

Having a mad gift means that people will call you "crazy." It means that people don't understand your mind, and if you want to "fix" or change your mind, you are on your own, or you have to listen to your doctor. Sometimes that means that you're told your only options are talk therapy and medication. These can be useful but they are not they only option.

The Icarus Project @ TESC seeks to help people with mad gifts find each other so we can support each other and find our own solutions. We want to challenge the stereotypes that silence us and express ourselves in our own words. We want to be creative and use our energy in constructive ways.

There are all kinds of possibilities, depending on what the group needs.

The question is, What do you want Icarus to be?



WWW.TheIcarusProject.NET



at The Evergreen State College

ELI
SAYS:



The previews for "The Crazies"
made me feel the same way.

There was no one in the television
to hear how angry I was.

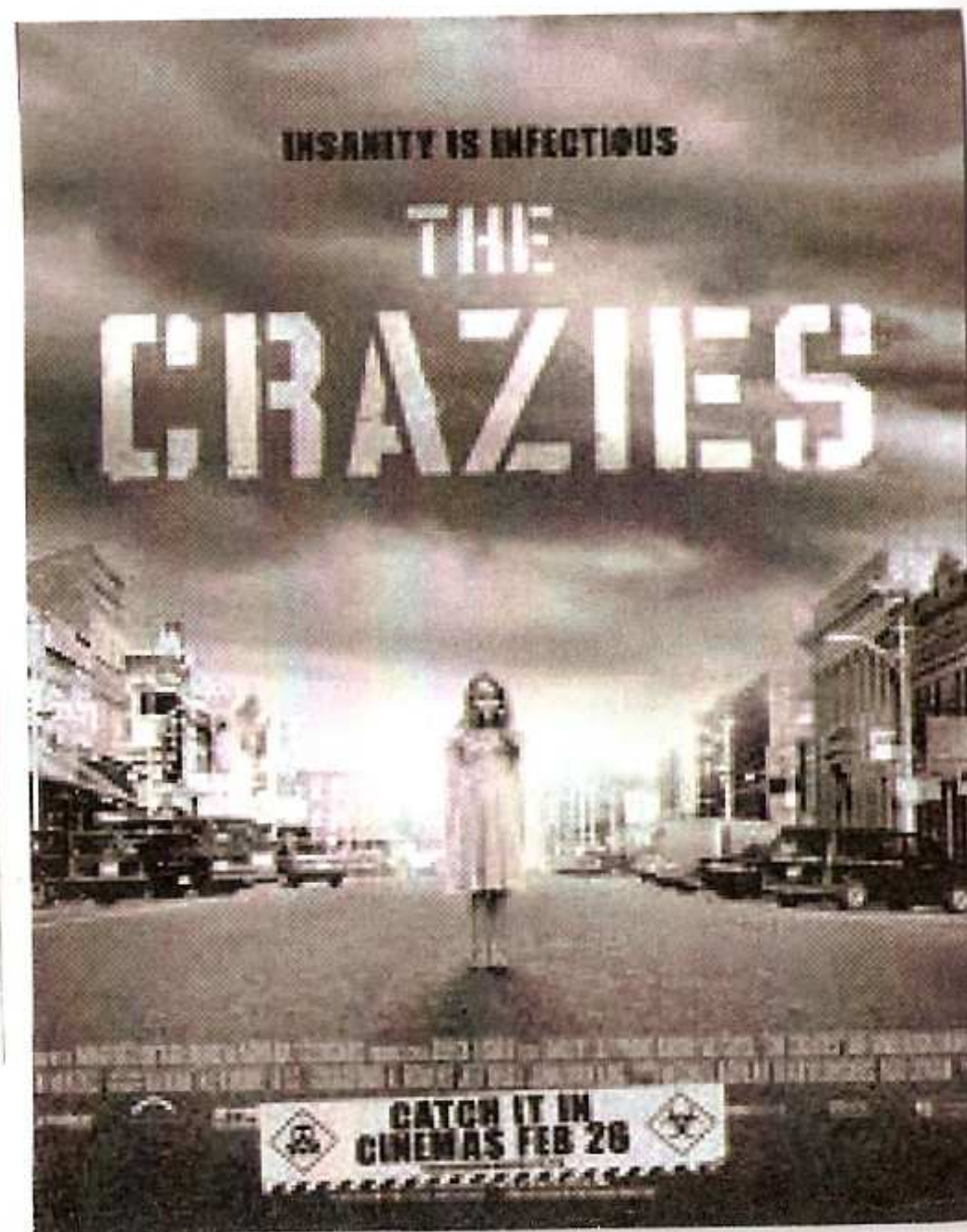
"Insanity Is Infectious"

is just the kind of idea that
creates fear of mental illness.

