphemous words were carried away by the summer breeze.

As I sat there on the blunt peak and gazed out over the quiet semi-dark German countryside, I could see other fires on other hills. I was informed that all over Germany, in old castles, in historic spots, groups of young human beings were that night attending similar ceremonies.

It was midnight. The fire was low—glowing blood red. The breeze was cool.

The group leader, a shadowy silhouette against the distant stars, arose. His voice was high, shrill, as if he were inspired. I scribbled his words by the light of that fire.



'Boys,' he shouted, 'this is the holy hour of the Sonnenwende. To the boys of Hitler this hour has only one meaning. At this hour when the earth is closest to the sun, when it is consecrating itself to the sun, we have only one thought. We must be close to our sun. Our sun is Adolf Hitler. We, too, consecrate our lives to the sun, Adolf Hitler. Boys, arise!'

They did, raised their right hands in holy fervor.

While drums rolled with deep rumbling thunder, young German boys, not yet in their teens, repeated after their leader:

'I consecrate my life to Hitler; I am ready to sacrifice my life for Hitler; I am ready to die for Hitler, the savior, the Fuehrer.'

Silence followed the oath.

Under the summer sky the hearts of young males were bursting with hero-worship such as the world has not seen before.

Then a fanfare. The fire was dead. Silently the troop crept off to bed, leaving the mountain top to the night.

### **3.1.2 Hitler Youth Rally - *Hitler's Children* (01:19-02:55)**

Just as the credits for set decoration materialize out of the flames that separate each card of the opening credits, the introductory music changes from an orchestral crescendo to the steady martial beat of drums. The opening beat of the drums gives way to a military band playing a rousing accompaniment to robust male voices singing a song in praise of Hitler. The young men sing with such vigor, and the easily memorized tune has such a strong rousing beat, that one finds it difficult not to want to join in the festivities and sing

along. Only listening to and understanding the full implication of the words would give pause to a viewer not sympathetic to Nazism.

For Hitler Fuehrer

Our lives we give

Our noble leader

Forever may he live

Heil, Heil, Hitler Fuehrer

Shout our battle cry

For Hitler we will live

And for Hitler we will die

Heil, Heil, Hitler Fuehrer

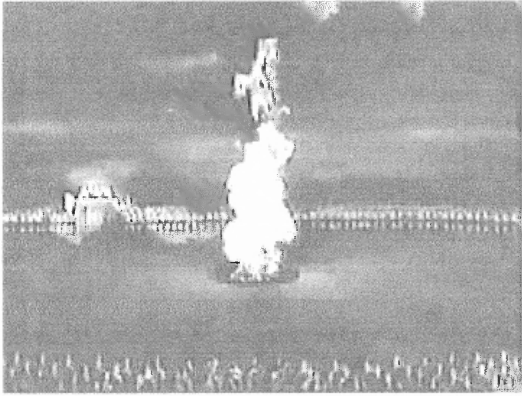
Shout our battle cry

For Hitler we will live

And for Hitler we will die

Suddenly, the song does not seem as pleasing as before. It may not be as blasphemous as the song from the book, but the words are still somewhat unnerving considering that they are supposed to be coming out of the mouths of young boys. (In the film, however, the voices are definitely those of young men, not boys. What effect might more youthful voices have had on the audience of this time period? Would children's voices have made the song seem less menacing or more obscene?)

While the song is being sung, the director's credit appears out of and disappears back into the flames. The flames that the card disappears into dissolve into other flames.



**Figure 3.1.1** Bonfire surrounded by Hitler Youth.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

As the camera pulls back slowly from these flames, we see that they are part of a huge bonfire, which is situated in the center of an enormous circle of boys, six to seven boys deep (Figure 3.1.1). A massive ceremonial platform stands behind and to the left of the bonfire. The camera continues to pull back until the bonfire is framed on either side by a Nazi flag. The flags appear to be situated on the top of a stadium wall and we are looking over the wall through the flags down at the bonfire and the circle of boys.

Actually, the platform and the huge circle of boys and the arena area itself appear to be part of a diorama—such as the ones seen in museums depicting every day life in ancient civilizations—in which a real flame has been placed. By shooting down upon the diorama from between the two small flags, which seem large because of their proximity to the camera lens, the filmmaker is able to create the impression of a huge gathering, when in reality he has only a limited number of people and resources at his disposal.

The most striking thing about this shot is its illusion of vastness. Everything in the shot seems huge: the bonfire, the circle of boys, the ceremonial platform, and the setting itself. This vastness, which is both awe-inspiring and frightening, bestows upon the spot the atmosphere of a pagan site of worship. And the Hitler Youth, under the guidance of their group leaders, have gathered here to worship.

Beneath an artificial sky streaked with light-colored elongated clouds that seem to glow slightly as though catching the rays of the yet un-risen sun, the boys and their group

leaders stand ready to perform a sacred task. It is an atmosphere pregnant with anticipation, as both the world and the boys stand waiting: the world for the sun to rise, the boys for the ceremony to begin.

As the boys finish singing, the camera cuts to a long shot of the Hitler Youth group leaders atop the ceremonial platform. With a final flourish of the trumpets, all falls silent. The leader of the rally stands on the platform, his right hand balled and resting on the rail of the platform, his left hand grasping his belt;



**Figure 3.1.2** Hitler Youth leader on platform.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

other group leaders stand on either side and behind him (Figure 3.1.2). The leader looks out upon the boys, and then shouts out, “Boys!” his voice echoing through the darkness. The echo effect of the leader’s voice adds to the illusion of a vast arena. It is not unlike the echo effect used during Gary Cooper’s final speech as the dying Lou Gehrig in *The Pride of the Yankees* (1942), another RKO production.



**Figure 3.1.3** Boys looking up at group leader.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

The camera cuts to a low angle long shot looking from right to left along the line of boys towards the platform. At his imperative, the boys have turned their heads as one to look up at their group leader (Figure 3.1.3). The low angle of the camera in this shot allows the viewer to see only the front line of boys. In

reality, there was probably only one line of boys. The dimensions of the circle having

been established by the diorama, the filmmaker could use camera and actor placement to convey the illusion of a huge gathering over into the live action shots, as the minds of the viewers would complete the illusion.

The boys stand at fierce attention as the group leader explains to them the significance of the ceremony in which they are about to participate.

This is the holy hour of the Sonnewende. To the boys of Adolf Hitler, The camera cuts to a slight low angle medium shot of the group leader and his entourage on the platform. Right hand on the platform edge and left hand grasping his belt, the group leader looks back and forth as he continues his speech.

this hour can have but one meaning. At this hour, when the earth is closest to the sun, when it is consecrating itself to the sun, we have only one thought—we too must be close to our sun, we too must consecrate our lives to our sun. And the sun that shines for us is Adolf Hitler.

The camera cuts again to a long shot looking from right to left along the line of boys towards the platform. The group leader shouts “Attention!” and the group leader, his entourage and all of the boys snap to attention. The rally leader tells the boys, “You’ll repeat after me the oath of allegiance to our Fuehrer.” The boys and the men on the platform all raise their right arms in salute.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of the rally leader. “I consecrate my life to Hitler.”

The camera cuts to a medium close up of some of the boys repeating the oath. They are shot in profile. The boys are lighted from the front as though the light is coming from the bonfire in the center of the circle towards which they are looking.

Again the director tries to maintain the illusion of a huge crowd by making it appear that the camera is being focused on only a small portion of the circle. The director does this by shooting along the curve of the line of boys forming the circle. The sound of many voices repeating the line also adds to the illusion.

The camera cuts again to a medium shot of the group leader. “I am ready to sacrifice my life for Hitler.”

The camera cuts to a medium frontal close-up of a few of the boys repeating the second line of the oath. We can see their faces now, or rather we can see clearly the faces of two of the boys, the two directly in front of the camera; the faces of the other boys are hidden by shadows and distance from the camera. The two boys that we can see are similar in appearance, having identical uniforms and haircuts. Their faces are also devoid of emotion.

The camera cuts back to a medium shot of the rally leader. “I am ready to die for Hitler.”

The camera cuts back to a closer shot of two of the boys, as they repeat the third line (Figure 3.1.4). Their faces are still devoid of emotion, but the viewer can nevertheless sense the intensity of their belief; the boys are taking the oath very seriously. The slightly low angle of the camera and the harsh lighting on



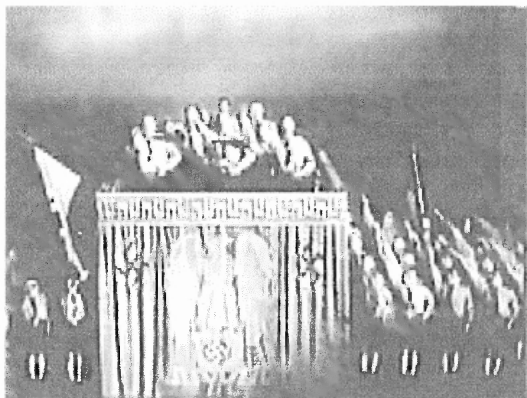
**Figure 3.1.4** Repeating the oath of consecration.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

the boys adds to the idea that these boys are not to be taken lightly. These are not Boy Scouts playing military games. These are boys being trained to be soldiers, and the boys are more than eager to be trained.

The camera cuts back once again to a medium shot of the rally leader. “My savior, my Fuehrer.”

The camera cuts again to a long shot of the platform along the line of saluting boys, similar in composition to the shot that began the sequence, as they repeat the final line of the oath.

The last line completed, the camera cuts to a frontal long shot of the platform. The circle of boys extends from either side of the platform. The boys salute in the direction of the platform, looking up toward the platform and their group leaders, while their group leaders salute and look straight towards the camera (Figure 3.1.5).



**Figure 3.1.5** Salute at conclusion of ceremony.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

As this shot appears on the screen, background music, which has been absent up to this point, begins to play. A jarring chord leads into a surrealistic sounding measure of the Hitler Youth song, as Kent Smith begins his first voiceover as Professor Nichols.

“Yes, these are Hitler’s children.”

Smith’s voice says in a rather matter-of-fact manner. His voice is gentle and soothing, a voice of reason, a voice to be trusted.

The camera cuts to a shot similar to the one at the beginning of the rally sequence, that is, an extreme long shot of the platform, circle and bonfire framed by a Nazi flag on to either side.

“It’s a little hard to believe when you see it for the first time,” Smith says. “It was hard for me too.” He continues to speak as the shot of the rally dissolves into the first shot of the second scene.

### **3.1.3 Hitler Youth Rally - Analysis**

Although the words uttered by the Hitler Youth and their leaders are taken almost verbatim from the book, the location of the rally has been changed. No doubt inspired by scenes from Leni Riefensthal’s documentary, *Triumph of the Will* (1935), the filmmaker has moved the rally from the mountaintop castle of the book to a Nuremberg-type arena for the film.

*Triumph of the Will*, according to Tom Doherty, is the film that taught American filmmakers how to use the medium to best political propaganda advantage. Artistic in its use of imagery and sound, and striking in its cinematography, it is considered to be a masterpiece of documentary film propaganda. Never before had American filmmakers seen film “used so well...for such unholy ends.” After seeing the film, Frank Capra, chief director of the American propaganda series, *Why We Fight* (1943-1945), wrote, “Satan himself couldn’t have devised a more blood-chilling super-spectacle” (17-27).

Clips from *Triumph of the Will* were used in a number of American feature films during the war years to add impact and authenticity to their storylines. Other feature films mimicked the settings and cinematic techniques used in the film to make their scenes appear more realistic. *Hitler’s Children* did both (Doherty 17-27).



This Nuremberg-like rally scene is an example of the influence *Triumph of the Will* had on how American movies portrayed the Nazis on the motion picture screen. The iconoclastic use of the swastika, the low-angle shots of the platform and boys, the positioning of lights to simulate light coming from the bonfire and the surrealistic scenery, all speak of the influence of Riefensthal's film. But whereas the Nazis used these elements in *Triumph of the Will* to compel submission from the nations they would conquer, American filmmakers used them to rally America and her Allies to fight the evil of Nazism. The Nazi propaganda machine had unwittingly given the Allies a powerful weapon to wield in the celluloid war (Doherty 22-23).

Another technique the filmmakers used to their advantage was Nazism's deification of Hitler. In their book, *Politics and Film*, Leif Furhammar and Folke Isaksson state that

filmmakers are unwilling to represent living people on a superhuman scale . . . [this] . . . taboo might . . . be due to a vague fear of conflict with Christian ideas of God (169).

While some of the followers of Hitler may have seen nothing amiss in this superhuman view of Hitler, many Americans would have found the idea of children *consecrating* their lives to their *sun* [Son?] and *savior*, Hitler, offensive if not blasphemous. Right from the very beginning, Nazism is portrayed as a corruptor of innocence that seeks to replace truth and light with pagan rituals and false gods. Thus, from the very beginning Nazism is presented as being anti-Christianity, and the Nazis as followers of a false god named Adolf Hitler; a theme oft repeated in American World War II anti-Nazi movies (Shull 223-234).

Nazi propaganda films also seduced their audiences with music.

When the soldiers of the Third Reich march to the firm beat of their own singing through one Nazi film after another, one gets an idea of the almost mystical mass attraction of Fascism. (194)

The song that opens this scene gives the American viewer a taste of the almost hypnotic power of the kind of music the Hitler Youth must have been subjected to on a regular basis. Even though an American composer (probably Rob Webb) wrote this song, it nevertheless captures the flavor of the music heard in *Triumph of the Will*. The words, quoted above, and melody are easy to remember, and once heard, they are hard to get out of one's mind. The music makes one feel strong and powerful, very attractive emotions for a nation still reeling from what it viewed as a humiliating defeat at the hands of its enemies.

The lack of music during the ceremony itself also adds to the mystical atmosphere of the scene. Without the music, it seems as though the whole world is holding its breath, waiting, watching, and listening. The world seems to know that, even though this ceremony is taking place in Germany, the idea that it represents is readying itself to conquer the world. And so the world waits, watches, and listens to see how far this idea will be allowed to spread. How far will America let it spread? How long before America believes the unbelievable and acts to stamp it out?

### 3.2 Nazi Classroom

This scene shows how film propagandists use juxtaposition to differentiate “the other” from the “us” (Furhammar 167; 186). By highlighting differences, the film propagandist can make the enemy appear inhuman and dangerous (168).

#### 3.2.1 Nazi Classroom - *Education for Death* (Ziemer 104-107)

The classroom was stuffy; the windows were tightly closed even though it was spring. The boys, aged ten and eleven, were in uniform. . . .

The boys were hushed, expectant, as if taught not to waste words or emotions. They looked at me shyly, curiously. Had they known that I was a foreigner their attitude would, no doubt, have been suspicious. But my knowledge of German smoothed the way.

. . .

The teacher entered, a young man of thirty. He was in full S.A. uniform. His stiff collar lapels boasted insignia: the button of the RLB (*Reichslehrerbund*, the Nazi Teachers' Union to which all teachers must belong, and also contribute); the Reichssportbund insignia; and an S.A. badge. His face was much older than his body, his eyes were oldest of all. There was tightness, even grimness, about his lips.

The students leaped to their feet in true Continental fashion. Up went all hands. A raucous *Heil Hitler* shook the windows. The

teacher stood at attention, clicked his heels, barked back majestically, 'Heil Hitler, Sieg Heil.' . . .

. . . The teacher gave a command.

In march-step the boys tramped out of the school into a small fenced-off garden back of the school. There they broke rank and stationed themselves beside tomato plants a few inches high.

I concluded this was a class in applied science, a project. The teacher was apparently using modern methods by taking the class to the garden, letting them see plants and experience at first hand how osmosis, photosynthesis, and geotropism worked.

I heard nothing of the kind. The Nazi teacher gave a fiery dissertation on the Holiness of German Soil, *Heiliger Grund und Boden!*

He pointed to the ground. With blazing eyes and clarion tones he explained that Germany had lost much holy soil through the diabolical Treaty of Versailles; her enemies had robbed her; Poland, Czechoslovakia, France, England—all had criminally appropriated holy German soil. So tense was he that I could write without attracting any attention.

'There is today one man who can recover this holy German soil. We mention his name with deepest reverence. His name?'

'Unser Fuehrer, Adolf Hitler, Sieg Heil!' echoed the chorus.

'And the Fuehrer *will* recover all this holy German soil—yes, and more, much more, tenfold more. We will revenge ourselves properly for the insults perpetrated by our second-rate enemies.

'And you—you and I—we must have only one thought. That thought is a holy thought; it is the determination, the hope, to become good soldiers for Adolf Hitler. And if we are good soldiers, if we give our all for the Fuehrer, then some day we shall reap a reward, the highest reward possible. We shall acquire a crown of glory. To us will be granted the privilege of lying in this holy German soil as Hitler's conquering soldiers.'

As dead soldiers, of course.

I scrutinized the faces of the boys. The teacher had been remarkably successful. The lads stood there with eyes bright and shining. Their faces were glowing. Their souls were hero-worshipping.

When the class was dismissed, the teacher turned to me to receive praise he knew could not be restrained.

'Never have I seen such teaching,' I said.

He clicked his heels and raised his arm in salute. 'Tell young America that young Germany is awake,' he commanded.

### 3.2.2 Nazi Classroom - *Hitler's Children* (05:21-08:38)

In the film, as in the book, the Nazi class takes place inside in a stuffy classroom. The teacher, Dr. Schmidt (Erford Gage), stands at the blackboard, wooden pointer in hand. He is in the middle of a geography lesson and as he mentions a location—“ . . . the so-called Polish Corridor and Danzig”—he points to it on the map he has drawn on the blackboard. Schmidt puts down his pointer and moves to stand beside his desk. Hands clasped behind his back, Schmidt begins his lecture in earnest. He is giving a lecture on European geography from the Nazi point of view.

We must observe, boys, and remember. We must let this humiliation burn deep into our memories. Germany was robbed in the Treaty of Versailles by her enemies; robbed of land, which has always been and always will be holy German soil. But the day will come when our force of arms will recover for us this holy German soil; every inch of it and more, much more; tenfold more. For today we rule Germany, tomorrow we rule the world. We shall rule because it is our glorious destiny to rule. We shall conquer because no nation can stand before the flame of our righteous anger.

As Schmidt speaks, the camera begins to pan slowly back from a medium shot of Schmidt alone to a long shot of Schmidt that includes the students—all boys, supposedly ten years of age—seen from the back. The camera stops panning back when a portrait of Adolf Hitler comes into view. The students listen to Dr. Schmidt in rigid attention as the portrait of Adolf Hitler looks down upon the class and teacher from its position over the blackboard. Like Big Brother in George Orwell's *1984*, Hitler seems to be watching,

waiting for any sign of deviation from the true path of Nazism (Lodger). Hitler's spirit rests heavily upon the room. It can be seen and heard in the almost religious fervor of Dr. Schmidt's presentation and in the reverent and intense silence of the students. Indeed, the very room itself seems to worship, as there is no background music or noise of any kind.

The boys sit listening to their professor with an intensity that is disturbing. They do not move. They are as still and as silent as statues. Indeed, they appear to be almost mass-produced. Their hair is cut short the same way. They all appear to have perfect vision for no face is differentiated by the presence of eyeglasses. They all wear the same uniform and sit in exactly the same position: left hand on left knee, right hand palm down on desk, backs straight, heads turned toward the teacher, eyes fixed intently on the teacher. They are all alike—one body, one mind, one soul and all devoted to Hitler.

Although European students may have been less rambunctious in class than American students (Ziemer 104-105, 198), considering that these are supposed to be young boys, as evidenced by their still being in short pants, their emotionless facial expression and posture seems unnatural. After all, it is a beautiful spring day outside and the sun is streaming in through the windows. No matter how well trained children are, one would expect at least one or more of the children to start fidgeting, even slightly; and one does.

The camera slowly moves forward from behind the teacher and centers on Karl Brunner (Tim Holt). The camera stops when it has Karl in a medium shot. Karl's eyes slowly begin to shift towards the left of the frame and his head soon follows. With this simple movement, Karl sets himself apart from the other students. He has allowed

himself to be distracted from the true path of Hitler. But what could he find more attractive than his duty to the Fatherland?

The camera cuts to show a window. The window looks out across the courtyard of the Horst Wessel Schule to the adjacent courtyard of the American Colony School where the American students—both boys and girls, also supposedly ten years of age—are playing. Some of the students play baseball, while Anna and Professor Nichols play table tennis. Unlike the strict hierarchy of the Nazi school, the structure of the American school is visibly more flexible. Professor Nichols appears not only to be a teacher, but a friend as well to the children in his care. He plays games with them, allows them to call him Nicky, and lets them talk him into holding class outside.

The American class is also learning geography, but the atmosphere of this class is more relaxed, more individualistic. First, the class is co-educational; there is no separation of the sexes as in the Nazi and European educational systems. Also, the opinions of girls seem to be valued as much as those of boys, as Professor Nichols calls on Anna to start the class discussion. Second, instead of sitting in rows with all students facing the blackboard, the class has seated itself around the former table tennis table now turned desk in seminar fashion. They sit facing each other, a position meant to foster the sharing of ideas.

Unlike the Nazi class, everyone is dressed differently. Their hairstyles are different. One boy wears eyeglasses. They do not all sit in the same position, and their faces are expressive. While Dr. Schmidt lectures for most of his classroom time, Professor Nichols speaks for a while, and then turns the floor over to the students by asking them to state their opinions. Once the students start discussing the topic, Professor

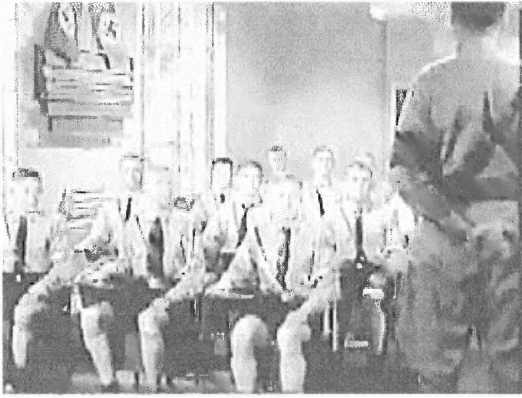


Nichols stands back and watches them, a slight smile on his face. Indeed, Professor Nichols seems to be rather pleased with the way things are going at the end of the scene when the students, in their eagerness to express their individual opinions, start talking over each other and start to raise quite a racket.

Cut back to the Nazi class where Dr. Schmidt is still lecturing. Dr. Schmidt sees Karl looking out the window, but continues to lecture. Suddenly he asks Karl a question. “In true Continental fashion,” Karl jumps to his feet, as the students did in the book, and recites the appropriate answer he appears to have learned by rote (Ziemer 105). At the end of his recital, Karl shouts “Heil Hitler” and salutes. Around him, the rest of the class jumps up as one, shouts “Heil Hitler,” and salutes. Karl appears to have been drawn back into the fold of the faithful once again as the scene ends.

### **3.2.3 Nazi Classroom - Analysis**

In their book, *Politics and Film*, Leif Furhammar and Folke Isaksson state that in propaganda films “the good masses were never faceless or impersonal.” If this is true, then the boys of the Hitler Youth are definitely not “the good masses” (195). Their relentless uniformity in dress, posture, and manner makes them a faceless mass; to see one is to see them all. They are interchangeable cogs in Hitler’s insatiable war machine, and the camera treats them as such, photographing them only *en masse* (Figure 3.2.1). Karl is the only exception; as the male protagonist it is important that we get to know and recognize him. We are allowed to see his face, to note his facial expressions, his distraction, to differentiate his face from all the other faces in the classroom. Karl has become a human being again, a recognizable individual, a person we can learn to care about; like the children in the American classroom.



**Figure 3.2.1** Nazi Class.  
(*Hitler's Children*)



**Figure 3.2.2** American Class.  
(*Hitler's Children*)



**Figure 3.2.3** German Class.  
(*All Quiet on the Western Front*)

After an all-encompassing establishing shot (Figure 3.2.2), the students in the American classroom are never shot *en masse*. Their sequence is a series of single person close up shots. Each face is shown to be different. Each outfit is shown to be different. The children speak with different accents and intonations, not the flat monotone used by Karl when answering his teacher. The American students are recognizable individuals. They are a part of a group, that is, students in a classroom, but they have not lost their uniqueness, their individuality.

*Hitler's Children* is not the only film to make use of this technique. The Academy Award-winning anti-war film, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930), also has a scene that takes place in a German classroom.

In this scene, set at the beginning of World War I, a German teacher is exhorting his students to enlist in the army. After an establishing shot that takes in the class as a whole (Figure 3.2.3), the students are treated as individuals. As the teacher speaks, the camera focuses on a boy, cuts to shots of what the boy is thinking, and then returns to a close up shot of the same boy, before moving on to the next boy. The thoughts of the boys are juvenile: one thinks about how his parents will react to his enlisting, while another thinks about the number of girlfriends his uniform will attract. One boy is shown crying because he is afraid of dying and is ashamed of his fear.

