

World War Two Propaganda:
Analyzing and Comparing German and American Strategies

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Introduction

The events of the Second World War encapsulate a chapter in history that bewilders the mind with its bizarre dynamics. Among the array of conflicts that have shaped civilizations, this global confrontation starkly juxtaposed governments with divergent ideologies and principles. Central to the focus of this paper lies a comparison between the governmental structures of the United States and Nazi Germany. This war era epitomized a landscape dominated by authoritarian regimes, encompassing Imperial Japan's absolute monarchy, Stalin's Soviet Union, and notably, Hitler's Nazi Germany. At their core, these systems were characterized by a singular authoritarian figure wielding absolute power, governing with unwavering authority. This unyielding control permeated various facets of civilian life, stifling freedom of expression and dissent against the omnipotent ruler's ideologies.

The hallmark of these authoritarian regimes lay not only in their authoritative control but also in their adept use of propaganda as a formidable tool. Propaganda, a potent weapon in their arsenal, served multifarious purposes. It was the catalyst for eliciting desired responses from the masses by “emphasizing positive figures and downplaying negative ones”¹, while also fostering an intense sense of patriotism, or instilling deep-seated fear among the populace. Hitler's Germany stands as a striking example of how propaganda was masterfully wielded to evoke such responses. Its mechanisms and techniques showcase the unparalleled ability to manipulate sentiments and shape societal perceptions, underscoring the immense influence of propaganda in authoritarian governance.

¹ Jowett, Garth S., and O'Donnell Victoria, “Propaganda & Persuasion.” *SAGE Publications*” (2018)

Conversely, the United States, revered for its federal republic system, stands as a stark contrast. This system pivots on the empowerment of the individual, granting them agency and the prerogative to shape the nation's trajectory. This system cultivates an environment of freedom and diversity, earning the nickname of the "melting pot" as individuals from diverse backgrounds and social situations enjoy the opportunity to express their thoughts and beliefs without authoritarian constraints. Nevertheless, despite the glaring disparities between the American democratic system and the German authoritarian regime, both nations resorted to employing various forms of propaganda. They utilized these tools in strikingly similar ways to conjure up animosity against undesired groups, cultivate intense patriotism, and plant seeds of fear within their citizens that is ultimately conveyed through various forms of media.

Nazi and American Propaganda

A propaganda technique that was integral to Nazi Germany during the Second World War was the demonization and dehumanization of undesired groups. Nazi propaganda vilified and dehumanized targeted groups, in particular Jewish people, as they were portrayed as subhuman and a critical threat to the well-being and prosperity of German society. This was evident in posters, films and other forms of media that depicted Jews as parasitic vermin or conspirators. Much like Nazi propaganda, American propaganda during this time also dehumanized and vilified certain targeted groups. Targeted The Japanese were among these targeted groups as they were similarly depicted as savage and subhuman in American forms of media.² Many comics also Both Nazi and American Propaganda utilized patriotic imagery to

²Hirsch, Paul. "'This Is Our Enemy': The Writers' War Board and Representations of Race in Comic Books, 1942–1945." *Pacific Historical Review* 83, no. 3 (2014): 448–86. <https://doi.org/10.1525/phr.2014.83.3.448>.

evoke a sense of patriotism and unity within the masses. American propaganda emphasized patriotism by using symbols like the American flag, Uncle Sam, Rosie the Riveter, and other iconic societal symbols to rally support for the war effort. American propagandists also fostered patriotism through comics with pop-culture stars that aimed to encourage feelings of moral obligation to the United States to encourage citizens to join the war effort.³ Nazi propaganda utilized symbols like the swastika, the god-like figure of Adolf Hitler, rallies, ceremonies, and other meticulously orchestrated events to glorify war and evoke a sense of strength and allegiance to the regime. Propaganda seen on both sides also strongly appealed to the emotions of citizens to elicit a certain response. Here propagandists appealed to emotions such as fear for national security or emotions of love and sympathy. This was often seen in both nations as propaganda stressed the consequences for enemy victories as well as the sacrifices that are necessary for the success of each nation's war effort.

Framework

When illustrating the similarities within American and Nazi propaganda during the Second World War it is essential to understand the framework by which these strategies are named. Historian Julius Yourman's *Propaganda Techniques within Nazi Germany* provides a name for each of the propaganda strategies that were used within Nazi Germany. The findings in this paper ultimately illustrate techniques that are similarly used by the United States. Therefore, it is important to give credit to Yourman's piece as many of the devices that Yourman illuminates will ultimately be the framework for understanding the specific techniques used by the Nazis and

³ Sostaric, Mia. "The American Wartime Propaganda During World War II: How Comic Books Sold the War." *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 38, no. 1 (2019): 17–44. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26926687>.

Americans. Furthermore, Yourman recognizes seven main propaganda devices in his piece. These devices are recognized as “Name calling”, “Glittering generalities”, “Testimonial”, “Bandwagon”, “Card Stacking”, “Plain Folks”, and “Transfer.”