We live in this world of the internet,
a place where insults may fly
because people do not need
to show their face.

Sometimes insults are harsher on the
internet *because* they don't have to
show their face. I've been insulted
via the internet, which made me feel
that I had been attacked, but I could
not fight back.

No matter what I typed,
it wouldn't be able to show the anger
I was truly feeling because no one
could see my expression
or hear my voice.



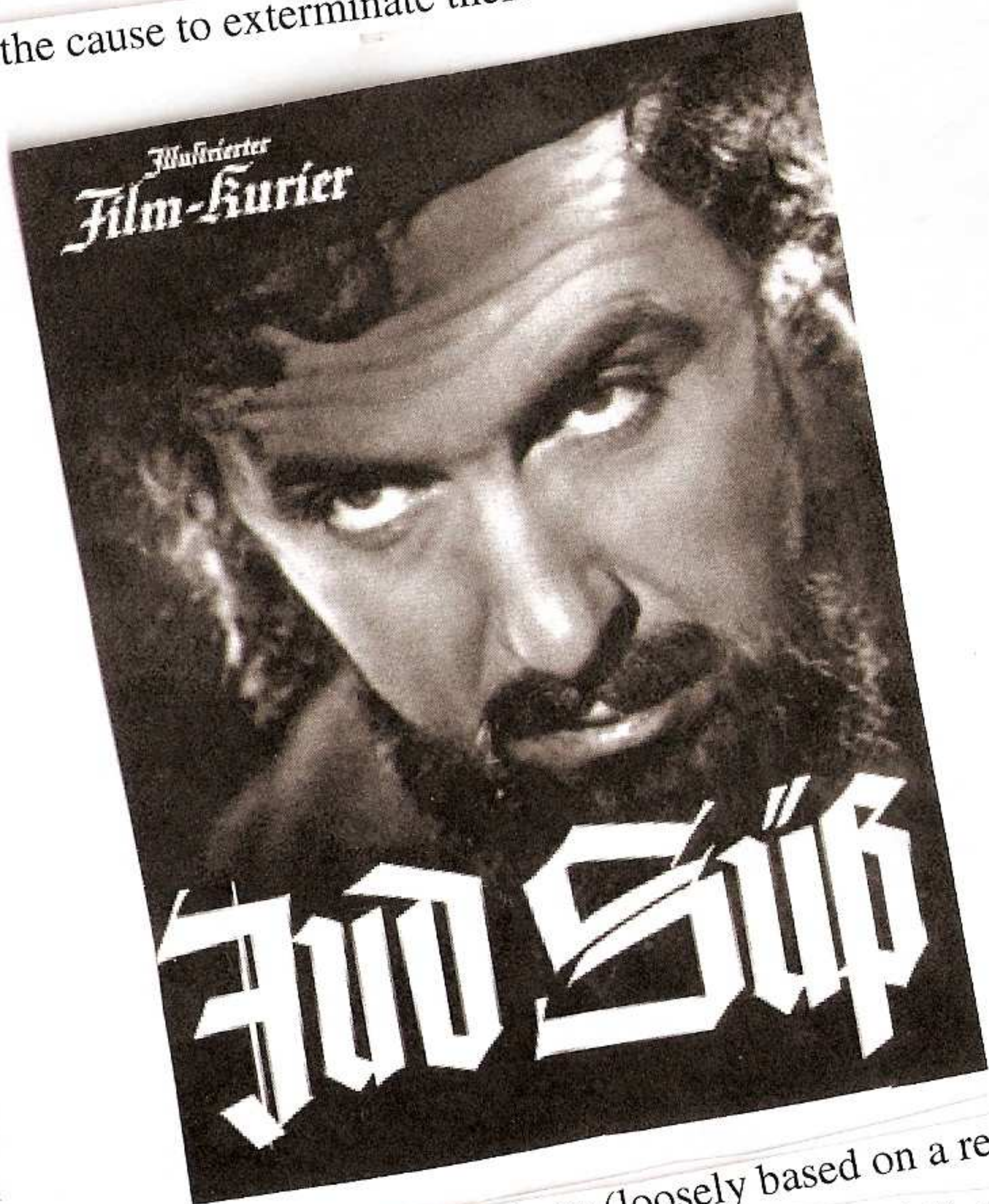
*Jud Suss (1940) or "Jew Suss" was the most
successful anti-Semitic film ever made.*



The film also showed the good German people so we could
see that they were exploited by Suss. The film shows Jewish people
as a threat to the "normal" Germany.

