

A THOUSAND WORDS: THEMES AND TRENDS IN HOME FRONT POSTER
PROPAGANDA OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

A Thesis

by

CHRISTOPHER C. THOMAS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

May 2007

Major Subject: History

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ABSTRACT

A Thousand Words: Themes and Trends in Home Front Poster

Propaganda of the Second World War. (May 2007)

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Poster propaganda is one of the most memorable and enduring legacies of the Second World War. These artistic creations were strongly influenced by social and cultural paradigms as well as corresponding military events. Previous scholarship on propaganda has largely overlooked the role of posters and propaganda efforts on the home front, a gap that this study seeks to fill. The purpose of this study is to compare home front posters produced by the major nations involved in the European theatre and discern any trends or patterns that have a larger significance. Each poster in the sample was arranged chronologically by country. The area of emphasis (recruiting, production, etc.) and appeal (duty, guilt, fear, hate, etc.) for each poster was then recorded and analyzed.

The analyses revealed several significant trends and patterns. The most important of these is that posters, regardless of which country produced them, tended to appeal to negative emotions (hate, fear, etc.) when the war was going badly and positive emotions (patriotism, duty, etc.) when the war was being won. Even when the areas of emphasis remained the same, the images, rhetoric and overall emotional tone of posters

changed depending on the corresponding war situation. In other words, what a government said was not always as important as how they said it. This trend is equally significant today. Although posters have disappeared as a major propaganda tool, nations still fight wars and still carry out propaganda campaigns, therefore, if relationship between propaganda and the conduct of war presented in this study is applied to modern campaigns it provides the public with information that propaganda intends to keep secret: the truth about the war. Previous scholarship has mentioned this connection between propaganda methods and military operations, but as previously mentioned, these studies neglect both the home front and the poster, choosing to focus on propaganda directed at the enemy. Other patterns, such as the use of humor and religion in posters, are briefly touched on and provide possible areas for future research.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

*Even the strongest powers of reasoning are capable of being at the mercy of emotions*¹
-Michael Balfour

In the early months of the Second World War, Germany's propaganda machine printed millions of posters assuring the people of an inevitable German victory. By the close of 1942 and the beginning of 1943, the posters assuring Germany of certain victory were replaced by posters that declared, "Victory at any cost!" By the end of 1944 these posters were again replaced by others that warned, "Victory or Bolshevism." The German propaganda campaign, like the German war effort, had gone from certainty, through struggle, finally ending in desperation and defeat.

Posters produced by the Allies followed a similar, though flipped pattern. Early Soviet Union posters exhorted the people to kill, destroy and annihilate the Germans. At the end of the war Soviet posters were filled with smiling faces and positive slogans. The same pattern held true for the United States and Great Britain. This trend illustrates an important connection between the rhetoric and imagery of poster propaganda, and the conduct of the war. Propaganda, though intended to manipulate public opinion, stir emotion and indoctrinate the viewer, at the same time inadvertently conveyed the realities about the conduct of the war.

This thesis follows the style of the *The American Historical Review*.

¹ Michael Balfour, *Propaganda in War, 1939-1945: Organizations, Policies and Publics in Britain and Germany* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 421.

Richard Taylor asserted that the purpose of propaganda is to fill the void between the government and the people.² It sought to bring the will of the people into line with the will of the government, reversing the belief that the government exists to fulfill the will of the people. British artist Cyril Kenneth Bird (who produced World War II posters under the pen name Fougasse) asserted that

the aim of propaganda posters was to overcome three obstacles: first, a general aversion to reading any notice of any sort; second, a general disinclination to believe that any notice, even if it was read, could possibly be addressed to oneself; third, a general unwillingness, even so, to remember the message long enough to do anything about it.³

The best form of propaganda before the advent of television was the poster. No other medium could reach out to passers-by, grab them, hold their attention, communicate dozens of thoughts (sometimes in less than five words), appeal to their deepest, heartfelt emotions, and do it in less than ten seconds. Speeches and broadcasts might be forgotten within a matter of hours, newspapers were replaced daily and involved time and effort to read. Posters, on the other hand, were simple, constant, catching, and could be digested by anyone, literate or not. Fundamentally, propaganda was primarily targeted at those on the lower rungs of the social ladder. Even in democracies such as America, where the government placed more faith in the people, government officials made comments that “it would be wonderful indeed if the psychological war could be fought on an

² Richard Taylor, “Goebbels and the Function of Propaganda.” in *Nazi Propaganda: The Power and the Limitations*, ed. David Welch (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble, 1983).

³ Kenneth Rendall, *A Selection from the Exhibition with Weapons and Wits: Propaganda and Psychological Warfare in World War II* (Wellesley, MA: Overlord Press, 1992), 12.

intellectual basis, if the American people who will win or lose this war were so educated and conditioned that we could bring them understanding on the terms we all prefer.

But...they unfortunately are not so educated.”⁴

In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler spelled out the necessary conditions that propaganda must meet in order to be successful. First, he asserted that propaganda caters to the largely uneducated masses, not the intellectuals. The common citizen is more likely to act, or rather react, based on emotion. Propaganda, therefore, had to appeal to the deepest emotions of the typical citizen. It had to be simple and contain as few words as possible because the average working-class individual was not capable of comprehending long, logic-based arguments.⁵ To succeed propaganda had to be repeated over and over.⁶ Hitler was correct when he stated that propaganda, in the hands of an expert, is indeed a frightful weapon.⁷ Lenin, like Hitler, also believed the masses were incapable of understanding their own interests without help and advocated the use of propaganda.⁸

Posters are the most ideal form of propaganda because their messages can be communicated to anyone and everyone. Additionally, their permanence and relative inexpensive production costs made them economical propaganda tools. Movie-goers have to buy a ticket, readers had to purchase books and newspapers, and radios must be bought to hear broadcasts. Posters, on the other hand, are available to the public for free.

⁴ As quoted in William Bird and Harry Rubenstein, *Produce for Victory: World War II Posters on the American Home Front* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 31.

⁵ Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), 179-181.

⁶ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 185.

⁷ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 179.

⁸ Kenez, *Birth of the Propaganda State*, 6.

This study is an analysis of the propaganda posters of the four major nations involved in the European Theatre of Operations during the Second World War. It is not concerned so much with the people and organizations involved in the printing and distribution of posters, although by necessity these subjects are touched on briefly. By sampling the vast oceans of posters generated by these nations and examining them chronologically, this study identifies general themes and trends as well as those that are unique to the country that produced them. Do totalitarian and democratic states have similar strategies and emphases as other totalitarian and democratic states? Can themes and trends be drawn along Axis/Allied lines? Why did Britain and the United States produce fewer negatively-themed posters than Germany or the Soviet Union? This study is as much about how culture and the war affected propaganda posters as it about how propaganda posters affected culture and the war.

There already exists a substantial number of books and articles on the creation and use of propaganda, especially in the Second World War, but most of these works focus on the administrators and organizations of propaganda and focus on a single nation rather than a comparison of several. Additionally, and most importantly in terms of this study, all previous scholarship on propaganda is concerned with propaganda “over there,” that is to say, propaganda used against the enemy. These books address the function and effectiveness of propaganda to undermine enemy morale and confuse enemy intelligence. By analyzing propaganda as an offensive weapon they tend to focus on the leaflet and the radio broadcast. By ignoring the home front and the poster, scholars have neglected half of the subject.

One of the earliest works on propaganda is Wallace Carroll's *Persuade or Perish*. Carroll, who served in the London office of the United States Office of War Information (OWI) during the war, critically reflected on the failure of government agencies to work together efficiently and effectively to use propaganda as a weapon against the enemy. Charles Cruickshank likewise does the same for the British propaganda machine in *The Fourth Arm*. By failing to place propaganda under one department the British Government wasted valuable time and resources through inter-departmental rivalries. It is surprising that Cruickshank devotes such little attention to home front propaganda when his chapter on propaganda policy quotes the British Ministry of Information (MOI) stating that "the purpose of psychological warfare was to destroy the moral force of the enemy's cause, and to enforce conviction in the righteousness of the allies cause."⁹

Charles Roetter, writing around the same time as Cruickshank, also focuses on the use of propaganda as a weapon against the enemy and neglects the use of propaganda on the home front. He does, however, challenge both Carroll and Cruickshank's argument that dividing propaganda between departments was foolish, but rather it made propaganda more effective. The diversity made the bureaucracy that much more chaotic, but in bringing together more departments, organizations, and most importantly, different people, American and British propaganda was more successful because it was more in touch with society. This study agrees with and confirms Roetter's conclusion on diversity, but still must shake a finger at Roetter for leaving out the home front.

⁹ Charles Cruickshank, *The Fourth Arm: Psychological Warfare, 1938-1945* (London: Davis Poynter, 1977), 47.

There are a few older books that are limited comparative studies. One of the foundational works is Michael Balfour's *Propaganda in Warfare, 1939-1945*. His research is a comparative study of propaganda in Germany and Britain and focuses on the relationship between propaganda and government policy. Although he devotes a chapter to printed materials, posters are passed over to make room for discussion about leaflets and newspapers. The book devotes some attention to the war at home, but all of Balfour's conclusions are directed toward propaganda as a weapon against the enemy. He agrees with Roetter that only through departmental coordination, rather than autonomy, can propaganda be efficient and effective.

Although the majority of books on propaganda study Great Britain or Germany, the United States is not forgotten. Allan Winkler's work, *Politics of Propaganda* traces the creation and development of the OWI and devotes a lengthy chapter to "propaganda at home." Winkler, along with Balfour and Roetter, addresses the unity vs. autonomy argument, stressing the American propagandist's dilemma that the pursuit of unity in the war effort through propaganda might come at the expense of political diversity.¹⁰ But, along with the other books that study propaganda, Winkler's work is limited to one country, and although the topic of the war at home receives more attention, posters continue to be pushed aside. Winkler's chapter on propaganda at home contains lengthy discussion of movies, radio and newspapers, but posters are never mentioned.

Recently, the subject of propaganda at home has received more attention.

Almost all books on propaganda published before 1989 focus on the use of propaganda

¹⁰ Allan Winkler, *Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 38.

in foreign settings because of the necessities of the Cold War. Being a war of ideologies and not bullets, it makes sense that scholars focus on propaganda policies and tactics that were useful in persuading “the enemy.” By even acknowledging the use of propaganda at home, scholars and politicians risked undermining their own position. Why would the people at home need to be propagandized if their ideology was the correct one? Now that the Cold War is over it is admissible to speak of propaganda at home, or to include the Soviet Union in discussions about propaganda; however, despite the changes in world politics, books on propaganda continue to focus on one or two countries and to ignore the only major form of propaganda of which many primary sources are still in existence today in abundance: posters.

In 1995, Anthony Osley published a brief, popular history of British propaganda during the Second World War. The book, *Persuading the People*, devoted its pages to the subject of propaganda on the home front, but although focusing on the home front, only mentioned posters in passing and spent the bulk of its text discussing newspapers, pamphlets and radio broadcasts.

Victoria Bonnell’s more recent study of Soviet political posters under Lenin and Stalin takes a very similar approach as the present study. She studied home front posters and analyzed several specific images over time to see how their appearance and usage changed. Fortunately her work covered a much broader time period (from the Russian Revolution to the end of the Second World War) and focused on different images and themes than the current study. Her work shows the growing attention toward

propaganda at home and makes use of posters as primary documents, but like previous scholars, focuses on one country.

There are only two published books that make a comparative study of propaganda, include the home front, and utilize posters. Anthony Rhodes's, *Propaganda: The Art of Persuasion in World War II*, and Zbynek Zeman's, *Selling the War: Art and Propaganda in World War II*. Rhodes's work covers a wide range of propaganda tools (printed materials, radio and film) rather than focus on posters in particular. Zeman analyzes poster themes but does so "irrespective of their country of origin" and also irrespective of chronology.¹¹

The purpose of this work is first to provide a comparative study of home front propaganda posters by looking at individual countries and the way their poster propaganda changed over time and then to analyze what caused these changes. The focus of this study is posters because they have been neglected for so long and because visual imagery is much more powerful and has a longer lasting impact than written or spoken words. Nearly every American is familiar with James Montgomery Flagg's image of Uncle Sam, pointing at the viewer over the caption "I want YOU" (a poster which came from the First World War and reused in the second). Churchill's "bulldog" face is remembered because it was put into so many British posters. Lastly, nothing will bring a hush to a crowded lecture hall faster than drawing a swastika on the blackboard. Images have lasting impact, the images of propaganda posters inspired and were inspired by emotion, thus they are the focus for this study.

¹¹ Zbynek Zeman, *Selling the War: Art and Propaganda in World War II* (New York: Exeter Books, 1982), 28.

One topic that many previous scholars have noted, and that this study explores, is the correlation between home front propaganda and military operations. Governments wrestled with how much information the people should be given. Do we tell them about our defeats? Will that strengthen resolve (as it did for the Americans after Pearl Harbor) or foster defeatism (as it did for the Germans after Stalingrad)? To what degree should the truth be twisted or withheld? What aspects of the war should be emphasized and will emphasizing one area betray the truth about another? The German winter clothing drive during the winter of 1942-43, for example, showed that all Germans were willing to sacrifice for the army and were united in the war effort, but it also hinted at the incompetence of the government and the military to adequately plan ahead. The relationship between the conduct of the war and home front propaganda campaigns provides the most important discovery of this study, that when the war was being won posters were positive in language and image. When the war was going badly images and language became much more negative. Thus in several of the chapters it will be necessary to discuss in some detail military planning and execution so that the themes of posters produced at the same time can be placed in their proper context.

Before going further it is necessary to say a few words about methodology. Due to the sheer volume of available material (the Hoover Institution at Stanford alone holds over 30,000 posters on microfilm), a brief description of how the data were collected and analyzed is in order. The sample was collected from previously published works on propaganda, online archives such as the Hoover Institution (which provides a smaller online collection), Northwestern University's collection of American posters, and the

Calvin College Nazi Propaganda Archive, as well as the catalogs of respectable antique poster dealers. Once collected, the samples were divided by country and placed in chronological order. Each poster was then categorized and analyzed.

Propaganda has already been subjected to numerous classifications. Some pertain to its production origins, some to its characteristics and others to its purposes. This study divides posters into two general camps depending on the types of emotion that the poster was intended to generate. The emotional nature of propaganda posters makes it possible to classify them on a simple, diametric scale; a poster seeks to stir up either positive or negative emotions in the viewer.

Those posters that appealed to the viewer's sense of duty, love of country, patriotism, tradition and love of family are classified as positive propaganda. Posters that incite feelings of guilt, fear and hatred are classified as negative. Robert Herzstein, in his book on Nazi propaganda, *The War that Hitler Won*, also uses a diametric scale and argued that posters appealed to only one of two emotions: hatred and idealism.¹² Although he is correct in asserting that propaganda, no matter who produced it, appealed to positive or negative emotion, his classification of propaganda as fostering hatred or idealism is not quite comprehensive. Take "fear" for example; fear is a common poster theme that is obviously not idealistic and, although related to hatred, is not equal to hatred. One can fear without hating, and one can hate without fear. If a diametric scale is to be used, it must be broad; hence, the general distinctions are limited to positive and negative.

¹² See Robert Herzstein, *The War that Hitler Won: The Most Infamous Propaganda Campaign in History* (New York: Putnam, 1978).

David Welch asserts that propaganda is inherently neutral because it can be used either for good or evil.¹³ This assertion, however, is incorrect because it only applies to the possibilities of propaganda's usage, not the neutrality of propaganda itself. Water is inherently neutral because it is neither acidic nor basic unless acted on by an outside influence. Propaganda, on the other hand, does not exist naturally and out of necessity involves human influence. Propaganda itself is no more neutral than dynamite, which can be used to aid the construction of railroads or to build military explosive devices. Thus, the most general umbrella under which poster propaganda can be classified is still the positive/negative scale.

Although this diametric scale could be applied to other forms of propaganda, it is especially applicable to posters. Radio broadcasts, movies and books can contain both positive and negative aspects. Posters, due to their simplistic nature, can only really appeal to one emotion. A late war poster by one of the Third Reich's most famous propaganda artists, Hans Schweitzer (writing under the pen name Mjöltnir) demonstrates the difficulty for propaganda posters to play both sides. Under the caption "Victory or Bolshevism" (fig. A1) Mjöltnir displays two different scenes. On the left under the word "Victory" is a picture of a happy mother and child bathed in glorious light. On the right side is a crowd of dirty, despairing, deformed people wearing caps embroidered with a red star. This poster is not both positive and negative. It does not appeal to love of family while at the same time arousing contempt for Bolsheviks and Jews. It is overwhelmingly negative because its overall message plays on the viewers' love of

¹³ David Welch, ed. *Nazi Propaganda: The Power and the Limitations* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble, 1983).

family and frightens them with what will happen if Bolshevism takes over. No matter what the viewers feel initially, they will undoubtedly leave with negative thoughts.