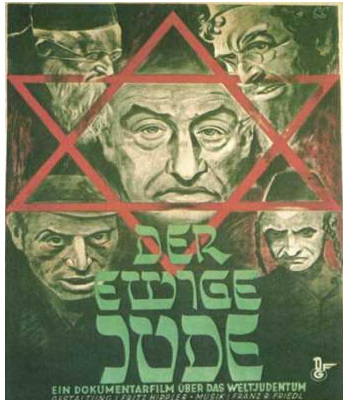
Name Calling

The “Name Calling” device is recognized as a technique that influences the subject to form an opinion or judgment without examining the evidence on which that judgment should be based⁴. During the Second World War the Nazis used this strategy to invoke strong feelings of hate and fear out of the citizens of Germany. Name calling furthermore helped alienate certain unwanted groups such as Jews, communists, and liberals by associating feelings of hate and fear onto them and it is no surprise that the Jewish population was among these groups. During World War two, Antisemitism in Germany was elevated to a whole new level that was perpetrated through name calling. Not only were the Jews viewed as biologically subhuman, but they were believed to be an infectious cancer that was an endangerment to the German people. Propagandistic posters serve as substantial examples that perpetrate this technique, not only are these posters effective at invoking strong feelings of hatred and fear of unwanted groups through supercharged words but through cartoonish characteristics of these unwanted groups as well.

A well-known example of a propaganda poster that illustrates the name calling technique is an advertisement of the film *The Eternal Jew*. The *Eternal Jew* was a film that was deemed by Nazi Germany’s minister of propaganda, Joseph Goebbels to be an extremely important tool for the skewing of public perception of Jews. The film was created to perpetuate the idea that Jews are inherently criminals that have no soul, are different from Germans in every way, therefore

⁴ Yourman, Julius. “Propaganda Techniques Within Nazi Germany.” *The Journal of Educational Sociology* 13, no. 3 (1939): 148–63. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2262307>.

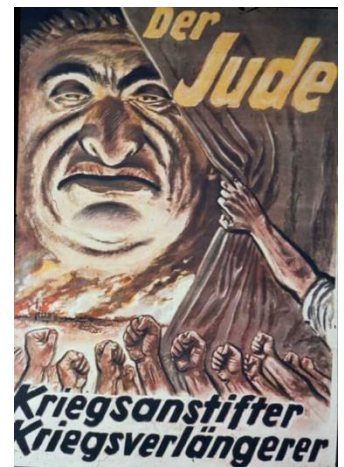
killing them is not a crime but a necessity. This 1940 poster ultimately advertised these themes



during the early stages of the war, the poster reads; “The Eternal Jew, a documentary film about world Jewry.” This serves as an interesting example of name calling as the words "Eternal Jew" illustrate some of the judgments and stereotypes that the Nazis were able to project onto the Jewish people. A major stereotype of the Jews given by the Nazis was that they were essentially the bane of existence of the so-called

“master race.” The idea that there is such a thing as “world Jewry ” further perpetuates the idea of the plague that is the Jewish people that was forced by Hitler and the Nazis. In addition to these supercharged words, this poster also influences the public perception by bolstering stereotypes with exaggerated features. The Jewish men that are shown in the poster on the left are depicted with things such as cartoon noses, distorted faces, evil expressions, and devilish eyes. This cartoonish exaggeration of the Jewish men shown in the poster further bolsters the stereotype through propaganda that Jews are savage, evil, and uncivilized beings that are inherently different and dangerous to the people of Germany.

Another example of the name calling approach can be seen in a poster released anywhere from late 1943, to early 1944. The poster is titled “The Jew” and the caption reads; “The Jew, the inciter of war, the prolonger of war.” This poster is another prime example that illustrates the use of supercharged words and exaggerated features that bolster Jewish stereotypes and antisemitism. The words “inciter of war” and “prolonger of war ” highlight antisemitic ideology that believes that Jews are an endangerment to Germany only bringing chaos and war to the country. The poster further dehumanizes Jews by depicting a Jewish



person with cartoonishly exaggerated features much like the Advertisement for *The Eternal Jew* film. During the Second World War, these propaganda techniques were also utilized in the film industry. Produced by Joseph Goebbels, the film *Jud Süß* illustrates similar approaches to propaganda. The film illuminates countless antisemitic themes and is one of the most notorious and successful pieces of antisemitic propaganda. As a result, there are various examples of the name calling technique that can be experienced throughout the film. When translated to English, a famous scene in the film states; “Dear friends and godfathers, listen to the song of the great vampire, wolves, rats, vipers are bad, but the worst of all predators is: the Jew, the Jew, the Jew, he reigns in the country, sucking our blood, takes away house and farm and shirt. To the devil with the Jew!”⁵ This scene from the antisemitic film further illuminates the name calling approach to propaganda, characterizing the Jews as vampires and predators. This scene from the film is important because it illustrates an effective propagandistic method to mold the public's perception of the Jewish people without investigating the reality of how fanatical this way of thinking truly is. There is no shortage of physical portrayals of Jewish people that reflect this propaganda in *Jud Süß*. Throughout the film, Jewish characters are represented as deceptive, evil, and parasitic in nature. These physical portrayals of Jews on screen only reinforce the fanatical name calling propaganda that was perpetuated by Hitler and the Nazis.

