



16 Anti-Semites and Psychoanalysis

As Löwenstein calls anti-Semitism a social mental illness, Simmel E speaks of a "mass psychosis". Rolf Pohl picks up on this before and after Simmel and deals with the relationship between individual pathology and collective delusion.

Antisemites and their behaviour

Through the anti-Semitic attitude one could understand that it is a mental illness. The anti-Semites are not only hostile, but also commit violent acts in a brutal way. This hostility originally results from a specific, antisocial and personal fear. Subsequently, the anti-Semites can be described as delusional, paranoid characters by their irrationality. Through critical theories and psychoanalysis of analytical social psychology, it can be seen that the influences of projection and identification on the emergence of anti-Semitic enemy images have been investigated. Another section deals with the perception of these projective enemy images. Thus, a discussion has been initiated. The results of this discussion are hidden, misjudged or ignored. One can say that the catastrophe is normalized and that speaks for a collective delusion.

The general knowledge now almost includes the realization that anti-Semites, like all other forms of prejudice and stereotypes, have to do with projections. The question can be asked: How does the projection process function in the psychological defense mechanisms? What reasons are projected onto whom and in what ways? In psychoanalysis, Adorno understands the term projection to mean a pathological psychological operation.

Disturbance of perception

In the conspiracy mania of the anti-Semite stands first and foremost the transformation of fear, this is an affection of hatred. Destructive processes lead to a loss of reality, unconscious fantasies and affects falsify perception. This false perception leads first and foremost to a union of the fortified ethnic community and thus to a collective alignment. This collective takes over the organization of perception and divides the world into good and evil, friend and foe.

The National Socialist community differentiates among the people between inequality between the image of the Jew and the image of the German, whereby the focus is on the otherness of the Jews. For this reason, political control of perception has been particularly important. Through this perception, the masses would be united with the idea of National Socialism. Thus one found an excuse to wage war against humanity, which degenerated into a mass extermination of the Jews. The figure of the Jews was portrayed as ugly, threatening, alien, arrogant, and suspicious in order to reduce disgust and hatred. This is how the potential for hatred arose, which explains the cruelty that goes as far as the willingness to destroy. This state was processed by the collective outbreaks of aggression and continued to be accompanied.

Freud proves with the unconscious splitting in the monkey budget between the love for the own group and the aggression against the foreign group. He explains the cause as the segregation of the libidinous and aggressive instincts. The collective hatred transformed out of social fear is psychological hatred of an object that can first be made a stranger, then an enemy and finally a victim. For similar to the field of sexuality are also the aggressive instincts. They are put into practice by the imagination. The key sentence in the dialectic of the Enlightenment is that an enemy is chosen and already regarded as an enemy. Thus the projection of the inner image onto the outer image is reflected and manifests itself in violence.

If one describes the psychological state of the anti-Semites or their destructive processes, one can say that the mechanisms used can have enemy image constructions as a result of pathological images. Xenophobia bears delusional traits, behind this delusion are fears, distortions of perception that can even lead to a loss of reality. The anti-Semites define themselves by belonging to a superior race or group.

Other groups, races or nations have no affiliation with them

From a psychoanalytical point of view, these mechanisms are based on an early childhood mode of archaic hatred, which has its origin in the unwanted experience.

Freud remarks: "That I hate and abhor with the intention of destruction all objects that become the source of unwanted experience for him." (Pohl 2006, p. 56)

In summary, anti-Semite hatred is based on a projection that can be traced back to an early splitting between allowed and forbidden, and on the repulsion of one's own inner impulses that become a cause of unwillingness.

Klein, Freud and Adorno give similar explanations about the projection process. Thus, an aggressive object relationship is seen as the original form and model. This process is described as an inner as well as an outer threat dynamic. It happens as a result of damage in early stages of development. These stages of development of subjectivity are called paranoid and schizoid and can be repelled by projection to the outside. These primitive mechanisms of dealing with the inner and outer world, their perceptions and underlying archaic fears they have never overcome since early development. The most dangerous potential that may exist arises from a coupling of delusion and normal state. Dangerous is the emergence of a racist and political subjectivism that constitutes anti-Semitic mass delusion. When an economic catastrophe or a particular event endangered the security of the individual or society, anti-Semitic delusions have always been the cause. The anti-Semitic accusations take various forms.

Simmel remarks: "I stress again: the individual anti-Semite is not a psychotic - he is normal. It is only when he joins a group, when he becomes part of a mass, that he loses certain qualities that constitute normality, and thus contributes to creating a mass delusion in which all members of the group believe" (Simmel 2006, p. 68).

Le Bon has discovered that the modern mass man is on the advance, because also through these masses a mass dynamic arises, which destructively exists in the background.