The boys in the scene as directed by Lewis Whitestone, are never allowed to become a faceless mass. Their faces, personalities, clothes, and postures are different. They are individuals, human beings worthy of our compassion. At the end of the scene, when all of the boys in the class sing a patriotic song and march off to enlist, the viewer cannot help but feel both anger at the teacher for encouraging such madness and sympathy for the boys who as yet know nothing of the horrors that await them in the trenches.

According to *Hollywood War Film, 1937-1945* by Michael S. Shull and David E. Wilt, another element common to American films of this era that can be seen in this scene from *Hitler's Children* is the use of baseball (Figure 3.2.4) as a symbol of America (151).

Baseball (and to a lesser extent, football) became a popular wartime symbol of America for several reasons. First, baseball is “the national pastime,” a sport invented in the United States and more popular in this country than in any other. Furthermore, baseball

embodies a number of American ideals: it is a sport which allows for individual expression but which requires a team effort; it is played on a green field, symbolizing the pastoral virtues and natural resources of America; it is played by adults as well as children, and to some degree represents an innocent, fun-loving nation—but the desire to win is present in all players, and they exert all of their energies to triumph. (151)

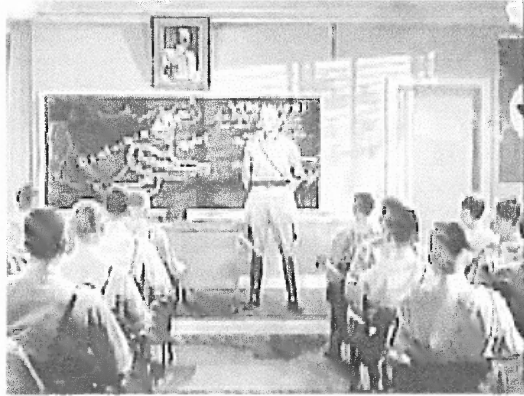
Baseball is an example of *e pluribus unum* in action. It shows that a person does not have to forfeit being an individual to be part of a team. A person can be a team member and still be known as a star hitter or pitcher. In baseball, as in America, individuality and being part of a team are not mutually exclusive (151).



**Figure 3.2.4** American Colony School students play baseball. (*Hitler's Children*)

Another trend evident in this sequence is the parallel drawn between the World War I regime of Kaiser Wilhelm II and the Nazi regime of Adolf Hitler. The classroom shot in *Hitler's Children* in which the camera draws back to reveal the portrait of Hitler over the blackboard (Figure 3.2.5) is a duplicate of the classroom shot in *All Quiet on the Western Front* in which the camera draws back to reveal a portrait of Kaiser Wilhelm II over the blackboard (Figure 3.2.6). Anyone who had seen *All Quiet on the Western Front* would have immediately recognized the similarity. This substitution of Hitler for the Kaiser is to be expected, as many of the studio heads that produced World War II films

had also had a hand in producing the propaganda films of World War I. Since many of them saw World War II as continuation of World War I, it was only natural to portray Hitler as a new, although more dangerous, version of the Kaiser (215).



**Figure 3.2.5** Portrait of Hitler over blackboard.  
(*Hitler's Children*)



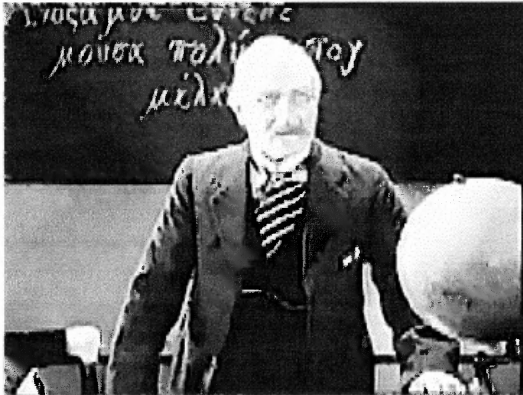
**Figure 3.2.6** Portrait of Kaiser Wilhelm II over blackboard.  
(*All Quiet on the Western Front*)

It is also interesting to note the difference between the two instructors in each of the movies, as they illustrate another principle common to film propaganda. Furhammar and Isaksson state that film propagandists play on our instincts about faces (189).

In *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the instructor is an elderly man (Figure 3.2.7). He appears in civilian clothes, wears eyeglasses, is bald and appears to be a little overweight. He is obviously not a soldier and may never have been. He appears physically soft, the kind of intellectual of which Hitler would disapprove (Ziemer 19-21). One doubts that he has ever done what he now encourages his students to do. His appearance makes the instructor seem hypocritical, and this increases our sympathy for the students.

Dr. Schmidt, on the other hand, is as described in *Education for Death*. He wears an S.A. uniform, and his face is hard, lean and grim (Ziemer 105). It is the face of a Nazi warrior, and a true believer (Figure 3.2.8). This is the face of a man who lives the creed

he preaches. We can believe that he would be willing and able to go to war, just as he encourages his students to do. This is what makes this instructor seem so dangerous. He is no longer an instructor guiding his students in how to think in a rational orderly manner, but rather has become a priest of Nazism sworn to bring up his charges in the way of the Fuehrer.



**Figure 3.2.7** German Professor.  
(*All Quiet on the Western Front*)



**Figure 3.2.8** Dr. Schmidt.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

In this scene, we are shown how the Nazis have turned one of the primary symbols of a democracy—public education—into a processing mill for its military machine (Shull 224). In the Nazi educational system, blind obedience has replaced intellectual freedom (Shull 224; Ziemer 22).

### 3.3 Picnic

This scene contrasts the culture of pre-Nazi Germany with that of Nazi Germany. It reminds the audience that America and pre-Nazi Germany share a common heritage, and that Nazism is a threat to that common heritage (Shull 214).

### 3.3.1 Picnic - *Education for Death* (Ziemer 72-73)

Week ends are almost invariably devoted to military maneuvers, as outlined by the Pimpf manual. I attended some of these. The country around Berlin is ideal proving-ground for future soldiers. It is rolling, has sand dunes, ravines, small lakes.

One windy April day a troop of thirty boys left Berlin for maneuvers. I followed later on my bicycle. But apparently I could not read maps as well as the boys, for by one o'clock I had pedalled my way through miles of sandy woods and had seen no trace of boys playing soldiers.

I found a warm sandy knoll under some jack-pines, unwrapped a lunch, and opened my thermos of tea, determined to continue the search after an hour's rest.

Suddenly I heard a low moan, some distance away. I followed the sound and almost stumbled across a youngster of nine or ten lying on the ground, scientifically staked out. He was gagged.

I thought of kidnapping. But there was no such thing as kidnapping in the Third Reich. There had been a case, but the guilty parties had been apprehended one morning, tried and sentenced by noon, beheaded before nightfall.

And then I realized, this was part of the practice maneuver. I soon had the stakes out, and the boy sat up. He blurted out his story. He had been acting as spy, and had been caught. Being staked out

was part of his punishment. He knew he deserved it. But he thought they had gone off and left him for good. He had visions of starving to death. Even his Spartan spirit broke under that strain.

While he talked he danced about, scratching himself. He never told me, but I saw that he had been lying almost on top of a hill of big black ants which abound in the woods between Berlin and Potsdam. Whether he had been put there purposely or not I never found out.

Together we discovered the boys, effectively hidden miles away. They cycled back to Berlin that evening as proud as professional soldiers after a victory.

### 3.3.2 Picnic - *Hitler's Children* (14:21-18:20)



**Figure 3.3.1** Nichols, Anna and Karl relaxing during picnic. (*Hitler's Children*)

what sounds like a German hiking song. The sun is shining brightly through the trees, and they are laughing and enjoying each other's company, as they walk, arms wrapped around each other's waist.

In the film, Ziemer's lunch for one has become a picnic for three—Professor Nichols, Anna, and Karl. An establishing shot at the beginning of the sequence shows the mountain upon which the three are hiking and picnicking. The camera then cuts to a long shot of the three crossing a bridge as they sing



The next time we see the three, they have finished eating their lunch and are now relaxing (Figure 3.3.1). Professor Nichols, sitting on a tree, his back propped up against its trunk, is reading a passage from Goethe's *Faust* to Karl and Anna who lie on the grass before him. Anna stares up at the sky as she listens to Nichols, a faraway look on her face, while Karl appears to have fallen asleep.

Cut to a medium shot of Nichols alone, reading lines that will be repeated by Karl and Anna at key points of the movie as a token of their undying love for each other. The lines are as follows:

And so he dreamed all his life  
That he might find the perfect moment.  
And t'ward the end of his days,  
He summed up his dream like this:  
If the whole world I once could see  
On free soil stand with a people free  
Then to the moment might I say,  
Linger awhile  
So fair thou art.

As Nichols says "then to the moment," the camera cuts to a close-up of Anna, looking off into the distance, a look of longing on her face (Figure 3.3.2). The camera cuts back to another medium shot of Nichols still reading. He looks up from the book as he finishes the lines and looks off into the distance, a look similar to that of Anna's upon his face.

Cut back to close-up of Anna who smiles dreamily as she says “Gee, that’s beautiful. That would be a wonderful moment, wouldn’t it?”



**Figure 3.3.2** Anna - a girl in love with freedom.

*(Hitler's Children)*

Cut to a long shot similar in composition to the shot that began the sequence. Karl shows that he is still awake by commenting, “It’s good poetry, but who’d want the whole world to be free. It’d never work.” Nichols replies, “The world’s never had a chance to try it, Karl. But the dream’s growing. The same poet expressed it in a simple line: ‘And those who live for their faith shall behold it living.’”

Cut again to a close-up of Anna repeating the last line, the same look of longing on her face as before.

Cut to the long shot again. “Much too fanciful,” Karl says rising, “it almost put me to sleep.” The camera tracks with Karl as he heads for the nearby lake. He has on the shirt and shorts of his Hitler Youth uniform, but his tie is missing along with his shoes and socks and swastika armband. He is out of uniform and totally relaxed (Figure 3.3.3). “But let me splash some cold water on my face and I’ll prove to you where that American author of yours was just a dreamer.”

Cut to a long shot of Karl squatting by the lake splashing water on his face in the foreground, while Anna and Nichols are still seated by the tree watching him in the background. “But he’s not an American, Karl.” Nichols says, “It’s by a German author named Goethe about a German hero named Faust.”

Embarrassed by his error, Karl laughs and comments that he should be thrown in the lake.



**Figure 3.3.3** Karl out of uniform and barefoot.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

forward from the background with a rock in her hands. Nichols watches them from the background. Just as Anna reaches the lake, she throws the rock into the lake near Karl causing him to be splashed with water. Anna runs off into the woods laughing. Karl jumps up from beside the lake and runs after her.

Cut to a medium shot of Nichols, who laughs as he watches Anna and Karl run away and then turns back toward the camera to continue smoking his pipe and reading.

Running through the woods Anna stumbles upon a Hitler Youth staked spread-eagled to the ground (Figure 3.3.4). Anna calls out to Karl to come and help her and runs to untie the boy. Karl, finding Anna, pulls her away from the boy.

Karl pulls Anna up into a close-up shot saying, "I said leave him alone. It's none of our business. You must come away quickly."

Anna replies, "Are you crazy? Don't you see this boy is in pain?"

"Listen to me," Karl persists, "and try to understand. I said that this is none of our business. Look!"

Cut to a medium long shot of Nichols and Anna. Anna, a mischievous look on her face, says "Anything to oblige a guest, eh, Nicky?" She glances back at Nichols as she reaches for a rock and then starts to rise.

Cut back to a long shot of Karl squatting by the lake; Anna is sneaking

Cut to a close-up of boy staked to ground, a gag in his mouth, trying to shake his head.

Cut back to a close-up of Karl and Anna. “Even the boy is trying to tell you.”

The camera cuts to a long shot as Karl kneels down beside the boy to untie the boy’s



**Figure 3.3.4** Staked-out *Pimpf*.  
(*Hitler’s Children*)

gag. The boy looks up at Karl and says, “Please, comrade, tie me up again and put the gag back in my mouth. It is only a game. I was a spy and I was caught. And this will teach me not to get caught again.”

Cut back to a close-up of Anna; the camera follows her as she drops to her knees beside the boy. She appears to be numb with disbelief. Surely this is a nightmare, the expression on her face seems to say; surely this cannot be happening. A plaintive rendition of the Hitler Youth rally song plays in the background as she continues to speak to the boy. “But how long have you been here?” she asks.

Cut to a close-up of the boy. “Oh, only a few hours. It is nothing.”

Cut back to a close-up of Anna. “How old are you?”

Camera stays on Anna when boy begins to speak, but then cuts back to a close-up of the boy. “I am ten, *Fraulein*. And if I come through this test well, I shall be taken into the *Jungvolk* soon.”

Anna starts to rise and the camera cuts to a long shot. Karl has finished tying the boy up again. “Thank you, comrade,” the boy says, as Karl finishes retying his right

hand. “And now if you’ll be so good as to replace the gag.” Karl replaces the gag as Anna watches in disbelief.

The camera cuts to a medium close-up of Anna. Karl stands up into a two-shot. He looks down at the boy and salutes as he says “Heil Hitler.” Anna looks at Karl and runs away in disgust. Karl, a bewildered look on his face, runs after her, calling her name.

The camera cuts to a medium long shot of the boy, staked to the ground once again. There is a flash of lightning and the sound of thunder; a storm is approaching.

### **3.3.3 Picnic - Analysis**

In this shot sequence, the old Germany of Goethe is contrasted with the new Germany of Hitler. In the Germany of Goethe, men and women, boys and girls, still go on picnics, still sing hiking songs, still laugh, still speak and dream of freedom and still have faith that one day all humankind will “on free soil stand/a people free.” In this world, there are no uniforms and no swastikas. Children are still allowed to be children, to run around barefoot, to play pranks on each other, and to chase each other through the woods playing catch-me-if-you-can. Goethe’s world is a world of light and warmth, of laughter and love, a world in which a young girl can fall in love not only with a young boy, but with the very idea of freedom itself.

In the new world of Hitler’s Germany, however, little boys wear uniforms and are taught to be good spies and soldiers. There is no time for playing with little girls or for running through the forest playing games. There is important work to be done. Boys must be toughened up and taught that failure is not an option. They must take their punishment without complaining—note that unlike the boy in the book, the “Spartan

spirit” of the boy in the film does not break under the stain of his punishment, but rather, he wishes to endure it to prove himself worthy of the *Jungvolk* (Ziemer 73). Obedience to Hitler and the relinquishing of individuality and individual rights to the state is of more importance in this world than the refinement of the intellect or spirit (18-23). The works of Goethe have no place in the New Order of Adolf Hitler, and so Karl does not even recognize the quote from Goethe.

Nor does he believe that the whole world should be free. He believes what Dr. Schmidt has taught him in the classroom scene, that is, that Germans are born to rule the world as lions are born to rule the jungle. It is their birthright, just as it is the birthright of the rest of the world to be ruled. And Karl and the other boys in the Hitler Youth are willing to suffer whatever they have to prove themselves worthy of that birthright. The attitude of the staked-out boy and of Karl regarding the boy’s punishment reflects this ideology.

Yes, Hitler’s children are willing to suffer much to see their dream of world domination come true. The question is how much is Anna, and by extension the audience, willing to sacrifice to keep Goethe’s dream of freedom alive? Hitler’s children seem ready to sacrifice their lives. Are the people who love freedom ready to make the same sacrifices for their beliefs?

### 3.4 Nazi Social Worker

This scene emphasizes the theme of Nazism as a destroyer of families (Shull 224). It also reveals “the undercurrents of terror beneath the blind obedience,” as well as Nazism’s total lack of regard for the welfare of the poor, an issue that would have been of great interest to an America just emerging from the Great Depression (Furhammar 212).

#### 3.4.1 Nazi Social Worker - *Education for Death* (Ziemer 44-46)

It happened to be the family of a janitor of one of the old villas whom we were to call on next. The house, formerly the home of a Jewish industrialist, had been divided into smaller apartments for Nazi government officials.

The heavy garden gate was locked. Through the bars we could see three small children at play. Sister Knoblauch pushed the bell, and asked the oldest, four years old, to release the inside catch.

‘Are you alone?’ she asked.

The boy told us that his mother had gone to market.

The Sister turned to me. ‘Sometimes it is just as good if the parents are not home. We find out more.’ She told the boy to stop playing a minute. ‘Are these your brother and sister?’

The youngster was dark, thin, dressed only in a pair of German overalls. ‘Mother says as soon as we have another brother or sister we don’t have to worry any more about the *Darlehen*.’

The *Darlehen*, the Sister explained to me, was the money the Party had loaned the parents when they were married. Four children cancelled it.

'What do you want to be when you grow up?' she asked the child.

'I'm going to be a *Sturmtruppen Leiter*,' said the boy.

'Surely you are! Your storm troop will be the best in the country,' she encouraged him.

'I'm going to lead my soldiers to fight the ugly Poles,' the four-year-old continued, standing straight and talking like a miniature drill sergeant. 'And my brother here—he is going to be a flyer. Aren't you?'

The younger boy came nearer, stood there, nodding.

'I'm sure he is,' said the Sister. 'And then he can drop bombs on Germany's enemies.'

'What is a bomb?' inquired Little Brother eagerly.

'*Dummkopf*,' retorted his senior. 'Don't you know what a bomb is? A bomb is a big bullet. The airplane takes it up, way up, very high, and drops it, and then it goes *Crash!* And all the people who do not love our Fuehrer are dead!'

I wrote my notes in German shortly after that. The lad was using Berlin slang. But that was the meaning of his words. Berlin slang is hard to translate.



Sister Knoblauch did not mind the slang. She beamed all over. 'Isn't it wonderful?' she asked. 'All is well here. We can go.'

### **3.4.2 Nazi Social Worker - *Hitler's Children* (26:21-30:19)**

In the film, Professor Nichols witnesses the above scene from afar. In his effort to rescue Anna from the Gestapo, Nichols has sought the aid of his friend, Franz Erhart. Professor Nichols is sure that Erhart, “a brilliant courageous journalist . . . in touch with everybody and everything that had happened in Germany” could and would help him. But when Nichols arrives at Erhart’s house, he quickly learns that Hitler’s New Order has affected even Erhart.

Although Erhart warmly greets Nichols, he nevertheless refuses to let Nichols enter the house, saying that it would be better for them to talk outside. “My boys are home this morning,” Erhart says. “Oh, two fine boys,” he continues holding his left hand out to show how tall his boys are. “But what they don’t know they don’t tell their troop leader.”

As Erhart says this, he gently, but firmly, guides Nichols away from his front door, down the stairs of his front porch, to stand in his front walkway. As the camera tracks them, it zooms into a medium shot.

Nichols is shocked. “Franz, you mean you can’t talk in your own house in front of your own children?”

“Why of course I can, my friend.” Erhart assures him. “Who said I couldn’t.” Leaning slightly towards Nichols and lowering his voice in a confidential tone, Franz continues, “I merely said it was wiser not to.” Not wanting to dwell on his problems, Erhart jovially pats Nichols and asks, “Well, my friend, what can I do for you?”

“I’m in trouble.” Nichols tells him. “They’ve taken Anna away.”

“Well, now, who took her away?” Erhart asks in a teasing tone, sounding like a father speaking to his small son.

“The Gestapo.” Nichols replies and Erhart, who has been smoking a pipe, drops the pipe from his mouth, the fear he is feeling evident in this action and in the expression of his face.

“I’m sorry, my friend, I can do nothing for you.” Erhart is finding it difficult to look Nichols in the eyes as he says this; it is obvious that he feels ashamed. Nichols will not drop the issue, however.

“Franz, we just can’t let a girl disappear without doing something—.”



**Figure 3.4.1** Erhart sees the Nazi social worker.  
(*Hitler’s Children*)

Suddenly, Erhart looks out towards the camera and in a spasm of fear grabs Nichols by the lapels, and tells him quietly, but urgently to “Shhh!” (Figure 3.4.1)

The camera cuts out to a long shot as a woman in a dark suit and hat walks into the frame from the right. She wears a light-colored armband that bears the stylized NSV motif on her left arm. Her militaristic stride and Erhart’s reaction to her give the impression that she is not a woman to be crossed. Erhart seems determined to stay on her good side. He waves and pleasantly calls out, “Good morning, nurse.”

“Good morning, Herr Erhart,” the nurse quickly acknowledges Erhart’s salutation as she continues to walk pass Erhart’s house.

The camera follows the nurse until she stops at the house next door. “Good morning, boys. Heil Hitler!” The nurse salutes three small boys. A little girl sits on the ground near the boys, but both the boys and the nurse ignore her. Upon hearing the nurse, the children’s mother, who has been working in the background, leaves her work and comes to stand behind her children (Figure 3.4.2). The nurse ignores her.



**Figure 3.4.2** Nazi social worker and the janitor’s family.  
(*Hitler’s Children*)

The boys, ranging in age from about 3 to 8 years, return the nurse’s salute and salutation as one, “Heil, Hitler!”

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Nichols and Erhart, still standing in front of Erhart’s house, watching the nurse interact with the children. Erhart nudges Nichols’ shoulder and points with his pipe towards the nurse and the children. “Observe how carefully the state takes care of even the janitor’s children.”

The camera cuts back to a long shot of the nurse, the children and the children’s mother. “Well, Hans,” the nurse asks sweetly, “what do you want to be when you grow up?”

“I shall be a leader of storm troopers,” Hans says proudly, as his mother lovingly strokes his blond hair.

“And you, Fritz?”

“I am going to be a flyer.” Fritz replies, his mother’s hand on his shoulder. “I shall drop bombs on Germany’s enemies.”



**Figure 3.4.3** Nazi social worker.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

The camera cuts to a medium shot of the nurse shot from behind and to the left of the mother. “Very good,” the nurse says. She looks up at the mother. “All is well here.” The expression on the nurse’s face when she makes this statement makes it seem as much a threat as a statement (Figure

3.4.3). She seems to be warning the mother of what could happen if the children’s training deviates from the authorized path.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of the mother from behind and to the right of the nurse. The mother, although she appears to be young, has sad, tired eyes, and she looks worn out (Figure 3.4.4). The nurse begins to walk away, but steps back into the frame when the mother calls her back. “Please?”



**Figure 3.4.4** Frau Liner - the janitor’s overworked wife.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

“Yes?” the nurse responds.

“Things are so difficult. My husband works so hard and earns so little. We have so many debts—“

“There, there; you have nothing to worry about,” the nurse reassures the mother. The camera cuts back to frame the nurse in a medium shot from behind and to the left of the mother. “Remember, Frau Liner, when you have your fifth child, you won’t owe the state anything.”

The camera cuts back to a medium shot of Nichols and Erhart watching the nurse and the mother talk. “You won’t have to pay back the money the state loaned you to get married on. The debt will be automatically cancelled.” The expressions on their faces say that they cannot believe what the nurse is telling the mother.

The camera cuts back to a long medium shot of the nurse, the boys, and their mother. “Heil, Hitler,” the nurse says as she salutes and walks away. The youngest boy says, “Heil, Hitler,” and raises his arm in salute. The mother also says, “Heil, Hitler,” and raises her hand, but her heart is not in it. The expression on her face says that she is too stunned to feel anything. Frau Liner already has four children that she and her husband can barely support, and now the nurse is telling her to have another child as a means to easing her family’s debt. Perhaps Frau Liner is beginning to see that the state sees her family only as a source of future soldiers and mothers of soldiers. How she and her husband support this army seems to be up to them.

The camera cuts back to a long medium shot of Nichols and Erhart in front of Erhart’s house. “Poor, Mrs. Liner,” Franz says, and then turns his attention to Nichols. “My friend, if you think what you have just seen and—and the fact that I can’t even talk in my own house—is unusual—humph—it’s happening in every house and every street in Germany. And my friend, it is only child’s play—that’s no pun—it is only child’s play to what is about to happen.

“Franz, how can you stand it, you of all people? How can you be so complacent?” Erhart looks at Nichols sharply, and then looks away.

“Humph! My friend, you can get off a train before it starts or after it stops, but while it is in motion, I would not advise it.”

“You mean you’ll pretend to believe in this and go on writing in praise of it.”

Again, Erhart looks at Nichols sharply.

“What would you have me do? I wouldn’t make a very good hero. I don’t even make a good Nazi.”

The front door opens behind them, and Erhart nervously turns to watch his two blond Hitler Youth sons leave the house. The boys walk toward Erhart and Nichols, one behind the other as though in formation (Figure 3.4.5). The boys seem regimented to the point of no longer being human. All human affection and the emotional ties that go with it are slowly being regimented out of them.



**Figure 3.4.5** Erhart’s sons.  
(*Hitler’s Children*)

All the while the boys are walking, they never take their eyes off of two men, and the men return their stares and rotate in place as they follow the boys’ progress. As they pass their father, Erhart raises his hand to wave weakly at them. It is clear that Erhart no longer knows how to relate to his

sons. He can feel their contempt for him in the way they stare at him and Nichols. The boys keep their eyes on the men as they walk toward the camera and out of the frame.

“They don’t approve of me either,” Erhart says, looking after his sons, sadness evident both on his face and in his voice. Nichols, who has also been watching the boys’ exit, turns to look at Erhart.