Glittering Generalities

The next propaganda strategy that is imperative to address in this paper is what Yourman refers to as “Glittering generalities.” Glittering generalities is a strategy by which the propagandist identifies his program by virtue by use of virtues words⁶ As opposed to name

⁵ Harlan, Veit. *Jud Süß*. 1940; Terra Film, *Internet Archive*, 1:34:43. <https://archive.org/details/jud-su-ss-english-subbed-1940>

⁶ Yourman, “Propaganda Techniques Within Nazi Germany.” 150.

calling, this strategy appeals to the emotions of love, generosity, and brotherhood. The Germans utilized this strategy during the war to persuade citizens of the importance of the war effort,



conjure feelings of intense patriotism, and encourage citizens to make sacrifices for the war effort. This can be seen through numerous posters that were developed by Goebbels. The poster presented has the slogan:

“Unshakable, determined to fight, certain of victory!”⁷ The spirited slogan shows the effort to conjure feelings of patriotism and comradery

through the glittering generalities approach. The poster's depiction of a rugged, tough, and competent German man further reinforces the patriotic themes within the poster. Goebbels and the Nazi party also utilized this strategy to encourage German citizens to make sacrifices for the war effort to create the feeling that the common folk were as much a part of the war as the ones fighting it. The poster illustrated on the right of the page represents a popular poster that encouraged the people of Germany to donate personal belongings that were of little value to



them. The poster says, “Get rid of old clothes and shoes!”⁸ This poster ultimately illuminates the glittering generalities approach as it created feelings of camaraderie and teamwork as it made the common folk feel as if they were a vital part of the war effort as they were encouraged to make important sacrifices for the war effort.

Transfer

The third approach to propaganda that was utilized by the Nazi party is known as the transfer approach. Transfer propaganda takes a symbol that carries authority, sanction, and

⁷ “Homefront Propaganda in Germany and the U.S.A” American Experience, 1996-2023.
<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/goebbels-gallery/>

⁸ “Homefront Propaganda in Germany and the U.S.A” American Experience, 1996-2023.

prestige and combines it with an idea or argument to make it appear justifiable. A prime example



of this technique is how Nazi propagandists were able to associate the symbol of the swastika and the Nazi regime with prestige and supremacy. This was commonly seen in ads and posters during the Second World War in which a certain message would be promoted accompanied by the symbol of the Reich. The image presented on the left was issued in January of 1941 and illustrates the transfer approach as the swastika is

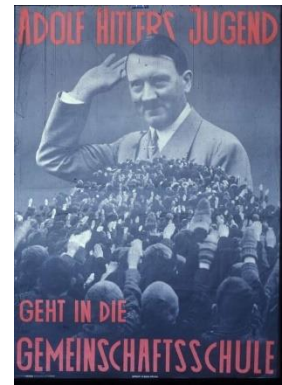
accompanied with the message; “Front and Homeland: The Guarantee of Victory.”⁹ The inclusion of the swastika symbol is important to this example because it associates the symbol with victory and prestige. Therefore, people will associate that symbol with what is best for Germany, which allows for more and more people to buy into the fanatical ideas and policies that come with it. The symbols and phrases seen in the poster pertaining to war are given in a glorious manner to make war seem more heroic and thrilling. This ultimately influences more young citizens to join the war effort and adhere to Nazi ideals. This method was especially effective with children as the German flag and the German soldier embodies the “Nazi hero. “The Nazi soldier is associated with manliness, and it is identified with the glory of the regime and is used as a tool to encourage German boys to develop a sense of superiority and belief in ideas about militarism and antisemitism.

Testimonial

The fourth approach that was integral to Nazi propagandists is known as the testimonial approach. This approach is characterized when “some respected celebrity (or alternatively

⁹ Bytwerk, Randall. “Nazi Posters: 1939-1945” German Propaganda Archive, 2001.
<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/posters3.htm>

someone generally hated) claims that an idea or product is good (or bad). This technique is used to convince us without examining the facts more carefully.” This approach can be seen in the way that Hitler’s approval is the supreme testimonial over anything and everything. The Fuhrer knows the goal of the state and knows the direction, therefore no judgment or authority that does not follow the Fuhrer can possibly be right. An example of this can be seen in a poster from 1936 to 1937 that promotes education. The caption reads; Adolf Hitler’s youth attends community schools.”¹⁰ This is an interesting example given the fact that it was seen before the war had officially kicked off. However, I believe this example is still essential to present since Hitler had been appointed as Chancellor of Germany during its release. As one can see in this example, the Nazi party is utilizing the divine aura of Adolf Hitler to promote the attendance of public schools. Hitler being presented in this way is important because it establishes trust in the public that he has his best interest for the education of the children of Germany. Since the Fuhrer knows the goal and knows the direction, then his ideas around education must be what is best for Germany.



Plain Folks

The next propaganda device that was used by Nazi Germany is known as the “Plain Folks” approach. This is a style that is often used by individuals and organizations with leadership positions to win over the public by appearing as one with the common folk, “just plain folks among the neighbors.”¹¹ As much as Hitler was characterized as a God-like figure within Nazi Germany, he was also made out to be a simple man of the people, which can be seen in

¹⁰ Bytwerk, Randall. Nazi Posters: 1933-1939. German Propaganda Archive, 2001.

