

## Pre-War Propaganda of Germany

Alyssa Gill, 4<sup>th</sup> Hour

### Search Process:

Why didn't anyone stop Hitler and his Nazis from killing six million people until it was too late? Why did millions of Jews (like Eliezer's family in *Night*) willingly board trains that led to death and misery? This occurred because the Holocaust started off small. Hitler slowly took away the Jews' and other outsiders' rights, such as their right to have jewelry and gold. Then, it slowly escalated to the mass murdering of millions of people.

It all began with the Nazi party's propaganda. They advocated for Adolf Hitler to Germany's leader and to stand with them against all of the outsiders. I had already known that Hitler's party put up propaganda to advertise their campaign, but I wanted to explore German Pre-War propaganda more in-depth. I wanted to know many things such as what the Nazi's motifs were, who made the propaganda, where it was placed and in what form, who it targeted, and how successful it was.

I faced many difficulties during these past 2 weeks. I had troubles coming with my project idea that was Pre-War themed, but I decided to focus on German propaganda because even though it played such a small part, it was the foundation of such a big event (The Holocaust), and I get to be artsy and crafty.

I also had difficulties coming up with a way to create a background for my propaganda poster, because during my research I found out it was illegal to put propaganda up on buildings. I had originally wanted to just paint a brick background, but instead I used plexi-glass and bordered it with brick to look like a shop window. After I did this, however, I found out that posters that were approved by the German government could be hung on buildings. Assuming that the Nazi regime's propaganda was approved, I could have stuck with my original idea, but that's okay.

My plans did not turn out as expected. I wasted 5 hours constructing my bricks. Initially, I cut and glued red-colored paper to all 6 sides of the foam brick, but it looked like a first-grader's doing. So re-did them by spray-painting wrapping paper red and wrapping the bricks like a Christmas gift. It turned out much nicer.

The last difficulty I faced was finding time to create the project. Because I do not have Wi-Fi at home, my class-time was consumed with answering my research questions. Then, after school I went to work. This issue was solved when we had our four snow days, and you gave us an extension (thank you!).

To explore more in-depth about Pre-War propaganda in Germany and create my project, I had to answer the following questions: Who made German propaganda? Who did German

propaganda target? What did German propaganda say and look like? Where was German propaganda found? How successful was German propaganda?

### **Research Findings:**

German propaganda was created by a Nazi government agency: the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. More specifically, a famous artist named Hans Schweitzer (or Mjolnir) played a large part in the creation of German propaganda. German propaganda was made to reinforce Nazism ideology.

They created propaganda to bring in support from the Germans to put Hitler into power and eliminate the Nazi party's enemies: Jews, Romani, Bolsheviks, Gypsies, Homosexuals, and the Allies from World War I and the Treaty of Versailles (The main countries being Great Britain, Russia, and France). So, German propaganda targeted German civilians, encouraging them to target their enemies. German propaganda said many bold phrases in German to stick out to the public.

I researched many propaganda poster designs. In the three Mjolnir posters I chose to replicate, they said, "Garanten deutscher wehrkraft!" ("The guarantee of the German army's strength") and there was a German soldier standing next to an S.A. soldier (to ensure that the country will be triumphant and safe in Hitler's hands), "Unsere letzte hoffnung: Hitler." ("Our last hope: Hitler") Hitler was thought to be the person to lift the country out of the Great Depression, and "Der ewige Jude" ("The Eternal Jew") This picture depicts Jews as disheveled, greedy, slave-driving communists, and how they should be looked down upon. These 3 posters had themes that were commonly seen throughout many German Pre-War propaganda posters. (Strong German armies, Hitler being Germany's savior, and the criticizing of Jews, gypsies, etc.)

German propaganda was found everywhere. Propaganda was mostly found in written form: newspapers, leaflets, posters, books, films, billboards, and factory newspapers. As stated before, it was illegal to use walls, building facades, and street surfaces, unless it was permitted. "To see with the eyes of the masses" was the key to an effective propaganda campaign. However, propaganda to support the Nazi regime was also displayed during speeches, marches, and cultural gatherings.