When analyzing posters it is essential to do so in their respective context, rather than from an omniscient third person's perspective. Because propaganda posters were produced for the purpose of stirring the emotions of the masses, viewing them from the standpoint of the common citizen (as opposed to an scholar or politician) is important in learning the messages they conveyed. Take, for example, a poster produced by Germany for occupied Holland late in the war. It depicts a flight of B-17 bombers, except that the fuselages have been replaced with coffins. The caption reads, "Flying Fortress? Flying Coffins!" (fig. A2) Upon first glance an observer might argue that the poster was intended to frighten U.S. aircrews from flying sorties over Europe; however, the poster was written in Dutch, not English. Furthermore, U.S. airmen never set foot on European soil (at least not if they could help it) and would have had little, if any, opportunity to see the poster. The poster was not a threat to Allied airmen; it was an attempt to comfort and make the people of Holland view their conquerors and former enemies as guardians and protectors. The message was not "We will shoot *you* down"; the message was, "We will shoot *them* down. *Support us.*" In studying posters it is important to view them in their original context and without the benefit of hindsight.

Therefore, to begin the analysis, each poster was first classified as either positive or negative. Next, the specific images and figures of the poster were recorded. Thus, I was able not only to ascertain the overall emotional trends of posters during a given year, but I was also able to analyze what aspects of the war were being emphasized at a

given time (production, military enlistment, secrecy, role of women, etc.) and whether the government appealed to positive or negative emotions to stir the public to take action in those areas.

The results and analysis are contained in the chapters that follow. The analysis reveals that each country shared a common trend while at the same time many had a unique characteristic setting it apart from the others. The theme that was shared by all the nations studied involved the shift between predominantly positive and negative posters depending on the overall war situation. In other words, when the war was being won the nation relied on positive images and slogans, regardless of the posters' particular topic. When the war went against a nation the majority of posters were negative in nature. The year 1942 witnessed a great shift in posters for all nations involved. During 1942, the Allies won some of their greatest victories, while the Axis suffered some of their worst defeats. Many previous scholars have noted the important correlation between physical and psychological warfare efforts, but their eyes were fixed on propaganda abroad rather than at home. They concentrated on the text of American leaflets dropped over Germany following the Normandy invasion, but neglected the posters printed at home in Britain during the Blitz or in the Soviet Union and Germany during and after Stalingrad. By comparing posters across national boundaries in their thematic and chronological context we can substantially add to the knowledge of propaganda at home and glean lessons from the comparison of the various countries involved.

CHAPTER II

NAZI GERMANY

Propaganda was one of the Nazis' most potent weapons. It was a means to an end, a vehicle by which the Nazi Party could steer public opinion, and Hitler understood this.¹⁴ According to Hitler, the goal of propaganda was garnering support for the struggle, whether it is economic, political or military. Learning from the British in the First World War, Hitler used propaganda to mobilize the defeated and demoralized German nation into a powerful, though ideologically skewed, force.¹⁵

Much has been written on the Nazi propaganda machine. Zbynek Zeman states that Nazi propaganda made possible the creation and sustention of an empire that lacked an ideological foundation.¹⁶ Robert Herzstein argues that Hitler's propaganda campaign was his most successful undertaking because even when Germans saw inevitable defeat, they continued to fight.¹⁷ Ian Kershaw, contradicting Herzstein's argument, suggests that Nazi propaganda was designed to break down the morals and values of society and rebuild Germany as a "fighting society," but that it failed because the German public still preferred peace to war, even when the war was going in their

¹⁴ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 177.

¹⁵ According to Zbynek Zeman, one of the biggest lessons learned from the British was the "Your country needs you!" appeal. As will be seen, Germany played the personal accountability card often.

¹⁶ See Zbynek Zeman, *Nazi Propaganda* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

¹⁷ See Herzstein, *The War that Hitler Won*.

favor. He argues that Germany continued to fight on at the end of the war due to coercion and survival instinct rather than propaganda indoctrination.¹⁸

Whether the German propaganda campaign succeeded or failed deserves further attention. This study, unfortunately, does not provide the answer. But whether propaganda was successful or not it was an important aspect of the Third Reich and demonstrated the pattern that propaganda tended to be positive when things were going well for Germany and became more negative once the war turned against them. Without any ideological basis from the start, the Nazi party had to create one through propaganda. Nazi Germany was created and sustained through propaganda.

A survey of the posters produced by the Nazi propaganda machine reveals that the regime can be split into four periods of roughly three-years each. The years 1933 to 1935 are the time of establishment and consolidation where Hitler, newly appointed Chancellor, solidified his rule by subduing his opponents and gaining the trust and support of the populace. From 1936 to 1939 are the years of conditioning and preparation for war. Having won over the German people, Hitler began to rebuild the nation's industry and military as it prepared for war. The years 1940-1942 comprise the period of diminishing success: France, the Low Countries and parts of Scandinavia fell to Germany, but the Luftwaffe lost the Battle of Britain, the Wehrmacht was first halted and eventually pushed back by the Russians at Stalingrad. Finally, on 11 December 1941, the Germans declared war on the United States providing yet another formidable opponent for the Reich. The final phase took place from 1943 to 1945 and witnessed

¹⁸ Ian Kershaw, "How Effective was Nazi Propaganda?" in *Nazi Propaganda: The Power and the Limitations*, ed. David Welch (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble, 1983).

full mobilization, total war, and the last attempts at resisting collapse. Hitler wanted to avoid total war at the outset because it interfered with his ideal German society (Aryan women were supposed to be at home raising Aryan children, not working in factories). A similar pattern appeared in the posters of the occupied countries as the Nazis attempted to pacify, motivate and defend the gains of the early war years.

Nearly every single poster produced during the first three years of Nazi rule (1933-1936) can be classified as positive propaganda. People in the midst of social and economic turmoil want reassurance, comfort, and at the very least, food and clothing. It comes as no surprise, then, that the theme most often referred to in early Nazi posters is that of family and welfare. Posters advertised the *Winterhilfswerk* (Winter Aid) and the *Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt* (NSV-National Socialist People's Charity), organizations that claimed to ensure that no German went without the necessities of life. One poster depicts an anonymous hand reaching out to a poor yet proud German mother and her daughter wrapped in ragged clothes. The poster reads, "No one shall go hungry! No one shall go cold!" Another poster shows another open hand dropping a few coins under the caption, "Don't spend, Sacrifice." The NSV and the *Winterhilfswerk* were not hollow programs. By the end of the decade they had fed, clothed and in other ways aided tens of thousands of needy Germans. By the end of 1934, almost four hundred thousand widows, orphans and elderly people were receiving pensions from the government.¹⁹ The Nazis also managed to reduce unemployment. By 1935 unemployment had been reduced from 4.8 to 2.1 million people. Additionally,

¹⁹ *World Almanac and Book of Facts* (New York: New York World Press Publishing Co., 1934) s.v. Germany.

government relief expenditures had been cut in half and the gross national product increased by almost twenty-five percent.²⁰

The programs appeared successful enough that statistics like those just mentioned were used in posters of the 1936 referendum to demonstrate to the people what Hitler had done for them. Other posters depicted large, happy families, nursing mothers, and smiling children. “Adolf Hitler’s Youth Attend Community Schools” (fig. A3) was the caption of one of the many posters portraying a laughing or smiling Hitler, surrounded by crowds of happy children. To a family with an unemployed father and hungry children these posters brought the promise of a new beginning, and they did not go unnoticed by an enthusiastically supportive population.²¹

The establishment and consolidation phase did not simply focus on reaching down to uplift, but also reaching out to push forward. In 1933 the *Kraft durch Freude* (KdF- Strength through Joy) program was established to provide vacations and other benefits to workers in lieu of offering pay raises. Although KdF posters were more prevalent in the 1936-1939 era due to the stepping up of production and the campaign for the *Volkswagen*, they made their debut in the early stages of the regime because it gave the masses confidence in their new government. The first KdF vacation trains ran in 1934, allowing workers to see the world outside of Germany, something they never

²⁰ See *World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1936* and R.J. Overy, *The Penguin Historical Atlas of the Third Reich* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996).

²¹ Milton Mayer, *They Thought They Were Free* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955). Mayer discusses the various reasons why ten men from different backgrounds joined the Nazi Party. One man mentioned that under the democratic Weimar Republic he had no job while the Nazis promised, and delivered, employment to the unemployed.

would have been able to afford on their own.²² How can a government afford to give away, in essence, vacations to thousands of families unless it could pay for them? How could it afford to pay for them unless the government had managed to pull out of the Depression? The obvious answer, at least in workers' minds, was that the Nazis really could deliver what they had promised. By providing all these programs to the public, Hitler and the Nazis made themselves appear as the saviors of Germany. In fact, the money for these programs came from deficit spending and the dues that were required from members of every social organization

Until the Treaty of Versailles the German people had a heritage of which they were understandably proud. The War Guilt Clause, combined with the spreading *Dolchsloss* rumors after World War One, robbed the Germans of their pride and embittered them towards both the Weimar Republic and everything associated with it. The second most common theme in the establishment and consolidation phase was the appeal to tradition and the longing for better days. By appealing to the German sense of tradition, Hitler bridged pre-war Germany with post 1933 promises of prosperity. Nearly all the 1933 election posters that displayed a picture of Hitler also contained a picture of former Field Marshall Paul von Hindenburg. It is true that in 1933, Hindenburg was the President of the unpopular Weimar Republic, but Hitler associated himself with "Hindenburg, the general of the glorious German Army," rather than "Hindenburg, the Weimar President." One famous poster was captioned, "The Marshal and the Corporal: Fight with us for freedom and equality."

²² Jeremy Noakes and Geoffrey Pridham, *Nazism 1919-1945: A Documentary Reader* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1983), 349.

The most striking of the tradition-based posters depicts Hitler, clad in shining armor and sitting resolutely astride his horse (curiously it is black, not white). In his right hand he carries the Nazi flag, connecting the pride and history of the Teutonic Knights and Saint Michael to the Nazi regime.²³ Ironically, the Russian government also used the Teutonic Knights in their own propaganda campaign before and during the Second World War, focusing on the Alexander Nevsky's defeat of the knights in 1242. Despite the flaws of appealing to the Teutonic tradition, the posters' goal was to stir the chivalrous, militaristic emotions of the German masses, not educate them in 13th century German history. Many of the remaining posters link the Nazis to World War One, the last time Germany was a great and powerful nation.

With all the emphasis on family and welfare, it should not be surprising that the least-often used theme among posters of the establishment era deal with the military. The memories of World War One were still too close. What few posters do make reference to militaristic organizations are mostly concerned with the *Sturm Abteilung* (Hitler's Brown Shirts) or the National Socialist Veterans Association, a charitable organization for World War One veterans. What is important, however, is the sizeable number of posters that appealed to the youth of Germany. Different posters encouraged boys and girls of various ages to associate themselves with the Nazis. Young children were encouraged to attend community schools while the posters directed at older youth prompted them to join the *Hitlerjugend* (HJ-Hitler Youth). In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler

²³ The tradition of the Teutonic Knights is a favored theme of the Nazis. The black cross on a white background was the official mark on German military vehicles and aircraft. As a warrior culture with a strong ideological basis, the Knights were a perfect folk tradition to tie to Nazism.

speaks of the importance of educating the youth from childhood, through adolescence, until boys were old enough to join the army and girls were old enough to become mothers.²⁴ Hitler's focus on youth demonstrated foresight; he was planning for war and knew that the soldiers of that war were, at the present, in their early or mid teens. These posters foreshadowed the inevitable shift in the thematic dominance of posters from domestic programs and services toward militaristic ones.

Even though the Third Reich was founded on anti-Semitism, very few posters of this first phase devoted any attention to Jews or Bolshevism. Of all the posters of the establishment phase surveyed, only three made any reference to the issue. Two of the posters depicted the Jews as rather silly looking, cartoon-like figures being swept out of the country with a swastika-marked broom. These early characters were a far cry from the later posters that depicted murderous, bloodthirsty creatures.

One final theme defines the posters of this era. The image of Hitler and the presence of the swastika are more prevalent in posters from this era, 1933-1935, than any other. The development of the "Hitler Myth" carefully orchestrated by Propaganda Minister Josef Goebbels, took place during the early years of the Reich, accounting for the high number of posters that either include Hitler as a part of the motif, or focus on him completely. Still, in terms of numbers, early Nazi posters were devoted more to family and welfare than to Hitler. In fact, there are more posters that contain swastikas than there are that contain images of Hitler. Although Hitler wanted to be seen as the creator of all these programs and the savior of Germany, he needed to fill bellies and

²⁴ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 413-14.

pockets first. Not every poster was required to have Hitler's picture or a swastika, just enough for the "simple" masses to make the connection between the Nazis and the upward trend.

Hitler's propaganda campaign for the hearts and minds of the German people was, initially, a resounding success. Citizens flocked to party programs, organizations and institutions. The HJ, for example, jumped from just over one million members in 1932 to nearly six million by 1935.²⁵ This dramatic influx of members occurred before membership was made mandatory in 1936. Not all were dyed-in-the-wool Nazis and not all believed every notion and doctrine of the Party, but that was not necessary.²⁶ Whether they joined the party for ideals, handouts, or job security, the fact remains that Hitler accomplished his goal of establishing himself and solidifying the Party's position.

After consolidating their gains, solidifying their power and silencing detractors, the Nazis began the second phase of the Reich; conditioning and preparing the people for war. The second phase continued to favor positive propaganda over negative; however, the specific themes and emotions that were reiterated shift and a few new themes were introduced.

During the second phase the emotions most often evoked by poster propaganda were duty, pride, and nationalism. After tending to the temporal needs of the nation, the Nazis turned to the more spiritual aspects through defiance of the hated Treaty of

²⁵ Overy, *Penguin Historical Atlas of the Third Reich*, 31.

²⁶ See Mayer, *They Thought They Were Free*. Many of the men interviewed said that by joining the Party they had greater job security and even possibility for advancement in some cases. They joined because they needed financial security and not necessarily for ideological reasons.

Versailles. When Germany regained administrative control of the Saar in 1935, posters with the captions “Germany is Free!” and “Long Live Germany!” appeared.

Many of the posters from this phase are political campaign posters for Hitler’s numerous late 1930s referendums. These political posters are either covered with statistics of jobs created, goods produced and charitable donations collected, or they contained only one word; “Ja!” By seeing lists of statistical achievements, the masses could feel a sense of pride in their accomplishments and would, of course, attribute all credit to Hitler. By depicting crowds of people unanimously thrusting out their hands and shouting “Ja!” these posters cultivated the feeling that the Nazi movement was widespread, popular, and unstoppable. It was bigger than any one person. This appeal to herd behavior further indoctrinated the masses and gathered public support. By building on the accomplishments of the first phase, Hitler had powerful propaganda for raising the national spirit and making it more malleable to his will. It was not long into 1936 before Hitler began cashing in some of his political chips.

The Hossbach Memorandum, the minutes of Hitler’s meeting with many of his generals and political subordinates on 5 November 1937, is traditionally credited with exposing Hitler’s specific plans to start his war for “living space.” Part of his plans involved creating total industrial self-sufficiency. To the public, this call to autarchy appealed to their sense of German greatness as well as a reminder of the shortages they endured during the Great War. The Four-Year Plan was a means by which Germany could protect its war industry, having learned from the blockade of the Great War the importance of national self-reliance. Unfortunately for Germany, total autarchy was

never achieved; nevertheless, numerous posters of the preparation phase implore people to demonstrate their loyalty to both the Fatherland and the man who saved the nation by boycotting foreign goods, buying only German products and stepping up production.

