

## Racist Semiotics and Nazi Gold

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international / social/political / commentary

Switzerland has often been portrayed as the neutral nation of Europe; it was spared the ravages of WWII principally due to the fact that other nations – Nazi Germany in particular – required a convenient location to store their gold in times of war. Big business also requires anonymous accounts in times of tax evasion! Yes, this is Switzerland, we ask no questions of regimes and institutions that deposit ingots and bars of gold, some of which now known to have been derived from Jewish gold fillings, stolen jewellery and other stolen artefacts. Our banks are happy to accept untraceable gold bars and other items of value – if you please!



No nation is actually neutral and the actions of Switzerland during WWII and since are the shameless acts of a very partisan nation – neutrality is a myth, but flagrant racism is Swiss reality!

Right-wing conservative parties are universally characterised by sordid, divisive political tactics. Conservatives seek to exploit our primal fears and arouse our base instincts for purely political purposes -- have we evolved since the caves or do we continue to share characteristics with the beasts of the field? Targeting baser instincts is the lowest form of politics; nevertheless, it has proven effective and is therefore consciously and shamelessly utilised by right-wing and conservative parties around the globe.

However, tapping into primitive instincts is fraught with dangers as the herd is liable to realise they are being manipulated and turn on the 'herdsmen.' Australia's John Howard has recently discovered that his Cronulla race riots have immunised the population against future exposure to these sordid political tactics. The whole world recalls the despicable victimisation of the dark-skinned Indian doctor, Haneef by Howard's conservatives and the latest attempts of the Immigration Minister to target black-skinned African refugees for purely political purposes. These efforts failed to achieve the desired effect, in fact, these tactics backfired dramatically on Howard's conservatives; one race riot is sufficient it seems to awaken a nation to racist political tactics -- but to return to the fascist Swiss SVP party.

The above distasteful political poster is a classic study in semiotics and subliminal advertising. The image depicts three white 'sheep' one of which is kicking a single black sheep off the Swiss flag/pasture or ground. The overt racist message is clear, the majority white sheep eliminating the one (minority) black sheep. However, the image deserves a more detailed analysis. The flag acts as

not only an overt national symbol but also as a metonym of the Swiss LAND itself. The sheep symbolism is obvious, not only as a symbol of the masses or human herd but it also connects to Switzerland's traditional agrarian, farming, historical cultural background. The caption renders into English as "For [our] increased safety/Security" - which is overt ethnic targeting and fear mongering.

Most consider this poster as sordid and highly offensive; nevertheless, its composition has not been accidental; it has proven to be highly effective in gaining support for the right-wing SVP. It seems the Swiss have not been sufficiently embarrassed and condemned by the international community for their overt racism. Perhaps a demonstration of cuckoo-clock burnings with Swiss chocolate tossed in for luck might send a clear message! Humour aside, the poster has also backfired, the effect on the international community has been exactly the opposite of its effect domestically - not surprising if you think about it, baa baa!

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article2625385.ece>

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Cleaves Alternative News. <http://cleaves.lingama.net/news/story-746.html>