VILLAINS

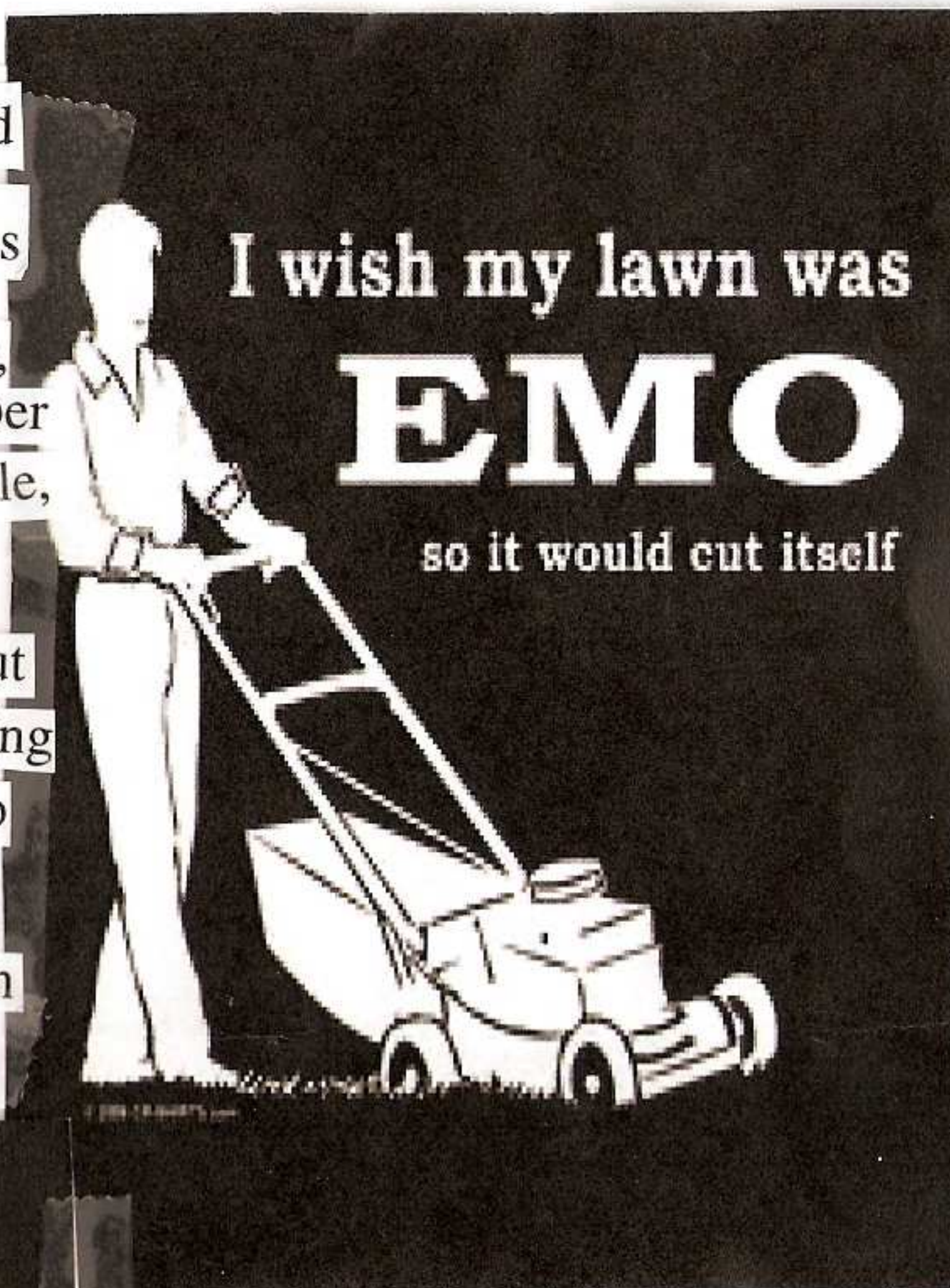
Another myth that posed people as criminals before proven guilty were anti-Semitic propaganda. One very famous piece of propaganda is the film "Jud Suss." The filmmaker Veit Harlan was prosecuted for war crimes because the film helped persuade the Hitler Youth and the SS that Jewish people were a threat to German society, so they would believe in the cause to exterminate them.