In the end, German propaganda was extremely successful. It achieved all of the Nazi party's goals. Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany in thanks to President Paul Von Hindenburg, and the Nazi's enemies became all of Germany's enemies. In 1935, the Anti-Semitic Nuremberg laws were introduced, providing a distinction between "Aryan" and "Non-Aryan" people (the Jews, Romanians, homosexuals, etc.). Then, Germany's hatred of these outsiders grew, and as one thing led to another, it grew into genocide of millions of innocent people.

All of my research was very beneficial to my 3-D project. I decided to focus on written propaganda, posters. Posters were placed in German window shops (as well as in factories and bulletin boards), which ensured that they wouldn't be torn off from any opposing parties. In the Pre-War era, many buildings were made of brick. So, I purchased plexi-glass and bordered it with wrapped foam bricks that were spray-painted red, to imitate a shop window.

I then decided to attach 6 propaganda posters: 3 being Mjolnir replicas, and 3 being my own design, based on the information I found. The 3 replicas have been previously described in my research findings. I did attach a black border around them so they could be identifiable from my designed posters. I chose the propaganda posters that I wanted to replicate while researching. I chose them by considering which ones seemed to have the strongest message, and if they would still look decent while being replicated in Sharpie. I used glossy paper, so Sharpie was the only medium that would stay on.

The three propaganda posters that I designed myself are bordered in red. The first poster I created targeted the Jews. It says, "Gegen die Feinde," which means "Stand against the enemies." I drew the Hebrew symbol and a scary, red-eyed Jew, to display how "evil" they were. The next poster I created says, "Hail Hitler." It has a sketch of Hitler with rays coming from him, showing his God-like greatness. I also put the Nazi symbol, showing the party that's enforcing the propaganda. The third piece says, "Hitler kann helfen auch sie!" In English, this means, "Hitler can help you too!" The picture is a happy couple with a nice, big house. They've survived the Great Depression and could never be better. Hitler wanted to advertise how he was going to help Germany in this state of tragedy. I used bright colors and a bold German statement because it would grab the passerby's attention. The only part of my project that is not absorbed with research information would be the 2 signs saying the project's title: "Propaganda of Pre-War Germany."

## **Reflections**

In conclusion of this project, I've learned a lot. In my opinion, the most questionable part of the Holocaust was why nobody bothered to stop it until it was too late. My project solidified this question by showing how small the Nazis really started-just a simple poster. With these propaganda posters, speeches, etc., the Nazis got Germany wrapped around their finger. They had the entire country against The Allies and "Non-Aryans." It didn't seem wrong to be against them, since the entire country was. For example, in *Night*, Eliezer's family and the other Jews slowly but surely got their rights taken away. Then, they got tricked into leaving their comforting homes and soon enough, people were being sentenced to a fire-burning death or a starving, cold life where all hope was lost. Everything started off seeming so insignificant; no one thought all of these murders would be the outcome. The Holocaust was a terrible event in history, and unfortunately everything was planned in the most genius way. No one even suspected the planned doom.

When I look at the Holocaust, humanity disgusts me. How can Hitler and his regime knowingly lead an entire country down a path resulting in six million deaths? How can they strategize to trick all of Germany? It's a shame that some people are so horrid. However, I do still have hope for humanity. I believe there's still good people in the world, for many people did not realize what they were doing was wrong until it was already done. The people of Germany, including the Jews, homosexuals, etc., were blind to what was going to occur. My final view on humanity is that there is a good and bad side to everyone; it's just a shame that some people, like Hitler, are too ignorant to choose the right side. I'm glad to have done this project; I've fulfilled all of the objectives I aimed to learn. I now know everything there is to know about the Pre-War propaganda of Germany.

#### **Works Cited:**

- <http://longstreet.typepad.com/thesciencebookstore/2010/01/nazi-propaganda-the-british-threat-to-germany-prewar-1939.html>
- <http://totallyhistory.com/us-history/world-war-ii/>
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazi\\_propaganda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazi_propaganda)
- <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005202>
- [http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/holocaust/resource\\_center/item.asp?GATE=Z&list\\_type=2-6&TYPE\\_ID=4&TOTAL=Y&pn=2&title](http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/holocaust/resource_center/item.asp?GATE=Z&list_type=2-6&TYPE_ID=4&TOTAL=Y&pn=2&title)
- <http://www.slideshare.net/Jessdowns/german-propaganda-posters-presentation>
- <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/stark.htm>