Although the preparation phase shared many themes with the establishment phase, there were a few new concepts that are introduced. Two of the posters from this era called for Germany to take back its colonies that were taken away at the end of World War One. Until the mid-thirties there had been numerous social organizations and societies advocating the return of Germany's colonies. The formation of the *Reichskolonialbund* (RKB-Reich Colonial League) in 1936 was an example of standard Nazi policy to assimilate independent organizations into one government-run organization. Any groups that refused to join were outlawed. Although organizations such as the RKB are seldom mentioned in textbooks their existence and appearance in posters is significant. Posters like those of the RKB stirred the public remembrance of Germany's former greatness and instilled the desire to make Germany great once again. Additionally, it familiarized the people with the notion of territorial expansion. Organizations like the RKB, combined with programs like the KdF, were excellent ways to prepare a nation for expansion. The RKB reminded them of what once was while the KdF hinted at what may be.

Negative propaganda of the preparation era is just as sparse as during the establishment era; however, the imagery of the few negative posters that did exist changed. Jewish figures no longer appear as comical. One such poster depicts a rather somber Jewish man holding some coins in his right hand and whip in his left. Under the

left arm he holds a map of the world with a large hammer and sickle stamped on it. These posters incited both anger and fear of the “Jewish-Bolshevik plot” (the Nazis used the two terms interchangeably) to take over the world. While the posters of the establishment era portray the Jews as a menace to be pushed out, the preparation era depicts the Jews as a menace trying to get in! By depicting Jews as invaders, the Nazis were able to create a defensive mindset in the nation, further preparing them for military action. The depiction of the Jewish-Bolshevik hordes grew more sinister as the war began and turned against Germany.

Other than these few anti-Semitic posters, most of the posters of the preparation era are positive, but aggressively so. The various themes and subjects of the posters prove that Hitler was preparing the nation for war. The era of inner-development gave way to the conditioning for action outside Germany’s borders. Militaristic posters began to contain pictures of contemporary German soldiers, not just veterans of the First World War. Captions such as “Through Military Will to Military Strength” (fig. A4) best represent the tone of the era. Hitler was preparing Germany for war both physically and mentally. On 1 September, 1939, Hitler’s armies invaded Poland. Britain and France had sworn to defend Poland’s independence and declared war on Germany a few days later. World War II had begun and brought with it dramatic change in the tones and themes of Nazi propaganda posters.

The years 1940 to 1942 make up the period of diminishing success. The quantity of posters in the sample for this period is almost double that of the earlier periods; additionally, more of them were militaristic and patriotic. This is also the era where

negative propaganda made its first large-scale appearance. What is surprising, however, is that that German propaganda focused more on producing posters for the people of the occupied nations than it did for any particular theme within Germany. Additionally, these posters targeting foreign people were directed more toward countries that lie to the west and north of Germany, particularly France and the Netherlands.

From 1940 onward many of the themes of Nazi propaganda posters persisted, but all of them were now directly tied to the war effort. Even a poster for the *Winterhilfswerk* was dominated by a rank of marching soldiers. The poster declares an upcoming “*Tag Der Wehrmacht.*” One would not know that the poster is for the Winter Aid if not for a small picture of a collecting tin in the lower corner, and the word *Kriegswinterhilfswerk* in rather small print underneath. It should be noted that the Winter Aid had been renamed the War Winter Aid; even charity became militant.

Posters promoting agriculture and industry shifted as well. To be sure they still encouraged hard work, sacrifice, and mass production, but the focus shifted from the good of the nation to support of the army. Posters pictured a housewife plowing her fields with a thoughtful expression while in the background the image of her husband advances with the infantry. Another poster depicts two men riding a plow like a chariot and ramming through the word “blockade” while the text reads; “Farmer, You are a Soldier in the Battle of Production.” These posters identified farming with soldiering and made the humble farmer or field hand feel as important as the front-line soldier.

In the establishment period many posters were designed to appeal to young men and encouraged them to join the HJ. There they would be indoctrinated and taught basic

drill and discipline. It is no surprise then that a majority of the posters in the early war years appealed to those same individuals, now grown men, to complete their training with the HJ and join the army. The seeds Hitler sowed in the mid-thirties were now ready for harvest. Germany focused most of the recruitment posters on advertising for the *Wehrmacht*; only a few posters recruited for the *Luftwaffe* and even fewer for the *Kriegsmarine*. More important, though, is the fact that nearly all of the army posters are for the *Waffen SS*. Clearly, these posters were directly aimed at the same boys targeted by the HJ poster campaign in the early and mid thirties. Hitler had raised a generation of young, idealistic militants and did not want to send them into regular conscript units. The *Waffen SS* was better trained and better equipped; therefore its ranks, initially, were reserved for HJ “graduates.”

Outside of Germany, posters focused on winning over the populations of newly conquered nations. Hitler’s initial success in Poland, Russia and all of Europe west of the Rhine left him with huge amounts of land populated by angry, hostile inhabitants. He needed to pacify these people so that large troop concentrations did not have to stay to perform police duties and could be sent to the Eastern Front. It is through these posters that Hitler began the process of establishment all over again. Page: 26

Because each country reacted to the Nazi occupation differently, no two foreign poster campaigns were alike.

In France, for example, a large number of posters were devoted to creating mistrust and ill will toward Britain. The Nazis would have been hard pressed to make immediate friends with the French. The only nation that France held in more contempt

than Britain at the time was Germany. Deflecting that hate onto Britain rather than to try to combat it head-on was a clever propaganda strategy.

The most popular subject of such Nazi posters immediately after 1940 was Britain's failure to help defend France from the Nazi invasion. One poster accuses the Royal Air Force of committing the first atrocities of the war on French soil when British bombs aimed at halting the German advance fell on French towns, killing (according to the poster) men, women and children. Another portrays an evil looking Winston Churchill smiling devilishly at the destruction of the French fleet at Dakar Mers El-Kebir (After France capitulated, Britain sunk the French North African fleet rather than see the Nazis use it against Britain). Other posters produced for the French focused on their longstanding feuds and historical quarrels with Great Britain. One poster was entitled; "Thanks to the British, Our Cross We Bear" and blames the British for the death of Joan of Arc and the enormous French losses in World War One; most ironically, it also places sole blame on the British for the defeat and exile of Napoleon. The convenient omission of Blücher's contribution to Napoleon's defeat is a classic example of propaganda appealing to blind emotion at the expense of logic and fact.

After producing posters to sabotage Anglo-French relations, Germany quickly capitalized on those feelings by producing several positive, pro-German posters. One, in particular, pictured a German soldier holding a child in one arm while two other children surround him. The child in his arms smiles while eating a piece of bread. The caption reads; "Abandoned People, Have Faith in the German Soldier!" For a demoralized, defeated nation, appealing to the emotions of peace, trust and support was especially

important, while directing any remaining anger towards other sources. This same tactic of alliance-breaking was also employed in the few posters that were produced for occupied Poland.

Not all occupation posters were dominated by negative themes, images or slogans. The poster campaigns in the Netherlands and Norway, for example, were actually quite positive; Norwegian posters focused on army recruitment for Germany while posters in the Netherlands were aimed at agricultural and industrial production. They had a few alliance-bashing and anti-Semitic contributions to be sure, but the majority were directed at production and recruitment and focused on appeals to tradition, duty and trust in the eventual German victory. Norway was an especially intriguing case. Although German troops occupied parts of Norway and there was a good deal of clandestine resistance, the collaborative government of Vidkun Quisling allowed the Nazis to influence and administer Norway with ease. Quisling modeled his own government after the Nazis, even to the point of establishing the *Hird*, his version of the SA.

Nazi posters in the Nordic countries were primarily for recruitment purposes. Quisling even had grand plans to raise three Norwegian divisions and send them to fight with Germany; however, public resistance ensured that the desired 50,000 man army never materialized.²⁷ Soon after the opening of the Soviet offensive in 1941, Himmler decided that the manpower shortage of the German forces on the eastern front could be filled to some degree by units of foreign, but still Germanic soldiers; hence the creation

²⁷ Johs Andens, Olav Riste and Magne Skodvin, *Norway and the Second World War* (Oslo: Tanum-Norli, 1983), 80-83.

of the SS *Wiking* Division. Most of the Norwegian recruitment posters appealed to the proud, Viking warrior culture of the people, their similarity to Germany and their ties to the Teutonic Knights. Posters pictured a young SS soldier with chin upraised, gazing stoically into his destiny while the spirit of a battle-garbed Viking warrior stands beside him. Himmler organized the *Standarte Nordland* (Nordic Banner), a regiment of Danish, Norwegian and Swedish soldiers under the command of German officers in the SS *Wiking* Division in 1941, but it too never reached regimental strength and was dissolved in 1943.²⁸ After 1943 the only Norwegian unit was the Norge Ski Battalion.

Another poster depicts a young civilian shaking the hand of an SS soldier while a Viking ship floats by in the background. The caption admonishes him to join the fight against Bolshevism. The only thing that the conquered nations of Europe disliked as much as Nazism was Bolshevism. With the invasion of the Soviet Union, Germany began producing more anti-Bolshevism posters in an effort to garner support from all nations, not just the occupied ones, in a global fight against Bolshevism and Communism.²⁹ By appealing to both the warrior tradition and the contempt for Bolshevism, Himmler was able to recruit several thousand volunteers from the countries north of the Baltic Sea.³⁰

More important than to whom these posters appealed is the message they carried. From 1941 through 1942 the German Army in the east slowly ground to a halt and proved unable to take any of the Soviet Union's three most important cities (Leningrad,

²⁸ Anders et. al., *Norway and the Second World War* 74-75.

²⁹ Zeman, *Nazi Propaganda*, 158.

³⁰ Adrian Weale, *Renegades: Hitler's Englishmen* (London: Pimlico, 2002), 86.

Stalingrad and Moscow). The Soviets provided the wall against which the German momentum could not break through. Germany, due to rapid losses on the Eastern Front, had to turn to other sources for soldiers, hence the appeal to other “Germanic” nations. When the heroic, tradition based posters could not generate the desired recruits the Nazis then turned from positive themes to negative ones, emphasizing the threat of Bolshevism as a reason to fight instead of a shared Nordic ancestry. This shift from positive to negative posters began in 1942 and, as we shall see, came to dominate all posters both in and outside Germany from this point on.

The Netherlands were also subjected to posters produced by Germany and the collaborative government, although until 1942 the poster campaign in the Netherlands was focused more on agricultural and industrial production than on recruitment. The economies of Germany and the Netherlands were intertwined from the start of the war. After the British established the blockade in 1939 and France fell in 1940, Holland was left with Germany as its only trading partner.³¹ Many of the posters printed for the Netherlands depicted happy workers and stressed the importance of their contribution to the struggle against capitalism and Bolshevism. Once again notice the shift from positive motivations (producing for the good of the nation) to negative (produce lest we all fall to the Bolsheviks) is very noticeable. One such poster portrayed the Biblical golden calf sitting atop a tall pillar. A crowd of workers have thrown ropes around the statue and are attempting to pull it down. The caption is “Take it Away.” This poster is particularly effective because it characterizes the struggle against both capitalism and

³¹ Louis de Jong, *The Netherlands and Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 36.

Bolshevism. (It must be remembered here that Hitler and the Nazis used the words Jewish and Bolshevik interchangeably.) The golden calf is a symbol from the Judeo-Christian tradition that symbolizes materialism and riotous living, conditions the Nazis associated with capitalism. The calf's ties to the Israelites in the Old Testament make the connection with Judaism, thus attacking both enemies with one poster.

Germany began a heavy industry/agriculture poster campaign in the Netherlands during 1942 as a response to a Dutch workers' strike in 1941. The Nazis could ill afford any sector of their war industry to slacken. With the war at its peak, Germany could not afford to suffer military or economic losses. Therefore, the posters were printed to motivate workers and prevent them from striking to keep the German Army supplied. Unfortunately for the Nazis, their attempts at keeping the Dutch industry in line did not succeed, and the Dutch staged two more massive strikes.

One of the major changes from Germany's early war posters is the absence of Hitler's image. Of the post 1942 posters surveyed, only two include his picture. One is a poster for Germany and advertises the *Deutsche Jungvolk*, the HJ organization for boys under twelve; the other "Hitler the Liberator" is for German-occupied Ukraine. During the establishment phase, when conditions in Germany were improving, Hitler made sure that his picture was posted everywhere so the German people would know who was responsible. That logic goes both ways. If a nation under occupation is in turmoil and Hitler's picture is put up all over, people would begin to associate their troubles with him.

The war had turned against Germany; as a result, Hitler (formerly associating himself with the nation's prosperous rebirth), withdrew further and further from the public eye and replaced flag waving posters with more desperate ones. Two of these posters were advertisements for anti-Jewish films produced by the Nazis; *Jud Süß* and *Die Ewige Jude*. These posters, the one promoting *Jud Süß* especially, depict cold, calculating, truly evil people, a far cry from the imbecilic-looking cartoon characters of the mid-thirties. The Jews of early war posters were depicted as being bent on taking over the world; but by 1942, posters hint that the Jews not only wanted to dominate, but that they possessed the capability to do so. In addition to the fear factor, the explanation for the shift in characterizing the Jews and Bolsheviks is simple: the anti-Semitic characters in posters became more evil looking because there was little to gain in fighting against, or defeating, ridiculous cartoon men.³²

In the establishment era, Jews were on the inside and merely had to be swept out. In the preparation era they were on the outside trying to get in. In the early war years they are still trying to get in and are appearing successful. The late war years show the maturity of the anti-Jewish frenzy as the conflict becomes a life-or-death struggle. These changes in Germany's poster propaganda mirror its war fortunes.

Posters of the total war and defeat phase (1943-1945) are characterized by the general shift from positive to negative. This phase is the first and only period in Nazi German history where the number of negative posters outweighs the number of positive ones. Posters containing Hitler are almost non-existent, and there are more posters

³² Herzstein, *War that Hitler Won*, 199.

displaying the SS runes than the swastika. Several emerging trends continue while other, new trends appear in reaction to the events of the late war years. The Russian Army had defeated the Germans at Stalingrad by the spring of 1943. In that same year the British and American forces in Africa had defeated Rommel and were poised to land in Italy. In response to these defeats and disasters, Joseph Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda, made one of his most famous speeches: he called upon the nation to mobilize for total war. “The only choice now is between living under Axis protection or in a Bolshevist Europe.”³³ Later in the speech he reiterated the choice in more drastic terms, “[I]f we lose, we will be destroyed.”³⁴ The war began as Germany’s crusade to expand the Aryan race at the expense of “lesser” races, proudly taking on the role of the aggressor and instigator. By late 1942 and through the rest of the war, propaganda switched Germany’s role to Europe’s only defense against Bolshevism.

In order to fight this new, defensive total war the population had to be in total commitment. To ensure that every man and woman in the Reich was willing and eager to contribute their utmost, Goebbels had to appeal to the very basest of human instinct; self-preservation. By shifting from positive to negative posters, Goebbels changing from using patriotism and duty to fear and hate to inspire the public.³⁵

It is no surprise that in the posters of the total war and defeat phase one begins to see themes such as the importance of secrecy. Though few in number, these posters

³³ Randall Bytwerk, 2005. “Goebbels’ 1943 Speech on Total War.” Grand Rapids, MI: Calvin College; available from <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goeb36.htm>; accessed 25 April 2005.

³⁴ Bytwerk, Goebbels’ 1943 Speech .

³⁵ Zeman, *Nazi Propaganda*, 165.

mark the beginning of the end of the Reich. Numerous individual posters stress the importance of watching one's words in case spies or saboteurs are listening. At first glance these posters appear to be typical war precautions, but when one considers that they did not appear at all in the early war years, they are telltale signs of Nazi Germany's impending doom. If the enemy is near enough to spy, then all of the gains in the early war years must either be lost or in danger. Great Britain and the United States also stressed secrecy, but emphasized it more when the Battle for the Atlantic was still undecided, and the journey to Europe was still very perilous. Once the U-boat menace was under control and the journey across the Atlantic was safer, Britain and the United States produced fewer secrecy posters. Secrecy, often stressed through negative poster images, was a sign that the war was not fully under control.

The greatest numbers of posters produced between 1943 and 1945 were aimed at the occupied countries, although the messages of such posters had changed. Posters in this phase called for the people of the occupied nations to join their German brothers-in-arms against the Bolshevik menace. The Reich launched a recruitment campaign in every occupied country except in Soviet Ukraine. Tradition was a favored recruitment tactic, mixed with the need to fight Bolshevism (the Jews) and capitalism (the Americans and British). Posters for Denmark pictured an SS trooper fighting alongside a Beowulf-like Danish warrior. French posters called for a united Europe against Bolshevism. The Netherlands, being Germany's closest Nordic neighbor, received the most attention. The former posters emphasizing production were replaced by recruiting posters for the SS and contained caricatures of famous Dutchmen such as the Boer War

hero, Paul Kruger, who led resistance groups against the British and later became the President of the Transvaal Republic. In 1944 the Allies successfully invaded Normandy and opened the much needed second front. From 1944 on the Nazi propaganda machine went into high gear to produce anti-British and anti-American posters for France and the Low Countries.