Le Bon reacts with fear and contempt because he did not recognize the deep causes of this phenomenon, which Freud later explained. Namely, the life of humanity, our civilization, is in extreme danger. Other problems were that the individual of this mass cannot relate to their psychic lives. Everyone expects love, but even that is no longer possible, and there is no possibility of discharging destructive aspirations triggered by failure.

Le Bon believes that the individual does not tend to live as an individual, but gives up his ego to live in the masses. This could be a reason to lead to the destruction of civilization. This adaptation is a pseudo-adaptation maintained by a variety of escape mechanisms. It enables a loss of reality.

Le Bon says that in the masses the individual will surrender his responsibility. Thus he declares that the individual superego surrenders his obedience to the masses. He again becomes a child who only fears the external violence of his parents. Furthermore, Le Bon believes that the merging of the ego into the group enables him to overcome his real infantile powerlessness towards reality. This gives him the freedom and power of an adult. With the help of a mass psychosis, he returns to the reality that the individual psychotic shrinks from. Le Bon further describes that the thinking and acting of the mass man is completely under the spell of the unconscious primary processes. Reason is switched off.

It is estimated that the relationship between individual and collective is held together by pathological delusion. The psychoanalytical research of character formation shows that irrational ideas are in harmony with irrational impulses for action, which help the individual to rediscover the mental balance. The collective character of a community, its civilization, is also subject to psychopathological disturbances that produce anti-Semitism as an irrational mass phenomenon. Anti-Semitism is a psychopathological personality disorder, a relapse into an ontogenetic and phylogenetic stage of development. Hate governs the relationship to the environment. It generates anti-Semitism along with other disease states.

The PA. confirms that anti-Semitism is pathologically pathological. Through irrational ideas combined with irrational impulses for action, you try to overcome your pathological disorder and regain your mental balance. Freud says that in a civilization irrational action impulses of the individual's need serves a pathological disorder.

The collective character of a community, its civilization, is also subject to psychopathological disorders. This pathological similarity of individual and collective causes a strengthening and attachment, direction neurosis, mass psychosis and delusion. Projective identification in Klein: it is clear that individual parts of the self are split off and projected onto another person. There is an unconscious defense mechanism, the split-off part is returned and pursued possessively.

The projection by Freud

Freud thinks that a person who suffers from a neurosis or delusion projects everything in him onto others. He is not aware that he himself is ill, he thinks that the others are the sick. This projection can be found especially in paranoia and also in normal forms of thinking such as faith. The anti-Semite does not see himself as sick, he will never seek therapy.

The collectives stand for the individual in a kind of propaganda, a common concern as a connection in favor of the political rulers. The sense of duty of the individual is eliminated in the masses, the responsibility is passed on to a leader or to the collective. One's own personality is strengthened by the masses, but in reality it is not a healthy increase in self-confidence. Reality is experienced as an illusion.

No individual is willing to take responsibility for what is happening. Advantages: those who themselves are plagued by feelings of inferiority will transform these into feelings of power in the collective. The prospect of an improved life situation lets the individual become a follower in the hope of an improvement of his social situation. Through community, a person's weakened self is strengthened.

To see anti-Semitism as pure mass neurosis is too little, a neurotic person can never form a group. Only a brief adaptation to the collective can take place. Neurotics can neither produce nor keep alive a mass phenomenon.

Irrationality of anti-Semitism

Why is anti-Semitism called an irrational mass phenomenon? To answer this question, one has to examine the relationship between anti-Semitism and civilization. In 1890, Eugen Richter, one of the great German parliamentarians in the German Reichstag, officially said: "If we allow this movement to grow, we will destroy the pillars on which our culture rests" (Simmel 2006, p.59). The German Foreign Minister Rathenau, of Jewish descent, declared after the First World War: "Anti-Semitism is the vertical invasion of society by the barbarians" (ibid., p. 59).

Rathenau was murdered by the Nazis. The German example shows that anti-Semitism can reverse the process of civilization and throw the anti-Semitic personality back to the stage of primitive cannibalism. From a psychoanalytical point of view, it has been proven that anti-Semitism destroys the achievements of civilization. The process of civilization produces anti-Semitism as a pathological symptomatology that destroys the ground on which it has grown. Anti-Semitism is a malignant ulcer on the body of civilization. If one examines the various accusations against the Jews, one can see, much to the displeasure of the anti-Semites as far as Jewish characteristics are concerned, that the Jews prefer to use their mental rather than their physical powers because their intellect is better developed than their physique.

Jews dominate occupations in which intellectual ability is of vital importance. Anti-Semitism certainly cannot explain this positive thought. If we consult history, we learn that the personality traits just mentioned are not the cause, but the result of anti-Semitism. Jewish was made up of warriors, peasants and thinkers as well as other nationality groups, until it was deprived of the right to use its physical powers in the struggle for self-assertion as a result of the dispersal of the law.