“Then I don’t suppose you’ll help me,” Nichols says disappointed. Erhart shoots Nichols a resigned look.

“Help you, my friend; I, I can’t even help myself.”

Discouraged, Nichols glances once more at Erhart, and then starts to walk away, without saying goodbye to his friend. “Nicky!” Erhart shouts. As Nichols turns back around, Erhart quickly looks around to make sure no one is watching, and then walks forward to where Nichols has stopped. The camera has them in a long close-up. “In such cases, they usually send the girls to the labor camp at Rhinesberg.”

Excited, Nichols takes hold of Erhart’s arm and moves in closer. Throughout the exchange between them, they stay huddled together, the edges of the frame closing them in on all sides. They are no longer teacher and journalist, but fellow conspirators (Figure 3.4.6). The framing makes it seem as though they are in a small tight space, but every now and then you are reminded that they are outdoors and vulnerable by the sound of birds chirping faintly in the background.

“Is it a prison?”

“Prison? Oh, no,” Erhart rolls his eyes sarcastically. “It’s an honor for German boys and girls to go to labor camps. To build themselves up to be fit for the duties as soldiers and mothers.”

“Then it shouldn’t be too hard to arrange an escape.” Nichols says, his voice full of hope and determination. Erhart looks up at him in alarm, however, at what he is saying. “I might even get her out of Germany,” Nichols continues.



**Figure 3.4.6** Nichols and Erhart conspire.  
(*Hitler’s Children*)

“Oh, my friend, it would be a very unwise thing to attempt.” Erhart warns Nichols. But Nichols will not be dissuaded now that he may finally have a chance of rescuing Anna.

“How can I get permission to visit the camp?”

“You, you couldn’t,” Erhart stutters, quickly looking around again to make sure that they are not being watched. Satisfied that no one is watching, Erhart continues. “Well, an American school teacher, it’s possible he might get permission from the Ministry of Education to make a tour of the camps.”

Nichols, knowing what it took for Erhart to overcome his fear and tell him what he wanted to know, looks Erhart in the eyes and grasps Erhart’s right hand with his right hand. “Thanks, Franz.”

“Ja, ja.” Nichols walks away and out of the lower left corner of the frame. Erhart looks after him, nervously fingering his pipe. Erhart seems to be wondering if he has done the right thing in telling Nichols about the labor camp. Maybe he has sent his friend to his death.

### **3.4.3 Nazi Social Worker - Analysis**

In *Politics and Film*, Furhammar and Isaksson state that

The relationship between parent and child is very important in propaganda, where the mystical and emotional implications appear to be derived from religious precepts. . . . The heroes of propaganda generally honour their parents in an exemplary fashion, and their parents’ pride is a guarantee that our heroes will forever rule the land that God has given them (237)



This scene shows that in Nazi Germany children are taught to place loyalty to the state above loyalty to their parents (Shull 224). In effect, Nazi children are being taught to break the Fifth Commandment, that is, “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee” (*Exodus* 20:12; Furhammar 237). Because Hitler’s children do not obey this commandment, it is implied that they will pay with their lives for their disobedience (237). This idea connects to the theme of the Hitler Youth rally seen at the beginning of the film; that the Nazis are doomed to failure because their ideology is in direct conflict with the teachings of the Bible and the Church (235-236).

The fear the German people have of the Gestapo and the other officials of the Nazi regime is also illustrated here (Furhammar 212). When Nichols tells Erhart that the Gestapo has taken Anna, Erhart’s pipe immediately falls from his mouth, and Erhart tells Nichols that he cannot help him. His fear of the Gestapo is greater than his desire to help Nichols. His fear is evidenced again by the way he clutches the front of Nichols’ jacket and shushes Nichols when he catches sight of the Nazi social worker. These are the actions of a man who truly fears for his life. Yes, he will go along with the party line, but his heart is not in it; he is mainly trying to stay alive.

According to Shull and Wilt, this portrayal of ordinary Germans as unwilling participants in the Nazi regime is a common theme in American World War II movies.

But the German population, with whom most Americans shared a common western heritage, was not generally targeted by Hollywood filmmakers as the enemy. The power-hungry Hitler and his crazy ideology are shown to have misled the German people and placed

them under a deadly spell: “the enemy was the Nazis—militaristic leaders who forced their way of life on the Germans.” So, during the World War II years, there evolved upon America’s movie screens a complex set of co-existing images representing the citizens of Hitler’s Germany—the honest, straightforward common German, helpless against the ruthless dictatorship of the bombastic, perverted Nazi fanatic Hitler, his fellow fascists, and the opportunistic or misguided German people/soldiers aiding his plan for world domination through military conquest. (214)

This portrayal, according to Koppes and Black, was in keeping with the guidelines set forth by the Bureau of Motion Pictures of the Office of War Information (67-68). The OWI saw World War II as a battle between good and evil, between the democratic common man and the Nazi superman, between freedom and slavery (Koppes 67-68; Shull 214). Therefore, the OWI wanted the American people to realize that it was Nazi ideology that was the enemy, not the German people as a whole or the Nazis alone (Doherty 122, 123; Koppes 67-68). To truly win the war and make the world safe from future world wars, the militaristic ideology of the Axis powers had to be destroyed (67-68). Americans could not afford to hate the German people as a whole, however, for when the war ended, they would have to find a way to live with them in peace (67).

The callousness of the Nazi regime towards women and children is also shown in this scene. The main concern of the Nazi social worker is not the physical or emotional well-being of the children or their mother, but rather how well they are being

indoctrinated with Nazi ideology. When the children give the correct responses to her questions, the social worker is satisfied.

The Nazi social worker has no sympathy for the mother's plea for financial assistance. She simply reminds Frau Liner that she and her husband need have only one more child to cancel out their debt. [The Liners already have four children—the required number according to Ziemer—but the film raises the number needed to five (45).] Frau Liner, who looks extremely tired, and her husband are working very hard to support the children they already have. To ask them to take on yet another child under their present situation seems heartless. Indeed, the state does not seem to care why people have children as long as they have the required number. In American propaganda films, the Nazi regime views German families simply as resources to be harvested at the appropriate time (Shull 154, 224). It would appear that in Nazi Germany, loyalty flows only one way—towards the State.



**Figure 3.4.7** Hitler's invisible girl.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

Note the little girl sitting on the ground next to the boys, and how everyone in the shot ignores her (Figure 3.4.7). In fact, the only one who has paid her any attention in the entire shot sequence is Nichols. At the very beginning of the shot sequence, Nichols has to pass the little girl's house to get to

Erhart's house. As Nichols approaches the little girl's house, she runs up to him and he picks her up and carries her back to the front of her house. Nichols puts the girl down,

gives her a playful swat on her behind, and then continues on his way to Erhart's house. That is the last time anyone interacts with the little girl.

While it is true that the girl is too young to have been indoctrinated much and that this may be the reason why the social worker does not pay any attention to her—the social worker does not speak to the youngest boy either—the little girl nevertheless seems isolated from the rest of the group. Indeed one could miss seeing her altogether, as her clothing does not contrast much with the bushes behind her. She is almost invisible.

Considering that the Nazis saw women mainly as breeders of new soldiers, this isolation of the little girl seems to be a subtle way of conveying this attitude to the audience (Ziemer 130, 132). In a previous scene, Karl continuously qualifies his statement that Anna plays the piano well with the phrase “for a girl,” as though her gender somehow limited her ability.

In both *Pastor Hall* (1940) and *The Mortal Storm* (1940), German women who speak out against the violent acts of the Nazi party are told that they are, by virtue of their gender, incapable of understanding political issues; it is, therefore, logical that they do not understand why certain violent actions are necessary. But it is not the place of women to try to understand such things; they only have to obey the men and bear children for the state (Ziemer 129, 130). Motherhood and the home are the only things that should occupy a woman's mind, and of the two, motherhood is the more important (130), as shall be seen in the next section.

### 3.5 Rest Home

This scene, early in Ziemer's book, depicts the Nazis as being anti-marriage and therefore anti-family and anti-religion, a depiction common to many American World War II films (Shull 223).

#### 3.5.1 Rest Home - *Education for Death* (Ziemer 29-33)

I received another glimpse of this pre-natal influence the Party exerts over the children in Nazi Germany when I visited the NSV homes for prospective mothers, married and unmarried. . . .

More than sixty mother-and-child homes are maintained throughout 'Germany, functioning the year round. Prospective mothers, girls having babies out of wedlock, are here cared for at State expense. I have seen seven of these homes, enough to prove their similarity. They were idyllically located by lakes, near the seashore, in fertile picturesque valleys, in romantic forests, away from noise and grime. Here the women did no housework, prepared no meals, and, with the exception of certain hours devoted to instruction in Nazi ideology, could loll in the grass or on the sand all day if they wished.

The most typical one was near a small village in the Harz Hills, among the pines and lakes—Bad Sachsa. The large wooden structure, four stories high, had formerly been a luxury hotel managed by a Jew who is now in Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp. The swastika over it fluttered gaily. The spacious reception

room was airy, comfortably supplied with wicker furniture, white curtains, and flowers.

My arrival was expected. The middle-aged matron in charge greeted me with the usual *Heil Hitler*. I told her I was especially interested in what the Party did for women who were going to have State children (formerly known as illegitimate children).

I was informed that the home was especially anxious to have such girls. They deserved special credit and special care for contributing a child to the State. According to the matron some of these girls still found silly, narrow-minded disapproval among relatives. As a result they occasionally developed *Hemmungen* (spiritual inhibitions). Thus handicapped, they would not produce good super-children. But they found peace and quiet in the NSV homes; the Party paid the bill.

When I asked if I could talk to one of the prospective mothers, she looked at me speculatively, trying to discover my motive in asking. Her sharp blue eyes betrayed distrust for a moment, but that passed.

Some of them, she told me, would not wish to talk to me, for they were in the advanced stages of pregnancy. But there was one—a very intelligent girl—that might. She hurried to her row of files and looked at her records. Each girl had signed a statement that the

father of her coming child was Aryan and in good health. That was all the registration required.

The girl's name was Magda. She was outside on the *Wiese*, the meadow. We found her. She was not beautiful, but definitely not unattractive. She was what the Germans call *eine intelligente Frau*, with sharp intelligent features, high forehead, delicate nose and brows. She was wearing a German *Turnanzug*, a blue jacket with long sleeves, open at the neck, and slacks to match. She was lying in the grass on her back, her legs up, reading a book.

She rose carefully. The matron introduced us in the formal German manner. Magda, whose last name I never learned, was self-possessed and just a trifle sharp in her manner, obviously wondering what the stranger wanted.

I explained that I was an American educator interested in the study of Nazi institutions. Her face broke into a very feminine smile. Wasn't I a bit early in coming to her with educational matters?

'Not too early,' interrupted the matron. 'I am sure Magda's child is going to be a very good Nazi.'

It was then I was allowed to peep behind the mask of this prospective young mother carrying an illegitimate child. Her eyes glowed with a fanaticism that was intense, devouring. Her answer was one of those I did not have to write down to remember:

'My child will belong to the State. I am bringing it into the world because he has asked me to.' She was referring to Hitler, of course.

The matron nodded and asked me to have lunch with them. I bowed and accepted with thanks. She left us alone.

Magda slipped back into the lush grass. Overhead, spring clouds went streaking past like armies; dark martial pines all around sighed and whispered. Down below in the valley peasants were busy with red and white oxen; we could hear their shouts as they prodded their beasts.

Magda investigated me with brooding eyes and surmised that it must be difficult for a foreigner to understand how German women felt. I admitted it and said I had always thought a woman with child craved the protection of a man, a home, and security.

She looked at me with disdain. 'We are having children for the State, and for Adolf Hitler who personifies the State,' she said. 'Is that not much nobler, much grander, and much more glorious than having a home and a husband?'

Her eyes burned. She expressed the hope that her child would be a boy. She wanted him to grow up and become a member of the Hitler Youth, and then join the Elite Guard, the S.S.

When I asked if she was not afraid of having a baby, she sat up and gave me an answer so intense that I recall vividly every



syllable: 'Afraid? Afraid of having my baby? Do you know what I am hoping? I am hoping that I will have pain, much pain when my child is born. I want to feel that I am going through a real ordeal—for the Fuehrer!'

I changed the subject and asked about the book she was reading. It was not about the feeding of babies, but Hanns Johst's *Maske und Gesicht*, a Nazi travelogue through Europe. I knew Johst was one of the most rabid fanatics of the whole Nazi Writers' Union. Magda thought he was wonderful. She was especially thrilled with Johst's assertion that wherever he went in Europe he met Nazis, men and women who felt and thought as he did, who were longing for the time when they could belong to Germany. She hoped that by the time her child grew up all Europe would call Hitler Fuehrer.

I dismissed the thought as the idle fancy of a young pregnant woman who must be humored. I broke off the interview by wishing her and her child happiness and health.

'*Heil Hitler*, ' she answered. 'From both of us!'

### **3.5.2 Rest Home - *Hitler's Children* (33:40-38:58)**

In the film, Karl has brought Nichols to the labor camp to see Anna in an attempt to convince him that Anna has embraced Nazi ideology. Karl hopes that this will be enough to get Nichols to leave Anna alone. Towards this end, Karl has Anna show the two of them around the labor camp. The camera catches up with the trio as they begin their tour of the rest home section of the camp.

The camera, in a deep focus long shot, follows the three as they walk across the lawn of the rest home. Anna is speaking.

“Finally, professor, this is the rest home. Here the girls receive the finest attention the state can provide.”

“Despite foreign propaganda,” Karl says, “you can see that these labor camps are not prisons; there are no walls.”

“You mean these girls are here voluntarily?” Nichols asks.

“They are drafted to serve just as men are in the army,” Karl replies, “and they serve just as proudly.”

Anna stops to look out over the rest home grounds and Nichols and Karl come to a stop beside her.

“You’ll observe, professor, that the rest home contrasts considerably with the other sections of the camp.”



**Figure 3.5.1** The Rest Home.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

The camera cuts to a long medium of a woman sitting in a lawn chair knitting or crocheting (Figure 3.5.1). A matron comes over to talk to her and to see what she is working on. In the background, we see other women in lawn chairs, what appears to be a baby in a bassinette, and nurses and matrons

attending to the needs of the mothers and mothers-to-be.

“As you’ve seen, they work hard, live simply to fit them for their duties to the state.”

The camera cuts back to a medium shot of Nichols and Anna, shot from behind them.

“The only recreation provided,” Anna says as she turns sideways toward the camera to look up at Nichols, “is the Saturday night dance.” Anna hesitates for a second, and then continues. “There, lovers may meet and decide to share the experience that makes them worthy of the Fuehrer.” Anna is trying hard to control her facial expressions as she says these words. While she is speaking, she makes sure to look Nichols straight in the eyes. But as soon as she is finished speaking, she lowers her eyes and quickly walks away.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Anna walking from screen right to screen left. Nichols moves into the frame next, followed by Karl. Anna glances back at Nichols as though to make sure that he is still following her.

“When the girls come here, nothing is considered too good for those whose children will belong to the state.”

“Even if they’re illegitimate?” Nichols asks. Anna quickly turns to face Nichols, as though shocked that he should ask such a question.

“Does that shock you, professor?” Karl asks. He has a faint smile on his face. He seems to find Nichols’ question and disapproval amusing.

“We’ve put aside these old superstitions,” Anna says, looking at Nichols. Turning away from Nichols, her facial expression carefully composed, she continues. “The girls of the new Germany are proud to rear their children for Hitler.”

“Does the state also offer them the alternative of a home and a husband?” Nichols asks. Anna looks screen left and then back at Nichols.

“Perhaps talking to one of the girls will answer that, professor.” The three start to walk screen left.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of a woman sitting in a chair. A nurse has just brought the young woman a tray of food. The nurse places the tray on the table and leaves as Anna, Nichols and Karl walk into the frame from the direction of the camera. The young woman sits facing the camera; Anna stands to the woman’s right, while Nichols and Karl stand to her left.

“Magda,” Anna says, “this is Lieutenant Brunner and Professor Nichols.”

“Heil, Hitler,” Magda replies, glancing at Nichols and Karl, and then returning her full attention to Anna.

“Heil, Hitler,” Karl replies and salutes. Karl keeps his eyes on Magda as he slowly begins to move behind her. Anna and Nichols are fully focused on Magda, who keeps her eyes on Anna.

“Magda,” Anna asks, “are there times when you’d rather have a husband and a home than what you have here?”

The camera cuts to a medium shot of just Magda. “Why should I?” Magda replies, looking first at Anna and then turning her attention to Nichols. “I shall have a child for the state and for the Fuehrer. Isn’t that much nobler than having a child just for a home and a husband?”

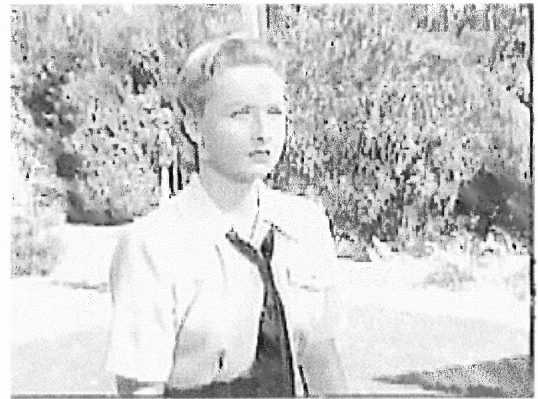
The camera cuts to a low angle medium shot of Nichols alone.

“Aren’t you afraid?” Nichols asks.

“Afraid?” The look on Madga’s face seems to ask, what is there to be afraid of? She smiles at Nichols and then leans forward toward him. “Do you know what I’m hoping? I hope I shall have much pain when my baby is born.”

We can see by the expression of rapture and determination on Magda’s face that she is a true believer; a fanatic, if you will. It is not enough for her just to bear a child for the state. She must prove that she is worthy of the state by bearing a child while enduring great pain. Being a woman, she can serve the state only by bearing a child, and she intends to serve the state with all her body, mind, soul, and spirit.

While Magda continues to talk, the camera cuts to a medium shot of Anna, who is watching Nichols intensely (Figure 3.5.2). The expression on her face seems to be saying, Do you see how insane they are; how insane this all is?



**Figure 3.5.2** Anna in the labor camp.  
(*Hitler’s Children*)

“I want to feel . . .”

The camera cuts to a low angle medium shot of Nichols who is looking down at Magda. Nichols, although he is keeping his facial expressions neutral, seems to grasp slightly, as though he cannot believe what he is hearing.

“. . . that I’m going through a real ordeal . . .”

The camera cuts back to a medium shot of Magda (Figure 3.5.3). Her eyes and facial expression are bright with the passion she feels for her Fuehrer. She looks almost mad.

“. . . for our Fuehrer.”



**Figure 3.5.3** Magda.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

Magda smiles triumphantly and turns her attention back to Anna, as though seeking approval for her profession of devotion.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Anna. She is still looking at Nichols, a combination of concern and melancholy in her eyes. It hurts her to see the look of shock

and disbelief on Nichols' face.

In an earlier shot, Nichols accuses Anna of playing a game, of acting like a Nazi to survive. Anna fervently denies that she is playacting, and throughout this sequence she tries to convince Nichols that she has become a true believer. She knows that as long as Nichols believes that she is being held against her will, he will try to rescue her, and she does not want him to risk his life in an attempt to save her.

But even her concern for Nichols' life cannot stop her face and voice from betraying her true feelings. When she espouses Nazi doctrine, she finds it difficult to look Nichols in the eyes and her speech falters. Nichols is right; Anna, like Erhart, has been playing along to stay alive.

"The state is very proud of you, Fraulein," Anna says, the hesitancy in her voice betraying her true feelings; Nazism disgusts her.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Anna, Karl, Magda and Nichols.

"Heil, Hitler," Magda says, as she settles back in her chair.

"Heil, Hitler," Karl responds as he snaps to attention and salutes.

“Heil, Hitler,” Anna says, salutes, and walks off screen left, with Karl following close behind.

Nichols, stunned and bewildered by all he has seen and heard, especially by Anna’s apparent adoption of Hitler’s New Order, looks after Anna as she walks away.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Nichols alone, looking after Anna. He looks as though he wants to go after her, to say something to her to bring her hope, to bring her back into the fold of freedom and light. But he does not know what to say to her, and so he just turns screen right and leaves, disheartened.

### **3.5.3 Rest Home - Analysis**

Shull and Wilt state that

mothers of the free nations support the war for various reasons, but one major point made repeatedly in wartime films is that the sanctity of the family is threatened by fascism (154)

According to both the book and the film, the rest homes of Nazi Germany exist for one reason, and one reason only, to supply the Nazi regime with future soldiers of pure Aryan blood (Ziemer 31). It does not matter to the state if these children are born in or out of wedlock. Indeed, *Hitler’s Children* implies that, to the Nazis, the idea of illegitimacy is but a moralistic superstition. Motherhood is no longer a sacred duty ordained by God and sanctioned by the holy sacrament of marriage. Rather, under Nazism, motherhood is simply a biological function and duty to be performed by every German woman deemed genetically and ideologically suitable. The god of Nazism, Adolf Hitler, had commanded his people to go forth, be fruitful and multiply, and Magda is more than willing to obey his commandment (Dick 192).

As in the book, the Magda of the film is a true believer. It is not enough for her to bear a child for Hitler; no, she hopes to further prove her devotion to her Fuehrer by enduring great pain during the birth process. Like the staked-out Hitler Youth in the picnic scene, she is ready to endure any hardship to prove herself worthy of her Fuehrer. Her personal wants and desires are insignificant compared to the needs of the State and are therefore cast aside without a second thought. Like a nun who has taken a vow of chastity, Magda has taken a vow of fecundity. The intensity of her speech and the fanatic glow of her countenance indicate that it is a vow that she takes seriously and intends to keep.

However, if the Nazi-breeding program finds a willing adherent in Magda, *Pastor Hall's* Lina is its unwilling and tragic victim. In this 1940 British film directed by Roy Boulting, Lina, age fourteen, eagerly leaves home to attend a labor camp. A frail child, Lina is very happy and proud to have the opportunity to serve her country by working in the camp, and believes that she shall come back all the stronger for having had the experience. At the camp, however, she is taken advantage of by a Nazi youth. Terrified and ashamed, Lina returns home pregnant.

At first, Lina and her father isolate themselves from the rest of the village, but Pastor Hall and his daughter, Christine, a long time friend of Lina's, visit their home one Sunday and insist on seeing Lina. Lina's father tries to dissuade them, but Christine will not take no for answer, and Lina's father finally allows Christine to go up to Lina's room.

Christine hears crying as she approaches the room, and slowly opens the door. Lina is lying on the bed crying, and Christine goes to Lina and hugs her while Lina tells her of her experience at the camp. Meanwhile downstairs, Lina's father relays the story



to Pastor Hall. Pastor Hall goes to the labor camp in an attempt to get the boy to marry Lina but is turned away by the officer in charge of the camp.

Pastor Hall returns to Lina's home and tries to comfort her by assuring her that he and Christine will always stand by her no matter what the other people in the village do, and by telling her a modified version of the Christmas story:

And Lina—I want you to remember one thing more. It's the world's most beautiful story. Of how a young mother, almost a child, like you, had to ride on a donkey. She was so poor and friendless that she could only find shelter in a stable. And people, who despised even her, refused to let her in. There've always been wicked and silly people in the world. I'm afraid they haven't changed much in two thousand years. But here you're among friends. And even if one should be unjust and say cruel things to you, just remember what they said to her.

Lina assures Pastor Hall that she will remember and is comforted both by these words and by Pastor Hall's assurance that she is still welcome in his church (Figure 3.5.4). Reassured and relieved, Lina smiles as Pastor Hall and Christine go downstairs to allow her to get dressed.



**Figure 3.5.4** Lina listens to Pastor Hall's version of the Christmas story. (*Pastor Hall*)

Downstairs, however, Lina's father tells Pastor Hall and Christine that the townspeople are already saying terrible things about Lina. Lina, who has dressed and is

on her way downstairs, overhears what her father is saying and returns to her room. Christine goes upstairs to check on her and finds that Lina has committed suicide. In the following scene, Pastor Hall says point blank that it was Nazism that killed Lina, and he resolves to fight against its spread even though it may cost him his life. Through Lina's death, *Pastor Hall*, like Ziemer's book, makes it clear that not everyone in Germany supported the Nazi's breeding program (Ziemer 30, 98).

It seems strange that the British film, *Pastor Hall*, should portray Lina in such a sympathetic light, considering Britain's proximity to the fighting, and the beating England was taking during the Battle of Britain. One would expect their portrayals of the Nazis to be more virulent. But perhaps it was because the war was so near to them that the British could afford to be more sympathetic to the "good Germans." The British knew what they were fighting for; if they forgot, they had only to look around at the devastation that surrounded them.

According to Shull and Wilt, however, the OWI feared that movies that sympathized with the German people too much would lead the relatively insulated American public to be too lenient with the Nazis when peace was finally achieved. The OWI wanted the American people to settle for nothing less than the total annihilation of fascist ideology. Magda's fanaticism would act as a reminder to viewers that the war could not be considered won until the Magdas of Hitler's Germany were reeducated in the ways of democracy and freedom. Destroying Germany's military strength would not be enough; America would have to destroy Nazism itself (215).