Perhaps the most surprising posters printed in 1944, entitled, “Our Flag is Going Forward Too” (fig. A5) was created for British POWs in an attempt to recruit them for the British Free Corps, an independent unit in the SS made up of British subjects.³⁶ Although over the course of its existence the BFC recruited over 200 British POWs for service in the German Army, there were never, at one time, the required thirty needed for the platoon to be sent into combat. Nevertheless, the existence of the poster is truly amazing because of what it represented: Germany was becoming so desperate for fighting men that it tried to convince POWs to switch sides.

Coupled with the appeal to tradition, fear was the other major theme of recruitment posters. Machiavelli asserted that fear was the most powerful emotion a ruler could instill in motivating his people to act and follow orders. Goebbels, in his famous Total War Speech, agreed, stating that “danger is a motivating force.”³⁷ A popular image was that of a great red dragon wearing a Star of David or a Russian Red Star around its neck being slain by a German soldier. St. George and the Dragon was a popular myth of the peoples of Europe and portrayed the ultimate battle between good

³⁶ Brian Bond, Review of *Renegades: Hitler's Englishmen*, by Adrian Weale, *The English Historical Review* 111, no. 444 (Nov. 1996), 1347-48.

³⁷ Bytwerk, Goebbels' 1943 Speech.

and evil. Posters depicted murdered families and burned villages under such captions as, “Bolshevism is Murder!” (fig. A6) and “Mothers, Fight For Your Children!” In just a few years the Nazi campaign against the Jewish/Bolshevik conspiracy shifted from offense to defense, from cleansing to resisting, and from perpetrator to victim, mirroring the course of the war from easy victory to struggle and finally to defeat.

Bolshevism was not the only enemy. The American and British were stigmatized as capitalistic task masters bent on oppressing the masses, working in conjunction with the Russians (after all, they were allies). To the intellectual, the thought of communists and capitalists uniting in a crusade for world domination may sound ludicrous, but to the common worker such posters instilled fear for life and family. One poster, intended to spur resistance to the advancing Americans in Holland, is titled “Liberators.” (fig. A7) The caption reads, “The liberators will save European culture from its downfall.” Although in many respects the poster was an admission of defeat, such posters had to be graphic in order to generate resistance to the Allied advance; the regime was crumbling, the occupied nations were being liberated, and if the posters were not gruesome and graphic, they might backfire and inspire resistance *against* Germany rather than for it. In summary, the posters of 1943-1945 were a last attempt at trying to gain the support of occupied nations by appealing to the most extreme negative images.

The survey of posters from 1933 to 1945 illustrates each of the four phases of the Reich’s development. The establishment and consolidation and preparation phases are filled with positive propaganda designed to win the hearts of the masses by appealing to the most basic, positive emotions like duty, honor, nationalism, family welfare and the

importance of youth. As the war began and progressed successfully, positive emotions still dominated but were military in tone. As the war turned against Germany, the posters became increasingly negative, appealing to guilt, hatred, and especially fear. As will be reinforced in the following chapters, the events of the war have a direct impact on propaganda campaigns. Successful prosecution of the war was marked by positive posters, whereas negative posters signified unsuccessful efforts.

CHAPTER III

THE SOVIET UNION

The Soviet Union had been using propaganda on a large scale ever since the Russian Revolution in 1917. Like Nazi Germany, propaganda provided the ideological foundation for the regime. Yet even the Nazi propaganda machine, which operated for nearly a decade before the war began, did not play as crucial a role in the establishment and perpetuation of the government as Soviet Union did. Soviet propaganda had an intellectual foundation in Marx's theories of dialectic materialism. Nazi propaganda, on the other hand, was void of deeper ideological meaning and founded on revenge and hate. While other states utilized propaganda, Soviet Russia was founded on it.³⁸ Once established, the government needed only to shift the focus of its propaganda machine to suit its needs, although, as will be seen, the relationship between the war and the balance between positive and negative propaganda continues. In the early stages of the war Russian propaganda was overwhelmingly negative and relied heavily on propaganda that generated hate and a desire for revenge. Russian posters, however, never used fear as a motivator. Even when the German Army was at the gates of Moscow, propaganda poster did not encourage its citizens to "fight for their lives," but rather told them to "kill the fascist invaders." After 1942, following the victories at Stalingrad and Kursk, Russian posters shifted to more positive scenes on the basis that victory was in sight. But whether the posters were printed early or late in the war they frequently contained

³⁸ See Peter Kenez, *Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

large amounts of block text, something unique to posters of the Soviet Union.

Considering propaganda is supposed to be simple in order to be effective, the presence of block text on even a single poster is worthy of attention. In the case of Soviet Russia, the use of text in propaganda posters stems from the literacy campaign established by the Bolsheviks during the Russian Revolution. Literacy, propaganda, and the communist state developed together.

When Tsar Nicholas II abdicated, he left a bloody power vacuum in which dozens of groups and private armies struggled for power and control of the government. The two largest of these groups were the Bolshevik Reds and the anti-Bolshevik Whites. Both sides had formidable armies and capable leaders, but the Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Illich Ulyanov (Lenin), had an advantage; Lenin realized the importance of popular support and was more skilled at gaining it than his enemies.³⁹

Both the Provisional Government that succeeded Nicholas and the Whites failed because they did not have the support of the masses. If the Bolsheviks were going to gain power, and hold it, they needed to sway public opinion to their side. When Lenin arrived in Russia in April of 1917 there were only around 25,000 Bolsheviks members in the entire country.⁴⁰ They had to convince the general populace that it was in their best interest to support the Bolshevik party. To achieve this, the Bolsheviks launched an enormous propaganda campaign.

³⁹ Evan Mawdsley, *The Russian Civil War* (Boston: Allen & Unwin., 1987), 276, 278-281.

⁴⁰ John M. Thompson, *Revolutionary Russia, 1917* (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 43.

Lenin envisioned a new socialist state that would stand as an example for revolutions in the rest of the imperial world. He wanted Soviet propaganda to be monumental and timeless, thus reflecting the grandeur of the Revolution itself.⁴¹ Soviet propaganda was designed to link the past, present and future in single, aesthetic instances.⁴² During the Great Patriotic War, Stalin used these same methods in his propaganda and brought ideology up to date by replacing Marx with Lenin.

Due to the sheer distances over which the large population was dispersed, printed media was the best way to reach the masses; however only the urban population had a literate majority while the rural populace was highly illiterate.⁴³ Although under the Tsar education made limited advances by the time of the Revolution only two out of five adults could read.⁴⁴ Even this figure is somewhat misleading because people living in urban areas had a much higher literacy rate than those in the country. At the time of the Russian Civil War, less than one half of Russians could read and write.

Lenin's solution was a massive literacy campaign. In Lenin's own words: "As long as there is such a thing in the country as illiteracy, it is rather hard to talk about political education."⁴⁵ By leading the crusade against illiteracy the Bolsheviks gained two victories. They would be lauded for teaching the illiterate how to read and while teaching, the Bolsheviks could simultaneously indoctrinate them.

⁴¹ Mikhail Guerman, *Art of the October Revolution*, translated by W. Freeman, D. Saunders, C. Binns (New York Abrams, 1979), 12.

⁴² Guerman, *Art of the October Revolution*, 13.

⁴³ Geoffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 4. Brooks points out that in most rural areas the literacy rate was only about 25% by 1910.

⁴⁴ Kenez, *Birth of the Propaganda State*, 72.

⁴⁵ Kenez, *Birth of the Propaganda State*, 72.

The Bolsheviks could not have asked for a better situation. With such a large portion of the populace unable to read they provided a fertile group for propaganda to be its most effective. The literacy campaign was conducted through teachers and textbooks regulated by the government; the more people learned to read, the more indoctrinated they became. Lenin argued that if people were unable to read they had only “rumors, fairy tales, prejudices, but not politics” upon which to base their thoughts, beliefs and actions.⁴⁶ By the early 1920 the Bolshevik literacy campaign was showing promising results and by the late 1930s, four out of five Russians could read and write.⁴⁷ In the end, the Soviet Union was founded on propaganda, and Soviet propaganda was based on literacy. This foundation upon literacy is reflected in Soviet Posters during the war; no other nation in this study produced posters that included as much text as the Soviet Union.

The *lubok* was a short, illustrated story printed on a single sheet of paper that was folded over several times to produce a small book or tract. These *luboks*, at the time, were the most popular form of literature among the literate peasants. Similar in form and structure to the Western European chapbooks or the British Penny Dreadfuls (also called Penny Bloods) the *lubok* often told the stories of Russian legend and myth and had the familiar flavor of Western fairy tales. These tracts had an impact on the culture and mentality of the Russian lower classes.⁴⁸ The popularity and potential of these books as

⁴⁶ Kenez, *Birth of the Propaganda State* 72.

⁴⁷ Kenez, *Birth of the Propaganda State*, 159-160.

⁴⁸ Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read*, 63. Brooks asserts that the *luboks* were enjoyable booklets that were written by authors of similar social and economic backgrounds. The fairytale like stories questioned Russian fatalism and the acceptance

tools of the state was not lost on the Bolsheviks. The purpose of the *lubok* was to convey a lesson or moral derived from the story, much like *Aesop's Fables*.

During the Civil War, the Russian Telegraph Agency began to adapt the *lubok* style to large posters that acted as newspapers for the public. These “Rosta” (after the Russian Telegraph Agency, *Telegrafnoe Agentstvo Sovetskogo Soiuz*) posters were put up in store windows. Because they could be produced faster than traditional posters, they became ideal propaganda tools.⁴⁹ The *lubok* had been successfully transformed into a new form of propaganda poster. Both Lenin and Stalin made use of the *lubok* poster.⁵⁰ (see figs. A8 - A10 for examples of *luboks* during the Tsarist regime, the Revolution, and the Great Patriotic War, demonstrating the continuity over forty years)

On 22 June 1941, the German Army launched Operation Barbarossa. Three of Hitler's army groups had crossed the border and invaded Russian-controlled Poland in direct violation of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression pact of 1939. By September-October of that same year, German forces were laying siege to Moscow and Leningrad. The Red Army, still recovering from Stalin's purges, fell apart under the swift German advance. Stalin had been forewarned that German forces were massing on the border, but at first chose to dismiss them as British lies to get the Soviet Union to fight Britain's war. Stalin's desire to maintain good relations with Germany was not unfounded and

of one's lot in life as unchangeable. The educated literate and upper classes, especially during the revolution, were not as friendly toward such literature because it fostered individualism. By producing their own, the educated classes were able to kill two birds with one stone; they could continue to let the public have their stories while at the same time controlling what messages and morals were conveyed.

⁴⁹ Victoria E. Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 199.

⁵⁰ Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 200.

Stalin did not want to jeopardize the Nazi-Soviet Pact by mobilizing. The country was still struggling economically and militarily and could not afford to go to war. The pact with Germany was a God-send in that it returned to Russia nearly all of the territory lost in the First World War and provided reassurance to Stalin that Hitler's formidable war machine would not encroach on Russian soil, thus Russia could relax over its border with Germany and focus more on the war with Finland. Stalin would have done well to remember that Hitler had broken every peace treaty or political alliance that involved Germany going all the way back to the Paris Peace Conference of 1919.

The invasion was a shock, as could well be expected. The ill-prepared Red Army was crushed at every turn and hundreds of thousands of Russian soldiers were taken prisoner. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, the German Army equated Russians with Jews and also held little regard for the Poles, making the German treatment of Russian soldiers, civilians and property, harsh and brutal. Further adding to the chaos was the arrival of the *Einsatzgruppen*, Hitler's mobile killing squads. The *Einsatzgruppen* saw virtually no distinction between Russian, Pole or Jew and within the course of the war the *Einsatzgruppen* were responsible for the deaths of over two million people.⁵¹

The Russian reaction to Barbarossa could be likened to the American reaction to the Japanese surprise attack at Pearl Harbor, but Barbarossa is even more shocking than Pearl Harbor because it was not just an attack, but an invasion, and also because the two nations involved had signed the non-aggression pact. By early 1941 both Stalin and

⁵¹ Ronnie Landau, *The Nazi Holocaust* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1994), 152.

Commissar of Foreign Affairs Vyacheslav Molotov knew that the Germans were planning an invasion, but they both clung desperately to the hope that it could be delayed until 1942, by which time the Soviet Union would be better prepared.⁵² The German invasion did not wait until 1942. It was treacherous, and left oceans of blood in its wake. The Russian people were shocked and frightened. Until the attack they were convinced of the invincibility of the Red Army, yet in the initial stages of the offensive the Germans steam-rolled over the “invincible” army with little difficulty.⁵³ The government had the task of rallying the nation and sending them to war against Hitler’s seemingly unstoppable army. The only way to do this was to build on the existing shock and anger to produce a hatred of the Germans that burned hot enough to convince Russian citizens to fight the very armies that were steamrolling across the country. Hence we see the continuation of the pattern of negative poster dominance when the war is in doubt.

To convince the people to continue fighting, Russian posters focused on three basic propaganda tactics; first and most importantly they worked to destroy the image of the invincible German Army. Next they focused Russian’s anger on Hitler. Lastly they appealed to the Russian people’s desire for vengeance and mixed it with patriotism. All three of these needs could be filled by relying only on negative propaganda.

Despite the influence of Socialist Realism on Soviet art a surprising number of posters used cartoons and caricature to portray the Germans. Socialist Realism

⁵² Alexander Werth, *Russia at War, 1941-1945* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 1984), 120.

⁵³ Werth, *Russia at War*, 132.

portrayed life as it would exist in the Communist Utopia and had no room for cartoons, caricatures, or any other non-realistic image, but the rules of Socialist Realism had to be temporarily suspended in order for Russian artists and poster makers to shrink the German military giant and depict it as comic and subhuman in a way similar to the German depiction of Jews. One in particular mixes cartoon images of Hitler, Goering and Goebbels with sarcastic irony, stating that Nazis are “Blond like Hitler, Well shaped like Goering, and Handsome like Goebbels.”⁵⁴ The image of Goebbels is the most striking: the artist portrays him as a rat, complete with tail.

The image of the rodent is in fact present in most of the caricature posters. Drawing on the treacherous invasion and the breaking of the 1939 pact, Russian posters foster stereotype of Germans as “dirty rats.” One poster dedicates itself to educating the Russian people as to why Nazis possess such rat-like qualities. In answer to the question, “What is a fascist’s nose for?” the poster answers, “To smell out treachery, and to scribble denunciation on everyone. That is what the fascist’s nose is for”⁵⁵ (fig. A10, first and second panel). Germany under the Nazis was a time of paranoia. Neighbors spied on neighbors and children spied on parents. Any comment with even the slightest hint of criticism toward the government could land the speaker in a concentration camp. The irony that “treachery sniffing fascists” are themselves treacherous adds further to the poster’s message.

⁵⁴ Lord Beaverbrook [Max Aitkin], *The Spirit of the Soviet Union: Anti-Nazi Cartoons and Posters* (London: Pilot Press, 1942), 44-45.

⁵⁵ Beaverbrook, *Spirit of the Soviet Union*, 22-23

A second group of posters use a different animal by associating the Nazis with apes. This choice of animal is an attack on Nazi racial policy. Hitler's notions of racial purity and Social Darwinism placed Russians at the very bottom of the Nazi social pyramid, together with Jews, gypsies and Poles. Portraying Nazis as apes is a simple but effective method of combating Nazi racial attacks on the same terms.

Twelve days after the invasion, scholar Alexander Werth was in Leningrad and recalled his surprise that while daily life remained "perfectly normal" (no rationing, consumer goods still available, theatres and restaurants still open and thriving) there were already plenty of posters on the walls and in the shop windows of the marketplace. The posters Werth specifically described showed "a Russian tank crushing a giant crab with a Hitler moustache, a Red soldier ramming his bayonet down the throat of a giant, Hitler-faced rat...it said: crush the Fascist vermin."⁵⁶ Less than two weeks after the invasion the nation was still reeling from the attack, but the government's propaganda machine was already churning out posters.

