**Lecture Notes**

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**NAZI PROPAGANDA**

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The following notes were taken during a lecture on Nazi Propaganda. They are in the order as presented during the lecture and may not include every topic covered, or the exact wordiing of the lecturer.

I. The Nazi "National Community"

A. The Nazis wanted to create a national community using inclusion and exclusion,

promoted through propaganda.

1. Inclusion essentially meant Germans, who received positive measures:

Example: Strength through Joy program

a. Families were given vacations that were subsidized by the government.

2. Exclusion were those who didn't belong, who received negative measures

B. Around 1933, Jews were 3/4th of 1% of the the European population-with Eastern

Europe having the highest population (see map of European Jewish population

on the USHMM website, circa 1933).

C. In 1933, when Hitler was appointment Chancellor, the Reich Ministry of Public

Enlightenment and propaganda was led by Joseph Goebbels.

1. Goebbels was already a propagandist; upon becoming the Minister for

Public Enlightenment, he included propaganda in the arts, books,

film, music, theater, the press, education, and the radio.

There are several myths about Nazi Propaganda. The following list includes the myth, with evidence or a statement that contradicts it.

II. Myths about Nazi Propaganda

A. Propaganda in general, is a lie

1. Not always-it is often a distorted fact.

B. Propaganda brainwashes people

1. The most effective propaganda is based upon beliefs that people already have, not new ideas.

2. It often builds upon existing beliefs.

C. All culture was propaganda-anything from the Nazis was propaganda

1. Goebbels knew there were limits

2. Film became an important outlet-but only 14% was overtly propaganda

3. Entertainment was considered important in general-but not usually

all propaganda

D. All of Germany listened to the Fuhrer with the "people's radio."

1. By 1939, 70% (not 100%) of houses had a radio.

2. Radio shows were often just for entertainment

III. What was Propaganda then during this time?

A. Portrayal of the Jews as a "scourge" on the nation-responsible for all past and

present ills-and part of a world conspiracy

B. Nazis used these ideas but did not create either religious nor racial Antisemitism

C. Nazis built on them-in order to turn Jews into SOCIAL OUTSIDERS (excluded) in

the National Community.

1. Jews didn't "have a place" in community, according to the Nazis.

2 Propaganda was focused on immigration-the "J" on the passport made it

harder

III. Themes of Propaganda

A. Der Sturmer newspaper

1. 1934 edition showcased "Blood Libel," or the "Jewish Conspiracy against

Non-Jewish humanity revealed."

2. Blood libel was a 12th century idea coming up again in the 1930's.

3. Phrase "The Jews are our misfortune" appears across the bottom of every

paper.

B. Star of David

1. Jewish stores were marked with a Star of David with a big "Jude" on the

store

2. Also the war time pamphlet and phrase emerged: " when you see this

symbol..."

3. In 1941 the the star became mandatory for everyone over the age of 6 in

German held areas.

4. The stars effectively made the **Jews themselves a form of propaganda.**

c. Films

1. Famous "Jud Suss," film, originally written by a German Jew- Goebbels

twisted it to reflect greed, manipulation, arrogance, lusting, power,

and treacherous character-and those viewing it were expected to

to accept it as the historical teaching of the Jews.

2. When it opened, 20 million in Germany saw it -20 million more in other countries occupied by Germany-numbers double by the end of the war.

IV. Hitler Myths

A. Joseph Goebbels proclaimed that his portrayal of Hitler in propaganda was his

best accomplishment.

B. Goebbels used the 19th century, fiercely nationalistic ideal of the "heroic leader"

1. People longed for this leader, especially in the Nazi party as Hitler became

the undisputed leader.

2. By the 1930's, this idea was transferred to the general public, and in 1933

Hitler was appointed chancellor.

3. Hitler became the heroic leader and got credit for EVERYTHING that went

well in Germany-It was Hitler's "genius" that saved them.

C. Elements of the myth:

1. He has restored law and order

a. Hitler attacked his political enemies, such as the communists,

who were arrested and sent to Dachau-to RESTORE ORDER. This

was considered legal.

b. The Reichstag building burned to the ground-President allows the

Reichstag Fire Decree and Enabling Act to restore order.

2. Economic Miracle

a. Hitler's leadership solved economic problems-which was most likely

the work of his economic minister

b. By 1936, Germany had 0% unemployment -of course due, in large

part, to militarization (League of Nations? What League of

Nations?!)

3. Foreign Policy

a. Foreign policy consisted of ANYTHING TO GET RID OF TREATY OF

VERSAILLES!

b. Militarization of the Rhineland was a huge success-and credited to

Hitler

c. 1936, Germany pulls out of the League of Nations

d. 1938- The Anschluss.. Annexation of Austria by Germany

e. Propaganda films like 1934 "Triumph of the Will (Leni Riefstahl) and

"Yesterday and Today" in 1938- how great Germany was due to

Hitler.

4. Military victory

a. War victories of 1939-1941 were showcased until they stopped

coming in the latter half of the war-and the myth was derailed.

b. Myths #1 and #2 were preserved after the war for awhile.