### 3.6 *Frauen Klinik*

Through the use of long shots, repetitive music and harsh lighting, the filmmakers pervert the German stereotypes of precision and efficiency into something monstrous—the assembly-line-like sterilization of women deemed unfit to bear children (Shull 144).

#### 3.6.1 *Frauen Klinik - Education for Death* (Ziemer 26-29)

The undesirables, the feeble-minded, those afflicted with incurable diseases, even the antagonistic in spirit would not have any more children, he explained. That was the wish of the Fuehrer, and Young Germany carried out his decrees.

He thought for a while and then asked if I would not like to see what he meant. Of course, I would.

'Your nerves—are they strong?' he asked. I told him they were as strong as the average. He asked to see my letter once more. For the second time in a few minutes I produced the document from the Ministry which had made it possible for me to see this official in the first place. He studied it carefully, held it up to the light, and inspected the water-mark. He seemed satisfied.

'Well,' he said, 'the Herr Minister Rust says you are to see things, and so you shall see them.'

We walked along the winding shore of the Spree River, and came to Friedrichstrasse, the main business street of Old Berlin.

Across that, we found Ziegelstrasse.

'Here,' said my Nazi guide, as he entered one of the forbidding brick buildings. 'Here is the place where we prove that our interest in the child begins before he is born. This is a *Frauen Klinik*—a city hospital for women.'

His black S.S. uniform opened all doors. In a locker room we slipped into surgical aprons. We climbed some stairs and entered a second-floor gallery, separated from an oval, well-illuminated operating room by a glass wall. Down below six doctors were hard at work.

What I saw drove the blood from my face for a while, I admit. Hospital beds came and went with methodical precision. The doctors made quick, deft incisions in white abdomen walls, spread the slit, and applied surgical clamps. They probed, delicately lifted a tube which they wrapped and cut. The wound was sewed, and the body was wheeled off to be replaced by another.

'What are they doing?' I asked.

He informed me they were doing what the Third Reich had to do if Germany wanted to have a race of super-soldiers. 'These doctors,' he said, 'are sterilizing women.'

For more than an hour I saw women come in with the cradle of life intact, and leave empty shells.

I asked what type of women were thus being disciplined, and was informed they were the mentally sick, women with low

resistance, women who had proved through other births that their offspring were not strong. They were women suffering from defects.

'We are even eradicating color-blindness in the Third Reich,' my S.S. guide told me. 'We must not have soldiers who are color-blind. It is transmitted only by women.'

Upon questioning he admitted that some of the women were sterilized because they were enemies of the State. Many of them should be in concentration camps.

'It is not humane to keep women in concentration camps,' he said. 'But a sterilized woman loses her interest in politics, especially if her fellow-women know that she is sterilized. And we see to it that the others find out.'

He could not tell me how many women were sterilized yearly; but he knew that in this particular clinic six doctors operated four days a week. The process had been going on in all larger German cities since 1933.

'Who decides that the women are to be sterilized?' I asked. I do not require notes to quote his answer. It planted itself in my memory.

'We have courts, my dear Herr Direktor Ziemer. We have courts. It is all done very legally, rest assured. We have law and order.'

That answer affected me more than the operations. He looked at me curiously.

'Seen enough?' he asked. I had. Once outside I took my leave, expressing my appreciation. I feel certain he returned to his colleagues and informed them gleefully that the *Amerikaner* could not take it.

### 3.6.2 *Frauen Klinik - Hitler's Children* (46:06-48:40)

Two men in medical uniforms sit in an observation deck watching the operations being performed in the operating theater below. We know that there is an operating room below, because we are looking up at the men through the glass of the observation deck and we can see the activity in the operating room reflected in the glass.

The man farthest screen right looks up off screen as though he has heard something. Suddenly, the man sits up as though startled and nudges his friend, who is sitting to his right. His friend looks up at him and then past him towards the right of the frame. Whatever he sees there makes him as apprehensive as his friend, and both men



**Figure 3.6.1** *Frauen Klinik* operating room.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

quickly rise and move off screen left. As they exit, Karl, Colonel Henkel and Professor Nichols move into the frame from the right and take the seats vacated by the two men. Again, the people's fear of the Gestapo is emphasized by the reaction of the two medical men.

The camera cuts to a long shot of the operating room, looking down from behind Karl, Henkel and Nichols and through the observatory glass. There are five separate operations going on simultaneously in the operating room. The tables are arranged in an “X” pattern with a table in each corner of the room and one in the center (Figure 3.6.1). As the men watch and Henkel speaks, the patient that was on the center table is taken away and the table is prepared for the next patient.

“This, professor, is a most unusual clinic,” Henkel says. “In fact, the most unusual. One of the finest of its kind in the world.” The camera, keeping the same angle, cuts to a closer shot of the activity below. “You are observing what is probably the most progressive medical advance ever attempted by any government.”

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Henkel and Nichols. Nichols looks at Henkel and asks, “What do you mean, Colonel?” Henkel, who seems to be studying the sight before him with great interest, looks over at Nichols and smiles sweetly.

“Oh, didn’t I tell you. All these patients are women—women who are unfit to have children.” Henkel looks towards the operating room again. “They are being sterilized,” Henkel says, his smile now gone.

Nichols looks at Henkel for a moment, apparently at a loss for words, and then looks down at the operating room. Dumbfounded, Nichols turns back to Henkel and asks, “May I ask why?”

“Yes, of course, professor,” Henkel says, his tone businesslike, his facial expression intense. “We’re building a new Germany,”

The camera cuts to a close up shot of Karl. At Henkel’s mention of ‘a new Germany’, Karl glances over at Henkel as if startled; he looks towards the camera as

though considering for the first time the implications of what Henkel is saying. “A strong Germany. There is no room for the sick and the weak and the unstable.”

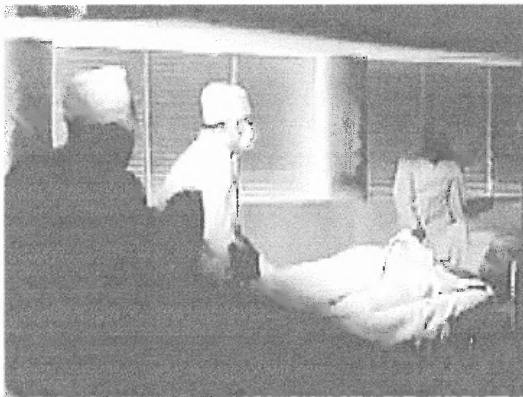
The camera cuts back to a two-shot of Henkel and Nichols (Figure 3.6.2). Nichols, looking at Henkel, asks, “Who decides that?” Henkel is looking at the operations again, but smiles as though amused as he looks over at Nichols.

“We have courts,” Henkel says, “special courts. Oh, it’s all very legal, I assure you,” he says, still smiling, as he turns to watch the operations once again.

The camera cuts to a long shot of the operating room. Four operations are in progress. The fifth table, the center table is empty, however, and the patient that recently occupied it is being wheeled away towards screen right.



**Figure 3.6.2** The smiling face of the enemy - Colonel Henkel and Professor Nichols.  
(*Hitler’s Children*)



**Figure 3.6.3** One patient is taken away as another is brought in.  
(*Hitler’s Children*)

The camera cuts to a long medium shot of an adjacent hallway. As the patient from the previous shot is being wheeled through the frame from left to right, another patient is being wheeled through the frame from right to left. They pass each other near the right of the frame, and the patient heading

left continues on alone towards the lower left corner of the frame (Figure 3.6.3).



The camera cuts to a long medium shot of the center table as the new patient arrives there. Suddenly the patient sits up on the gurney. The man at the head of the gurney grabs the patient's shoulder. The patient begins to struggle, and the nurse from the center table and the man from the foot of the gurney quickly join the first man to subdue her.

"Bring another hypo," the nurse says, looking over her shoulder at another person in surgical scrubs standing on the other side of the central operating table. The other person nods and moves off to get the hypodermic needle with a stronger drug, presumably. Another patient is wheeled away in the background. Apparently, nothing can stop the work going on here.

The camera cuts back to a close long shot of Karl, Henkel and Nichols; we are looking up at them.

"Of course, although the majority of our cases are the weak and the unstable, our doctors operate for a number of other reasons. Would you believe it, Professor . . ."

The camera cuts to a medium shot of just Henkel and Nichols. ". . . they range from eliminating hereditary colorblindness to dangerous political thinking. In political cases, it makes the woman much quieter, more reasonable."

The camera cuts to a medium close up of Karl alone. As Henkel continues to speak, Karl's face is expressionless, but his eyes betray his true emotions (Figure 3.6.4). There is no mistaking the look of fear and concern in his eyes. Also, his whole body is



**Figure 3.6.4** Karl fears for Anna.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

tight and rigid, and he swallows hard, as though trying to calm himself. You can almost hear his heart racing. He knows that Henkel is alluding to Anna. "It is sometimes much kinder than putting a woman in a concentration camp."

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Nichols alone. He looks at Henkel, and then jumps to his feet; the camera follows him up.

"You are barbarians, aren't you? Even the Rhodes Scholars among you."

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Karl and Henkel alone.

"Well, Professor has voluntarily ended his tour. He's fortunate that I spared him the news that I was referring to the Muller girl. She was one of his students, wasn't she?"

The camera cuts to a medium close up of Karl. "Yes, Colonel."

"What would you do about her, if you were in my place?"

"If I were you, Herr Colonel, I should do exactly what you will do."

The camera cuts to a medium close up of Karl and Henkel. "Good, boy," Henkel says, patting Karl on the shoulder. Henkel stands to leave and Karl stands with him.

"Well, shall we run along?"

"If you don't mind, Herr Colonel, I should like to watch for a little while longer."

Turning to leave, Henkel says, "I'll see you at the Ministry."

The camera cuts to a long medium shot through the glass of the observation deck as Henkel leaves the frame screen right. The operations are once again being reflected in the glass. Karl, a stunned look on his face, slowly sits down once again to watch the operations.

### 3.6.3 *Frauen Klinik* - Analysis

Unlike the other scenes discussed so far, this scene has background music; nerve-racking, mechanical, ominous music that complements the activity of the operating room, that is, the hospital beds coming and going “with methodical precision” (Ziemer 27).

Violins repeat one note slowly in the background while a piano runs up and down a four-note scale, repeating the scale until Colonel Henkel finishes his statement about the “special courts.” The piano stops, and cellos play the four-note scale once drawing out the notes ominously, increasing in volume as the two gurneys pass in the hall. Trumpets and flutes join in echoing the confusion of the patient that has to be given another hypodermic needle of sedative.

The music grows quiet then, the string instruments playing sustained notes with clarinets playing quick notes emphasizing Karl’s growing anxiety. With the departure of Professor Nichols, the piano returns, playing the four-note scale again, and continues to the end of the scene. Except for the occasional woodwind and brass flurries, the music works at an almost subliminal level, with the viewer feeling it more than hearing it. The music works the nerves like the buzz of fluorescent lights in a quiet room.

One contrast between the book and the film is the presentation of the operations. While the description of the procedure is rather graphic in the book, we are kept at a respectable distance in the film, and the operating room is allowed to keep its sterile, cold whiteness; blood stains on the sheets or on the hands of the surgeons are not allowed. This gives the scene a kind of dream-like quality; the operating room and the operations themselves seem but shadows of a brutal reality (Dick 190). The lighting further

emphasizes this dream-like quality: gurneys move from shadow into light into shadow again as though playing peek-a-boo with the viewer, and the operating room remains brightly lit, yet no detail can be seen. This is the operating room of dreams, what a person who has never been in an operating room might dream. It looks just real enough to convey what it is supposed to be.

Of course, this lack of graphic details is due to the restrictions of the Production Code Administration; they never would have allowed the graphic descriptions in the book to be depicted on the screen (Gardner 211). Those who knew the sights and smells of the operating room would be able to fill in the blanks in their minds. Those who were ignorant of such things would have to use their imaginations.

Adding to the barbarous nature of the scene is the way Colonel Henkel speaks so calmly and rationally about what is taking place in the operating room. In a previous scene, we are told that Colonel Henkel studied at Oxford University in England and that he was a Rhodes scholar. Henkel is a highly intelligent and well-educated man. This makes his acceptance of and participation in the Nazi regime seem all the more obscene; we feel that he should know better. We also feel betrayed that a man such as Henkel, who has had one of the finest educational opportunities a person can receive, should use his talents in such a way.

So far, we have seen the Nazis pervert some of the most important institutions of western civilization, namely the legal system, the educational system, the medical system, and the family (Shull 216, 223, 224). There is but one major institution left for the Nazis to conquer and that is the Church (216, 223-224). We shall see how the State fares against this institution in Section 4.4.

## CHAPTER 4

### SUPPORTING THE PARTY LINE

In this chapter, I will examine scenes from *Hitler's Children* which, although they have no counterpart in *Education for Death: The Making of the Nazi*, still illustrate themes and techniques common to the American propaganda films of World War II.

#### 4.1 Keepers of the Flame

This sequence illustrates how film propagandists use a nation's symbols and past victories to promote the belief that victory in the present conflict is inevitable (Furhammar 241-242; Shull 146-149). This sequence also shows how Hollywood turned Nazi symbols against them (Shull 144, 219-221).

##### 4.1.1 Keepers of the Flame - *Hitler's Children* (20:14-22:25)

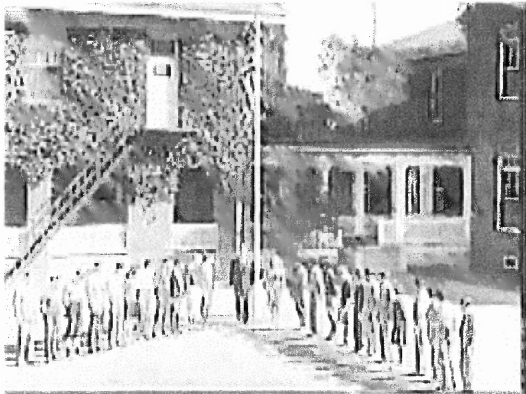
As this scene slowly fades into view out of the montage of film clips that precedes it, the voice of Prof. Nichols can be heard saying

The new order of things was underway. The fires of freedom were burning lower. But although things grew more tense all around us, at the American School the fires are banked high. It's Memorial Day, and we all gather to celebrate.

The camera, in a high angle establishing shot, reveals the courtyard of the American Colony School. The students, both boys and girls, form a "V" with Nichols and Anna at its apex (Figure 4.1.1). Behind Nichols and Anna stands a flagpole proudly bearing the American flag. As the camera fades from the establishing shot of the

courtyard to a long shot of Nichols and Anna, the Nichols voiceover continues, but we can see and hear that Anna is speaking in the background, although the viewer cannot determine what she is saying yet.

That's Anna you're looking at now. She's all of twenty and the best assistant I ever had.



**Figure 4.1.1** Memorial Day at the American Colony School. (*Hitler's Children*)

As the voiceover ends, Anna's voice comes to the foreground and we hear that she is completing a recitation of the *Gettysburg Address*. As the camera moves into a medium shot of Nichols and Anna, we can tell from the sound of her voice and the intensity of her expression that Lincoln's

words are more than just words to her; this is a woman who truly believes what she is saying.

As Anna intones the ending "And that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth," Nichols turns to look at her, with affection and pride on his face. Here is a woman who loves democracy as much as he does; a woman who, though she could have left Germany to return to the relative safety of the United States, had stayed behind to run the school with him in order that there might be one more light of freedom still burning in Nazi Germany.

Anna finishes her recitation, and the camera pulls back to another long shot that includes some of the students closest to them. Nichols raises his right hand in an up beat, and as he brings it down, all present start singing *My Country, 'Tis of Thee* which seems

designed to appeal to English viewers too, as the tune is recognizable to them as “God save the King.”

All seems well, but then the camera cuts to the entrance of the school’s courtyard where a Nazi flag blows in the wind. A dark-colored staff car bearing a swastika on its front door rolls into the frame from the right and stops in front of the school. Four Nazi officers in black uniforms immediately jump out of the car and start to head toward the singing group in the courtyard.

The camera cuts to a medium long shot of Nichols and Anna. Nichols sees the Nazis first; his expression hardly changes, although he almost stops singing. This is probably not the first time Nazi officers have come to the school, and he seems resigned to it. Anna’s concern and fear are evident on her face, however, and she does stop singing for a moment when she catches sight of the officers.

The camera cuts to a medium long shot of the officers marching, single file, into the courtyard. It then cuts to a long shot of the courtyard group; the Nazi officers march into the shot from the lower right corner of the frame. The officer-in-charge, a sergeant, positions himself in front of Nichols and Anna, while the other three men space themselves out across the “V” created by the students. Nichols, Anna, and the students continue to sing. The sergeant tries to call the students to attention and tells them to stop singing, but the students, Nichols, and Anna continue to sing. The sergeant orders his men to “shush” the students. The men approach the students, yelling at them to be quiet. They threaten to slap one, grab and shake another, but the children keep singing until they finish the song.

When the singing stops, the sergeant turns to Nichols and says, “The Ministry of Education requires the instant dismissal from your school of all Poles, all Jews, all Lithuanians and all persons of German blood.”

Nichols objects, but the officer cuts him short.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of the sergeant who has his back towards the camera. Nichols and Anna stand beyond him on either side. The sergeant pivots around to face the camera and the students in the courtyard. He has a paper in his hands and instructs the students to step to the center of the grouping when he calls their name. He calls out the names of four students; their names reflect the ethnicities of the people he has come to collect.

The camera cuts to a close up shot of the first student called, a girl named Sarah Klein. Sarah starts at the sound of her name, glances over at the officer, and then, pulling back her shoulders and pushing out her chin, walks resolutely towards the center of the grouping.

The camera then cuts to a close up shot of the second student, a boy named Martin Korvac. Martin, his eyes downcast, his mouth opening and closing in indecision, hesitates as he starts to move forward and is pushed toward the center by one of the other Nazi officers.

The camera cuts to the center of the grouping where the last two students called join Sarah and Martin.

Suddenly, the sergeant shouts, “Muller, Anna.”

The camera cuts to a medium shot of the sergeant, who looks at the children and again shouts, “Muller, Anna.”



The camera cuts to a medium shot of Anna. “My name is Muller; Anna Muller. But I’m not a student; I’m a teacher here.”

The camera cuts to a long medium shot of the Nazi Sergeant, Nichols and Anna. “You live with Mr. and Miss Max Muller at Kronenstrasse 137?” the Sergeant asks Anna.

“Yes, of course,” Anna replies. “They’re my grandparents. They’re German, but I’m an American.”

“Nevertheless, you’re to fall out too.”

“Sergeant,” Nichols tries to intervene, “Miss Muller is an American citizen. I refuse to let you . . .”

“I have my orders,” the Sergeant tells Nichols. “If you have any objections, take them up with the Lieutenant.”

“Very well. Where will I find the Lieutenant?”

“Follow me.”

The camera cuts to a medium shot of the four students standing in the center of the grouping. “You too,” the Sergeant says to Anna. As Nichols and Anna follow the Nazi Sergeant away from the camera toward the school building in the background, the four students are taken away screen right by the three officers who yell at them, in German, to move quickly.

#### **4.1.2 Keepers of the Flame - Analysis**

In their book, *Hollywood War Film, 1937-1945*, Michael S. Shull and David E. Wilt state that one of the most prevalent symbols seen in American World War II films was the letter “V,” which stood for victory. From the later part of 1942 until the end of the war in 1945, the radio tower of the RKO logo that appeared at the start of every RKO film,

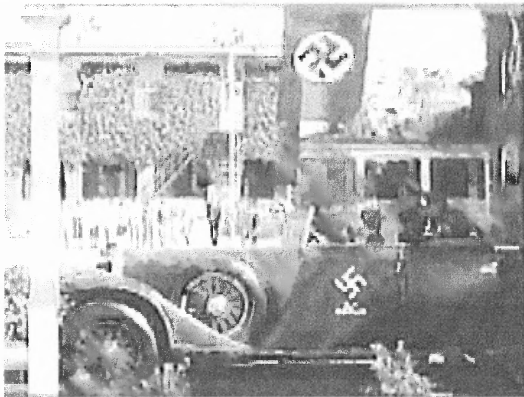
including *Hitler's Children*, broadcast the letter “V” in Morse code or (dot, dot, dot, dash). At the start of *Hitler's Children*, the music that accompanies the opening credits begins with the first four notes of Beethoven’s *Fifth Symphony*, which happen to spell out musically the letter “V” in Morse code. In the opening shot of this sequence, the students of the American Colony School form a “V” with the American flag at its apex. Surely, the significance of the “V” formation was not lost on the audience; America would be victorious as long as it remained faithful to those ideals the flag represented, ideals such as freedom and democracy (146, 148).

The American flag was another symbol heavily used in World War II films. In *Hitler's Children*, the American flag is seen only twice, in this scene, and in a following scene when Nichols visits the American embassy. In the embassy scene, the seal of the United States government is also visible on the wall. While the relative absence of the American flag in *Hitler's Children* is most likely due to the fact that the movie is based in Nazi Germany, it also reflects a trend in World War II films (149).

In World War I, the flag was portrayed with such frequency in American films that its use came to be viewed as more of an insult than a patriotic gesture (Furhammar 166). Perhaps remembering what was done with the flag in World War I, the *Production Code of 1930* demanded that the flags of all nations—the United States included—be treated with respect (Gardner 211). This trend was formalized in 1943, when the United States Congress passed the Flag Code

mandating rituals of usage that confirmed the status of the flag as a quasi-sacred object., a focus for unity in a nation lacking the cohesive factors of shared race or religion. (Shull 149)

Another technique used by film propagandists during times of war, according to Furhammar and Isaksson, was the linking of a past victory to a present conflict. By playing the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* in the background during Professor Nichols's voiceover and by having Anna recite the *Gettysburg's Address*, the creators of *Hitler's Children* are linking the ideals of the Union forces of the Civil War with those of the Allies in World War II. Just as the Union soldiers had fought to preserve the United States as a single entity and to free the Southern slaves, the Allies had to fight to preserve democracy and to free the countries enslaved by the Axis. By linking the two conflicts the scriptwriter, Emmet Lavery, suggests that the outcome of the present conflict will mirror that of the past conflict, that is, as we were victorious before so shall we be again. (220-221, 241-242; Shull 157)



**Figure 4.1.2** Staff car at American Colony School.  
(*Hitler's Children*)



**Figure 4.1.3** Hitler and Mussolini in staff car.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

The Gestapo officers' arrival at the American Colony School in a staff car (Figure 4.1.2), illustrates another technique prevalent in American films of the time. Shull and Wilt say that filmmakers used staff cars as a means of identifying the enemy. (220-221).

German officers traveling in open staff cars symbolize a military elite and would remind many in the contemporary audience of actual

footage showing Hitler in his custom black Mercedes—particularly the oft-used scene of his grand entrance into Nuremburg, lifted from Leni Reifenstahl’s 1934 *Triumph des Willens*. (221)

In the montage of film clips from *Triumph of the Will* that precedes this scene, Hitler is shown riding in such a car with Mussolini (Figure 4.1.3). So, there is a direct connection made between Hitler and the Gestapo, especially since this is the first time the staff car appears in the movie. It would be seen again in the Rest Home scene (Section 3.5) and in the whipping scene (Section 4.5). As Shull and Wilt indicate, this is the car of the “military elite,” and it serves as a visual cue to American viewers that something unpleasant or important was about to happen. (221)

This scene is also the first time that the black uniform of the SS is used as well. According to Shull and Wilt,

the most evil cinematic Nazis are usually portrayed in the black uniform of the SS (usually referred to as members of the dreaded secret police, the Gestapo—although they were separate organizations, Hollywood made little distinction between the two) (221)

The officers in this scene are later revealed to be Gestapo officers, and in the next sequence, we see that Karl, the devoted Hitler Youth, has become a Gestapo lieutenant.

The fact that Hollywood makes no distinction between the Gestapo and the SS is borne out in the fact that Ziemer never mentions being shown around by the Gestapo in his book; he is always shown around by SA officers, SS officers or other government officials, but never the Gestapo.

In Hollywood films, however, the epitome of Nazi evil is invariably presented as the Gestapo, and this evil almost always wore the black uniform of Hitler's elite force, the SS (Figure 4.1.4). Since in Western culture the color black is often associated with death and evil, the black uniforms of the SS, like the black hats of the western villains, were ready-made visual cues as to who the enemy was in American war films. The viewers always knew that they could expect the worst from the men in the black. (221)



**Figure 4.1.4** Gestapo sergeant.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

This is also the only scene in which the Nazi's racial policies are alluded to; the Nazi sergeant demands the immediate dismissal of all Poles, Jews, Lithuanians and persons of German blood, and then proceeds to read aloud a list of names representative of the ethnic groups he has mentioned. It is

interesting to note that Jewish people are not singled out as the main group being persecuted by the Nazis, but rather they are included in a list of people of various ethnicities, a common occurrence in World War II melodramas (Doherty 130).