The dehumanization of the Germans was necessary, whether as comical rats, allegorical apes, or as cartoon humans with physical defects. The people needed to be convinced that the currently undefeated Germans were not unstoppable; additionally, resistance needed to be encouraged and collaboration discouraged.⁵⁷ In response to the invasion, Stalin made a speech on 3 July 1941 in which he assured Russia that "history

⁵⁶ Werth, *Russia at War*, 176.

⁵⁷ Peter Kenez, *A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 150.

has shown that there are no invincible armies and never have been.”⁵⁸ The irony of such a statement is glaring. The formerly “invincible” Red Army had been smashed by the currently “invincible” German Army.

By portraying German soldiers as animals or cartoons, the Russian government replaced fear with an odd sort of comic-anger. The Russians needed to lose their fear of the Germans. The best way to do that was to portray Germans in ways that inspired Russian confidence and replace the fear of the Germans with hatred toward them.⁵⁹ This partially explains why posters are more negative when the country is losing the war. When the nation is losing the enemy must be dehumanized in order to convince the nation to fight on.

The second theme that characterized the Russian posters of 1941 was to focus on Hitler in particular. When not showing Hitler as an animal or beast in one form or another, posters exaggerate his features, especially his hairstyle and moustache. Some depict him as a scrawny, disheveled little man while others draw him as an obese giant. Although the posters do not always collaborate in terms of what Hitler looked like, they all share the common goal of giving an identifiable face to German aggression. How he was drawn was unimportant as long as the viewer recognized Hitler in the poster (by the moustache and hair). One poster is made up of apes in German uniforms; the leader of these apes is completely undistinguishable from the others except for a tiny moustache.

⁵⁸ Joseph Stalin. 1941. “Broadcast to the People of the Soviet Union, 3 July 1941” [on-line]. South Hadley, MA: Mount Holyoke College; available from <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/ww2.htm>; accessed 17 March 2006.

⁵⁹ Werth, *Russia at War*, 174.

Hitler-centered posters also often include references to the non-aggression pact. One particularly conspicuous poster shows a fat, hairy, and very beast-like Hitler sitting on a pile of papers. Protruding from under his feet one can only make out a few of the words that are scribbled on the pages, “International law” being the most conspicuous. One more feature of Russian posters of Hitler deserves discussion. More often than not any picture of the Fuhrer also contained the image of a well-worn (and sometimes bloody) axe. Whether in his hand, thrust in his belt, or serving as the legs to his chair, the axe motif is unmistakable and repetitive (figs. A10 and A11).

First, as the tool of their trade, the axe is a symbol of both a butcher and an executioner. The previously mentioned poster of the bestial Hitler trampling international law under his feet takes the image of Hitler as both butcher and executioner even further. He not only has an axe in his belt, he also has a gallows strapped to his back. Although most often associated with Hitler the axe was not reserved solely for Hitler posters. One in particular makes the connection between Hitler and the German people, showing them all to be butchers. The poster is laid out in the comic book, *lubok* style with six panels, each showing a young German’s progression from a boy to a Nazi. In the last panel, after literally surrendering his brain to Hitler, the boy “graduates” and instead of a diploma is given a blood-stained axe. The man giving the axe, identifiable as Himmler by his glasses, has the familiar rat like nose, whiskers and tail. With a grin he holds out the axe in his blood stained hands and welcomes “Fritz” into the Gestapo

(fig. A10, last panel). The axe-wielding Hitler gave a face to the atrocities of the German army and the *Einsatzgruppen*, uniting the people's anger toward a single, focused target. A basic feature of war propaganda designed to rally a nation is, of course, to give the masses something on which to focus their anger, hence the dominance of negative propaganda during times when the war is not going well. In Germany it was the Jews; in the Soviet Union it was Hitler. The next step was to mobilize the population against their newly identified foe.

In sharp contrast to the posters depicting Nazis, posters showing Russian people are drawn carefully and accurately. Not a single cartoon figure of a Russian can be found. The function of these posters is exactly opposite those previously discussed. Once the enemy has been adequately reduced, the home front needs to be proportionally built up. Soviet citizens, adhering to the standards of Socialist Realism, are portrayed as strong and defiant, but not overly exaggerated. More often than not the poster emphasizes the need for unity and the value of the group. It is rare to find posters that only have one person in them, though a few exist. The norm is to see ranks of young men in the army, or groups of older men and women fighting as partisans. Captions such as "The enemy cannot escape the people's revenge," or "We're not giving Moscow," seek to incite hatred and a burning desire for retribution in the viewer. Poster captions often refer to the larger group and use "we" and "our" much more often than "you." The individual Soviet citizen was expected to put aside self-interest and be willing to sacrifice everything, even his or her own life, for Mother Russia.

The last important group of positive posters appeal to tradition. Although not as prevalent as other themes, it could be considered the most important in terms of raising the public morale. One poster depicts rows of infantry moving forward behind the cover of advancing tanks. Above the soldiers the spirits of three Russian war heroes stand with swords drawn and extended as if leading the charge. Two of the spirits are identified in the caption; one is Alexander Suvorov, one of Catherine the Great's field marshals, the other is World War I hero Vasily Chapayev. The third figure, though not specifically named, is recognizable by his facial features and medieval armor as Alexander Nevsky, the hero who defeated the Teutonic Knights on frozen Lake Peipus in the famous "Battle on the Ice" in 1242. These three men were not chosen randomly. Not only were they all legendary figures, but they were all victorious against German opponents. The caption refers to Russian soldiers as the "sons of Suvorov and Chapayev."⁶⁰ It is strange that Nevsky's name does not appear in the text, though it is more than likely that Suvorov and Chapayev are not as easily recognizable, or even as well known, as Nevsky. Thus the people would need a little "help" in understanding the poster.

Another poster, drawn up in the classic *lubok* style, reminds the Soviet people that Hitler is not the first to attack Russia, although he will meet the same fate as those who have come before. The Teutonic Knights and Napoleon are pointed to as examples of "invincible armies" that met their demise in Russia. The poster assures Russians that

⁶⁰ Rhodes, *Propaganda*, 234.

Your enemies are ferocious for war and pillage,
 But the time of retribution will come.
 The banner of victory will stay with you forever.⁶¹

This kind of reassurance was most effective for the simple reason that it was true. The Teutonic Knights were defeated by Nevsky. Napoleon's armies marched all the way to Moscow before having to turn back in the face of the harsh Russian winter, harassed by the resurging Russian armies along the way until the decisive battle at Borodino in 1812 (providing the inspiration for Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture"). Napoleon's "invincible" Grand Army was dealt its first major defeat by the Russians. The poster's message is even more potent considering that German armies are among those that have invaded before and failed. Despite being constantly considered backward or behind the times by its European neighbors, Russia had never been successfully conquered by any of them. Beaten on the battlefield, yes, but not conquered. Even Napoleon, who drove his army to the gates of Moscow, as Hitler was now doing, could not force surrender and returned to France broken and defeated. History, the public was assured, was on their side. (Surprisingly, the Nazis also used the Teutonic Knights in their propaganda posters, despite the fact that in the end the Knights came out as the vanquished rather than the victors.)

The posters of 1941 served the purpose of helping the nation recover from shock, rally, and turn to fight. Although they broke several of the rules established by Social Realist tradition, the infractions were necessary. Artists used cartoons and unrealistic

⁶¹ Nikolai Denisovsky, *Okna TASS, 1941-1945* (Moscow: Izobrazit. Isskustvo, 1970).

figures to portray German soldiers and leaders. In the winter of 1941 when the German juggernaut was finally halted at the gates of Moscow, the posters took on different themes and messages.

In the winter of 1941 the scattered Red Army pulled itself together and pushed the Germans from the gates of Moscow. The Russian winter had helped in slowing the German onslaught and allowing time for the Red Army to regroup. On 5 December, Russia attacked and drove the Germans westward for more than 150 miles. The blitzkrieg was halted; Germany had failed to knock out the Soviet Union in the same way it had Poland and France. The war in the East settled into the bloody slugfest that dominated the Eastern theater for the duration of the war.⁶² Now that the threat of immediate collapse had subsided, the posters changed focus, but only slightly at first. Posters continued to show German atrocities in an effort to fan the flames of revenge while appealing to tradition and heroism. Furthermore, 1942 witnessed the first of the Russian counteroffensives and liberations of towns along the German-Soviet front. With the liberation of these towns and villages, Russian soldiers discovered many of the atrocities committed by the Germans against “partisans,” including women and children. With the discovery of these atrocities, Russian propaganda began to use Germany’s war of extermination for its own purposes.⁶³ This shift in the fortunes of war allowed publishers to print more positive posters and introduce two new themes, industrial production and Stalin as the savior of the Soviet Union.

⁶² See Omar Bartov, *Hitler’s Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁶³ Werth, *Russia at War*, 274.

When the German Army invaded in June 1941, it swept through the most industrious and productive sections of Russia. If Russia hoped to fight back, it needed to rebuild its industry and churn out vast quantities of munitions in order to make up for what was lost in the previous year as well as to equip the rapidly expanding Russian military. Entire factories were more or less packed up, put on trains and shipped east, deep into the country where they were free from molestation by German artillery and bombers. Once re-established, the Russian war industry began producing at an astonishing rate. The government created posters that targeted the worker and urged them to work longer, harder and faster. Many of the posters depict women workers because most of the men were in the army. At the Kirov Works in Leningrad, for example, almost 70% of the workforce was women.⁶⁴ These production posters were usually positive in nature and are among the first positive posters produced by the Soviet Union during the war.

Although production was essential to the war, the second poster theme that emerged catered to the more ideological, intangible aspects of the war. During 1941 the image of Stalin was noticeably absent from posters. In his studies of daily life during the siege of Leningrad, historian Alexander Werth found that in a collection of essays written by children regarding the June 22 attack, many mentioned shock, revenge and the inevitable victory of the Red Army, but none mentioned Stalin. On a weeklong train trip to Moscow during the same year, Werth discussed the war with the many other

⁶⁴ Werth, *Russia at War*, 344.

passengers and once again, Stalin's name was never mentioned.⁶⁵ For the man who became the father figure of Russia after his 3 July speech, Stalin remained aloof both as a topic of public conversation and a subject for propaganda posters for the rest of the year.

In 1942, the year the overall tide of war turned in favor of the Allies, Stalin made more appearances in posters, accompanied in many of them by Lenin. The image of Lenin as the founder of the Soviet Union represented both the Russian masses and what the Nazis were so violently trying to destroy. Pictures of Lenin, and more importantly of Stalin and Lenin together, linked the Revolution with the Great Patriotic War, almost making the latter a continuation of the former. The posters encouraged Russians to fight with the fervor of 1917; to fight for the very life of Russia, and in 1941 indeed they were. When the war was in doubt, Stalin, like Hitler, remained out of the public eye. Once the Red Army began pushing the Germans back, Stalin was more than willing to put his face on posters for everyone to see.

The appearance of a nation's leader in posters presents an interesting contrast between the dictators of Germany and Russia, and the elected officials of Britain and the United States. As dictators, Hitler and Stalin had more of a necessity to legitimize their rule. One method of accomplishing this, as demonstrated by their presence in posters, is to make themselves highly visible during the good years and scarce during the bad, thus the people will associate prosperity with the regime. Churchill and Roosevelt, as elected officials, no doubt want to associate themselves with positive events during their tenure

⁶⁵ Werth, *Russia at War*, 369.

in office, but as representatives rather than absolute heads, Churchill and Roosevelt did not need to appear in posters for legitimizing purposes. Additionally, as democratic countries, Britain and the United States would be contradicting themselves to attribute victories to the head of the country rather than to “the people.” Britain and the United States did indeed print posters that contained the image of their prime minister or president, but these posters were produced *at the beginning* of the war when things looked bleak. Roosevelt and Churchill appeared in posters as a bolstering image, “Things are not going well, but we are still here” as opposed to Stalin and Hitler, “Things are going well *because* we are here.”

Over the winter of 1942-1943 the pivotal battle of the war raged in the city of Stalingrad. House-to-house fighting coupled with the harsh winter weather created almost unbearable conditions for both German and Russian alike. However, the extended German supply lines and the pressing need for troops on other fronts stretched the German Army too thin. On 19 November 1942, The Red Army launched a giant pincer attack that totally surrounded and isolated the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad. Hitler made an attempt to break through and relieve the trapped Germans but was unsuccessful. Without adequate supplies and equipment the Red Army tightened the noose until recently promoted Field Marshal Von Paulus surrendered on 2 February 1943. Stalingrad broke the back of the German war machine and signaled the beginning of the end of the war in Europe. With the victory at Stalingrad, Soviet posters increasingly leaned toward positive propaganda, although posters with negative messages by no

means disappeared. This was the same time that German posters became predominantly negative, due in large part to the outcome of the same battle.

Posters with cartoon figures comprised a large part of the posters after Stalingrad, though now they served a different purpose. In 1941 the use of caricature was to deflate the image of the German soldier and convince the Soviet public that Germany could be beaten. With the victory at Stalingrad as proof that Germany was not invincible, cartoon posters suggested that the road to total victory was not only possible, but almost simple. Images of a Russian infantryman sweeping away Germans with a broom made from many bayonets tied to his rifle, or a room of rodent-like Germans throwing up their hands in the face of a single Russian soldier suggests that the rest of the war was merely a mop-up of the remaining Germans. The images of the rodent and the axe are still present; the Germans were on the run, but they were still sneaky, treacherous animals. Using similar images such as these ensured that a healthy dose of anger and hatred was thrown in.

Posters in 1942 illustrated the need for production, 1943 posters show the fruits of Russian industry. Posters show masses of troops and tanks advancing while aircraft scream overhead and artillery booms in the background. In comparison to earlier posters the troops no longer advance behind the tanks but are running alongside or riding on top. The image of a soldier running alongside a tank (and being able to keep up with it) hint that victory is near or rapidly approaching and that the Germans are fleeing so fast that men must ride on tanks to keep up. As a result of the victories at Stalingrad and Kursk, posters of late 1943 and early 1944 make the shift from being predominantly negative to

positive. Additionally they focus on the bravery and valor of Soviet soldiers and partisans rather than the atrocities of the Germans. The message shifts from “see why we fight” to “behold our glorious victory.” Medals also begin to appear in posters. Citations and recognition are given after a battle. By showing medals in posters, the government was suggesting that the last battles were over and the war was nearing its close, even though the fighting continued on into 1945. In some cases, the medal is small, but conspicuous, in others, the poster is a montage with an enormous medal superimposed over a battle scene or some other victorious image.

Despite the fact that they are few in number, the negative posters of the last few months of war are particularly telling. As the allies closed in on Germany and liberated the surrounding countries they discovered the intricate network of camps established by the Nazis. On 27 January Soviet troops marching through Poland liberated Auschwitz-Birkenau. In April the Americans liberated Buchenwald and the British liberated Bergen-Belsen. In July the Soviets liberated Majdanek death camp, south of Warsaw. With the liberation of these camps, the gruesome images of early Soviet posters were brought to startling reality. The bestial cartoons and the butcher-axe motif were substantiated. As the main targets of Hitler’s war, the Soviets had already seen their share of atrocities. The *Einsatzgruppen* followed behind the army at the launching of Barbarossa, villages were liquidated in reprisal for partisan activities, and as the Red Army crossed Ukraine they found the Nazi attempts to cover up the murder of over 30,000 Russian Jews at Babi Yar. But the discovery of the camps took the accusation of the Hitler and the Germans as butchers to a new level.

Many of the older poster themes were resurrected and magnified. Hitler the “Man Eater” (fig. A12) who formerly sat in uniform on a pile of skulls, gnawing on a femur was now in the middle of a war-torn wasteland, naked, hunched over an open sarcophagus fishing about in a soup of blood, bones and decayed human remains with one hand while his dripping mouth chews on a bone held in the other. Across the sarcophagus is written “Majdanek.” The Soviet tendency toward humor persists in the poster’s title. The poster is entitled “The Philanthropic Hitler” (fig. A13) and plays on the definition of philanthropy; love of man, by suggesting that to Hitler’s love of man is in terms of cannibalism. Included at the bottom of the poster is a quote from Goebbels, taken from an article he published in *Das Reich*. The quote reads, “If the world could know what the Führer would give to it, and how deep a love of mankind he has.”