They enslaved it and forced the people to live without farmland. It was claimed that the Jews did not appreciate their fatherland, that they had all the money in the country, that they wanted to occupy all the top positions in the upper professions. The government positions decided that the Jews would not be admitted as university professors. Excluded from the army, they must not become officers. Legalized by the government, their businesses were boycotted.

When the anti-Semitic affects were uncoupled from modern civilizational ideas, the merciless, complete physical annihilation of the Jews took place. The irrationality of anti-Semitism

manifests itself in the accusation of Jews as criminals. An erotic love instinct of species conservation and a destructive devouring instinct of hatred with the goal of self-preservation: "Not only our ancestors were cannibals; we all enter life with the instinct to devour not only food, but all objects that cause us hardships. Before the childish individual acquires the ability to love, he is dominated by a primitive hate relationship with his environment" (Simmel 2006, p.65) "Aggressive destruction is the primitive precursor of the psychic repression process. The process of regression proceeds with the lifting of the barriers of repression.

As a result of this abolition of repression, unconscious material can penetrate to the conscious self. In this way, the ego is subjected to the irrational inner world of the soul. The repression is regressively replaced by destructive aggression. As the state of the psychotic ego system worsens, the superego is gradually subject to the ego. This explains why the ego can no longer orient itself to reality and loses the ability to distinguish between the outer reality of the objects and the inner, irrational psychic reality. The images that populate the world of the psychotic can be adopted by the parents.

In the conflict, the ego collapses because it could not resolve the ambivalence conflict with the parents. For centuries there has hardly been a change in anti-Semitic behavior. Neither the ethical standards nor the social structures of the epoch have brought any improvement. The anti-Semitic behaviour has always remained the same in favour of the German anti-Semites. One cannot imagine that such isolation still prevails in Germany and Austria. The observers were able to establish that anti-Semitism had spread to all countries as a result of the Second World War.

Such anti-Semitism also appeared in the USA within a certain framework of society. The Jews were not integrated into society, but were restricted in their activities and their form of existence. They have been expelled by some clubs, universities and colleges. This was a reaction to the mass immigration of Jews towards the end of the 19th century, when millions of Jews from various European countries, such as Romania, Poland and Russia, fled to the United States. During the Second World War, German anti-Semitism took shape. It spread to an ever larger circle of the American population, and the more it spread, the more irrational the defamation of the Jews became.

There were whole series of accusations: The Jews had started the war, the Jews were to blame for the restrictions made necessary by the state of emergency, they are responsible for corruption, e.g. on the black market, etc. Moreover, anti-Semitism tended to make a

distinction between American citizens and Jews. It is possible that this new form of anti-Semitism comes in part from sources of neo-Nazi propaganda organization in that country.

Here the question can be asked, why is such propaganda successful in America and why is it spreading now that the war is over?

Finding an answer to this question is of paramount importance for psychoanalysis. Anti-Semitism is not only a danger for the Jews, it is also a danger for this country. What is more, it is a danger to civilization as a whole. The fact that Germany has completely damaged its Jewish citizens and has branded them as a country hostile to immigration was the decisive factor that led to a global war and a worldwide Holocaust full of hatred and destruction.

The American government took a stand on this chaos: they remained true to their democratic tradition, condemned such negative prejudices and discrimination, and took the side of the Jews and against the neo-Nazis movement. Another question was raised by the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Society, affiliated to the American Psychoanalytic Association.

What would happen to the United States and civilization if anti-Semitism were to prevail here?

They commented: "It is our duty to our country and to the world community to carefully examine the problem of anti-Semitism and to find rapid solutions. It must be made clear that anti-Semitism takes action against the minority of Jews and it is our duty to protect the minority.

Literature

- Pohl R (2006) Projection and Delusion. Adorno and the Social Psychology of the Anti-Semitism. In: Perels, Joachim (Ed.) (2006): Let suffering be eloquent. Contributions on Theodor W. Adorno's thinking. Hanover
- Simmel E Anti-Semitism and Mass Psychopathology, in: Simmel E (Ed.), Adorno T W, Berliner B, Fenichel O, Frenkel-Brunswik E, Nevitt Sanford R, Horkheimer M, Orr D W, Simmel E (1993) Anti-Semitism, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag Frankfurt am Main
- Pohl R (2010) The anti-Semitic delusion. Current approaches to the psychoanalysis of a social pathology, in: Wolfram Sender, Guido Follert, Mihri Özdoğan (ed.): Konstellationen des Antisemitismus. Anti-Semitism Research and Social Pedagogical Practice, Wiesbaden: VS Publishing House for Social Sciences
- Horkheimer M, Adorno T W, Elements of Anti-Semitism - Limits of the Enlightenment
Text II: Elements of anti-Semitism
from: "Dialectic of the Enlightenment - Philosophical Fragments"

prof. Dr. Andrawis