According to Koppes and Black, anti-Semitism was rampant in the United States at the time and growing worse (283). In 1942, a public opinion poll reported that forty percent of the American public thought Jewish people wielded too much power in the United States, and that eighteen percent of Americans agreed with Hitler's treatment of the Jews as known at that time (283). Indeed, the Nazis had considered the United States the most latently anti-Semitic of the world's democracies, a trait they had hoped in the pre-war years to use to their advantage (Rhodes 142).

Aware of the anti-Semitic sentiments of some Americans, the studio moguls, many of whom were Jewish, could have

produced a number of films with Jewish heroes openly arguing for racial equality, respect, and compassion. While Hollywood placed no premium on subtlety, such a blatant frontal assault would have too obviously telegraphed the films' intentions, with the possibility of an audience backlash. Instead, what actually took place in a number of war-relevant films released between 1942 and 1945 was the presentation of a few obviously Jewish characters (usually in supporting roles), whose Jewishness was not over-emphasized. These cinematic Jews are deliberately portrayed as average Americans, who at some dramatic point may espouse the virtues of democracy or act heroically. Sometimes the latter is an act of individual bravery, but more often it is presented as taking place within a group—most particularly as a manifestation of the collective patriotism of a combat unit. (Shull 140-141)

In *Hitler's Children*, Sarah Klein is the "Jewish hero" (Figure 4.1.5). When she hears her name called, she hesitates only for a moment. She then squares her shoulders, pushes out her chin and resolutely steps into the grouping. She is a child, but she has the courage of an adult. Her body language says



**Figure 4.1.5** Sarah Klein.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

more than any speech could, and we the viewers cannot help but feel sympathy for her and anger towards the Nazis.

In propaganda films, children are used to represent purity and innocence (Furhammar 238-239). In the Hitler Youth rally scene (Section 3.1) and the Picnic scene (Section 3.3), we were shown how Nazism corrupts innocence. In this scene, we are shown how Nazism persecutes innocence. The fact that the Nazis did not spare even children would have angered the viewers. Adults might kill and imprison each other over politics, but children are a different matter. It seems inherently wrong to involve them in such things; therefore, Nazism by association also seems inherently wrong, and therefore, worthy of destruction.

It is interesting to note that Ziemer is also subtle in dealing with the Nazi persecution of the Jews. While he does relay the anti-Jewish ravings of a couple of Nazi officials, mentions that certain houses now being used by the Nazi regime once belonged to Jews, and that a fight in front of his school was a result of the anti-Semitic beliefs of the Hitler Youth involved, Ziemer never touches on the subject in any depth. Like the film, he injects a factoid here and there amid the information about the Nazi educational system. (Ziemer 3-5, 12-13, 44)

This was probably a wise choice on Ziemer's part, as *Education for Death* was first published in October 1941--before the United States entered the war. Too much emphasis on Nazi anti-Semitism would have appeared to support the view espoused by many isolationists, that is, that the people who wanted the United States to fight the most were foreigners and American Jews who cared more about saving Europe and European Jewry than maintaining American neutrality (Koppes 40-41).

Ziemer wrote *Education for Death* as a wakeup call to America (200). If it was to be successful in its mission, it would have to speak to all Americans and make them believe that Nazism threatened them all, not just those of foreign or Jewish heritage. The same could be said of most other American propaganda films.

## 4.2 Oppressors of the Elderly

This section deals with how film propagandists often use brutalization of the elderly to arouse indignation against the enemy within the viewer (Furhammar 222)

### 4.2.1 Oppressors of the Elderly - *Hitler's Children* (24:42-26:21)

After the Gestapo takes Anna into custody, Professor Nichols goes to the American Embassy for help since Anna, although born in Germany, is an American citizen. Nichols is shocked when the American ambassador tells him that the embassy is powerless to help.

“But surely under international law . . .” Nichols begins to argue.

“There is very little law being recognized here, professor, other than the laws of Hitler,” the American ambassador interrupts.

Disheartened and shocked that the American government can offer Anna no assistance, Nichols sets out to save Anna on his own. He tries “to reach Anna by mail, over and over again,” but all of his letters are returned unopened. He seeks the help of friends and party officials, but to no avail. No one will help him find out where the Gestapo has taken Anna.

Finally, “in desperation it occurred to...[him]...that maybe Anna’s grandparents would know something.”





**Figure 4.2.1** Nichols arrives at the Mullers.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

mission, a mission he believes will end successfully.

The Muller's house is not unlike many of the brownstones found in New York City. The windows are barred and there is an iron fence around the sunken porch. There is also an iron gate across the front door. The camera tracks with Nichols as he descends the few steps that lead down to the front door and rings the doorbell.

The camera then cuts to a medium shot of Nichols still ringing the bell and peering through the gate; the front door is a few feet from the gate creating a short cave-like archway. The camera is shooting from behind Nichols, and we can see the doorway beyond the gate from over his left shoulder; the entire scene is shot from this angle.

A man slowly opens the front door and meekly peeks out, only his eyes and forehead visible at first. After looking Nichols over, Mr. Muller opens the door further.

"Yes?" Mr. Muller asks. Mr. Muller seems dazed and distracted. His face says that he does not want to speak to Nichols, but is doing so out of politeness.

Mr. Muller is a man of the old Germany, as evidenced by his clothes: a crisp white shirt with a standup collar whose corners have been turned down over a dark tie, and a dark suit with a contrasting vest. It is not a suit worn by men in the 1930s, but by

The camera meets Nichols as he arrives at the house of Anna's grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Muller (Figure 4.2.1). In an establishing long shot, Nichols is seen walking in from screen left. Unlike the previous scenes, Nichols' spirits seem to be a little more hopeful. He is a man on a

the generation that came before. It is somewhat formal and speaks of comfortable middle-class prosperity and values.

“It’s Professor Nichols, Mr. Muller. Don’t you remember me?”

“Yes, yes,” Mr. Muller, says wearily. “But please go away, Herr Nichols,” Mr. Muller turns to go back into his house, “we do not know anything.”

Nichols shouts after him. “Mr. Muller, I must find out from you about Anna.”

“Please not so loud, Herr Nichols,” Mr. Muller says, coming out to the gate, motioning to Nichols to lower his voice. Mrs. Muller, who apparently has been listening to their exchange from just inside the door, now follows her husband out to the gate. “I beg you.”

“It’s better if no one sees us talking to you,” Mrs. Muller says, worry and sadness evident in both her voice and facial expression. Her clothes also speak of an earlier time: a dark dress with a light rounded lace collar with a cameo pinned in the center of it, and a shawl wrapped around her shoulders. Her slight plumpness and gently pulled-back gray hair make her seem grandmotherly, like a woman who would normally take pride in her home and hospitality.

But now both she and her husband have the look of people beaten down by fear and worry. Where once they might have welcomed Professor Nichols warmly into their home, they now cower behind their front door, afraid to be seen talking to Nichols. Their house has become their prison and their talking to Nichols through the bars of the gate makes this point clear (Lodger).

“You’ve got to tell me what you know,” Nichols pleads with them.

“Well,” Mr. Muller says, “she came here that afternoon for some things, and then they took her away.” Mr. Muller, obviously wanting the conversation to end, tries to move his wife back into the house, but she does not move.

“She said she would be all right,” Mrs. Muller says, her eyes downcast, as though she does not have the strength left to look Nichols in the eyes. She holds her shawl around her and stares at the ground; she looks and sounds emotionally and spiritually numb. “She said we should not worry.”

“I’m trying to find out where she is.” Nichols continues. “I want to do something about it.”

“Humph. Do something?” Mr. Muller looks at Nichols as though amazed by Nichols naiveté.

“What can anyone do?” Mrs. Muller asks, her voice full of despair.

“Well, at least you have the right to ask.”

“No, no.” Mr. Muller says, shaking his hand at Nichols to emphasize his words.

“One must never ask questions.”

“Mr. and Mrs. Rumann down the street,” Mrs. Muller explains, looking up at Nichols for the first time, her eyes wide with fear, “they asked some questions about their grandson. He was in the army.” Mrs. Muller drops her eyes again, and retreats into her thoughts while her husband explains further.

“They took the Rumanns away,” Mr. Muller continues. “They said they were sick—very sick. And they never came back.”

“Ja, ja,” Mrs. Muller awakens again, and looks up at Nichols. “They said they died in the hospital. But I know—,” she says, her voice rising with every word, her left hand tapping her chest in frantic emphasis, “they put them to sleep in the hospital—“

“Mama,” Mr. Muller tries to silence her, to bring her back to her senses. There is no telling who is listening; her talk could endanger them all.

“They put them to sleep with gas,” Mrs. Muller voice continues to rise in volume; Mrs. Muller has reached her breaking point.

“Mama, mama!” Mr. Muller pleads with his wife, his own fear intensifying.

“They murdered them because they’re at war—,” Mrs. Muller screams, and her husband grabs her. Placing his hand over her mouth, he gently but firmly pushes her back towards the house.

“Mama, please don’t say that. Mama, you mustn’t say things like that. They will come—.” Mr. Muller gets his wife inside the house and closes the door.

The narration and the background music start, as Nichols stands watching the Muller’s door for a few moments.

“Fear—it was the same wherever I turned; some terrible dread that froze people where they stood.” Nichols turns slowly to face the camera as this line is said. He wears a shocked expression on his face. How could every thing have changed so quickly, he seems to be thinking to himself? And if everyone is so afraid of the Gestapo, how will he ever find and rescue Anna?

Suddenly, Nichols’s countenance lightens as a thought enters his mind. “I thought I’d exhausted every possibility. But then I remembered Franz.”

#### 4.2.2 Oppressors of the Elderly - Analysis

In *Politics and Film*, Leif Furhammar and Folke Isaksson say that

suffering arouses indignation, which is the keystone of all propaganda. But it is always the weaker side that attracts such feelings which therefore conflict with the need to appear strongest. However, women, children and old people provide convenient victims, whose defencelessness [sic] can never be rationalised, in the spectator's mind, into military or political weakness. (222)

*Hitler's Children*, *Pastor Hall*, and *The Mortal Storm* all have scenes in which the Nazis victimize the elderly, either physically or psychologically.

In *Hitler's Children*, Anna's grandparents become virtual prisoners in their own home (Figure 4.2.2) as symbolized by the bars of the front gate (Lodger). The slight high angle shot over Nichols's shoulder only serves to make Mr. and Mrs. Muller appear small and frail. The fact that



**Figure 4.2.2** A portrait in fear - Nichols speaks to the Mullers.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

their conversation with Nichols is photographed as a single shot also adds to the claustrophobic atmosphere of the scene and testifies to the oppressive atmosphere engendered by the Nazi regime (Furhammar 212). The Mullers have been boxed in by their fear, just as they are boxed in by the frame of the screen, the bars of the gate, and the arch of the entrance way.



**Figure 4.2.3** Frau Kampe holds box containing the ashes of her murdered son.

(*Pastor Hall*)

In *Pastor Hall*, Pastor Hall is summoned to Frau Kampe's house by her niece who fears for her aunt's health. When Pastor Hall arrives at the house, he finds Frau Kampe in a state of shock, holding a small wooden box in her hands (Figure 4.2.3). The box contains the ashes of her only son, a SA officer and a victim of the Night of Long

Knives. Her son, in whom she has taken such pride and of whom she has spoken so warmly in a previous scene, is dead, and she has been forbidden to give him a proper burial because he has been branded a traitor to the state.

In *The Mortal Storm*, the elderly Professor Roth is sent to a concentration camp because he is Jewish (Figure 4.2.4) and because he will not teach that Aryan blood is superior to that of other ethnic and racial groups. In the same film, a group of SA men threaten and then beat Professor Werner (Figure 4.2.5) because he refuses to sing the



**Figure 4.2.4** Professor Roth in concentration camp - note letter "J" on sleeve.

(*The Mortal Storm*)

*Horst Wessel Lied*, and Frau Brietner is threatened with physical harm when she refuses to disclose the whereabouts of her son, a known opponent of Nazism (Figure 4.2.6).



**Figure 4.2.5** SA officer threatens Professor Werner.  
(*The Mortal Storm*)

According to Furhammar and Isaksson, by showing the Nazi regime victimizing the elderly, filmmakers encouraged the audience to become indignant against the regime. The audience was not told directly who to hate, but was allowed to discover gradually the inherent evil of the

enemy. No civilized person could condone the brutalization of the elderly, even if they were the elderly of the enemy. Therefore, any system or ideology that permitted such things had to be evil and had to be destroyed. (155, 205)

The gassing of the Rumanns that Mrs. Muller refers to in this scene alludes to the Nazi's euthanasia program started in the summer of 1939 (Burleigh 383; Shull 225). According to Burleigh, children having mental or physical defects were either given daily doses of barbiturates in their food and drink to bring on death via pulmonary illness, or were killed outright with overdoses of morphium-scopolamin. Six thousand children, ranging in age from infants to sixteen years, were killed in this manner (384).



**Figure 4.2.6** Frau Brietner during SA interrogation.  
(*The Mortal Storm*)

When the program was expanded to include adults, however, a faster method was found: carbon monoxide gas. Foreshadowing what would later happen in the extermination camps, adults deemed unworthy of life because of mental or physical

defects were herded onto buses and trains and taken to extermination centers. There, they sometimes would be given towels and soap, before they were locked into the airtight gas chambers, disguised as shower stalls, and executed. The bodies were then removed from the chambers and cremated. Five thousand men and women were murdered in this manner between March and August of 1940. By the time the infrastructure for the Final Solution was in place, the men and women who would execute the plan already had experience in the art of mass murder (384-35, 393-394).

### **4.3 A House Divided**

This scene illustrates an important principle of propaganda films, namely, to portray conflict in the enemy camp (Fyne 88). In this scene, we are made privy to the internal frictions between the SS and the SA (Santoro).

#### **4.3.1 A House Divided - *Hitler's Children* (38:58-43:33)**

This scene takes place in the office of Dr. Graf, the head of the Ministry of Education. Karl has recommended Anna for admission to a special program in geopolitics at the University of Berlin, and Dr. Graf is informing her that she has been accepted into the program as Colonel Henkel looks on.

Karl has warned Anna that it would be dangerous for them both if she turned down the position. But Anna can no longer play along with her Nazi captors and tells Colonel Henkel and Dr. Graf that she wants nothing to do with the “diseased new world” they are planning. For this act of treason, she is taken into custody (Figure 4.3.1).

After Anna is taken away, Colonel Henkel and Dr. Graf discuss the matter.





**Figure 4.3.1** Dr. Graf blows up at Anna.  
(*Hitler's Children*)  
wears a suit and tie.

The camera frames Colonel Henkel and Dr. Graf in a medium shot. Colonel Henkel stands in front of Dr. Graf's desk facing the door his back toward the camera, while Dr. Graf stands behind his desk also with his back to the camera. Colonel Henkel wears his Gestapo uniform, while Dr. Graf

"Well," Henkel says turning toward Dr. Graf, "that young lady was allowed to come quite far for a person harboring such thoughts."

"She was recommended and vouched for by your protégé, Lieutenant Brunner." Startled, Henkel looks up at Graf.

"Really?" Henkel picks up the intercom and rings the outer office. "Send in Lieutenant Brunner." He hangs up the intercom.

Graf leans forward on his desk to look into Henkel's face. "He must be removed at once."

"Why?" Henkel asks him.

"Colonel Henkel!" Graf stands up in surprise. He is shocked that Henkel should even have to ask why.

"Oh my dear, Graf, when are you going to learn that we must stop purging our best people." Graf leans forward again to emphasize what he is saying.

"Do you consider a man who recommends that type of woman for a position of trust our best people?"

“All men make mistakes, especially young men.” Henkel says. He walks around the desk to Graf’s side and leans against it. “I dare say even you and I have made some.” Graf turns away from Henkel, growling slightly in disgust, but turns back as Henkel continues speaking. “I consider it as much my job to save them from their mistakes and from themselves—“

“Your attitude is inviting, Henkel.” Graf cuts him off, hitting the desk to punctuate his statement.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Henkel sitting on the edge of the desk. “Inviting trouble,” Henkel replies, rolling his eyes. “Your fears are so typical of the old-line party men, Graf. You seem to forget that the usefulness of the street corner hoodlum went after we achieved power.”

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Graf who is looking down his nose at Henkel, a look of disdain on his face. “I wish you would diminish your admiration for brute violence.”

The camera cuts back to Henkel again. “If the party is to survive, intelligent young men will be needed.”

The camera cuts back to Graf, who moves in closer to Henkel and bends over to speak in Henkel’s face. “Do you consider what he did an act of intelligence?” He hits the desk again.

“All right, perhaps not,” Henkel says, “but certainly not reason enough to disqualify him. Suppose he does care for this girl?” Graf waves his hand at Henkel as he turns away, signifying that he believes Henkel to be talking nonsense.

The camera cuts back to Henkel. “We Nazis are not opposed to such relationship. My only question is will he put his interest in this girl before his duty to the state?”

The camera cuts back to a medium shot of Henkel and Graf. “It’s too dangerous to risk waiting for an answer.” Graf says lifting his hands in emphasis.

There is a knock at the door and Henkel stands. Both men stand looking at the door as Karl enters. Ominous music plays softly in the background.

Karl walks over to Dr. Graf’s desk and salutes. “Heil, Hitler.”

Colonel Henkel and Dr. Graf return the salute.

Henkel walks around the desk to stand by Karl, while Graf walks out of the shot, screen right. “Herr Karl, you recommended a girl named Anna Muller for work at the university.”

“Yes, Herr Colonel.”

“I supposed you looked into her background carefully?”

The camera cuts to a close up shot of Karl. “Yes, Herr Colonel. She was born in Germany, though she has lived in America. Her work at Rhinesburg was considered excellent. She’s regarded as a German. Therefore there seemed no reason for not advancing her as a German.”

The camera cuts to a close up shot of Henkel. “That is sound enough. The young lady only a few moments ago committed an act of treason . . . ”

The camera cuts to a close up shot of Karl. “. . . against the state in this office.” Fear flashes across Karl’s face as he realizes that Anna has made good on her threat; she had warned him to withdraw his recommendation, but he had told her that it was too late for him to do so and had warned her that it would be dangerous for the both of them if

she turned down the position. Fearing the punishment ahead of him, Karl stares at Henkel for a moment, not sure of how to proceed. He glances in Dr. Graf's direction, before returning his attention to Henkel. Resigning himself to the situation, he drops his head in shame and attempts to explain his error.

"I allowed a moment of sentiment to misguide me, sir." Karl looks into Henkel's eyes as though trying to convince him of his sincerity and remorse. "I knew her as a young girl. We went to neighboring schools. I regret it, sir."

Camera cuts to medium shot of Henkel, the sternness of his face undercut by a hint of amusement in his eyes, as he examines Karl. "What do you think we ought to do about her?"

Camera cuts to medium shot of Karl, his face controlled, looking Henkel in the eye. "There's no alternative; she must be sent to a concentration camp."

Camera cuts back to Henkel, who is suppressing a smile. He is pleased with Karl's answer. Henkel glances over at Graf as he speaks to Karl, with an "I told you so" attitude evident on his face. "I don't think that such severity will be necessary."

The camera cuts back to Karl as Henkel continues to speak. Karl smiles faintly in relief when he hears that Anna will not be sent to a concentration camp, but erases the smile from his face when he sees Henkel turning to look at him again. "Perhaps a year in the labor corps will work out these silly notions."

"As you wish, Herr Colonel." Karl says, his face devoid of expression.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Henkel and Karl facing each other. Henkel dismisses Karl. "That will be all, Karl." Karl pivots on his heels and exits the room.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Graf standing by the office window looking out. As Graf leaves the window and walks toward the desk, the camera frames both Henkel and Graf on opposite sides of the desk once again.

“Well, Graf?” Henkel asks.

“I still warn you, it would be safer not to experiment.” Graf says, his hands grasped behind his back. He does not like the idea of Karl still being in a position of authority. As far as he is concerned, Henkel is playing with fire and they are all going to get burned.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Henkel. Henkel rolls his eyes at Graf and smiles and sighs in exasperation at Graf’s misgivings, as he rings the outer office again and tells them to send Anna back to the labor camp. Henkel believes that he has the situation well under control; nothing will go wrong. Karl will prove himself a loyal party member and Anna will become a good Nazi in the end. His face and attitude say that he has no doubts about the outcome.

#### **4.3.2 A House Divided - Analysis**

This scene illustrates an important principle of propaganda films, namely, to portray conflict in the enemy camp (Fyne 88). In this scene, we are made privy to the internal frictions that existed between the SS and the SA (Santoro).

In the pre-war years, newsreels and motion pictures had emphasized the apparent invincibility of the Nazi war machine. This was done in an attempt to convince Americans that the Nazis were a real threat to national security and that America had better take this threat seriously (Fyne 73-74).

Once the United States entered the war, however, motion pictures began to shift their emphasis from the invincibility of the Nazi war machine to the fragility of the Axis alliance (Shull 225). Now that the United States was in the war, the American public had to believe that the enemy could be defeated. The American public had to be shown that there were flaws inherent in the social system of the Nazi regime; that even in this supposedly solid incorruptible cohesive organization there were division and dissension among the rank and file that could be exploited by the Allies (Fyne 88).

Dr. Graf represents the old party. He is not as disciplined or emotionally restrained as Henkel and Karl. He shouts and bangs on the table whenever he is upset, and has no qualms about showing his anger when Anna refuses to take the position at the university. Unlike Henkel and Karl, Graf is seen in



**Figure 4.3.2** Dr. Graf.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

uniform only toward the end of the film, just before and during Karl and Anna's trial. One has the impression that perhaps Dr. Graf was one of the "street corner hoodlums" that Henkel speaks of; a SA man who is loath to give up the brute force tactics of the early party. The expression on Graf's face when Henkel makes this statement suggests that Graf has as much contempt for Henkel's new way as Henkel has for his old way (Figure 4.3.2). He believes that Henkel's "experiments" will bring them nothing but grief.

Colonel Henkel, on the other hand, represents the new face of Nazism. It is a polished, sophisticated, highly educated face that hides its brutality beneath a veneer of

reserve and refinement. Henkel would never bang on a table or growl in exasperation. A rolling of the eyes, a sigh, an arrogant smile, or a scowl are the only emotional expressions that he will permit himself (Figure 4.3.3). He is a man of thought, a member



**Figure 4.3.3** Colonel Henkel.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

of Hitler's elite, a man who gives orders and expects them to be executed. He is the officer to whom men like Graf must answer. His whole attitude towards Graf, the way he dismisses Graf's concerns, gives the impression that he believes himself superior to Graf and men like him. One has the

impression that Henkel looks forward to the day when all of Hitler's men will be like him, and the Graf's of the party will be completely eradicated. Henkel is determined to make his experiment work, if for no other reason than to prove to Graf that his way is the future of the party.

Karl's actions also prove that the party is not as solid as it should be. If, as Graf said, Karl is Henkel's protégé, then Henkel has a right to expect a certain amount of loyalty from Karl, seeing as how Karl owes his rapid rise through the ranks in part to Henkel's patronage (Figure 4.3.4). But



**Figure 4.3.4** Karl smiles faintly.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

Karl's desire for Anna is greater than his loyalty to Henkel or the state, as evidenced by his relief that Henkel will not send Anna to a concentration camp. In fact, in the previous

scene, Karl suggests that the only reason he wants Anna to become a Nazi is so they can be together; he had hoped that her position at the Geopolitical University would allow them to grow closer. Karl is more concerned about getting Anna to submit to him than about promoting party ideology or observing loyalty to Henkel. It would seem that Nichols was right when he said in an earlier voiceover that the party had planned for everything but the human factor.

#### 4.4 Church versus State

This scene illustrates how film propagandists use religious imagery—in this case, Christian imagery—to elevate a mundane conflict between two ideologies to the level of a metaphysical battle between good and evil (Furhammar 240).

##### 4.4.1 Church versus State - *Hitler's Children* (01:01:04-01:08:44)

This sequence takes place in the office of a Gestapo major. The major is interrogating Anna as a Catholic bishop looks on. In a previous sequence, Anna escapes from the labor camp and seeks refuge in a Catholic church. The Gestapo finds out that she is hiding in the church and orders the bishop to stop the mass and dismiss the congregation; they hope to capture Anna as she tries to leave the church. The bishop ignores the leader of the Gestapo search party, however, and continues on with the mass. Anna surrenders to the Gestapo when the leader of the search party threatens to shoot the bishop if his orders are not followed. The search party brings her to the office of the Gestapo major.

The Gestapo major suspects that Anna and the bishop are part of a conspiracy, but they finally convince him that they have never met before. After consulting with Colonel Henkel via telephone, the major tells Anna what her punishment is to be. Since she has





**Figure 4.4.1** Bishop blesses Anna before she is taken away. (*Hitler's Children*)

caused them so much trouble, Anna is to be made an example of; she will be publicly flogged and then taken to a *Frauen Klinik* to be sterilized. Both Anna and the bishop are shocked by the sentence. The bishop tries to intercede, but his protests are dismissed. In the end, the bishop can only encourage Anna

to remain strong and blesses her before she is dragged away by a Gestapo officer (Figure 4.4.1). Anna calls out to him and the bishop starts to follow after her, but another Gestapo officer blocks his path. Taut with anger, the bishop turns to confront the Gestapo major.