War posters of 1945 also became more like those of the other nations in that there were fewer with block text or excessive amounts of writing. More often than not the posters contained only a few words, the most popular one being “Слава” (glory). The combat scenes are replaced by small groups of soldiers with their arms around each others’ shoulders or sitting in the back of a lorry enjoying the sound of an accordion. The soldiers are bedecked with numerous medals to show their bravery.

The last trend of Russia’s WWII posters is to credit Stalin as the man who won the war. At the end of the war, posters exclaim “Glory to the Stalin Artillery” and “Glory to the Stalin Guards,” thus still giving credit to the men who fought, but adding Stalin’s name. The best example comes from a poster that contains a child perched on the shoulders of a decorated soldier. With one of the child’s arms raised in praise, the

smiling pair exclaim “Thanks to Stalin!” With the soldier representing the victorious present and the child representing the hopeful future, the poster forges the final link tying Stalin to the prosperous future. Victoria Bonnell, in her book on Soviet propaganda demonstrates that Stalin’s capitalizing on the victory ushered in an era of “High Stalinism.”⁶⁶ Posters reverted back to the characteristics of Socialist Realism. Only Stalin’s image and name appeared more often than any other image (workers and peasants included), giving him credit for virtually everything.

Soviet posters during the Second World War set themselves apart from all other nations in several ways, the first and most important factor being their foundation on the literacy propaganda machine that was established under Lenin. The Nazi regime was also founded on propaganda, but it did not have the history or the ideological backing that was present in the Soviet Union. The Bolshevik regime secured power by convincing the masses that the Bolsheviks represented their interests. Because of the vastness of Russia, printed materials, especially posters, served as the main vehicle for speaking to the public. The Bolshevik literacy campaign established a foundation upon which the propaganda state could build.

The second unique characteristic of Soviet posters ties closely with the first and is the use of large amounts of text. The multi-panel layout adaptation of the *lubok* was used during the Revolution by the Bolsheviks, who in turn used it because of historical precedent. Returning to that same layout in the Great Patriotic War was a way by which Stalin could tie himself and the war to Lenin and the Revolution. Because of Lenin’s

⁶⁶ Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 234.

god-like status, Stalin needed only connect his regime to Lenin. He linked the past with the present, and promised a future if the people supported him.

Lenin's propaganda machine used lots of text so that the people could be indoctrinated according to Bolshevik design. By continuing to use block text in posters, not only did Stalin present posters as blown-up *luboks* of the past, but he, like Lenin, could be assured that the viewer would be guided to the correct interpretation of the imagery in the poster. If a picture was worth a thousand words, Stalin, like Lenin, wanted to be sure that the masses did not misinterpret a single one of them. The viewer, through tradition, read the poster and accepted its visual and textual message because that was how they had been taught to read. Large amounts of text in Russian posters were simply another means of indoctrination and control, ensuring that the "correct" message was taken from the poster.

A final trend in Soviet posters is their use of humor, irony and satire to both attack the enemy and motivate the masses. The "other" was of course demonized and degraded, but in Russian propaganda the element of humor adds a unique twist. Seldom in German or American posters does one see such comedic or humorous overtones. Britain, as will be seen later, used humor in posters, but not the darker humor and satire used by the Soviet Union. An excellent example of this dark humor can be seen in the *lubok* poster "How German shells get to where they are going." The poster tells the story of a shipment of German artillery shells that is hijacked and captured by partisans. The partisans then load the captured shells into their own guns and fire on the German artillery, thus delivering the shells to where they were going (fig. A14). The poster

serves another role; it instructs partisans in the ways of conducting irregular warfare. Another example of dark humor is the previously mentioned “Man-loving Hitler” poster’s play on words.

The Soviet Union was as unique in its poster propaganda campaign as it was in its economic and social system. As a state founded on propaganda, The Soviet Union already had an efficient system of indoctrination set up by Lenin and the Bolsheviks and needed only to shift the content and tone of the propaganda that it produced. Nevertheless, the propaganda of the Soviet Union during the war upheld the pattern established in the preceding chapter. In the opening stages of the war, because of the initial defeats and military disasters, Soviet posters were negatively themed. After 1942 they became much more positive. The victories at Stalingrad and Kursk broke the German Army and a positive end to the war came into view. If it had not been for the discovery of the concentration and extermination camps, Soviet propaganda posters would probably not have had negative themes at all in 1945.

CHAPTER IV

THE UNITED STATES

The Soviet Union and Nazi Germany were both founded on propaganda. The United States, on the other hand, was not created, nor sustained, through continuous propaganda. During the First World War, America was only involved for a little more than a year and did not have the amount of time to work at and perfect the propaganda poster as the other nations involved. Americans were disillusioned with the results of “the war to end all wars” and were even more adverse to propaganda as a weapon.⁶⁷ But this deficiency in experience was more than compensated for by the experiences of the advertising industry in the early twentieth century and the important relationship forged between that industry and the government during the First World War. Curiously, Carroll’s previously mentioned book on American propaganda criticized the United States for failing to fully adapt its advertising practices to the production of propaganda.⁶⁸ As will be seen, America was quite effective in utilizing the advertising industry as producers of propaganda. In the 1920s, American President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed, “the chief business of the America people, is business.” The same is true of the American poster propaganda campaign in the Second World War.

In 1903, Walter Dill Scott, a professor of psychology at Northwestern University, published an article in *Atlantic Monthly* entitled “The Psychology of Advertising.” Scott argued that marketing and advertising schemes were not as effective as they could be

⁶⁷ Rhodes, *Propaganda*, 139.

⁶⁸ Wallace Carroll, *Persuade or Perish* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1948), 4.

because they failed to appeal to the appropriate emotions of the consumer. The most important technique, he argued, was to utilize cheerfulness and happiness in ads rather than pain and discomfort.⁶⁹ A shoe advertisement, for example, ought to show the comfort and pleasure of wearing the advertiser's brand, rather than the discomfort of wearing the competitor's product. Dove-tailing with the favorable response to positive ads was the disdain of ads that made extravagant claims that often proved to be false. Consumers had little patience for advertisements that were based on lies.

This idea of favoring positive advertisements over negative ones was widely accepted by the advertising industry and, as we shall see, continued when the advertisers of the nation turned their attention to war campaigns. The United States, harking to the advice given by Professor Scott, favored the use of positive images and slogans. As a result, American posters were never dominated by negatively themes, even immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor. American poster producers did print hate-filled, fear-based, and other negatively themed posters, but unlike the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, negative posters in the United States never dominated. Thus upholding the trend that negative posters are more prevalent when the war is going badly while at the same time following Scott's advice on making advertising (or propaganda) more effective.

When America entered the First World War, the government created the Committee on Public Information to oversee propaganda at home. The committee was sub-divided into various offices under the general leadership of newspaper editor George

⁶⁹ Victor Margolin, Ira Brichta and Vivian Brichta. *The Promise and the Product: 200 Years of American Advertising Posters* (New York: Macmillan, 1979), 62.

Creel. One of these sub-offices was the Division of Advertising. This division was responsible for magazine, newspaper, and poster propaganda and included some of the most prominent men in the advertising industry on the board of directors. William H. Johns, president of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, served as chairman of the board.⁷⁰ Although the Creel Committee only existed for two years, it laid the crucial foundations of a government-backed advertising/propaganda machine. When the United States entered the Second World War, it created a modified rendition of the Creel Committee.⁷¹ During the First World War, and to a large extent during the second, the advertising industry was not just a part of America's propaganda machine; it *was* America's propaganda machine.

In fact, Even before Pearl Harbor the United States had a functioning political and psychological warfare department. The Office of Facts and Figures, established in 1941 under the direction of William Donovan, tried primarily to plead the case to the American public for aiding Britain against Germany. In 1942, President Roosevelt established the Office of War Information (OWI) under Elmer Davis to direct "white" (overt) propaganda efforts.⁷² The OWI incorporated the Office of Facts and Figures.

Prior to 7 December 1941, the United States printed military-related posters on a limited scale. Most of the posters printed were for recruiting and appealed to the viewer's sense of patriotism and duty. Most posters used the word "career" in one

⁷⁰ James R. Mock and Cedric Larson, *Words that Won the War: The Story of the Committee on Public Information, 1917-1919* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939), 96.

⁷¹ Mock, *Words that Won the War*, 346.

⁷² Rhodes, *Propaganda*, 144.

context or another, suggesting that service in the military would all but guarantee a job once discharged, or that a career in the military was steady, desirable profession. In the late 30s the United States was coming out of the Great Depression, although by no means was it out of it entirely. Fifteen per cent of the population was unemployed, and a job was still a precious commodity.⁷³ The only negative posters (which were few indeed) made references to the evils of fascism and reminded the viewers to remember that no matter how bad their lot in life may have been, when compared to the oppressed people of totalitarian regimes, it could be worse.

In addition to recruiting, the government had also been producing posters urging production and the purchase of government bonds. America's role as the primary arms supplier for Great Britain necessitated the need for economic posters. Posters urged citizens to "buy a share in America." At the time, bonds were referred to as Defense Bonds. After Pearl Harbor the title was switched to War or Victory Bonds.

The biggest surprise about the posters produced in 1941 is the lack of negative, revenge-based or hate-filled posters. Obviously one has to take into account that Pearl Harbor was not attacked until the end of the year, but the presence of other military posters indicate that the means to produce more were already in place. The Soviet Union, for example, had revenge posters published and spread throughout Moscow within two weeks of the German invasion. However, posters like the famous; "Remember Dec 7" did not appear until 1942. Despite the obvious shock and outrage that Americans felt upon hearing of the attack, the majority of posters produced

⁷³ US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics [on-line] available at <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat1.pdf> [accessed 8 June 2006].

immediately afterwards were not hateful in nature. They pushed for enlistment, to be sure, but the idea of a “career” in the military was secondary. The posters prior to Pearl Harbor are very passive, merely inviting the viewer. After Pearl Harbor, posters become active and compelling. Phrases such as “Make the regular army your career” were replaced with “Arise Americans.”

Next to recruiting, the common theme among early American posters is that of industrial and economic victory. Posters encouraged workers to work longer hours, work faster, and take fewer days off. One of the most famous American posters, “Give ‘em both barrels,” (fig. A15) illustrated the vital link between the home front and the battlefield. Part of this industrial emphasis involved the mix of war propaganda and direct advertising. As has been previously stated, the advertising industry provided valuable tools, tactics and leadership in the area of poster propaganda, but the corporate world also benefited from the relationship. Many posters on the home front were produced by some branch of the Office of War Information (OWI). In addition to governmental agencies, private industries and individuals were free to publish their own posters with the dual benefit of supporting the war effort while shamelessly adding a plug for their products.⁷⁴ One such poster urges American to buy war bonds and stamps

⁷⁴ William Bird and Harry Rubenstein, curators at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, published a brief study of American home front posters. Their book, *Produce for Victory*, provides a sample list of organizations that contributed posters to the war effort including corporations like General Motors, Boeing Aircraft, Kroger Grocery and Baking and RCA in addition to numerous government agencies such as the Departments of the Army and Navy, the Treasury, the Agriculture and the Office of Defense Transportation in addition to the OWI. Finally, other organizations like the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations added their own contributions.

in order to “clear the way, on to victory.” Yet along the bottom of the poster in same-sized letters one reads “Esslinger’s Premium Beer and Little Man Ale.” Another poster urging the purchase of war bonds is brought to you by Hygrade Lamps. The lack of centralization in American poster production was both a blessing and a curse. More producers meant more posters, but agencies and organizations spent as much time fighting each other for funds and influence as they did fighting the psychological war against the Axis.⁷⁵

This tends to support Roetter’s and Balfour’s criticism of Britain and the United States for not running propaganda ministries with a firmer, more centralized hand; however, if the United States had kept an iron grip on poster production as Germany and the Soviet Union had done, thousands of businesses and tens of thousands of posters would have remained unprinted for lack of official approval or would have been lost in the giant propaganda machine. By allowing private enterprise to advertise through propaganda the United States made more effective use of its resources.

Many of the companies that produced war materiel published posters that encouraged workers to put in longer hours, take better care of tools, avoid idleness, and invent new ideas for making production more efficient. These posters were somewhat sneaky in that serve both the patriotic war effort and help to line the fattening pockets of war industrialists. Longer hours, faster workers and functioning tools meant that more planes, tanks and guns would be available for the military. At the same time, more efficient industry was the ticket to government contracts. This is not to say that war

⁷⁵ Rhodes, *Propaganda*, 144.

profiteering was unique only to America, far from it. German and Italian companies like Mercedes, Porsche, Siemens and BMW all made enormous sums of money from the war. The difference is that America embraced the capitalist spirit utilized it as a tool of war. In regards to posters, America placed the most emphasis on the areas that it specialized in; economy and industry. Germany was not ignorant of the United States' position as an industrial superpower. In fact, near the end of the war, German propaganda leaflets dropped on American positions turned the idea on its head and suggested that big business, industry, and even wage-laborers were conspiring to prolong the war at the cost of soldiers' lives in order to make more money.

With the nation fully and officially engaged in the war against both Japan and Germany, the production of propaganda posters soared. The year 1942 was the most important year of the war in terms of propaganda for the Allies, especially the United States. America had the task of motivating and directing the country for a war that it was not ready for, and did not want. Even after Germany had invaded Poland, Denmark, Norway, France and the Low Countries, the United States wanted no part in the war. Gallup Polls taken throughout 1940 revealed that Americans disapproved of Germany's actions, wanted to increase America's armed forces, and were even willing to increase taxes to pay for the increase in defense spending, but as late as 22 November 1941, just two weeks before Pearl Harbor, 61 percent of Americans were still opposed to entering the war.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ The Gallup Poll. *Public Opinion 1935-1971*, vol. I, s.v. 1940 and 1941 (New York: Random House, 1972).

The decentralization of production resulted in a flood of propaganda posters that made possible a statement by OWI official Thomas Mabry, “People should wake up to find visual messages everywhere, like new snow – every man, woman and child should be reached and moved by the message.”⁷⁷ To give an example of the sheer volume of posters that took the country by storm; J. Walter Wilkinson and Walter G. Wilkinson, a father-and-son artist team created a poster for the U.S. Treasury entitled, “You buy ‘em, we’ll fly ‘em.” The treasury ordered 1.5 million copies of this poster alone.⁷⁸

One of the largest organizations that helped the war effort at home was the War Advertising Council, known today as simply the Ad Council. Some of America’s most memorable wartime campaigns were sponsored and administered directly by or in conjunction with the War Advertising Council. The first, and most successful campaign, began in January 1942 with the drive for Defense Bonds. Famous slogans such as “Loose Lips Sink Ships,” “Keep It Under Your Stetson,” (as opposed to the British version, “Keep It Under Your Hat”) and Rosie the Riveter’s “We can do it” (fig. A16) were all creations of the War Advertising Council. By combining patriotism with capitalistic incentive, the Council was able to harness one of the nation’s greatest resources; money. In the War Bond drive alone over 350 million dollars worth of donated time and ad materials were collected for the campaign, resulting in the purchase over 800 million individual bonds by nearly 85 million Americans.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ As quoted in Bird and Rubenstein, *Produce for Victory*, 11.

⁷⁸ Bird and Rubenstein, *Produce for Victory*, 22.

⁷⁹ Ad Council, *Historical Campaigns* [on-line], available from <http://www.adcouncil.org/default.aspx?id=61> [accessed 8 June 2006].

Although economic posters comprised the largest group in the United States they were not alone. With an army to raise, patriotic fervor to whip up, and the need to take the occasional pot-shot at the enemy, America had to produce posters that catered to all aspects of war. Enlistment posters that appealed to notions of duty and patriotism were the second most common group in 1942. This is not surprising in the least. In order to fight a war a country needs a military. What is surprising is the relative lack of hate-filled or revenge based recruiting posters. They existed, no doubt about it. Posters calling on Americans to “Avenge December 7th” and “Remember Pearl Harbor” (fig. A17) were put up along side positive recruiting posters. Other posters depicted buck-toothed men with exaggerated physical features and a perpetual devilish grin.⁸⁰ But more often than not recruiting posters appealed to the viewer’s sense of duty, patriotism, and tradition. These posters stand in stark contrast to posters produced by the Soviet Union after their surprise attack from Germany. Hate and revenge were the bread and butter of early Soviet posters.