¹¹ Yourman, “Propaganda Techniques Within Nazi Germany.” 154.

various posters as he is presented interacting with ordinary people in everyday life. His address to the Reichstag on September 1, 1939, is a great example of this and is brought up in Yourman's article. In his speech he states: "I myself am today as ready as I once was to make every personal sacrifice. I expect no more of any German than what I for four years was voluntarily prepared to do. There shall be no privations in Germany which I myself will not immediately endure. My whole life from now on belongs still more exclusively to my people. I now did not want to be anything but the first soldier of the German Reich. I, therefore, again put on the uniform which once had been most sacred and dearest to me. It will be taken off only after victory or death."¹² This statement from Adolf Hitler illustrates the plain folk's approach as his humble language ensures that he is not above the common people of Germany in any way therefore, their struggle is his struggle. He also refers to his days in which he served as a German soldier and makes the analogy to stress that he is not above them and is here to



fight with them. The poster presented on the right further illustrates this approach as Hitler is seen with a mass of orderly German soldiers. The caption reads: "Long live Germany!"¹³ It is important to note how Hitler is depicted wearing a military uniform which further bonds him with his comrades at war. Posters like this were key to bolstering Hitler's image and making him out to be like he was willing to fight with the German people and endure the struggles that they endure.

Bandwagon

¹² William C. Fray and Lisa A. Spar, "Address by Adolf Hitler - September 1, 1939" The Avalon Project, 1997. <https://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/document/HITLER1.htm>

¹³ Bytwerk, Randall. Nazi Posters: 1933-1939. German Propaganda Archive, 2001.

The next Nazi propaganda device that is essential to address is the “Bandwagon” approach. The bandwagon is a device in which the propagandist encourages the feeling to follow the crowd and accept whatever idea or program is being advertised simply because of the idea that if everyone is doing it then why not do it too? The Nazi hatred towards unwanted groups serves as an exceptional example of this approach. For instance, Jews, communists, liberals, and democrats were at the center of this hatred and were seen as the ones to blame for all the people's shortcomings and societal struggles. The bandwagon is then reinforced through various things such as films, advertisements, and education systems that vilify and dehumanize these groups. This helps form a fanaticism within the masses and an appeal to follow the crowd where these fanatical ideas are shared. The bandwagon technique can also be seen in the way the Nazis created feelings of comradeship and excitement within the masses. The Hitler Youth camps demonstrated this as the children dressed up in uniform, performed marches, sang songs, and were surrounded by various other patriotic demonstrations. At the early stages of the mass hysteria, these spectacles drive more and more parents to send their children to these camps and join the bandwagon. The poster that is presented illustrates how patriotism was promoted to all children of Germany. The poster reads: "Youth Serves the Führer. All 10-year-olds into the Hitler Youth."¹⁴ This further demonstrates the effort to indoctrinate children and encourage the masses to join the bandwagon through feelings of patriotism and unity.



Card Stacking

“Card Stacking is a propaganda technique in which the propagandist employs

¹⁴ Bytwerk, Randall. “Nazi Posters: 1939-1945” German Propaganda Archive, 2001.

all the arts of deception to win our support for himself, his group, nation, race, policy, practice, belief, or ideal. He stacks the cards against the truth. He uses underemphasis and overemphasis to dodge or evade facts.”¹⁵ A prime example of the card stacking technique is ultimately seen in the way Adolf Hitler and Joseph Goebbels were able to promote falsehoods surrounding the demonization of Jews and the fallacies of the Nazi “master race.” The ability of propagandists to manipulate how information is presented to the public given that the ideas and ideologies are inherently false and fanatical in many ways is the key element of the card stacking technique. Moreover, technique is illuminated in many forms of German media along with the name calling technique. For example, the *Jud Süß* film that was noticed earlier in this paper serves as a classic example of card stacking which is seen in the way Goebbels manipulated information to promote antisemitism by vilifying Jews as well as glorifying Nazi ideology. This is just one example of many films that share this type of content which illustrates how Nazi propagandists utilized the card stacking technique to promote blatant falsehoods repeatedly to the people of Germany to bolster Nazi image and vilify the enemy.

Emotional Appeal

The last German propaganda technique that is essential for the comparison of U.S. propaganda is how they appealed to a fear response in citizens using anti-spy propaganda. There was a slew of Nazi propaganda that aimed to instill fear within the masses, influencing them to act towards specific tasks. A popular example of this type of propaganda was known as the “Shadow Campaign.” This was a campaign aimed to push awareness of enemy spies. This campaign was known for the code word that was used by various carefully chosen individuals

¹⁵ Yourman, “Propaganda Techniques Within Nazi Germany.” 156.

that signified that the enemy is nearby and is listening to sensitive information that could be said in everyday chatter. This code word is the whispered Pst! This was used to advance the campaign as the word was used in spontaneous situations to alert German citizens that the enemy was listening and to behave appropriately. The chosen individuals would interrupt any inappropriate conversations in a manner like this: “Pst! The enemy is listening! You know that! And you surely do not want to help him against us! If the enemy had heard that, or learned of it fifth or sixth hand, we would all be hurt, our soldiers at the front and you yourself!”¹⁶ This



ultimately demonstrates the fear appeal tactic as it was aimed to stir up fear within German citizens to make them behave appropriately, preventing people from blurting out certain things in public conversation that could aid the enemy. This campaign was also accompanied by a series of twelve anti-spy posters that bolstered the significance of the campaign. The poster on the left of the

page represents the shadow campaign as a man is seen warning two people conversing, as a shadowy figure is seen peering behind them. The eerie feeling that is conveyed through the poster illustrates the effort by Nazi propagandists to encourage German citizens to take action against spies and be concerned about the well-being of Germany



by instilling fear into them. The shadow campaign was also seen on various everyday items. The picture on the right of the page shows an advertisement for the shadow campaign on a box of matches.