The camera tracks with the bishop as he walks toward the Gestapo major. The bishop although elderly and walking with the aid of a cane, nevertheless, seems more than a match for the major. His ecclesiastical habit is as striking as the major's uniform, and his crucifix stands in contrast to the major's swastika.

As the bishop advances on the major, righteous anger in his eyes (Figure 4.4.2), he asks, "Is there nothing you madmen will stop at? I bow my head in shame that any man who calls himself a German should beat a woman. But this—this *Frauen Klinik* as you call it, is the supreme blasphemy of all. How dare you—how dare you take away that which is not yours to take. Before God we're all free, major." The major turns away from the bishop and looks towards the wall. The bishop is not deterred, however; he continues speaking. "We have certain rights which are inalienable; certain rights which are never given to us by the state." The bishop takes a step toward the major leaning in

slightly to look into the major's face. "Tell me, major, who made you? Who gave you the very breathe of life itself? Was it the state or was it something mightier than the state?"

The camera cuts to a close up shot of the bishop and the major; the bishop's profile can be seen on the left side of frame while the major's face is seen in  $\frac{3}{4}$  profile, as he faces the bishop and the camera. From this angle, the bishop seems taller than the major. Between the bishop and the major, we can



**Figure 4.4.2** Bishop squares off against Major.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

see a portrait of Adolf Hitler; it seems to be looking right into the camera. This is what the major has been staring at during the bishop's interrogation. As a Christian supplicant might look upon a crucifix for strength during an inquisition, so the major looks upon the portrait of his Fuehrer, to give him strength in the face of the enemy.

"You cannot trick me with your questions," the major replies. "If I must choose between Christianity and the state, I'm glad to choose the state."

As the major continues, the camera reverses the previous shot so that we see only the side of the major's head now and the full face of the bishop. The bishop is shaking his head slowly from side to side in disbelief at what the major is saying. "Christianity had its chance and failed," the major continues. "When the time is right, we'll break with it completely; once and for all."

Although the bishop's face is tight with anger, one can also see pity and compassion for the major in his eyes.

“No wonder you take away the breath of life so readily,” the bishop replies, “the breath of death is already upon you.”

“That’s enough. You may go now, bishop.”

Camera cuts to a medium shot of the bishop and the major facing each other.

“Just one question more, major. If you whip that poor unfortunate girl, why do you not whip me? Is it perhaps that you are afraid?”

“Afraid?” the major says, obviously puzzled.

“Afraid that the people who listen to me may someday rise up against you.”

Cut to a close-up of the bishop and the major. The bishop is seen in profile, while the major is seen in  $\frac{3}{4}$  profile again. The portrait of Hitler looks down at the camera from the background, almost as though it is the spirit or ghost of Hitler speaking through the major (Shull 222). “No, we’re not afraid. But there’s no need to make a martyr of you before your time. Besides when the work of National Socialism is finished there’ll be no one in the churches for the clergy to talk to—except themselves. Good morning.”

Cut to a medium two-shot of the bishop and major. The camera follows the bishop as he turns and slowly walks away from the major. The bishop walks to within a few feet of the major’s desk and then turns back around to face the major once again. “What a pity barbarians have so little time for history. Tell me, major, have you ever heard of Attila—Attila the Hun, the infamous leader of the Huns who murdered his own brother, Bleda? Who swept with fire and sword through Asia and Europe?”

The camera cuts to a close up shot of the major as the bishop continues to speak off screen; Hitler’s portrait can still be seen in the background. “Who ruled with bloody hands this very land we now call Germany?”

Cut back to bishop in front of desk. “Well, Attila and his barbarians have gone, but the Church remains. The church remains, major; it is eternal. It is the will of God. No man can change it. And now I shall go and offer a special prayer for our speedy destruction at the hands of our enemies.” The camera in a medium shot follows the bishop to the door of the office. Fade to black.

#### **4.4.2 Church versus State - Analysis**

Furhammar and Isaksson say that

it is not surprising that Western propaganda fiction should reflect Christian mythology...The most active myths in any cultural environment are those connected with its religious beliefs. Simply on the strength of this, they seem fated to crop up all the time in stories which aim to exploit deep-seated emotions and to impart the highest possible associations to political objectives and heroes...the use of religious mythology here is not primarily meant as a declaration of faith but as a basis for the plot structure.” (232)

Furhammar and Isaksson go on to say that even countries in which religious observation is on the decline make use of religious symbolism in their propaganda films, especially during times of war. People tend to seek solace through religious observance during times of war, and the idea that God is on their side is comforting to them. (German soldiers had “Gott mit uns” inscribed on their belt buckles in WWI.) Therefore, war propaganda constantly links the mundane conflict to something greater, to something metaphysical. It is not enough for the viewers to see the enemy as evil; the viewers must see the enemy as the representative of universal evil (235, 240).



**Figure 4.4.3** The Major and his Fuehrer.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

In *Hitler's Children*, the bishop represents the eternal Church—the Church that has lasted for over one thousand years—while the major represents the new Reich that proclaims that it will last at least that long.

This scene portrays the clash between a defender of the true faith, Christianity, and a

defender of the false faith, Nazism. Their conflict elevates the mundane conflict of the war to the level of a religious crusade. In this light, killing the enemy is now acceptable for to kill the enemy is to do the will of God (235, 240).

And to do the will of God is to be on God's side, which in turn assures victory (235-236). Therefore, it is a foregone conclusion that the Nazis will lose; they have replaced God with Hitler and the Church with the State. They have taken the symbols and rituals of the Church and have formed them into a false religion, a religion that will fail them in the end simply because it cannot stand against the true faith (Dick 192). Like Attila the Hun, the Nazis will fall and the Church will go on, because in propaganda films, as in fairytales, the unrighteous never prosper (Furhammar 231, 236).

As in the first scene of the film, the Hitler Youth ceremony, the quasi-religious nature of Nazism is hinted at (Dick 192). The Bishop and the Major wear the same colors. The crucifix of the Bishop seems to counter the swastika, sometimes called a broken cross, of the Major (Shull 224). (In an earlier scene, the small cross Anna wears on a chain around her neck counters the swastika on Karl's armband.) The way the Major seems to seek strength from the portrait of Hitler (Figure 4.4.3), and the way the

portrait looks down from the wall into the camera as the Major denounces the Church and affirms his devotion to the State, all speak of the deification of Hitler and the metaphysical elements of Nazism (Dick 192; Shull 154-155):

the omnipresence of Hitler's image . . . make it appear the Fuehrer is participating in and condoning the brutal acts depicted being carried out by members of the Party and military officers. (Shull 222)

Through the presence of these pictures, Hitler is portrayed as an almost spiritual force of evil processing all who willingly bow before him. All of this makes Nazism seem more than just a political ideology; it has become a theology of evil that seeks to replace Christianity (Dick 192; Shull 223-224). And, according to the Major, one day it will.



**Figure 4.4.4** The Bishop - Representative of the eternal Church. (*Hitler's Children*)

But the presence of the Bishop (Figure 4.4.4) assures us that Nazism will not prevail. According to Shull and Wilt, a

sign that God is on the side of the democracies is the frequent appearance of positive clerical figures. These are not persecuted figures in occupied countries—although there are plenty of those—but rather "muscular Christians" actively taking part in the war effort, whether in combat or on the home front. (Shull 155)

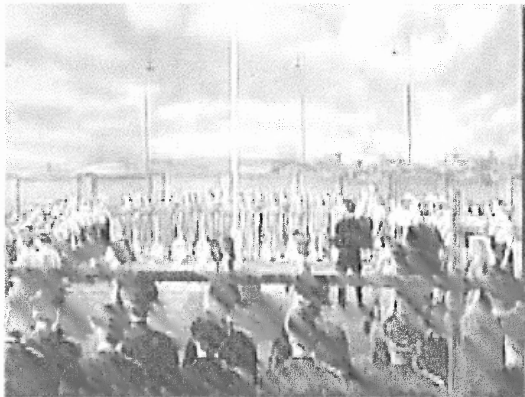
The Bishop is a "muscular Christian," a man who courageously challenges the enemy in his own den, thereby reinforcing our belief that the godly are untouchable and that we, as

the godly, will overcome all evil in the end; the Allied cause is a righteous one, and therefore predestined to succeed (155; Furhammer 231-233, 240).

#### 4.5 The Enemy of Women

This scene illustrates how propaganda filmmakers use the victimization of women to evoke indignation in the audience (Dick 188; Furhammar 222).

##### 4.5.1 The Enemy of Women – *Hitler's Children* (01:06:44-01:10:27)



**Figure 4.5.1** Labor camp courtyard.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

We are in the courtyard of the labor camp (Figure 4.5.1) and off-screen drums play a marching tattoo. Unlike the rest home visited in a previous scene (Section 3.5), this courtyard is visibly enclosed with a chain-link fence in the foreground along the bottom of the frame and a stonewall fence about

mid-frame in the background. There are tall street lamps rising above the stonewall. The hoods of the lamps hang over the courtyard suggesting that they light the courtyard at night. The sky behind the lamps is overcast. Unlike the rest home, this part of the labor camp looks like a prison.

In the foreground along the bottom of the frame, a detail of Gestapo officers stands at attention two lines deep. They look straight ahead towards the center of the courtyard where a flagpole stands without a flag. Next to the flagpole stand two more Gestapo officers, their backs towards the camera.

One of the Gestapo officers steps forward, hands grasping his belt, as a detail of women in labor camp staff uniforms march in from screen left. It is for them that the drums are beating, and they march in a double line in time with the beat. The women continue across the frame, and then turn right toward the two Gestapo officers near the flagpole. The first pair of women stops just before and to the right of the two Gestapo officers by the flagpole, and then turns to face the flagpole; each of the other pairs does the same. While the last members of the first detail are marching into position, a second group of women in labor camp staff uniforms marches in from the lower left-hand corner of the frame. They continue marching until the first pair of women in the second line stands across from the last pair on the first line. They then turn pair by pair to face the flagpole.

While the second line settles in, a third group of women marches in from screen left. Only the first two women in this line wear the labor camp staff uniform; the other women all wear the plain homespun-looking uniform of the labor corps. As this line stops, the fourth and last line of women marches in from screen right to stand in front of the double line of Gestapo officers standing in front of the fence at the bottom of the frame. The women have enclosed the flagpole in a square.

The camera cuts to a close medium shot of the two Gestapo officers by the flagpole. The man on the left side of the frame is the Gestapo officer who led the search party that arrested Anna at the church. The identity of the other man is yet unknown, but he bears a dueling scar on his left cheek. One of the lines of women in staff uniforms stands behind them.



The arresting officer is looking screen left. The camera cuts to show two pairs of women in labor camp uniforms who break formation and move to either side creating an opening in the square. Through this opening, marching forward from the background, comes Anna. To either side of her is a Gestapo officer; they do not restrain her physically and she does not resist. Her face shows apprehension, but determination too. She will face her punishment with as much dignity as she can muster. She will not appear weak before her captors.

The camera pulls back as Anna and her escorts come to a stop before the flagpole. Anna glances up at the officer who arrested her and curls her fingers; she seems to want to say something. But before Anna can gather her thoughts, the arresting officer signals the guard closest to him to take Anna to the flagpole. Grabbing Anna by the arm, the guard drags her to the flagpole.

The camera moves in for a close shot as the guard pushes Anna down against the flagpole and the other guard ties Anna's hands. Anna's face is tight with anger and apprehension. She tightens her lips as the guard ties her hands; he apparently is hurting her, but she is determined not to cry out.

The camera cuts to a medium shot as the guards leave Anna and stand before the arresting officer again. The arresting officer nods his head towards Anna and the guard who tied her hands moves towards Anna again.

The camera cuts to a close shot of Anna as the guard moves in behind her from screen left, and, pushing her hair out of the way, takes hold of her shirt and rips it open down the back. Anna gasps at the violation.

The camera cuts to a long shot of one of the lines of women in staff uniforms. The women in the line keep their heads turned toward the flagpole, but a few seem to be averting their eyes. Some of the women appear to waver slightly, as though the thought of what is yet to come is difficult to bear.

The camera cuts to an extreme close up shot of Anna's face (Figure 4.5.2). Anger, fear and determination take turns playing across her face. With the left side of her face pressed against the flagpole, Anna waits, glancing anxiously behind her when nothing happens. Anna's face is a study in determination; no matter what they do she will not give them the spectacle they desire.



**Figure 4.5.2** The face of a martyr for democracy - Anna awaits the first lash. (*Hitler's Children*)

The camera cuts to a medium shot of the arresting officer and the officer with the scar on his face. The major has his eyes on Anna, but then impatiently looks around before checking his watch. The arresting officer cannot begin the whipping until Gestapo Captain Karl Brunner, the officiating officer, arrives. He is late, and the major is becoming impatient. The arresting officer suddenly looks screen left.

The camera cuts to a long shot that takes in the whole courtyard from the chain-link fence in the foreground to the stone wall in the background. In front of the stone wall, a staff car drives into the frame from the left, and comes to a stop.

The camera cuts to a medium long shot of the staff car. As the arresting officer approaches the car, a Gestapo officer descends from the car; it is Karl. The two men say "Heil Hitler" and salute each other. The arresting officer turns back towards the flagpole

as Karl reaches him, and falls in behind Karl as they walk towards the camera and the flagpole, the arresting officer respectfully trailing Karl by a step or two. When the men have walked close enough to the camera to be in a medium shot the camera begins to track with them.

Karl and the arresting officer come through the same opening in the square as Anna did. As they do, Karl, seeing Anna, slows down slightly, causing the arresting officer to step ahead of him. The arresting officer, realizing that he has stepped ahead of Karl, glances at Karl and falls back slightly. Unlike Karl, who is dreading the whipping, the arresting officer is eager to start.

The men arrive at the flagpole and the arresting officer hands Karl the decree ordering the whipping. Karl takes his eyes off of Anna for a second to glance at the decree, and then looking once again at Anna, returns the paper to the arresting officer.

The camera cuts to an extreme close up of Anna again. Tightening her lips and setting her chin, Anna fights hard not to cry. She is very afraid, but refuses to give into her fear. She will not break down in front of the enemy.

The camera cuts to a close medium shot of Karl and the arresting officer. Karl is looking at Anna, a stunned look upon his face. It is as if he is sleepwalking; his eyes seem to see Anna, but his mind cannot comprehend fully what he is seeing. Or rather, his mind does not want to comprehend what his eyes are seeing. All he can seem to do is stare at Anna. And while Karl stares at Anna, the arresting officer stares at him.

The arresting officer knows that Karl is in love with Anna, and he is wondering if Karl will go through with the flogging. If Karl carries out his orders, he will prove his loyalty to the state. If Karl calls off the flogging, however, he will have proved that he

loves Anna more than the state, and that he is unworthy of the trust the Fuehrer and the state have had in him.

Karl looks up at the arresting officer and nods his head quickly, signaling the arresting officer to proceed. The arresting officer quickly steps behind and to the side of Karl and, looking off towards the right of the frame, jerks his head in Anna's direction. A drum roll begins.

The camera cuts to medium shot of the Gestapo officer with the scar on his face. He is looking to where the arresting officer is standing off screen left. Seeing the arresting officer's signal, the flogger, whip in his right hand, adjusts his stance as he unfurls the whip.

The camera cuts back to an extreme close up of Anna's face. She opens her mouth to grasp for air and braces herself against the flagpole in anticipation of the first lash of the whip.

The camera cuts back to the flogger. Still looking down at Anna, the flogger's face contorts with his effort as he draws back the whip, and then starts to bring it down full force towards Anna.

The camera cuts back to an extreme close up of Anna's face. We hear the crack of the whip and Anna's face contorts into a grimace of extreme pain. Anna gasps and drops her head forward; she seems on the verge of passing out.

The camera cuts back to the flogger, who is drawing back to deliver another lash.

The camera cuts to a close up of Karl, who winces as the sound of the second lash is heard. The blankness of his expression suggests that he is not looking at Anna, but

rather in the direction of the man with the whip. Karl seems to be trying to get through the ordeal by trying to block it out of his mind.

Again the camera returns to the flogger. He has just completed the second lash. His teeth are still locked together from his exertion, suggesting the amount of force he has used in delivering the second lash. He begins to draw back to deliver the third lash.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Karl and the arresting officer. Karl eyes are wide with terror now, as though he has just awakened to the scene before him. Glancing quickly in Anna's direction, he charges towards the flogger.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of the flogger. Karl rushes in from screen left, blocks the flogger's downward stroke and takes the whip from the shocked officer. The drum roll stops and silence returns to the courtyard. Karl steps back out of the frame.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Karl alone, the whip in his right hand. Karl rears back and brings the whip down twice in quick succession upon the flogger. He then throws the whip to the ground.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of the flogger breathing hard, presumably from the pain of the lashes. [As with Anna, no one is ever seen being whipped. The beating is always suggested by the sound of the lash and the facial reaction of the character being whipped. *The Production Code* only allowed a limited amount of suggested brutality (Gardner 209)].

The camera cuts back to Karl, who having avenged Anna, pulls a knife from his belt and starts cutting Anna free.

“Listen—“ Karl whispers as he cuts Anna's bonds.

“Karl!” Anna cries, realizing that her ordeal is over for the moment.

“No matter what happens now,” Karl continues, “remember I love you; I’ll always love you.” Anna’s hands are free now and Karl pulls her up into an embrace, as the camera moves in to frame them in a close up.

“I don’t care what happens to me now.” Anna replies.

“You know this will be the end for both of us, don’t you?”

“I don’t care. I’m not afraid, not now, Karl.”

“Just once, while there’s still time, I want to tell you, I was wrong, Anna; horribly wrong.”

“Oh, it doesn’t matter.”

“Just once again, I want to tell you how very much I’ve loved you—all the time. This isn’t the moment one would choose, Anna, but—“

“But—But to the moment might I say, Linger awhile, so fair thou art.”

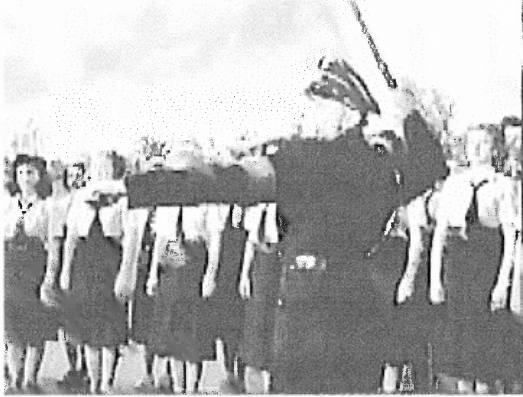
The two kiss, having confessed their undying love for each other, and the screen fades to black.

#### **4.5.2 Enemy of Women - Analysis**

This scene is probably the most famous of all the scenes in *Hitler’s Children* as it is the one most frequently reproduced in books about World War II films (Dick 189). RKO’s publicity department, mimicking this scene, distributed trailers portraying half-naked women being whipped by Gestapo officers to promote the film (Furhammar 67). This scene with its sadomasochistic eroticism was part of the reason for the success of *Hitler’s Children* at the box office (Doherty 89).

According to Bernard Dick, Hollywood tended to view the Third Reich as a crime syndicate run by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party. This analogy made it easy for

Hollywood to cast the Nazis as hoodlums and gangsters in uniform. But while the actions of the Nazis seemed tailor made for the formula films of the era, there was a major difference between Hollywood gangsters and their Nazi counterparts: the way they treated women. (188)



**Figure 4.5.3** The face of Nazi brutality  
- The Flogger.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

An American gangster may slap a woman around, cut her, or even smash a grapefruit in her face as James Cagney's character did in *The Public Enemy* (1931). But, usually, American screen gangsters did not abuse their women sexually; they did not sterilize them or flog them (Figure 4.5.3)

when they refused to bear children for their leader; the Nazis, however, did (188).

Here was the essence of Axis brutality. If women could be punished for refusing involuntary impregnation, then everyone was in danger unless Nazism was eradicated . . . Americans would never forgive an enemy who tied a young women [sic] to a post and lashed her bare back with a long black whip. (Shull 89)

Yes, American gangsters may not treat their women with respect all of the time, but even they knew where to draw the line.

That the Nazis did not is further emphasized by the apparent eagerness of the arresting officer to see Anna whipped. He impatiently looks at his watch when Karl is late (Figure 4.5.4) and is so eager to get on with the flogging that he almost breaks military protocol by stepping ahead of Karl, the officiating officer. The way he leers at

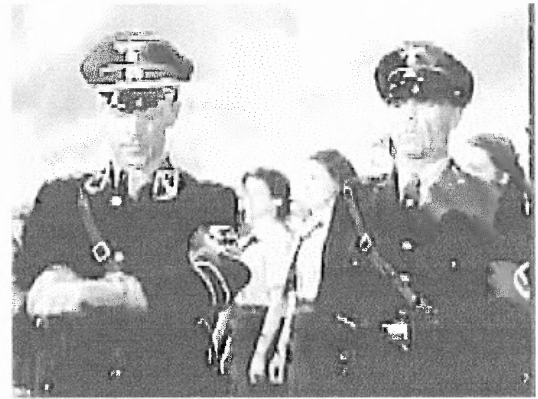
Anna after her shirt is torn makes the viewer wonder what other perversions—sexual and otherwise—the Nazis are capable of.

But what of Karl's actions in this scene? According to Furhammar and Isaksson, Karl's actions are in accordance with a common image in propaganda films, namely, the spellbound character (Figure 4.5.5):

Characters who have been spellbound or led astray are very common, in both folk lore [sic] and film propaganda: They are forced to serve an evil master but are forgiven when the spell has been broken (in propaganda fiction, such a character is likely to wake up and sacrifice his life to win salvation). (232)



**Figure 4.5.5** Spellbound Karl.  
(*Hitler's Children*)



**Figure 4.5.4** Arresting officer impatiently checks his watch.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

Karl is such a spellbound character. All through this scene, he acts as though he is under a magic spell of some kind. Even though he sees Anna tied to the flagpole and knows that she is about to be whipped, it takes her receiving two lashes to bring him to his senses. He has a startled look on his face

just before he runs toward the flogger, as though he has just realized that Anna is being beaten (Figure 4.5.6). It is as though a veil has been lifted from his eyes, and for the first time in a long time, he sees things as they really are. His love for Anna has broken the



spell of Nazism and Fuehrer worship. He is now able to avenge and rescue his lady fair, if only for the moment. In saving Anna from the flogger, Karl has doomed them both. But in sacrificing his life for Anna, Karl has redeemed his soul. He now fights the good fight and in doing so, wins the love of Anna, and by extension, the audience (232).



**Figure 4.5.6** Karl wakes up.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

Love as a positive political force is another element of propaganda films (156).

According to Furhammar and Isaksson,

one standard pattern is to let love awaken and grow at the moment that danger is at its height, when death is nearest and emotional preparedness at its most intense in both the characters and the audience: all the emotional forces are brought together into a single strand ready to be exploited. (156)



**Figure 4.5.7** Love blossoms as death looms near.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

The film propagandists of the United States used this technique more than the film propagandists of any other country, perhaps most memorably in the last scene of the classic, *Casablanca* (1943) when Rick (Humphrey Bogart) puts his duty to the Allied cause ahead of his love for Ilsa (Ingrid Bergman) (156).

In *Hitler's Children*, Karl finally wins Anna's love by denouncing Nazism. All through the movie, Anna has been denying him, pushing him away because of his political beliefs. But now that he believes as she does, she can accept his love and give him her own even though doing so means their death (Figure 4.5.7). It is appropriate, therefore, that the words of love they speak to each other to profess their undying love for each other are the words of Goethe regarding freedom recited earlier in the film. Their love is a love born of their common love of freedom; it is the pure love of those who are ready to die for what they believe (156-157).

#### 4.6 Perverters of Justice

This scene illustrates how propaganda filmmakers used the popularity of their stars (Furhammar 163-164) and depicts a common theme in American propaganda film, that is, the use of live radio broadcasts to defeat the enemy (Doherty 30).

##### 4.6.1 Perverters of Justice – *Hitler's Children* (01:15:14-01:19:27)

Karl and Anna, having been charged with treason, await their trial in separate cells. They know that the trial is but a formality, their guilt having already been determined.

Afraid, Anna calls out to Karl seeking reassurance that he still loves her. To her shock and dismay, Karl shouts back that he curses the day he met her.

Colonel Henkel has promised Karl a hero's funeral in exchange for Karl's denunciation of his treasonous actions during the live radio broadcast of his and Anna's trial. Karl has agreed to do this, and as a result, seems to have turned against Anna once again.