The use of celebrities was another feature that further demonstrated the influence of the advertising industry on poster propaganda. A Ford B-24 factory in Willow Run, Michigan published a poster that included a caricature of racecar driver and WWI flying ace Eddie Rickenbacker. The poster promises, “Yessir! Rick, we’ll make Willow Run Hitler’s headache.” The army put out a poster of Boxer Joe Louis who joined the army in 1942 as a private. Using Louis was particularly significant given the fact that in 1938

⁸⁰ See John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1986) for an analysis of American attitudes toward the Japanese during the war. Additionally, Dower’s study sheds light on the phenomenon that Germans were never targeted with the same intensity as Japan.

he knocked out German boxing champ Max Schmeling during a title rematch. Louis had been badly beaten in his first bout with Schmeling in 1936, and after winning the rematch in less than three minutes, Louis became an icon. As an African-American he was considered by the Nazis as an *Untermensch*, a sub-human. Schmeling on the other hand represented the ideal Nazi Aryan, thus the Louis-Schmeling bouts became a contest of ideologies. Ironically, The Louis-Schmeling fights also mirrored the course of the war between America and Germany.⁸¹

America was not alone in using prominent, non-political figures to promote the war effort. The Soviet Union also utilized unique individuals in their posters, but the approach used was much different. When Soviet pilot Nikolai Gastello's plane was hit by flak and doomed to crash, Gastello steered the burning hulk towards a nearby German column, striking the fuel trucks and causing them to explode. Stalin posthumously awarded Gastello the Hero of the Soviet Union and used him in posters to inspire the troops to fight the Germans even when the situation seemed hopeless, which many did. What separated Soviet posters of this nature from American was that the Soviet figures were made icons because of their actions in battle whereas the American figures, like Joe Louis, were famous before joining the service. It should be noted that Max Schmeling, the German boxing celebrity, joined the *Fallshirmjaeger* (German paratroopers), yet he was never used in German posters to motivate others to enlist.

⁸¹ After initial defeats due to lack of training and preparedness, such as the defeat at Kasserine Pass, the Americans learned from their mistakes, quickly adapted to their new foe and were much more successful.

The Joe Louis poster was important for another reason. The caption read, “Pvt. Joe Louis says; ‘we’re going to do our part... and we’ll win because we’re on God’s side’” (fig. A18). Whether or not Louis actually made the comment is irrelevant. The important fact is that America invoked the power of God in the war effort. Another poster produced in 1942 depicts three outstretched arms, one holding a rifle, the other two holding wrenches. Divine light shines down on the hands as they thrust their determined fists toward heaven. At the top of the poster was the text, “Strong in the strength of the Lord, we who fight the people’s cause will never stop until that cause is won” (fig. A19). President Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms, one of which is freedom of worship, were made into famous posters by Norman Rockwell. By using religion as a positive motivating factor in the poster campaign, American propagandists were turning the war into a crusade, much like President Woodrow Wilson did during the First World War.

This is not to say that the soldiers in the other countries involved were atheist or left God on the sidelines. Germany was the home of Martin Luther and the beginning of the Reformation. The belt buckles of German soldiers were inscribed with “*Gott Mit Uns*” (God is with us) as were the buckles of their fathers who served in the First World War. Russia, as has already been discussed, had a very deep religious history, and although communism espouses atheism, the Russian Orthodox Church was given increased leniency and allowed to flourish during the war because it helped unite and inspire the masses. Priests were encouraged to publicly and vocally pray for Mother

Russia and victory.⁸² But despite their deep religious roots, neither Germany nor the Soviet Union used religion in posters in the same way as the United States. Only Britain, the other democratic belligerent in this study, used God and religion as a positive motivating factor in poster propaganda.

It is interesting to compare the German belt buckles with Louis' comment. The buckles state "God is with us" while Louis' poster says "we are with God." The German slogan puts man in front with God as close support. Germany is doing the work with God's blessing. Louis, on the other hand, makes it sound more like God is fighting the war and America is simply helping out where it can. Statements such as Louis' further created the image of American intervention in the war as a crusade. While the Germans went to war dragging God along on their belts, America answered when God called on His way to the front. The German use of God is more aggressive. The American use is more defensive.

In the later war years, Germany produced a few posters that contained crosses in a religious context (as opposed to grave markers), but in such posters the religious reference was added for poignancy. Take for example the poster "Bolshevism is Murder"⁸³ (fig. A6). The religious implications are obvious, but they are not the central image of the poster, nor are they positive motivations. Rather than encouraging the people to fight with God (as American posters did), posters such as "Bolshevism is Murder" threaten the people to fight in fear of losing Him. The democratic, religiously tolerant nation therefore embraced religion as a positive motivating factor while the

⁸² Werth, *Russia at War*, chapter VI.

⁸³ Rhodes, *Propaganda*, 200.

atheist dictatorship only used religion in a traditional or religious context. As we shall see with Great Britain, the positive use of religion (if used at all) falls along distinct democratic/totalitarian lines.

The biggest surprise of America's first years in the war was that positive posters outweighed negative ones. Additionally, the negative posters that were produced were not as hate-centered as might be expected. Certainly, there were many posters that appealed to the nation's sense of revenge while others depicted the beastliness of the "other." The more prominent purpose of negative posters, however, was the creation of guilt for not doing one's job rather than stirring up hate. Some posters asked, "Our boys are giving their all, are you?", while other posters warned that "enemy ears are listening" and encouraged the viewer to "button your lip" because "loose talk costs lives." In fact, the major theme of negative posters was closely related to the main themes of positive ones. Positive posters were designed to increase production and generate funds while negative posters sought to ensure that the money raised and the goods manufactured were not needlessly lost. Using the carrot-stick method, posters of the early war years sought to harness America's economic resources.

Posters in 1943 focused, as they did in 1942, almost totally on the war at home, and rightly so. Soldiers would not see them, nor would the enemy see them. American posters did not have to combat the mental consequences of a successful German invasion as the Soviet Union did. American posters also did not have to pacify conquered, subjugated, and often hostile populations as the Germans did. By being physically removed from battle (even Pearl Harbor was "over there") American propaganda posters

had fewer areas to cover and thus could concentrate more fully on those areas. Posters dealt with everything from victory gardens and rationing to production and secrecy. Women began to appear more and more in posters, sometimes with male counterparts, but frequently as the sole figure in the poster. Except for secrecy posters, where motivation was based on guilt and fear, posters of 1943 are positive and in many cases uplifting.

Rather than be authoritative, American posters pulled at the moral and patriotic heartstrings of the viewer and seemed to leave the course of action up to them. One of the most famous poster series of the war, in fact, was printed in 1943 and illustrates this point. Norman Rockwell created a series of four posters based on the aforementioned “Four Freedoms” from President Roosevelt’s 6 January 1941 speech to Congress. Each of the four posters focused on one of the four freedoms (freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, freedom from fear) and presented some of the most stunning examples of positive propaganda to come out of the war. The text of each poster was limited to the respective freedom printed across the bottom and across the top and simply said “OURS...to fight for.” [Caps original] Neither the poster nor the captions suggested a specific course of action. Was the viewer to fight by joining the military? Were they to buy more war bonds? Were they prompting women viewers to get a job in a factory or join the Red Cross as a nurse? The answer to all of these questions is, yes. The poster was open to interpretation. It simply utilized positive emotions such as love of family and patriotism to motivate the viewer to act. The

British, as we shall see, used this same tactic. Democratic nations made democratic posters. The viewer was encouraged to do *anything*, so long as they did *something*.

“Americans will always fight for liberty”⁸⁴ [Original emphasis] is another example of a positive, open-ended poster, although a military course of action is much more strongly suggested. The poster depicts a parade of modern infantrymen marching past ranks of colonial militiamen. The tattered clothes of the revolutionaries and their stoic expressions tell the viewer this war, like the American Revolution, will be long and hard, but the cause is just. Both this poster and Rockwell’s “Four Freedoms” successfully appealed to duty and responsibility without appealing to guilt.

Other posters were not so positive. A poster centering on the five Sullivan brothers, although positive in image, appeals to guilt as a motivation. The brothers enlisted together and all five were stationed on the *USS Juneau*. On 13 November 1942 the *Juneau* was sunk, claiming the lives of all five brothers. In the poster, the brothers look at the viewer with playful smiles on their faces. The situation seems almost cheerful until the viewer sees written below, “[T]he five Sullivan brothers ‘missing in action’ off the Solomons. They did their part”⁸⁵ [Original emphasis]. Obviously the unwritten next sentence is “Are you doing yours?”

Posters directed at women are not so ambiguous. Men were expected to join the military, plain and simple, but because women were left with so many different responsibilities at home, posters had to be more explicit in their instructions. Although

⁸⁴ Northwestern University, *World War II Poster Collection* [on-line]. Evanston: IL. Available from <http://www.library.northwestern.edu/govinfo/collections/wwii-posters/index.html> [Accessed 8 June 2006].

⁸⁵ Northwestern University, *World War II Poster Collection*.

there were many actions and attitudes that women were told to adopt, they all fall into one of the three jobs of the home front; production, rationing and secrecy.

With so many men overseas, women had to step into many of the roles formerly occupied by men. One of the most important of these was in a position on the assembly line. The image of “Rosie the Riveter” first appeared in 1942. The familiar poster of Rosie rolling up her sleeves, exclaiming “We can do it!” was, and still remains, one of the most famous American posters of the war. The push for women in the workplace continued unabated in 1943. Women were urged to “find their place” in a war job.⁸⁶ One poster even suggested that, they might be able to not only find their place, but “find themselves” in the role of a nurse.⁸⁷ For those that entered the factories, posters acted as teaching tools. The U.S. Public Health Services released a series of posters about “Jenny on the Job” that covered nutritional eating habits, proper work attire, sanitation practices and even described the proper way to lift heavy objects.⁸⁸

Poster education was not limited to the factory. Numerous posters informed women about what was expected of them in the home, particularly in the kitchen. According to one poster, “Food is a weapon, don’t waste it. Buy wisely, cook carefully, eat it all.”⁸⁹ Leftover fat and grease was to be saved for munitions production. Families were encouraged to grow Victory Gardens and preserve their own food so that more could be sent to the military. The American campaign to “Do with less, so they’ll have enough” [Original Underline] was one of the most successful Allied food campaign due

⁸⁶ Northwestern University, *World War II Poster Collection*.

⁸⁷ Northwestern University, *World War II Poster Collection*.

⁸⁸ Northwestern University, *World War II Poster Collection*.

⁸⁹ Northwestern University, *World War II Poster Collection*.

to the fact that despite the soldier's inevitable griping over army food, and "though most G.I.'s did not like to believe it, they were fed better than the soldiers of any other army."⁹⁰

The last area of concentration on the home front is the only area in which the United States utilized negative propaganda almost without exception. Occasionally other areas, such as the war bond campaign used a negative poster or two, but only the campaign for secrecy remained predominantly negative. Posters portrayed drowning sailors, wooden crosses and mysterious, disembodied hands wearing Nazi rings under captions such as "Loose talk costs lives," "Another careless word, another wooden cross" and "Bits of careless talk are pieced together by the enemy."

On 8 November, American forces landed on the beaches of Morocco and began Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of North Africa. America's geographic isolation, useful in defense, was a great hindrance when on the attack. To reach North Africa an American G.I. had to cross three thousand miles of U-boat infested ocean. Secrecy about sailing schedules and troop movements was paramount, thus the United States resorted to negative posters inspiring fear and guilt as their prime motivation. By 1943, America had pushed the Germans from Africa, Sicily, and was landing troops on the Italian coast, but troops still had to make the perilous voyage across the Atlantic. The negative tempo establish for secrecy posters in 1942 did not let up one iota. Even the one poster that does not appeal specifically to fear or guilt has negative tones. The poster depicts the head of a soldier looking over his shoulder at the viewer and with a

⁹⁰ Lee Kennett, *G.I.: The American Soldier in World War II* (New York: Scribner, 1987), 98.

suspicious look he asks, “Who wants to know?” (fig. A20). “Silence means security” is written across the bottom of the poster. Though not instilling fear or guilt, this poster encourages suspicion and distrust of others.

It is somewhat surprising that secrecy took so long before becoming a prominent theme in American posters when one considers the tremendous responsibility that the United States bore as a supplier of war supplies to Britain and Russia both before and after Pearl Harbor. Roosevelt signed the Lend-Lease Act in March of 1941, even before Germany invaded the Soviet Union. All of the supplies had to cross the Atlantic and were subject to the mercy of Hitler’s U-boats. After Pearl Harbor, and before Soviet industry recovered in the Caucasus, The United States was almost supplying the entire Allied war effort by itself. With such a burden on the US Merchant Navy one would assume that more secrecy posters would have been created. In fact, by 1943, when secrecy became more prominent in posters, the war in the Atlantic had already swung in the Allies’ favor. This was to ensure that the American public did not become lax in areas of secrecy just because the war in the Atlantic was being won. To start celebrating too early could lead to disaster.

At the same time themes like women’s roles and secrecy make their big debut in 1943, other previously established trends continued. The use of religion in posters continued in 1943, though its previously positive instances have faded away into much darker ones. The previously mentioned “Another careless word, another wooden cross” is a simple poster, depicting a single cross slightly leaning under the weight of the American helmet and bandolier hanging from it. Using the cross as a Christian symbol

of death is a complete turn from an earlier poster utilizing the cross as a symbol of faith and hope. The starkest example of using religion negatively in posters can be seen in “This is the enemy” (fig. A21). The mysterious, disembodied hand again is presented only this time it is stabbing a German bayonet through a copy of the Bible. The Bible cover is cleverly drawn so that its bent and torn form actually gives the book the appearance of being in pain. Whereas in earlier days religion was a motivation and a positive influence in the war, it had been turned on its head just a year later. This is for the same reason posters promoted secrecy the most after the climax of the war in the Atlantic. If the public started to believe that the end of the war was near they might create slack in the war effort and give the Axis time to make a comeback. It was more important that the American war machine be kept at peak capacity until the war was truly over.

Several crucial events involving American soldiers took place in 1944. American troops captured Rome, invaded northern France, participated in the disaster of Market Garden, and defeated Hitler’s last desperate offensive in western Europe. But regardless of America’s biggest year in the war, militarily speaking, the posters at home continued the trends of previous years. Positive posters emphasizing economic factors continued to dominate although a few negative ones were slipped in for motivation through guilt and the importance of secrecy.

Wars are expensive. The Great War, for example, cost the Allies over 125 billion dollars and the Central Powers over 60 billion, and that was a war without the wide use of expensive equipment such as airplanes, tanks and aircraft carriers. Even though the

United States was the world's leading industrial nation by the outbreak of World War II, it still had to find a way to pay for everything that industry produced. Taxation was one method used, but an unpopular one. As it did with military service and the war of production, the government needed to convince the public to give up their money voluntarily to maintain the "aura" of democracy. If the government resorted to mandatory contributions, they could be seen as listing toward the compulsory methods of dictatorships. The solution was to raise funds through war loans in the form of bond sales. Although war loans began in early 1942, they did not reach their peak until 1944 (Table 1).

<u>War Loan</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Sales (billions)</u>
First	1942	13
Second	1943	18.5
Third	1943	19
Fourth	1944	16.7
Fifth	1944	20.6
Sixth	1944	21.6
Seventh	1945	26
Eighth, or Victory	1945	21

Table 1 - United States War Bond Revenue. Source: *Brief History of World War Two Advertising Campaigns: War Loans and Bonds* [on-line]. John W. Harlman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; available from <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess/warbonds.html>; accessed 7 April 2006.

The War Loans of the 1944 roughly coincide with the preparation and aftermath of major campaigns. Of the three loans, one began in January, one in June and the last in November. War Loans received incredible amounts of attention in terms of advertising and propaganda. After three full years of conflict, through victories and defeats, American poster propaganda continued to focus on industry and economics. Positive

posters urged production and bond drives while negative posters emphasized secrecy and the need to protect the goods produced. The trends that began in 1941 continued through 1944 and into 1945.

The fact that the volume of posters produced drops significantly in 1945 is not surprising. Germany, shattered both within and without, surrendered on 8 May. The Japanese capitulated three months later. With the war drawing to a close, there was no further need of mass poster campaigns. Army posters that referred to soldier discharges and how to adjust to life back home began to appear. But even with the end of the war in sight, American propaganda posters still followed the same trend of emphasizing production and the economic aspects of the home front.