In similar fashion to the Nazi regime, the United States utilized several of the propaganda strategies mentioned throughout this paper. As for the name calling technique, the United States

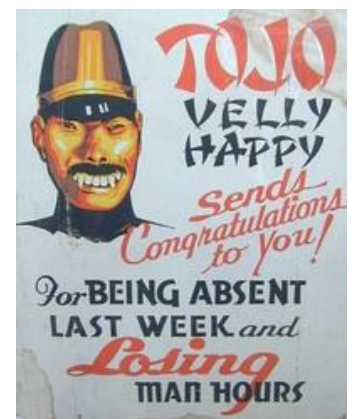
¹⁶ Bytwerk, Randall. “Guidelines for Oral Propaganda: The Shadow Campaign” German Propaganda Archive, 2007.

also used this to conjure up feelings of hatred towards unwanted groups. The U.S. ultimately exercised this method the strongest against the Japanese. While the U.S. was in many ways already a racially segregated country, Japanese prejudice during the Second World War was intensified after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941, resulting in the U.S. to fully enter the war. As a result, there became a massive rise in Japanese name calling propaganda. Interestingly, profound examples of this can be seen in the works of Dr. Seuss as the beloved author's cartooning skills were utilized to perpetuate harsh stereotypes of the Japanese.¹⁷

The anti-Japanese image shown illustrates the name calling approach used by the United States to reinforce stereotypes against the Japanese as being savage and dangerous. This is reinforced through the cartoonish exaggeration of the Japanese person's features. Another example of this approach that was commonly seen in the United States is a series of posters that showed how Americans at home could inadvertently help the enemy by not acting on various issues.



The stress for Americans to work and not take days off was a popular theme in these posters and the image on the right of the page shows this. The poster depicts a Japanese man with the common stereotypes of being savage and evil and is done so using exaggerated features such as animalistic teeth and eyes. These stereotypes help create a sense of urgency to act in working towards stopping the Japanese as they bolster the feeling of impending doom on Americans insinuating the importance of work as days off could only help the enemy in the long run.¹⁸



¹⁷ J387: Media History: "WWII and the Racism of Anti-Japanese Propaganda."

¹⁸ J387: Media History: "WWII and the Racism of Anti-Japanese Propaganda."

The name calling approach was also prevalent in many American films during the war. The 1943 film *Our Enemy: The Japanese*, ultimately serves as a good example of this. This film was a film that aimed to educate American troops about the Japanese army and culture. However, many anti-Japanese stereotypes can be seen throughout the film. At the beginning of the film, there is a scene where the film commentator states: “The Japanese aren't easy to know, I've lived among them for ten years and I can testify that they are as different from ourselves as any people on this planet. The real difference is in their minds, you cannot measure Japanese sense of logic by any Western yardstick. Their thinking is two thousand years out of date.”¹⁹ The commentator then goes on to describe the Japanese military as being a group of fanatics with a sense of reckless courage and hunger for world domination. This ultimately displays the name calling approach as the film uses various stereotypes of Japanese people and culture to create a sense of danger and evil within them. This creates a sense of urgency within Americans to act against the “savages” from Japan and breeds further hatred for them.

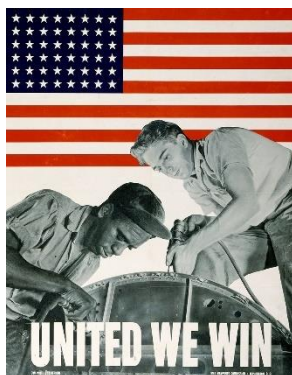
An additional film that illustrates this approach is the 1945 film *My Japan*. This film is very similar to *Our Enemy* however, this film is much more aggressive in the way it uses racism and stereotyping. Its purpose was to encourage Americans to purchase war bonds for the war with Japan. The film is narrated by a man impersonating a Japanese man. The man pokes fun at Japanese people by squinting his eyes and ridiculing a Japanese accent. Throughout the film, the man narrating the film uses reverse psychology to stir up feelings of anger in Americans by alluding that they are weak compared to the Japanese due to their need for materialistic things. One scene from the film the narrator states: “You say you can destroy us by starving us out, you forget that we do not like you. We have no soft bellies crying for beefsteaks, butter, and candy.

¹⁹ Periscope Film, “Our Enemy the Japanese.” November 11, 2016. YouTube, 01:07.

We live well on simple food, easy to get, starve us? It is easier to starve a fish in the ocean.”²⁰

This scene from the movie illustrates how the film is trying to provoke feelings of anger within Americans so they in turn channel this anger towards the enemy. The narrator then goes on to poke fun at the claim that Americans are lazy, stating: They work longer hours than you do, twice as long, quite often. Why not? They are not working for the clock. They are working to win the war! They do not make as much money as you do. Well, they are not working to make money, they are working to win the war! They work every day of every week. Is this so strange? They are not working to get days off; they are working to win the war!" This line further highlights the name calling approach as the film uses the combination of racism, stereotyping, to vilify the Japanese in hopes of encouraging more Americans to purchase war bonds.