The film shows Suss Oppenheimer (loosely based on a real person) as a greedy cheating man who coerced a beautiful German woman into having sex with him, thus taking away her purity and causing her such despair that she drowns herself. This film shows Suss as immoral, so we see that Jewish people are corrupt.

Sticks & Stones

I experienced ridicule for my mind in high school. When I heard jokes about people who cut themselves, I felt humiliated. You may remember the term "Emo" for emotional people, who wear dark eyeliner and make "Emo" music where they sing about their heart tearing open or something equally dramatic. This gave way to a joke about "Emo" kids cutting themselves, such as "I wish my lawn were Emo so it would cut itself."



A remark like this would make me laugh uncomfortably, so I wouldn't stand out. I could not reveal that I was one of these people because I would be laughed at.

I knew that if I was going to fix this problem, I would have to face it alone.

CHEER UP



EMO KID

MAD PRIDE

There are some identities that people could hide, but choose not to because they can't stand the shame. They choose to trade that shame for a sense of pride. Gay pride and Trans pride are becoming more acceptable and understood all the time.

• However, have you ever heard of Mad Pride?



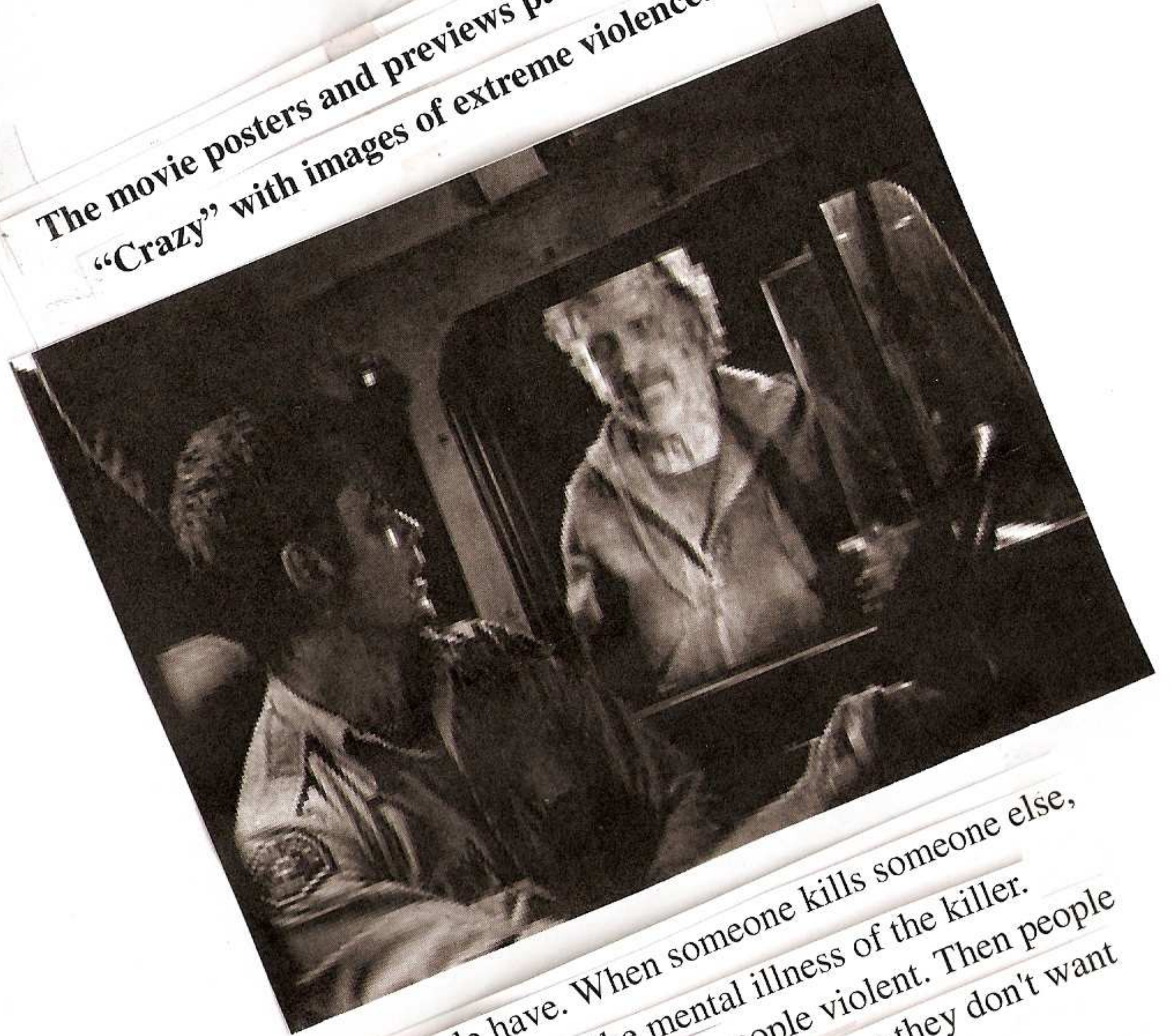
The Icarus Project.NET says:

“We are a network of people living with and/or affected by experiences that are often diagnosed and labeled as psychiatric conditions.

We believe these experiences are mad gifts needing cultivation and care, rather than diseases or disorders.”

It was these words that inspired me to question using the word “crazy” or “psycho” as things to be afraid of. These words made me look at myself and decide that I wanted to accept myself on my own terms, not based on whether I may be “crazy” or “normal.”

The movie posters and previews paired the word “Crazy” with images of extreme violence.



This is a real fear that people have. When someone kills someone else, news sources often blame the violence on the mental illness of the killer. This is why many people assume mad gifts make people violent. Then people who have mad gifts become secretive and ashamed because they don't want people to be afraid of them.

When I saw the previews for “The Crazies” I felt that it supported the idea of “crazy” people as violent. If they do reveal this, they risk losing jobs, opportunities, or relationships. This puts “crazy” people as though they are villains that need to be locked up or medicated because they're a threat to society.

MONSTERS

The previews for "The Crazies" showed me that a small town in the Mid-West was over-run by zombie-like monsters. However, one thing that seemed different to me from other zombie movies was the kind of "sickness" afflicting the people.

The preview says, "Something is infecting the citizens of Ogden Marsh... with insanity." So this "sickness" is insanity, this is what led me to believe that "The Crazies" was not harmless, it literally referred to "insane" people turning into murderers.



ICARUS

The Icarus Project gets its name from a greek myth. This myth told the story of Icarus, a boy who was trapped in a labyrinth with his father Daedalus. In order to help him escape, his father made him a pair of wings out of wax and feathers. Daedalus warned his son that if he flew too close to the sun, the wings would melt, and he would fall into the sea.

The Icarus Project uses this myth because it represents how people with mad gifts struggle to find balance in their lives. There are overlapping layers of "crazy" worlds and "normal" worlds. Often we exist in both, yet belong in neither. We shouldn't have to blindly trust doctors who supposedly know best.



We need to find our own solutions, and our own strength.

“Woe to us all.”

After all, how much does it take to turn someone “normal” into someone “crazy?” The human mind is fragile. If someone has a traumatic event, or a head injury, or just gets older, they could start believing things that aren't “normal.”

The Unworthy Life
under Nazi Rule

Just as George Mosse said in *Toward the Final Solution*, in the case of euthanizing Jewish people and other “sick” individuals for the sake of society:

The churches took the lead in protesting euthanasia.

The Protestant bishop Theophile Wurm was one of the first to protest, and so was Bishop Konrad von Preysing of Berlin.

Yet it was Bishop Clemens August Galen of Munster who created the most attention when he publicly exposed the program on August 31, 1941.

If so called unproductive people can be killed like animals, then “woe to us all when we become old and feeble,” he exclaimed.

Nazi propaganda for their compulsory “euthanasia” program:

60000^{RM}

kostet dieser Erbkrankte die Volksgemeinschaft auf Lebenszeit

Volksgenosse das ist auch Dein Geld

Lesen Sie

NEUES VOLK

Die Monatshefte des Rassenpolitischen Amtes der NSDAP

“This person suffering from hereditary defects costs the community 60,000 Reichsmark during his lifetime.

Fellow Germans, that is your money, too.”