Unbeknownst to Anna and Karl—although from Karl's sudden change of heart, we surmise that Karl may suspect the truth—Colonel Henkel, Dr. Graf and the Gestapo major are eavesdropping. Hearing Karl's rejection of Anna, Colonel Henkel believes that he has won Karl back to Nazism. The major and Dr. Graf are not convinced, however.

Does it have to be a live broadcast, Dr. Graf asks, will not a transcript do as well?

In response, Henkel punches the desk in emphasis and says:

No a transcription will not do as well. People no longer believe our transcriptions. No. The memory of this betrayal must be wiped away by some real, tremendous demonstration for the youth of Germany; something un-staged, unrehearsed, something with the undying ring of truth in it.

The live broadcast will proceed as scheduled.



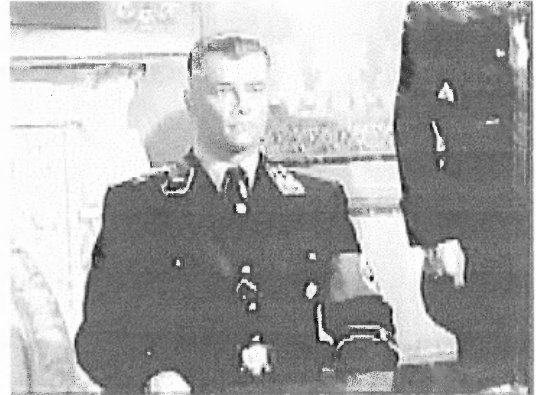
**Figure 4.6.1** Trial of Karl and Anna.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

And so, we arrive at the day of the trial. The camera dissolves to reveal a long shot of a courtroom. Looking down and over the heads of the audience that has its back to the camera, the camera looks toward the front of the room (Figure 4.6.1). Centered on the wall behind the long rectangular table where

the judges will sit is a wall covering bearing a stylized eagle standing atop a wreath with a swastika at its center. Between the audience and the judges' table is the long rectangular table of the defense and prosecution attorneys. To the left of the attorney's table and the screen stands Karl facing screen right. Anna stands at the other end of the table facing screen left. They both glance at the judges of the tribunal as they enter the

room, first the four co-judges and then the chief judge. They look at each other, as the chief judge takes his seat. Everyone sits down.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Karl (Figure 4.6.2). He sits as still as a statue, his eyes staring straight ahead as though he neither sees nor hears anything that is going on. He looks like a Nazi again.



**Figure 4.6.2** Karl at beginning of trial.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Anna. Her face is controlled, but her eyes belie her true feelings; they are full of hurt and fear, fear that Karl has really changed his mind about her and democratic freedom. Anna glances screen right and her face becomes hard.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Colonel Henkel, who is pulling back a curtain to look out the window.



**Figure 4.6.3** Crowd outside courtroom.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

The camera cuts to stock footage of a long shot of a very large crowd milling about on a lawn, presumably outside of the courtroom building (Figure 4.6.3). This is what Henkel is looking at from the courtroom window.

The camera cuts back to a medium shot of Henkel. He turns from the window towards the camera. From the smug look on his face, he is very pleased with himself. His plan seems to be working quite nicely.

The camera dissolves into a long shot of Nichols and Erhart arriving at the airport.

In a previous scene, Nichols was given an airplane ticket to Paris and ordered to leave Germany by the Gestapo. He was told that if he did not leave Germany tonight, he would be charged as an accessory to treason. Nichols's first impulse was to tear up the ticket, but Erhart stopped him; someone must survive, he told Nichols, to speak for those who no longer can. So, Nichols and Erhart pack Nichols's things and go to the airport.

They are five minutes early. It is foggy and Nichols wonders if the plane will be able to take off. Erhart assures him that it can. If the plane were landing, it would be difficult. But Nichols needn't worry about that, Erhart tells him, as the air will be clearer in Paris, for a while anyway. The intonation of Erhart's voice tells us that he is speaking of more than the weather. As the audience watching the movie knows, it would not be long before Hitler's army brings the fog of Nazism to Paris and the rest of France.

Erhart links his arm in Nichols's and as they begin to stroll, they hear the following over the airport's loudspeakers:

"Today, all over Germany, by special permission of the Ministry of Propaganda, we bring you the trial of Captain Karl Brunner and Anna Muller."

The two stop and look up at a loudspeaker. The camera cuts back to a long shot of the courtroom.

"The prisoner, Captain Brunner, will be permitted to make an opening statement.

"Well, Karl Brunner?" the chief judge says. Karl stands and snaps to attention.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of the chief judge, between two other judges.

"You have a right to make an opening statement if you wish. Have you anything to say for yourself?"

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Karl. A large microphone stands before him to his left. Karl glances at the microphone and then pulls it to him (Figure 4.6.4).



**Figure 4.6.4** Karl begins his speech at trial.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Anna, who anxiously waits for Karl to speak. What will he say? Has he really reverted to Nazism?

The camera cuts back to Karl.

“I speak today, not for myself, but for the youth of Germany. I speak as one who has learned a great lesson.”

Karl glances towards screen left.

“Our Fuehrer, our beloved Fuehrer . . .”

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Colonel Henkel. He is smiling smugly. He is very satisfied with the way the trial is proceeding. Karl is giving a convincing testimonial; his faith in Karl has been well justified. His decision to broadcast live has been vindicated. Colonel Henkel glances screen right.

“ . . . has often said that the future belongs . . .”

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Dr. Graf and the Nazi major. Dr. Graf looks annoyed. Henkel’s smug attitude is grating his nerves, and he slouches down in his chair as though bored. He doesn’t believe that Karl has had a change of heart. The Nazi major, on the other hand, seems tense. If Henkel is wrong and Karl is tricking them, he,

Dr. Graf and Henkel will all be in trouble. Karl and Anna may not be the only ones to suffer.

“ . . . to youth, and that the youth belong to the future . . . ”

The camera cuts back to Henkel, who is still smiling smugly, turns his attention away from Dr. Graf and the Major back to Karl.

“ . . . and I know how true that is.”

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Anna, looking at Karl with hurt and venom in her eyes. How could she have believed Karl? How could he have said he loved her one moment and then turned his back on her the next?

“I beg you all to be warned by my example.”

The camera cuts back to Nichols and Erhart at the airport. They are still looking up at the loudspeaker listening to Karl. Erhart suddenly taps Nichols on the arm and they walk off screen right.

“I thought for a while that it would be fun to be free . . . ”

The camera cuts back to Karl at the microphone

“ . . . to do just as I wished. I was willing to serve the Reich, but I was not willing to obey it in all things.”

The camera cuts to a close long shot of a room in which a group of Nazi officers from different divisions are gathered around a large radio console listening to the trial.

“Some things I wanted to decide for myself.”

The camera cuts to a close long shot of a group of labor camp women gathered around a small radio; they are also listening to the trial.

“Some things, I said, were no business of the Reich.”

The camera cuts back to Karl. He glances around the room, but then concentrates his attention on Anna as he begins to quote Goethe.

“Yes, in some things I put my will above that of the Fuehrer. From all this I’ve learned a great lesson. And the lesson in the words of a German poet is this: ‘Those who live for their faith . . . ’”

The camera cuts to Anna. She is slumped over and her head is bowed down in despair over what Karl has been saying. Suddenly, hearing Karl quote Goethe, Anna looks up. The look of despair on her face slowly changes to one of dawning awareness and then love. Karl has not betrayed her. He still loves her and democratic freedom.

“ . . . shall behold it living.””



**Figure 4.6.5** Nichols and Erhart listen to trial at airport.  
(*Hitler’s Children*)

The camera cuts back to the airport and Nichols and Erhart rush back into the frame from screen right. They are looking toward the camera upward at the airport loudspeaker that is off screen (Figure 4.6.5).

They too have heard Karl quoting Goethe and know that something is up. Could it be that

Karl has not repented of his conversion to democracy?

“And my faith, my friends, is the faith of the great Goethe.”

The camera cuts back to a long close up shot of Karl.

“If the whole world, I once could see

On free soil stand with a people free

Then to the moment might I say . . . ”



The camera cuts to a medium shot of Anna who can hardly contain her joy. She knows now that Karl had been playacting; he has not returned to Nazism, but was only pretending to in order to get this live broadcast. No matter what happened to them now, the Nazis would not be able to deny Karl's defection; the German people would know the truth, the real truth.

“ . . . Linger awhile

So fair thou art . . . ”

The camera cuts back to Karl, who continues his speech, his voice becoming more impassioned as he continues.

“ . . . So fair thou art.”

As he says the second “So fair thou art,” we know by the tone of his voice that he is saying these words to Anna; they are his final declaration of love to her.

The camera cuts to Henkel who seems to be realizing only now that something has gone amiss.

The camera cuts back to Karl. He has a sad look on his face, but he appears resigned to his fate. He continues his speech:

“To the youth of Germany then I say, this is my lesson; this is the lesson of life.”

Karl glances over at Henkel before he quickly continues, speaking as quickly as he can, trying to get as much of his message out as he can before they cut him off.



**Figure 4.6.6** Colonel Henkel realizes that he has been betrayed.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

“But this is not the lesson you’re learning in Germany today. You’re not learning the lesson of life.”

The camera cuts to Henkel who is fuming (Figure 4.6.6). He cannot believe that he has been so deceived by Karl. All through the movie, he has given Karl every chance to prove himself worthy of the Fuehrer and the Reich, and at every turn Karl has stabbed him in the back. And now, Karl is betraying him in a live broadcast. There will be no hiding this error in judgment.

“Your education is an education for death.”

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Dr. Graf and the Major. They are both sitting up and alert now. They both glance screen left to where Henkel stands off screen, as though wondering why he has not ended the broadcast yet.

“You do not live from day to day, you die from day to day.”

The camera cuts back to Karl who is in full fervor now; he knows that his time is short and he is pouring his repressed emotions into his final plea.

“For to live is to be free. You no longer wish to be free.”



**Figure 4.6.7** Anna overflowing with love and pride for Karl.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Anna who is beaming with pride and love for Karl (Figure 4.6.7). Karl has redeemed himself not only in Anna’s eyes, but in the eyes of freedom-loving people everywhere. He has become a believer in democracy and freedom.

“Have you any idea, my friends, what it is like to be free?”

The camera cuts back to Karl.

“Well, I’ll tell you, for I was a free man once . . . ”

The camera cuts to the fuming Henkel. Suddenly, Henkel exits screen right.

“ . . . and once you’ve had a taste of freedom, nobody can take it away from you.”

The camera cuts to a medium long shot of Henkel approaching two Gestapo officers. As he reaches the officers, he slaps each man on the arm in turn and the men draw their guns.

“It’s like a breath of fresh air that lasts to eternity.”

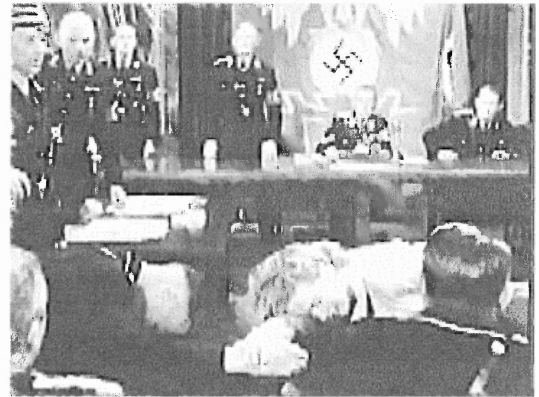
The camera cuts to Karl. Seeing that he is about to be shot, Karl shouts,

“Long live the enemies of Nazi Germany!”

Two shots ring out and Karl, grimacing in pain, knocks the microphone to the floor as he falls forward unto the table.

The camera cuts back to Nichols and Erhart at the airport. As they listen, they hear the voice of Anna cry out, “Karl!” and then another gunshot is heard.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Karl and Anna lying draped across the table, Anna’s hand clutching Karl’s in death (Figure 4.6.8). Like Romeo and Juliet, these politically star-crossed lovers appear to have found in death the union they were forbidden in life.



**Figure 4.6.8** Karl and Anna united in death.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

#### 4.6.2 Preverters of Justice - Analysis

Here again, as in the whipping scene, we see the theme of love as a political force as mentioned by Furhammar and Isaksson. It was Karl's love for Anna that caused him to turn away from Nazism in the first place, and it is his love for Anna that gives him the courage to sacrifice himself for the cause of freedom and democracy. The closer Karl and Anna come to death, the deeper their love grows, until they consummate it in a martyr's death (156).

This martyr motif is another theme often used in propaganda films. In these films, however, it is not religious salvation that the martyrs seek, but political salvation and redemption. By sacrificing himself for freedom and democracy, Karl, in effect, wipes out sins committed while he was a dedicated Nazi. We can forgive him his past transgressions because he now adheres to our beliefs, so much so that he has made the ultimate sacrifice (Furhammar 233).

Because he is willing to make this sacrifice, we are willing to listen to his impassioned plea, for it is not the Germans of the film's radio broadcast that he truly speaks to, but to us, the film audience. He seeks to remind us of what it is we are fighting for; to remind us and encourage us to keep on fighting for freedom (Figure 4.6.9). Charlie Chaplin's character in *The Great Dictator* does much the same thing at the end of that film, pleading with the audience in the theater via the audience in the film (162-163).



**Figure 4.6.9** Karl makes an impassioned plea to the youth of Nazi Germany.  
(*Hitler's Germany*)

It is also because of the professional persona of the actor playing Karl—Tim Holt—that the audience is willing to listen to the character's plea (Furhammar 163-164). Despite his having appeared in a variety of films, including Orson Welles's *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942) and John

Huston's *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (1948), Tim Holt was best known for his work in RKO's many low-budget westerns (Parish 328, 330, 332). To the American public there was possibly no persona more trustworthy than the American cowboy hero (Furhammar 163). We need only think of the screen personae of John Wayne, Gene Autry, and Roy Rogers to see why a western movie hero would make an appealing propaganda vehicle; people tend to see these stars as no nonsense, straightforward, honest human beings who would never steer you wrong (163).

This is why, according to Furhammar and Isaksson, propaganda filmmakers often cast popular stars in leading roles in their films; the filmmakers hope to cash in on the appeal of the star's screen persona (163).

Stars have by their mere presence guaranteed the validity of political messages. They bring with them the charismatic glamour of their earlier roles, and their popularity give [sic] rise to their status as political authorities. (163)

Or as Robert Fyne states in his book, *The Hollywood Propaganda of World War II*, to many viewers, “movie stars always tell the truth” (8).

Another element in this scene is the use of broadcast radio to defeat the plans of the enemy. Hollywood took great joy in showing how the Axis used the media to fool its citizens. According to Thomas Doherty,

by depicting the careful attention the Axis lavished on mass communications, laying bare the techniques and disrupting the presentation, wartime films illustrated how to see (and hear) through doctored photos, forged documents, and deceitful broadcasting. (30)

Broadcast radio, the motion picture industry’s main media rival, seemed particularly prone to misuse by the Axis, with Tokyo and Berlin feeding false information to their citizens while trying to spread the seeds of despair among the Allied troops (30).

So how appropriate it is for the hero of *Hitler's Children* to use Hitler's favorite medium against him. Henkel had wanted a live broadcast that had "the undying ring of truth in it" (Figure 4.6.10), and that is exactly what Karl gave him. Unfortunately for Henkel, however, it was not the "truth" of Nazism that Karl proclaimed, but the truth of freedom and democracy. All over Germany, young and old hear one of Nazi Germany's best and brightest denouncing the ideology of Nazism and wholeheartedly embracing the ideology of democratic freedom, so much so, that he is willing to die for it. Does die for it. And, unfortunately for Henkel, there would be no way he could hide or explain away his own error in judgment.

Dr. Graf had been correct when he said Henkel's experiments would get them all in trouble. Colonel Henkel's arrogance did not permit him to consider the possibility that Karl might be deceiving him or to seriously consider the warnings of Dr. Graf and the major. It is unfortunate that Henkel's political beliefs would not allow him to believe in the teachings of the Church or he would have known that "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (*Proverbs* 16:18).

## CHAPTER 5

### THE FILM CLIPS

*Hitler's Children* uses film clips from other films as transition shots, and although these clips have no counterpart in *Education for Death*, they nevertheless help to reinforce whatever opinions the viewers may have formed about Germany, both before and after the rise of Hitler and Nazism (Doherty 23).

By using footage that the viewers had probably already seen in newsreels, the filmmakers added a certain air of veracity to the narrative accompanying the clips and, by association, to the film as a whole (23). I shall examine the two main blocks of film clips here.

#### 5.1 Berlin Before World War II

The first insert occurs after the Hitler Youth rally scene and acts as a transition between the Hitler Youth rally scene and the start of the storyline proper (Doherty 23). I shall start with the end of the Hitler Youth rally scene because Professor Nichols's narrative starts here, continues on through the inserted clips, and finally ends at the beginning of the first schoolyard fight (see Appendix B).

##### 5.1.1 Berlin Before World War II - *Hitler's Children* (02:55-03:22)

The camera cuts to a frontal medium shot of the platform. The circle of boys extends from either side of the platform. The boys salute in the direction of the platform and look up toward the platform and their group leaders, while their group leaders salute and look straight towards the camera.



As this shot appears on the screen, background music, which has been absent to this point, begins to play. A jarring chord leads into a measure of the Hitler Youth song, as Professor Nichols begins his first voiceover.

"Yes, these are Hitler's children . . . "

Nichols's voice says in a matter-of-fact manner. His voice is gentle and soothing, a voice of reason, a voice to be trusted.

The camera cuts to a shot similar to one at the beginning of the rally sequence, that is, an extreme long shot of the platform, circle and bonfire framed by a Nazi flag on to either side.

"It's a little hard to believe when you see it for the first time. It was hard for me too. Because . . . "



**Figure 5.1.1** Brandenburg Gate.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

The long shot of the Hitler Youth rally dissolves into stock footage of the Brandenburg Gate (Figure 5.1.1). As the gate appears, the music switches to the happy, light-hearted *An Artist's Life* by Strauss.

"when I first saw traces of it back in 1933, Berlin was still a fairly . . . "

The camera cuts to a long shot of a street with trolley cars and automobiles running up and down it. The waltz still plays in the background.

"pleasant place. True, there had been some unpleasant moments . . . "

The camera cuts to stock footage of a medium shot of an open truck full of S.A. men, also known as Brown Shirts (Figure 5.1.2). Two men, one to either side of the truck's cab, carry Nazi flags. People on the sidewalk watch the truck roll by. The orchestra plays a few notes of the waltz, this time out of tune.



**Figure 5.1.2** Brown Shirts on truck.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

"but on a nice spring day like this, you could tell yourself that . . ."



**Figure 5.1.3** Brown Shirts post anti-Jewish signs.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

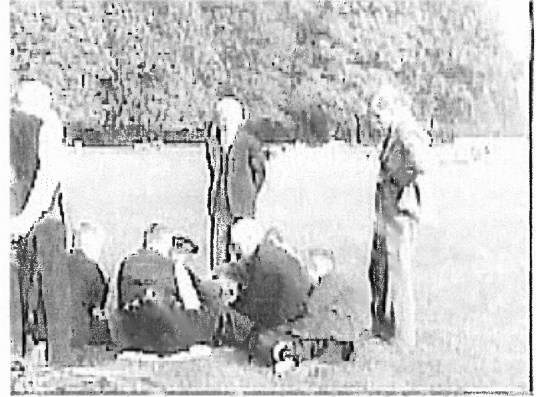
The camera cuts to a medium shot of Brown Shirts posting signs on a building (Figure 5.1.3). The signs are in German, and we are not allowed to see them clearly. But the word "Juden" can be seen very briefly, and we can conclude that the signs declare that the business is owned by Jews.

"many of these disturbances were purely local."

The camera cuts to an extreme long shot of men relaxing on the grass in a park beneath the shade of a tree. They appear to be having picnic. Other people can be seen walking in the background beyond this group. The sun is shining brightly, and it seems to be a great day for being outside enjoying life. Even the background music has caught the spirit of fun and has changed from the Strauss waltz to a polka such as one might hear at Ocktoberfest.

"After all, the bands . . . "

The camera cuts to a long shot of a group of men, who appear to be playing some game hidden from the camera by their bodies (Figure 5.1.4). Some of the men sit on the ground, while others stand watching. They are reminiscent of the old men you see on warm summer days playing chess or



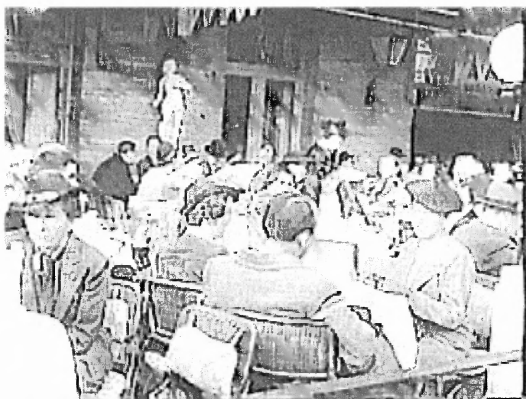
**Figure 5.1.4** Men relaxing in park.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

checkers or cards in the park. Whatever they are doing, it is obvious by their relaxed postures that they are enjoying both the company and the day.

"still played in the parks, people . . . "

The camera cuts to a long shot of a sidewalk café. People sit at the tables enjoying their meals, while two women heading in opposite directions walk by the café. There are no Nazi flags to be seen, no uniformed men.

"could still laugh and smile . . . "



**Figure 5.1.5** Berlin café before World War II.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

The camera cut to a closer shot of the café. Men in suits and women in fashionable hats sit talking and eating (Figure 5.1.5). A waitress delivers drinks to a table in the background. All is peace and civilization.

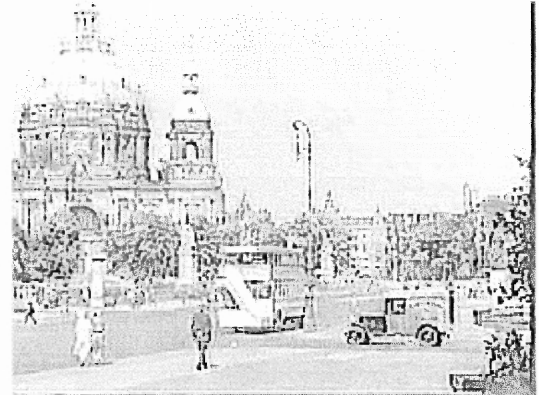
"and the beer was wonderful."

The camera cuts to a long shot of a domed building, presumably a church (Figure 5.1.6). Automobiles, a delivery truck and a

double-decker bus run on the intersecting streets before it, while pedestrians stroll on the pristine sidewalks. Everything looks very clean and civilized.

"On a day like this . . . "

The camera cuts to a long shot of Professor Nichols coming out of the American Colony School and slowly strolling along the school's front porch, which seems to stick out from the side of the school building. He holds his head high as though breathing in the fresh air and carries



**Figure 5.1.6** Berlin street.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

his hands on either side of his stomach as he walks. He pats his stomach as he comes towards the steps of the porch and then places them in his pants pockets, as he lowers his head to navigate the steps. His whole body suggests that he is at peace with the world.

"even I could walk along and tell myself that things would work out somehow. Yes, you could tell yourself many things on a day like this."

### **5.1.2 Berlin Before World War II - Analysis**

This sequence of stock film clips acts as a transition between the Germany of the present, represented by the Hitler Youth rally, and the Germany of the past, the time period of the film's story, that is, a few years before the outbreak of war. The pictures show how Germany used to be before Hitler, when the people of Germany were free to walk and play in the sun without fear, before the swastika became omni-present, and before the Hitler Youth became more than just another youth organization (Keeley 21).

In fact, both the narrative and the pictures suggest that many Germans may have thought that the actions of the S.A. were a momentary unpleasantness, that sooner or later, everything would quiet down and life would continue pretty much as it had before. Indeed, many people around the world had admired how the Nazis had revitalized depression-crippled Germany and assured that the “unpleasantness” would soon pass. Even the narrator of the story, Professor Nichols shares this opinion. He soon learns the error of this notion—as the rest of the world had—as the events of the story unfold.

One of the elements to note in this sequence is the use of well known musical works and genres. According to Furhammar and Isaksson,

No other genre makes such extensive use of ready-made music—no other genre has such a need to use emotional attitudes sufficiently institutionalised to have their own musical symbols. (161)

The use of Strauss’s waltz, *An Artist’s Life*, and the polka music in the clips, as well as the use of *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* and *My Country ‘Tis of Thee* in the Memorial Day scene, illustrate this propaganda technique.

In both instances the ready-made music is used to evoke an emotional response in the viewer. In the Memorial Day scene, the music is used to invoke patriotic feelings in Americans. In the clips, however, the music is used to evoke in the viewer a longing for the charm and culture of pre-World War Germany; to remind the American viewers of the culture and heritage they share with the German people (Shull 214). This is the Germany that had given the world Strauss, Beethoven, Mozart, Wagner, Goethe, Schiller, polkas, and beer; the Germany that many Americans were proud to be descended from, and to which the western world owed a great cultural debt (216). The waltz and the polka

bring pleasant connotations associated with the old Germany, the Germany that the Allies sought to restore.