The U.S. also made extensive use of the glittering generalities approach. “Rosie the Riveter” was an advertisement aimed at women encouraging them to work in manufacturing plants as more and more men went off to war. This is not only one of the most renown American posters of all time, but it serves as an exceptional example of the glittering generalities approach. The generalized phrase “we can do it” along with the depiction of a strong woman serves as a perfect example of the use of this approach to create feelings of comradery within women in the U.S. as they take



over for men in the workforce. The famous Uncle Sam “I WANT YOU” poster provokes similar feelings for Americans as it appeals to feelings of comradery, patriotism, and the desire to fight for one's country. An Additional example can be seen in a wartime poster with two men working alongside each other with the caption: “United We Win”²¹

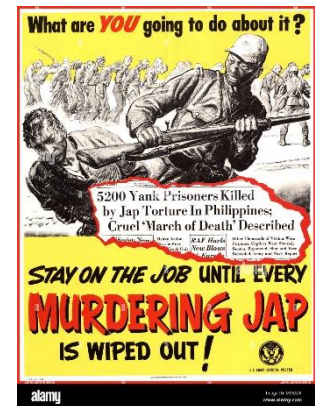
²⁰ Periscope Film, “My Japan” June 1, 2016. YouTube, 04:27.

²¹ National Archives, “Powers of Persuasion” Archives.gov, 2019.

These examples ultimately illustrate how American propagandists utilized the Glittering Generalities approach to strengthen the sense of patriotism and unity within American citizens to influence people to work together to fight in the war effort. In this poster, one can infer that the poster is focusing on bolstering the morale of citizens on the home front as their part in the war is just as important as the men fighting on the front lines due to the large number of supplies and resources that troops need for the war that need to be manufactured back in America. Furthermore, these examples convey how American propagandists used the Glittering Generalities approach to strengthen comradery and unity within citizens in times of war.

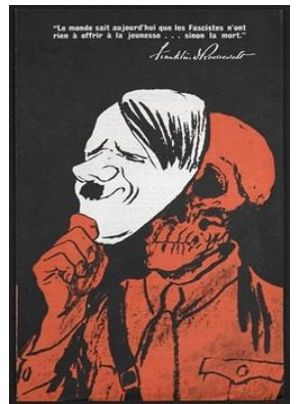
Even though the United States was a democratic nation, card stacking propaganda still existed. This can be seen in the way U.S. propagandists portrayed enemy actions as well as U.S. actions. Propaganda posters and media campaigns often emphasized the atrocities of U.S. enemies. A wartime poster detailing the killing of U.S. prisoners of war in the Philippines illustrates this technique. The poster says: “What are you going to do about it? 5200 Yank prisoners killed by Jap torture in Philippines; cruel ‘march of death’ described. Stay on the job until every MURDERING JAP is wiped out.” This poster illustrates how the U.S. used card stacking propaganda to selectively portray the brutality and savagery of the Japanese by emphasizing their atrocities. This selective portrayal was an effort to conjure negative feelings towards the enemy and solidify support for the war.

Further, the way in which the films *Our Enemy* and *My Japan* insinuate that U.S. citizens are lazy and are in danger of being taken over and destroyed by a war-crazed Japanese is another example of card stacking. The two films illustrate a deliberate attempt to exaggerate and skew



information to elicit the response out of American citizens to buy war bonds. The card stacking technique is also evident in U.S. propaganda in the way it promotes patriotism and unity. Posters, films, and other media emphasized American values, unity, and patriotism, showcasing the nation as a place of freedom and democracy. This approach aimed to unify the people behind a common cause and rally support for the war effort.

The transfer technique was also prevalent in the U.S. during wartime. Faces of enemies such as the Japanese and the Germans serve as good examples of this approach as they're representation was often associated with a negative idea. The right centered poster illuminates the transfer approach as the face of Hitler is seen paired with a skeleton that represents death. The caption on the poster states: "The world knows today that the Fascists have nothing to offer to the young apart from death."²² This quote ultimately reinforces the association of Adolf



Hitler and death. This allows Americans to develop the correlation between the two in their mind. Many anti-Japanese posters convey this as well as a popular theme in many of these posters during the war was the threat that Japanese men, especially Japanese soldiers were to the safety of American women. One popular wartime poster depicts an American woman running away from a cartoonishly evil looking Japanese soldier holding a knife and wearing a hat with the imperial rising sun on it. This was accompanied by the caption: "This is our enemy."²³ This ultimately conveys the transfer approach as the propaganda associates the Japanese and their imperial symbol to a negative idea, that being the threat towards American women.

²² Eddie Choi, Jay Min, and Bryan Kwak, "Propaganda Techniques: America at War." Weebly.com. <https://propaganda-bje.weebly.com/special-appeals.html>

²³ J387: Media History: "WWII and the Racism of Anti-Japanese Propaganda." j387mediahistory.weebly.com/anti-japanese-propaganda-in-wwii.html

As for the plain folk's approach, similarly to the Germans the U.S. used this approach to advertise prominent and revered figures in society as being more relatable to the average citizen. There is a poster that depicts the famous American boxer Joe Louis wearing a military uniform fighting for America Joe Louis was most known for his victory over a German boxer by the name of Max Schmeling which made him an especially revered figure given the U.S.



discontent with Germany at the time of the war. Louis's image in the poster is accompanied with the caption: "Pvt. Joe Louis says- We're going to do our part...and we'll win because we're on God's side²⁴." This highlights the plain folk's approach as a renowned figure like Joe Louis became an influential figure in all social classes as he is seen sacrificing himself to his country, low in the ranks in the army. This ultimately encouraged more and more men to make sacrifices and join the American forces like Louis.

Americans also utilized prominent figures in society in testimonial propaganda. One unique wartime poster uses pop culture icon Captain America to encourage Americans to buy war bonds, where Captain America is seen giving a salute to the audience. This advertisement illustrates the testimonial technique as U.S. propagandists used an iconic fictional character giving their props to the ones who have bought war bonds to help the country, which influences other citizens to do the same.²⁵ American propagandists used the famous Bugs Bunny cartoon with this



approach as well. This was done through a 1942 song "Any Bonds Today?" This was a short song sung in a cartoon promoting war bonds, starring Bugs Bunny. The cartoon shows Bugs Bunny singing: "Any bonds today? Bonds of freedom That's what I'm selling Any bonds today?"

²⁴ Eddie Choi, Jay Min, and Bryan Kwak, "Propaganda Techniques: America at War." Weebly.com.

²⁵ National Archives, "Powers of Persuasion" Archives.gov, 2019.

Scrape up the most you can. Here comes the freedom man, asking you to buy a share of freedom today. This serves as another American propagandist effort to use a well-known figure in pop culture to influence people to join the bandwagon and follow the crowd by purchasing vital war bonds.

Much like the Shadow Campaign, American propagandists were also focused on making citizens wary that spies could be lurking at any given moment. As anxieties about national security within America became increasingly more pronounced during the war, American propagandists made a series of posters to alert citizens of enemy spies. A famous American anti-spy poster during the time is a 1942 poster depicting a shrouded figure peering over a wall with just the figure's eyes looking at the viewer with the caption:

“He’s watching you²⁶.” Much like the shadow campaign, this type of propaganda stressed to citizens that senseless chatter about the war effort can potentially have dire consequences for U.S. success in the ears of the wrong listener. The



dramatized way this propaganda is presented also points to the effort to make Americans act now by appealing to the fear of the viewer. An additional poster shows a woman in a very unsettling



manner as she is depicted as an evil murderer along with the caption:

“Wanted! FOR MURDER, her careless talk costs lives.”²⁷ It is interesting to

note that the words “careless” and “talk” are underlined in this example.

This shows the emphasis on how detrimental everyday conversations that

happen in social settings every single day can be when there are sneaky

saboteurs listening for sensitive information. Also, another interesting detail in this piece is how

²⁶ National Archives, “Powers of Persuasion” Archives.gov, 2019.

²⁷ Eddie Choi, Jay Min, and Bryan Kwak, “Propaganda Techniques: America at War.” Weebly.com.

the woman in the poster is depicted as a regular, everyday citizen. This is important because it illustrates how the nation's saboteurs are oftentimes the least suspected of doing so. Therefore, it appeals to the fear and paranoia of the viewer once again as the viewer should be wary of everyday peers such as co-workers, neighbors, and friends.

Psychological and Social Impacts

As illustrated throughout this paper, the various propaganda strategies stated above had immense psychological and social effects on both the United States and Germany. Both nations were effectively able to instill feelings of ill-will and angst towards unwanted groups using stereotypes, exaggerations, and racism. These are feelings that were manufactured and bolstered using carefully crafted propaganda. This is conveyed through the sentiment towards groups like Jews and the Japanese that is perpetuated through both American and German name calling propaganda. This is important because these examples illustrate how the use of propaganda in societies can greatly impact individuals' perceptions and attitudes during and after the war. During the war, American anti-Japanese propaganda only intensified American sentiment towards the Japanese and other Asian ethnic groups that was head started with the bombing of pearl harbor. Not only were these sentiments intensified during the war, but these anti-Japanese sentiments were no doubt felt in American society in many years following the war. Similarly, in German society during the war antisemitism conveyed through propaganda greatly affected the perceptions of many German citizens about Jews that helped pave the way for one of the most brutal genocides in history. Unfortunately, antisemitism still existed in many societies around the world years after the war and even today. In turn, one can imagine that the booming of antisemitic propaganda by the Nazis in the Second World War has a lot to say about the negative perceptions of Jews in German society.

The psychological effects of propaganda can also be felt in citizens from both nations through the way in which both nations used similar propaganda methods to effectively influence their citizens to achieve a desired response. In both nations, citizens were influenced by propaganda to be wary of jeopardizing the well-being of one's nation. This technique instilled the feeling that spies and saboteurs in all kinds of shapes and forms could be lurking in even the most seemingly secure places, which influenced citizens to generally keep quiet about various political topics. Both nations also utilized similar approaches to generate feelings of intense patriotism within citizens to effectively influence them to join the military to help their countries war effort. This ultimately created strong cultures of patriotism in both countries socially. Furthermore, both Germany and the United States utilized similar propaganda techniques during the Second World War that had a profound impact on their citizens socially and psychologically that allowed propagandists to influence individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors to achieve a desired outcome.