These images also remind American viewers of the culture and heritage they share with Germany. Berlin was not that different from many large American cities. Their cars and clothes were similar to ours, as were their cafes, parks, and recreational activities. In many ways, the clips seem to say, the Germans are like us, except for the Brown Shirts. The Brown Shirts are troublemakers who ride around in trunks waving flags and who put up racist signs in an attempt to turn neighbor against neighbor.

But surely in a country as civilized and cultured as Germany, the violence of the Nazis would soon disappear. Certainly the majority of the German people, who seemed to be so like us, and who did not appear to be Nazis; would not allow the Nazi party to get out of hand. Surely the Brown Shirts and the Nazis were aberrations that would quickly pass into oblivion. Looking at Germany through Professor Nichols's eyes, we can understand how the Germans were seduced and deceived by the Nazis into a false sense of safety.

## **5.2 Germany on the Road to War**

This second group of clips is composed of shots from *Triumph of the Will* (1935), the Nazi documentary directed by Leni Riefenstahl, and acts as a bridge between the Picnic scene (Section 3.3) and the Memorial Day celebration scene (Section 4.1) (Doherty 23).

This sequence illustrates how Hollywood filmmakers used documentary footage to add authenticity and veracity to their own fictional films (Doherty 23). It also

illustrates how film editing, in conjunction with music and sound effects, can manipulate the emotions of the viewer (Furhammer 158).

### 5.2.1 Germany on the Road to War - *Hitler's Children* (18:20-20:14)

Lightning flashes are seen and thunder is heard as the camera pans upward from the staked-out *Pimpf* to the overcast sky above in the Picnic scene. As Nichols begins to speak, the plaintive rendition of the Hitler Youth Rally song gives way to a flurry of violins, imitating the increasing fury of the approaching storm, the approaching storm of World War II.

“That was the last we saw of Karl for a long time. He was swept up in the storm.”



**Figure 5.2.1** Nazi war planes.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

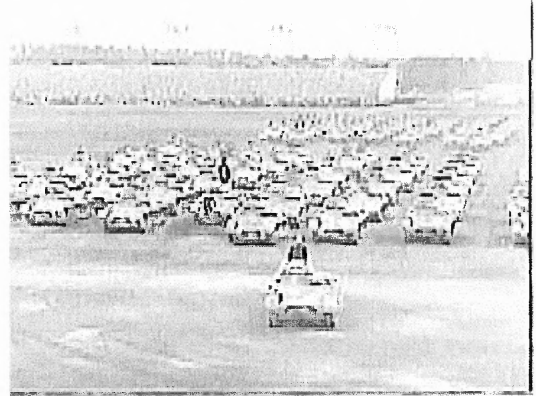
The picture of the treetops dissolves into dark clouds. A lightning bolt streaks across the clouds, and the shot of the clouds dissolves into a shot of a squadron of military airplanes flying in formation (Figure 5.2.1).

“The storm that was sweeping through all of Germany.”

Suddenly we hear another voice, an unfamiliar German-accented voice. It sounds guttural, raspy.

“The German Reich does not prepare for war, the German Reich prepares for peace.”

As this voice speaks, the squadron flies by and the camera cuts to a high-angle long shot of a battalion of tanks rolling towards the camera (Figure 5.2.2). The camera cuts to a medium shot of the tanks as they veer off toward screen right.

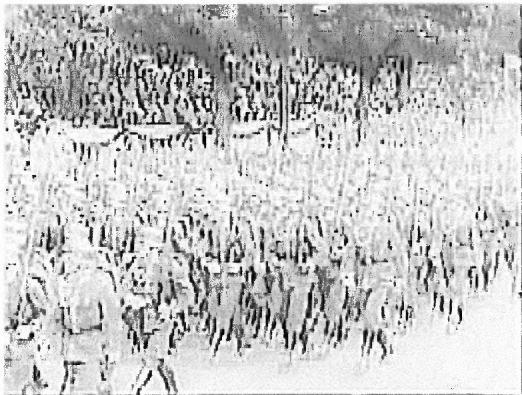


**Figure 5.2.2** Nazi Panzer division.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

Another voice suddenly speaks up.

This voice has no accent; it is the strong, deep, authoritative voice of an American reporter. As the reporter speaks, German soldiers and sailors march across the screen (Figures 5.2.3 and 5.2.4). There seem to be hundreds of them.

“October 1933: Germany withdraws from League of Nations.”



**Figure 5.2.3** Soldiers.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

We now see that this is a montage of clips representing the military build up and military conquests of Nazi Germany prior to the beginning of World War II, and that the first voice, the one with the strange guttural accent, is supposed to be Hitler himself.

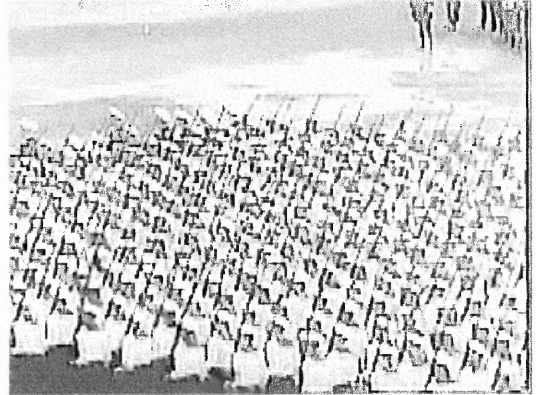
As troops, ships, tanks and planes march across the screen, the Hitler impersonator and the reporter compete with each other's narrative over the quickly changing pictures. For every statement the Hitler impersonator makes, the reporter makes a countering statement that contradicts the impersonator's statement. Together the two speakers fall into a lie/truth pattern, with the Hitler impersonator stating the lie and the reporter stating the truth.



**Hitler impersonator:** “I assure France that she need not fear, now or ever, for her national security.”

**Reporter:** “March 1936: Germany marches into the Rhineland” (Figure 5.2.5).

**Hitler impersonator:** “But to you, comrades, I say, with the return of the Rhineland, the German Reich has no more territorial demands to make upon Europe.”



**Figure 5.2.4** Sailors.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

**Reporter:** “March 1938: Germany marches into Austria” (Figure 5.2.6).

**Hitler impersonator:** “We have come to Austria not as tyrants, but as liberators.”



**Figure 5.2.5** Marching into the Rhineland.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

**Reporter:** “October 1938: Germany marches into Czechoslovakia” (Figure 5.2.7)

**Hitler impersonator:** “We give to Czechoslovakia the hand of fellowship. We assure the world peace in our time.”

**Reporter:** “May 1939: Germany signs military and political alliance with Italy.

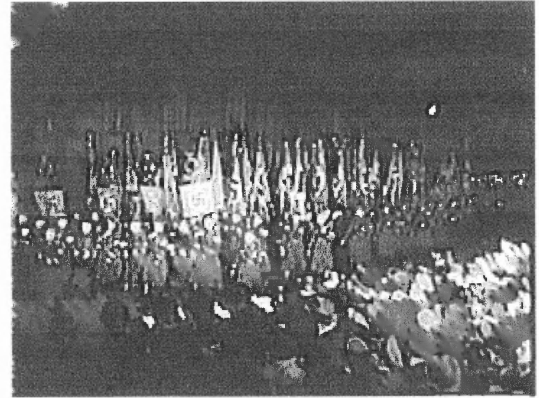
Germany makes demands on Poland.”

**Hitler impersonator:** “We have no quarrel with England; we have no quarrel with France. We are a new Germany and we shall bring to the world a new order.”

With each statement the impersonator makes, his voice becomes louder and more agitated, until he is shouting at the end.

Anyone who had ever heard the real Hitler speak would recognize the pattern. They could probably also see him in their mind's eye, ranting and gesturing wildly, as he spoke (Shull 222).

But then the audiovisual storm breaks, and the calm, firm trustworthy voice of Professor Nichols is heard again.



**Figure 5.2.6** Marching into Austria.  
(*Hitler's Children*)



**Figure 5.2.7** Marching into Czechoslovakia.  
(*Hitler's Children*)

“The new order of things was underway. The fires of freedom were burning lower. But although things grew more tense all around us, at the American School the fires are banked high. It’s Memorial Day, and we all gather to celebrate.

That’s Anna you’re looking at now. She’s all

of twenty and the best assistant I ever had.”

We have arrived at the eye of the hurricane.

## 5.2.2 Germany on the Road to War -Analysis

Leif Furhammar and Folke Isaksson in *Politics and Film* state that

the effects of rhythm perhaps offer the simplest illustration of how a heightened emotional level functions in purely physiological terms to reinforce a particular tendency (158).

This shot sequence is a good example of this statement. The filmmakers combine cutting rhythm, images, music and sound to continue the storm motif started by Professor Nichols's metaphor, and to stir up the emotions of the viewers.

The images of Germany's military build up move across the screen in a relentless series of cuts, each shot lasting only a few seconds. We see shot after shot of planes, tanks, soldiers, sailors, cavalry, and supply wagons moving across the screen in a seemingly endless orgy of military power.

While the rapidly-changing images assault our eyes, a martial rendition of the music that accompanied the opening credits of the film assaults our ears. Trumpets, horns, and drums dominate the rendition, with the trumpets and horns sounding a charge every now and then. String instruments occasionally intervene, sounding like gale strength winds in a particularly violent storm. The storm motif is further developed by the introduction of a ship's artillery that is seen and heard firing on three separate occasions during the shot sequence. The sudden boom of the gun resembles thunder.

Even the voices of the reporter and the pseudo-Hitler add to the storm motif. With each exchange, the Hitler voice increases in intensity and volume. At the end of his last statement, he is screaming and, because of his accent, sounds like he is almost growling. At the same moment, the music climaxes, as though he is shouting to be heard over the fury of the musical storm.

According to Furhammar and Isaksson,

The *crescendo* form is a natural one for propaganda films. Aided by the rhythm of images and music emotions are awakened, gathered and heightened towards a climax. (Furhammar 158)

By the end of the montage, the viewers feel as though their emotions have been buffeted by a storm and are emotionally eager to seek safe haven in the relative calm of the Memorial Day scene. After having had the military strength of the Nazi regime paraded before us, we are ready to be impressed and moved by the quiet dignity and strength of the children in the Memorial Day scene. The message of the Memorial Day scene is also a welcome change from that of the montage: even in the mist of the terrible storm of Nazism there are still safe havens of light where freedom and democracy are still valued.

Hitler's idiosyncrasies were a favorite target of film propagandists, who particularly enjoyed mocking his oratorical style. According to Shull and Wilt

the unintelligible (to the majority of Americans) words and harshly grating delivery of Hitler's speeches seemed like the rantings of a lunatic . . . Many of Hollywood's wartime releases contain verbal and visual attacks aimed directly at Hitler. (222)

And the raspy voice of the impersonator in this clip is definitely a verbal attack aimed at Hitler.

While the reporter's voice sounds strong and authoritative, the Hitler voice sounds harsh and guttural, as though he is trying to speak while gargling. Also, while the reporter's voice stays at the same volume level and emotional intensity, the Hitler voice starts out relatively calm, but rises in both volume and intensity towards the end of the shot sequence. This change in volume and intensity mimics the oratorical style of the real Adolf Hitler who would start his speeches in a soft, quiet manner and build to an impassioned ranting finish (Santoro). Any viewer who had ever heard one of his speeches on the radio or seen him in a newsreel would have recognized the pattern.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of propaganda is action . . . but at root, democracy and propaganda are uneasy companions . . . Democracy . . . is a babble of competing propagandas. So at war's outbreak, we lack by design the very machinery for making ideas march to a single drum.

*(World)*

Political leaders need to be fluent in the art of persuasion if they are to encourage, reassure and rally their constituents during times of crisis. They must be able to speak the right words, to project the proper image, and to mobilize the populace. This ability to persuade is of special concern to the political leaders of democracies, for unlike dictators, democratic leaders cannot force their people to comply with their wishes—at least, not without repercussion.

But how can a democratic leader persuade his or her constituents to support a particular viewpoint? During World War II, the Roosevelt administration was able to gain the support of the heads of one of the era's most popular means of mass communication—motion pictures (Rhodes 146). With approximately eighty million people—two-thirds of the American population—attending the movies on a weekly basis, the Roosevelt administration could not ignore the propaganda potential represented by motion pictures (Koppes 1, 43).

Although Furhammar and Isaksson and Shull and Wilt all point out that research reveals that no single film is capable of changing the political viewpoint of a viewer, they

all nevertheless suggest that the films of the World War II era may have had a cumulative effect that influenced the political viewpoints of the American public (Furhammar 244, 245; Shull 140, 142). The motion pictures of the World War II era were unique in that they all spoke with the same political voice—the voice of the interventionists (Koppes 39, 46; Shull 161). This interventionist viewpoint was further supported by the other media of the era, namely, radio—the motion picture industry’s main rival—newspapers, posters and popular music (Doherty 30; Rhodes 147-148, 150-152; Shull 140, 161). With these various media working in concert, the American public found itself immersed in a sea of pro-Allies/anti-Axis propaganda that would have been hard to resist and that many of its members already agreed with, even if they still resisted the idea of the United States entering the war (Koppes 41, 45; Shull 139-140).

Since political film propaganda works best on those who already share the political viewpoint of the film, it may be safe to assume that while the propaganda films of World War II may not have changed the political opinions of the viewers, they nevertheless would have bolstered and validated their anti-Nazi beliefs (Furhammar 187, 217, 222, 228, 231; Shull 140, 142). By reflecting the beliefs of the audience, in this case, the belief in the inherent superiority of democracy and the righteousness of the Allies’ cause, the director of *Hitler’s Children*, Edward Dmytryk, validated the viewers’ beliefs and made them feel good about themselves and the beliefs they to be true (Furhammar 217, 222, 231). This "patriotic self-glorification" was the essence of much wartime propaganda and helped viewers to easily divide the “us” from the “them” (Furhammar 168, 186, 226, 228; Shull 140). In *Hitler’s Children*, this division between “us,” the Allies, and “them,” the Nazis, is emphasized repeatedly.

The first set of film clips (Section 5.1) reinforces the audience's cultural kinship with pre-Hitler Germany and by extension, the "good Germans," that is, those Germans who opposed Hitler and the Nazis. The Nazi classroom scene (Section 3.2) reinforces the viewers' belief that the democratic American educational system is superior to the educational system of Nazi Germany. The Nazi social worker's treatment of the janitor's wife and Erhart's fear of his children (Section 3.4), Magda's willingness to bear children out of wedlock for the Fuehrer (Section 3.5), the activities of the *Frauen Klinik* (Section 3.6), the treatment of Anna's grandparents (Section 4.2), the Gestapo major's contempt for the Church (Section 4.4), the flogging of Anna (Section 4.5), and the mock trial of Karl and Anna (Section 4.6) all reinforce the belief that the Nazis are morally corrupt and that the Allies are justified in opposing the Nazi regime. These images reassure the viewers that they are part of a collective, a collective that represents what is good in the world, while the enemy is part of a collective that embodies evil (Furhammar 186, 240; Shull 143).

It is this fairytale quality of film propaganda, this ability to reduce complex ideas into simple opposites of black and white, good and evil, that gives film propaganda its greatest strength, especially in times of war (Furhammar 168, 201). For a nation in crisis, the simplistic world of film propaganda with its reassuring message that good shall be rewarded with victory and evil punished with defeat is a welcome, however fleeting, illusion (240). We do not care that the world on the screen is the creation of the director, a result of his manipulation of images, music, sound, symbols and ideas, or that it is his reality we are living, his thoughts that we are thinking for the moment (Furhammar 156, 246; Shull 144). No, for that moment we are willing to allow ourselves to be seduced

and to follow the filmmaker wherever he or she may wish to lead us, as long as he or she leads us to a place that makes us feel good about ourselves and hopeful about the future (Shull 140, 142).

For many Americans born after World War II, ideas about the war have been formed not only by the testimonies of those who fought in and lived through it, but by the images presented in films from the era (Beidler 1-4). Looking through this celluloid lens, it is easy to see why so many Americans think of World War II as the “Good War,” as the war that had to be fought by the “greatest generation,” as the war against wickedness in high places (1).



**APPENDIX A**

**CASTLIST FOR THE FILM *HITLER'S CHILDREN***

Karl Bruner .....	Tim Holt
Anna Muller .....	Bonita Granville
Professor Nichols .....	Kent Smith
Colonel Henkel .....	Otto Kruger
The Bishop .....	H. B. Warner
Franz Erhart .....	Lloyd Corrigan
Doctor Schmidt .....	Erford Gage
Doctor Graf .....	Hans Conreid
Brenda .....	Nancy Gates
Nazi Major .....	Gavin Muir
Murph .....	Bill Burrud
Irwin .....	Jimmy Zaner
Gestapo Man .....	Richard Martin
Arresting Sergeant .....	Goetz Van Eyck
Gestapo Officer .....	John Merton
Plane Dispatcher .....	Max Lucke
N. S. V. Worker .....	Anna Loos
Mother .....	Bessie Wade
Boys .....	Orley Lindgren
.....	Billy Brow
.....	Chris Wren

Mr. Muller.....Egon Brecher  
Mrs. Muller .....Elsa Janssen  
American Vice Consul..... William Forrest  
Young Matrons .....Ariel Heath  
.....Rita Corday  
Bit.....Mary Stuart  
Lieutenant S. A .....Roland Vamo  
Whipping Sergeant.....Crane Whitley  
Chief Trial Judge.....Edward Van Sloan  
Radio Announcer .....Douglas Evans  
Magda .....Carla Boehm  
Storm Trooper.....Bruce Cameron  
First Matron .....Betty Roadman  
Chief Matron.....Kathleen Wilson  
Boy.....Harry McKim  
Gestapo Officer.....John Stockton

*Distributor:* RKO

*Director:* Edward Dmytryk

*Released:* January 6, 1943

(Jones 140-141)

## APPENDIX B

### SHOT SEQUENCES FOR THE FILM *HITLER'S CHILDREN*

- 00:** RKO Radio Pictures logo: a broadcasting radio tower on top of a revolving globe. Tower broadcasts in Morse code: “an RKO Radio Picture”. The opening notes to Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* play over the Morse code.
- 01:** Title and credits. Song about Hitler begins at director's credit and continues into beginning of sequence 02.
- 02:** Hitler Youth Rally [similar to a scene described in Ziemer page 119-121].
- 03:** Stock footage: Scenes of pre-World War II Berlin. A Strauss waltz, *An Artist's Life*, plays in background, but turns sour over pictures of brown-shirts, and then changes to German folk music over pictures of ordinary Germans doing everyday things.
- 04:** Schoolyard fight between students of the Horst Wessel Schule and the American Colony School [similar to a scene described in Ziemer 3-7]. “Cute meet” of Karl Brunner and Anna Muller. Karl's reflex reaction to Anna's “Heil Hitler” and salute allows Anna to punch him in the stomach.
- 05:** Horst Wessel Schule class in session [similar to scene described in Ziemer 103-107]. American children playing outside distract Karl. Anna and Prof. Nichols play table tennis.
- 06:** American Colony School class in session. Nazi class again [Ziemer 103-107]. Karl is brought back into line by teacher's question.
- 07:** Karl hears Anna playing the piano—possibly a Beethoven composition—and crosses the schoolyard to peek through the school window at her. Anna rebuffs him.

- 08:** Second schoolyard fight occurs.
- 09:** Karl visits the American Colony School. He says that he requires first aid, but has really come to see Anna. Anna plays *For Elise* by Beethoven before switching to another German (?) composition requested by Karl.
- 10:** Establishing shot. Extreme long shot of mountain valley where the picnics are held.
- 11:** Long shot of Nichols, Anna and Karl crossing a bridge. The three are laughing and singing what might be a German hiking song.
- 12:** Nichols reads to Anna and Karl from Goethe's *Faust*. Anna splashes Karl by throwing a rock in the lake he is kneeling by, and Karl playfully chases Anna into the woods. Running from Karl, Anna happens upon a Hitler Youth staked to the ground spread-eagled [similar to situation in *Ziemer 72-73*].
- 13:** Linking shot. Storm clouds link the approaching literal storm at the end of sequence 12 to the approaching metaphorical storm of German military aggression depicted in sequence 14.
- 14:** Scenes from *Triumph of the Will* depict German military buildup. Voiceovers: One voice tells of the territory Germany has occupied, while the other voice, possibly representing Hitler, assures the listener that Germany wants only to exist in peace.
- 15:** Gestapo officers remove all Jewish, Polish, Russian, and German students from the American Colony School. The Gestapo also takes Anna, even though she is now a teacher and no longer a student.
- 16:** Nichols and Anna meet Karl, now a lieutenant in the Gestapo, again. Karl tells them that Germany does not recognize Anna's American citizenship. Anna is taken into custody.

- 17:** The American ambassador tells Nichols that the embassy can only lodge a formal complaint about Anna with the German government.
- 18:** Nichols' letters to Anna are returned unopened.
- 19:** Nichols tries to get Anna's grandparents to inquire after Anna, but their fear of the Gestapo is too great.
- 20:** Nichols asks his friend, Franz Erhardt, a journalist, for help in finding Anna. Nazi social worker checks on the janitor's children [similar scene mentioned in Ziemer 42-47].
- 21:** Nichols asks Dr. Graf of the Ministry of Education for permission to tour Nazi educational institutions [similar scene in Ziemer 11-14]. Nichols is introduced to Colonel Henkel and meets Karl again. Nichols learns that Karl is Colonel Henkel's assistant.
- 22:** A Gestapo officer stops Nichols from leaving the Ministry of Education.
- 23:** Karl and Nichols talk about Anna. Karl takes Nichols to see Anna at the labor camp.
- 24:** Karl and Nichols arrive at labor camp. Anna is a staff member at camp. Anna introduces Nichols to Magda who is having a baby for the Fuehrer [similar scene in Ziemer 29-33].
- 25:** Anna at the Ministry of Education with Dr. Graf and Colonel Henkel. When she denounces National Socialism, Anna is returned to the labor camp. She is to be a member of the labor force this time, however.
- 26:** Scenes of Anna disobeying camp rules.
- 27:** Matron of labor camp reports to Karl about Anna's behavior at camp. Colonel Henkel tells Karl that he has been promoted to captain in the Gestapo.

- 28:** Colonel Henkel takes Nichols and Karl to *Frauen Klinik* to view sterilization operations [*Frauen Klinik* mentioned in Ziemer 26-29].
- 29:** Karl visits Anna in labor camp and warns her that she is in danger of being sterilized. Anna, on the spur of the moment, decides to run away from the camp.
- 30:** The Gestapo chases Anna through the woods. Anna hides beneath a blanket in a wagon. A Gestapo officer checks the wagon, but does not find her.
- 31:** Transition shot: A wagon wheel rolling in the rain.
- 32:** Anna awakens in moving wagon. Anna hears church bells, sees the church, jumps from the wagon, and runs into the church. A uniformed man, standing at the entrance to the church, sees Anna enter the church and hurries off screen. Anna finds a seat and kneels among the other kneeling parishioners.
- 33:** The Catholic bishop in charge of the mass speaks out against Hitler from the pulpit. Armed Gestapo officers invade the church to capture Anna. A woman noticing Anna's labor camp uniform and seeing Anna's fear, gives Anna her cloak to wrap around herself to hide her uniform. Anna surrenders to the Nazi officers to save the bishop's life.
- 34:** For her disobedience, Anna is to be whipped and sterilized. A Gestapo officer takes Anna away. The bishop and Nazi major square off.
- 35:** Courtyard of labor camp. Karl arrives at labor camp to officiate at Anna's whipping. Anna receives two of the ten lashes she is sentenced to received, and then Karl intervenes. Karl unties Anna, and she repeats the lines from Goethe's *Faust*, as they embrace and kiss.

- 36:** Karl and Anna are in prison having been arrested for treason. Karl tells Anna that he does not love her, as Colonel Henkel, Dr. Graf and the Nazi major eavesdrop on their conversation via an intercom. Colonel Henkel plans a live broadcast of Karl and Anna's trial.
- 37:** Gestapo officers order Nichols to leave Germany or to prepare to be arrested.
- 38:** The trial and death of Karl and Anna. Karl betrays Colonel Henkel for the last time by telling the youth of Germany to turn away from Nazism. He repeats the lines from Faust, and as he does, Anna realizes that he is still in love with her. Colonel Henkel has Karl shot and Anna is shot running to his side. They die hand in hand. Nichols and Franz, who have been listening to the trial at the airport, hear the gunshots and know that Karl and Anna have been killed. Franz and Nichols say goodbye, and Nichols boards a Paris-bound airplane.
- 39:** Return to Hitler Youth Rally. Narrator asks audience, "Can we stop Hitler's children before it's too late?" [similar in tone to the last chapter of Ziemer]. Music of Hitler Youth song is reprised as background music, but slower, more somber.
- 40:** Flashback to Nichols, Anna and Karl on way to picnic.
- 41:** Stock picture of building before bombing.
- 42:** Stock picture of bombed building (maybe the same one as in shot 41).
- 43:** The End.
- 44:** RKO Radio Pictures Logo.

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