The Role of Media and Technology

The use of various forms of media and technology played a substantial role in shaping and disseminating propaganda during the Second World War for both countries. Propaganda films in both nations served as an important medium to portray each unwanted group in a manner that gives a sort of seemingly real-life depiction. American films like *Our Enemy: Japan*, the German film *The Eternal Jew*, and countless other films alike served as important tools to create a negative perception in citizens towards unwanted groups in both societies. In turn, these propaganda films also simultaneously influenced citizens to take action in various tasks that would help their country's war effort against these unwanted groups. Whether it be becoming a member of the S.S. to stop the spread of communism and "Jewry" or investing in war bonds and

working double the hours in the factory to prevent a Japanese takeover, these techniques were integral to both societies.

As one can see from the many examples shown throughout this paper, posters and advertisements were perhaps the most widely used form of media propaganda by both nations during the war. The quick and simple nature of posters almost serves as the ultimate medium to send a desired message or gain a desired response from citizens. These posters allow propagandists to leave the reader with a very powerful and influential message that is captured all in a poster that does not take more than a few seconds to read. The use of prominent figures in society in posters from both nations also served as a power tool to influence citizens to jump on the bandwagon and follow in everyone else's behavior in a way that makes the behavior seem justified. Additionally, the cartoonish exaggeration of these posters gives them a profound ability to capture the reader's attention. In result, forms of media and technology played an exceptionally important role in further disseminating propaganda into German and American societies during the Second World War.

Artistic Aspects and Symbolism

For both the U.S. and Germany, the way in which propaganda was depicted artistically was an important process for whatever message each side was intending to convey, and both sides shared similar methods in doing so. These artistic portrayals were pivotal in shaping public opinion by instilling a collective belief that these marginalized groups posed a fundamental threat to both societies. By characterizing them as culturally inferior or inherently evil, the propaganda aimed to create a sense of urgency, presenting these groups as an imminent danger to the well-being and stability of both Germany and the United States. The symbolism that was illuminated in these artistic representations was a potent tool to instill the notion that these

targeted groups were not merely different but were, in fact, adversaries detrimental to the nation's prosperity and security.

Moreover, these visual representations were deeply entrenched in cultural connotations, tapping into existing prejudices and stereotypes within each society. This type of artistic portrayal with societal biases reinforced the idea that these groups were not to be understood or accepted but to be feared and combated. Consequently, such propaganda artworks fueled a narrative that these groups were the enemy, perpetuating an intense mentality that justified discriminatory actions and policies against them. Overall, the artistic depiction of undesirable groups in propaganda played a pivotal role in shaping public perception, consolidating prejudices, and fostering a sense of national unity against perceived threats, ultimately influencing the societal stance towards these undesirable groups.

Moral and Ethical Implications

It is apparent that numerous moral and ethical boundaries were breached through the deliberate use of propaganda by both Germany and the United States during the Second World War. However, what makes this similarity interesting is the differing government systems and ethical standards of Germany and the United States during the Second World War. Germany being an authoritarian style of governing, encroaching upon the moral and ethical boundaries of society was a key element for the success of this type of system and was a regular occurrence. For instance, Germany's propagandist machinery that was exemplified by Joseph Goebbels' orchestrated dissemination of anti-Semitic narratives and glorification of war. Even though in some cases this was starkly contrasted with the democratic nation of the United States' campaigns as they were mainly aimed at bolstering patriotism, American propaganda occasionally manipulated public sentiments, which is ultimately seen with anti-Japanese

examples. These strategies not only crossed ethical lines by manipulating information but also exploited societal vulnerabilities. Furthermore, these examples illuminate how the United States was willing to encroach on the boundaries of morality and ethics as they participated in propaganda strategies that are like techniques that are often prevalent in authoritarian systems.

Conclusion

Upon thorough examination and analysis of the plethora of U.S. and German World War two propaganda exemplified within this study, it is resoundingly evident that propaganda served as a pivotal tool wielded by both governmental structures to mold specific responses from their respective citizens. These discoveries present compelling and insightful instances, underscoring strikingly similar methodologies employed by vastly different forms of governance, the democratic framework of the United States and the authoritarian regime of Nazi Germany.

It is especially eye-opening to witness a democratic nation, founded on principles of individual expression and ideological diversity, employing tactics akin to an authoritarian state built upon suppressing dissent and imposing singular perspectives. For instance, both American and Nazi propaganda encompassed iconic imagery and slogans, fostering unity and patriotism among its populace, while also utilizing propaganda to manipulate emotions, instill fear, and rally support for its aggressive agenda. The significance of these parallels extends beyond historical interest, tapping into a profound revelation of how different systems of government will encroach on ethics and morals in times of war. Witnessing how disparate political systems harness similar methods during times of immense conflict offers a compelling insight into the power of propaganda's influence. It prompts one to contemplate the complexities of governance, challenging preconceived notions of the boundaries between freedom and control, democracy, and authoritarianism.

Furthermore, this comparative analysis illuminates the malleability of propaganda techniques, regardless of the underlying ideologies or governmental structures. It encourages one to raise questions about the ethical implications of propaganda in shaping collective consciousness, regardless of the societal framework in which it operates. The juxtaposition of the U.S. and German propaganda strategies during World War Two serves as an instructive tableau, compelling us to critically examine not only historical events but also the enduring dynamics of persuasion, power, and the intricate interplay between governance and public opinion.

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