For example, one final bond drive was held in 1945, although it was held after Japan surrendered and the war officially ended. Even more surprising is the fact that despite the cessation of hostilities, the Eighth, or Victory Loan was still a stunning success, raising over 21 billion dollars.⁹¹ Other posters urged aircraft production, Victory Gardens, and funds for the Red Cross to care for wounded veterans. Money and production were still the central items in war posters. The need for secrecy and guilt-based posters was no longer necessary and such posters were absent in 1945. In fact, negative posters as a whole virtually disappeared. The war had been won; there was no longer a need to degrade the enemy. On the contrary, America had a new task once the war was over as the occupying force in Japan. The United States had to cultivate relationships diplomatically, economically, and socially with the very people with whom

⁹¹ John W. Harlman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History at Duke University, *War Loans and Bonds* [on-line].

they had been locked in life-or-death struggles only weeks before. After the surrender of Japan the removal of anti-Japanese sentiment in posters was not only prudent, but necessary because of America's new role as caretaker and re-builder of the Japanese nation.⁹²

As the world's leading industrial power the United States had enormous production potential when it entered the war. Being separated from both fronts by great oceans, the United States could concentrate its efforts and focus its campaigns on harnessing and channeling her greatest resources in relative safety. A Japanese invasion of California or a German invasion of New York was highly improbable, thus allowing America to produce war material for most of the Allied war effort unmolested until the Soviet Union got back on its feet. Scholar Anthony Rhodes, although he had little to say about posters specifically, asserted that America's victory was primarily thanks to its industrial capacity and ability to make that industrial capacity known to allies and enemies alike.⁹³ The American poster propaganda campaign illustrated this ability.

Another interpretation of America's emphasis on industry and economy suggests that such poster campaigns were not designed to celebrate a union between labor and business, but rather realizing both the importance of production and the rocky history of American labor, posters were designed in an attempt to create this unity.⁹⁴ But whether the posters represent the dream or the reality, the fact remains that American propaganda posters focused primarily on industry.

⁹² See John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999).

⁹³ Rhodes, *Propaganda*, 158.

⁹⁴ See Bird and Rubenstein, *Produce for Victory*.

American poster campaigns throughout the entire war never wavered in their emphasis on the economic victory. Negative posters were few in number and the emotion invoked most often was guilt for either not contributing to production or not protecting the transportation of finished products through careless talk. Even after the attack on Pearl Harbor, anti-Japanese posters are fewer in number than Soviet anti-German posters in 1941 or German anti-Semitic posters in 1944. The advertisement industry, and hence the propaganda machine of the war, adhered to Scott's assertion that the public react more favorably to positive advertisements than negative ones.

CHAPTER V

GREAT BRITAIN

The British Empire holds a unique place in the history of the Second World War as the only European country to have seen the entire war through. Britain was among the first to go to war in 1939 when Germany invaded Poland. In the summer of 1940 after the fall of France, but before the invasion of the Soviet Union, Britain stood alone against Hitler's armies. After the surrender of Germany in 1945 and the war in Europe ended, Britain continued to fight in the Far East against the Japanese. No other western nation involved in the war, on either side, can claim to have fought from beginning to end except Britain.

In the First World War, Britain had one of the most successful propaganda campaigns of any country involved. Their campaigns were so successful that Hitler sought to base his own propaganda machine on the British methods used in the war.⁹⁵ The propaganda the British used in the First World War, however, was so heavy-handed, exaggerated, and often outright false, that when the public discovered the truth they were understandably offended. Because of the use of lies and deceit, propaganda became suspect in Britain and was shunned by politicians due to its unpopular link to the Great War.⁹⁶

Goebbels had shown in Germany how effective propaganda could be both used as a morale booster at home and a weapon abroad. Great Britain had to meet the

⁹⁵ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 176, 181.

⁹⁶ Rhodes, *Propaganda*, 107.

challenge with their own propaganda machine, but Britain's previous experience with it in the First World War demonstrated that they could not resort to sensationalism or outright deceit in their campaign. As the United States learned from the advertising industry, Britain learned from the previous war that positive propaganda was more readily accepted by the public. The new British approach was to base all propaganda on a kernel of truth, and to be cautious in timing its delivery to the people; even a military defeat for the British could be spun so as to use all its propagandistic value before the Nazis could capitalize on it. For example, the evacuation of Dunkirk in June of 1940 was a military disaster for the British, but a propaganda triumph. The German war machine had smashed the French and driven the British Expeditionary Force to the coast of the English Channel. With the German Army in front and their backs to the channel, the BEF stood little chance of survival. But because of delays in decision making by the German High Command, the British Navy, along with the help of thousands of private yachts, schooners and dinghies, over three-hundred thousand soldiers were safely evacuated. The core of the British Army was saved, but at the cost of all their weapons, equipment, and morale. The German Army had soundly thrashed the British, yet the whole affair is remembered in England as the "Miracle" of Dunkirk.⁹⁷ One article in the *Times* congratulated the BEF for carrying out what the author referred to as "the most

⁹⁷ BBC News, 30 May 2000 available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/765004.stm>; Internet; accessed 12 September 2006.

difficult of all operations of war” [ie. retreat] in open view of the enemy.⁹⁸ Through the skillful use of propaganda, a military disaster was given a positive spin.

What made British propaganda posters unique is the adaptation of the lessons learned from the First World War. Having abused the trust of the public by printing false information for the purpose of stirring emotion, British propagandists had to rely on less emotional and sensational methods. Instead, the government decided that facts were a more powerful tool than lies.

Two days after Germany invaded Poland the United Kingdom declared war on Germany. Unlike the First World War the British were in no hurry to enlist and go to the continent. Memories of trench warfare, gas attacks and machine guns were still too fresh in memory. Posters produced at the outbreak of the war are few in number and are much less aggressive than posters produced in 1914. There were no cries of “Onward to Berlin.” Although dramatically different than their WWI counterparts, WWII posters were not totally separated from them either. Familiar phrases, images and characters re-appeared, one of the most notable being the pipe-smoking “Arf A Mo” Tommy.

During the First World War the British government held a campaign at home to collect money to buy tobacco for the troops at the front. Cartoonist Bert Thomas sketched a British private standing outside the trenches, lighting a pipe, and requesting “Arf a mo, Kaiser” (Half a moment, Kaiser) so that he could enjoy a leisurely smoke (fig. A22). The campaign was enormously successful, raising a quarter of a million pounds sterling. “Arf A Mo” reappeared in the 1939, but this time the campaign had

⁹⁸ “Rapid Flow of Troops Through Dunkirk,” *The Times*, 01 June 1940, Issue 48631, pg. 6, column A.

nothing to do with tobacco. One such poster, sketched by the same Bert Thomas, depicted the same smoking private and was titled “Arf A Mo,” but encouraged the viewer to volunteer for one of the armed services (fig. A22). As both a positive and untainted image, ‘Arf a ‘Mo was ideal for use in the Second World War.

British posters, like their Soviet counterparts, used humor from the very beginning of the war, “Arf A Mo” being an example. Britain did not use the same satirical, dark-humor that the Soviet Union utilized, and focused on the lighter side of home front propaganda. Many artists such as Kenneth Bird (going by his pen name Fougasse) and Abram Games used cartoons and caricatures in their posters to add humor.⁹⁹ The messages are still the same: “Careless talk costs lives,” “Produce for victory,” etc., but the images used tend toward positive conveyance rather than negative. The British use of humor in war related material has its roots in the Great War. The First World War was so awful, especially for those at the front, that humor, irony and satire became some of the only literary and artistic means by which people could discuss the war. The war was devastating and one of the only ways to make sense of it was to belittle it.¹⁰⁰ When the Second World War broke, humor was again employed essentially water-down the war.

⁹⁹ Anthony Osley, *Persuading the People: Government Publicity in the Second World War* (London: HMSO, 1995), 44.

¹⁰⁰ See Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), for a complete discussion of the repercussions of the First World War on British society and culture, particularly in the introduction of humor and satire in literature. The classic primary example of humor, irony and satire in literature remains Robert Graves autobiography, *Good-bye to All That*.

Although the posters produced by Britain at the outbreak of the war are few in numbers, it is significant to note that they are all positive in message. Posters pull at patriotic heartstrings and seek to establish confidence in the public rather than stir up hate towards Germany. Of course, one must bear in mind that in 1939 the war was still “over there,” and Britain was not yet directly threatened. That changed the following year when the war came to Britain’s door.

Before an analysis of British posters in the early war years can be undertaken, it is necessary to briefly review the war’s progression, so that the posters may be analyzed in their proper context. By the end of 1941, Germany had conquered France and all but neutralized the British Army at Dunkirk. The debacle in Norway was a further military disaster and led to Churchill replacing Chamberlain as Prime Minister. By mid 1941, the German Army had pushed the Soviets clear to the gates of Moscow. Fighter Command had managed to win the Battle of Britain, but at a tremendous cost in men and equipment. After the Battle of Britain, the *Luftwaffe* began bombing major cities in a terror campaign. While the skies were filled with German bombers, the seas were full of German U-boats sinking the vital merchant vessels that kept the little island afloat. The “miracle” of Dunkirk negated any possibility of retaliating on land and the only means the British had to fight back was through their own terror bombing campaign, which was as ineffective (as well as destructive) as the German campaign over Britain.

Things only got worse. The Japanese launched their major offensive in the Pacific in early December and captured every British colonial possession in Southeast Asia and the Pacific with the exceptions of Australia and New Zealand. The fall of

Singapore was an even greater disaster than Dunkirk. In Africa, the British Army had appoint a new ground force commander three times due to failure and capture. The crucial port at Tobruk fell and Rommel's Afrika Korps was poised to take Cairo. By mid 1942, Britain was at its lowest point in the war; yet, its resolve and its poster propaganda remained positive, stoic and steadfast.

When Germany invaded the Soviet Union, its poster propaganda was overwhelmingly negative, hate-filled and vengeful. Great Britain reacted differently to its darker years, and its posters focused on keeping up morale rather than inspiring hate. The Ministry of Information (MOI), established at the outbreak of war in 1939, played the same propaganda role as the American Office of War Information. The MOI stated that its mission was to “publicize and interpret government policy in relation to the war, to help sustain public morale and stimulate the war effort, and to maintain a steady flow of facts and opinions calculated to further the policy of the government in the prosecution of the war.”¹⁰¹

What made British posters unique was the lack of strong-arm images and messages. Early war posters and slogans were rejected by the public because they felt that they were being harped on and treated like little children. A good example is the poster “Your Courage”¹⁰² (fig. A23). Britons disliked the poster because they felt it created a rift between them and the government. Soon thereafter, “you” and “your” in

¹⁰¹ As quoted in Osley, *Persuading the People*, 10.

¹⁰² Paul Vysny, “Weapons on the Wall: British Propaganda Posters of the Second World War” available from <http://www.standrews.ac.uk/~pv/pv/courses/posters/index.html>; Internet; accessed 14 August 2006.

posters were replaced with “us” and “our.” The perfect example of this new trend was illustrated by the 1940 poster “Let us go forward together” (fig. A23). The British people did not want to be told what to do or how to feel, and they certainly did not want to be constantly told to keep up morale. This created a troubling paradox for the MOI, which had the task of raising morale without appealing to morale.

Brendan Bracken, head of the MOI from July 1941 until the end of the war, studied reports from the Home Intelligence Division of the MOI and concluded that the people of Britain wanted to be led, but not dragged. Rather than tell them to keep up morale, they should be provided with accurate information about both the war front and the home front and be trusted to take the appropriate action. “Your Courage” was a failure because it was too patronizing.¹⁰³ In a 1942 memo to the government, Bracken argued that propaganda, rather than just being assertion, “must be more explanation: not only about the armed forces and the war situation, but also about production, labor, wartime restrictions and the big problems that affect the life of everyone today... We must stop appealing to the public or lecturing at it. One makes it furious, the other resentful.”¹⁰⁴

Another good example of the new, non-patronizing attitude was illustrated by a poster produced by the Railway Executive Committee in 1941 entitled “...still the railways carry on” (fig. A24). The poster simply stated a fact accompanied by a cartoon illustration of a bustling railway station during the blackout. The poster does not tell the viewer to “take heart for the trains still run!” rather it stated a fact and let the viewer fill

¹⁰³ Osley, *Persuading the People*, 10.

¹⁰⁴ As quoted in Osley, *Persuading the People*, 18.

in the words before the “...” Britain stood alone against Germany, her armies had barely escaped annihilation in France and London was being constantly bombed...but still the railways carried on. The previously mentioned posters by Fougasse and Abrams provide another example of how the MOI conveyed the appropriate messages without resorting to exhortation or pleading.

Further proof of Britain’s trend to favor positive posters over negative can be seen in the attention given to two separate propaganda campaigns launched in the latter-half of 1940. The first campaign was designed to generate anger toward the Nazi regime for starting the war and for the atrocities they had committed. Until that time the public distinguished between German and Nazi. The campaign’s second goal was to eliminate that distinction.¹⁰⁵ This same problem was addressed by the Americans upon their entry into the war. The OWI wanted to avoid portraying all Germans as Nazis to avoid offending the millions of German immigrants residing in the country, but at the same time the threat had to be portrayed as larger than a small group of gangsters that stole a country.¹⁰⁶ Because Britain had far fewer German immigrants than America (in addition to the fact that they were being bombed by the *Luftwaffe* daily!) the British could afford to use a wide brush to paint all Germans as Nazis. Although there were a few posters that were designed to boil British blood, the campaign was primarily driven by BBC broadcasts, booklets and pamphlets. The campaign was negative, but posters only played a minor role. When the government and the MOI wanted to send negative

¹⁰⁵ Osley, *Persuading the People*, 20.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 122.

messages they relied on other forms of communication. Poster propaganda continued to be generally positive.

Around the same time the MOI launched another campaign with a very different message. Because of Britain's small size and geographical isolation she had to rely on imports, mostly from her colonies and dominions throughout the globe. When the war broke out the need for raw materials increased, unfortunately Germany was aware of this as well and let loose its U-boats to hunt in the Atlantic. With Britain's capacity to make war resting heavily on her imports the MOI thought it prudent to acknowledge the efforts made by the empire that ensured Britain stayed supplied, especially considering the cost the empire sustained in making the dangerous voyage across the Atlantic.¹⁰⁷ Posters focused on individual countries and the materials they provided. Australian wool, Indian cotton and New Zealand sheep are just a few examples. These posters, in addition to assuaging British fears of food and clothing shortages, also boosted British confidence and resolve by assuring her that she was *not* alone. These posters are significant for another reason, which will be discussed later; they emphasized unity in the empire at a time when the control over the colonies was waning.

Britain's precarious position (until the Soviet Union joined the war) coupled with its reliance on imports provides the last theme that dominated the early war years: secrecy. The need to protect shipping from enemies without and the need to starve spies and fifth columnists from within meant that security and secrecy in Britain needed top priority. Secrecy posters ranged from humorous to serious and it is in the secrecy

¹⁰⁷ Osley, *Persuading the People*, 24.

campaign that we see most of Britain's negative posters. The most serious posters, for example, depicted drowning soldiers under the simple caption "Talk Kills." In the middle of the spectrum there was a fairly bland, but slightly humorous poster that showed a window that has been covered for the blackout. On the window was written, "Be like Dad, Keep Mum." At the humorous end there were posters like those created by Fougasse. His posters all carried the caption, "Careless Talk Costs Lives," but the images, drawn as cartoon sketches rather than realistic images, were designed to be humorous rather than to evoke guilt while at the same time getting the message across (fig. A25).

The trends of the early war years continue into 1941 although a few new themes were introduced. Production and secrecy remained paramount because Britain still needed supplies from wherever it could get them. U-boats were still sinking transports and the convoy system was failing to adequately protect the shipments. Posters designed to stir up anger in the populace were still produced to ensure that the public maintained a healthy level of "properly directed hatred" toward the Germans.¹⁰⁸

Along with the familiar themes, British propagandists also introduced a new one; the introduction of a religious element. Britain, as in the United States, used religion as a positive motivator in the war. As has been previously discussed, Germany and the Soviet Union also used religion in their propaganda efforts, but because of the Fascist and Communist attitudes toward religion their usage of God was both less frequent and in different forms than in Britain or the United States.

¹⁰⁸ From Doherty, *Projections of War*, chapter VI. Although the book is about American cinema the phrase is just as applicable to British propaganda.

God had a history of helping the British in wartime, at least according to British folklore. In 1415, Henry V attributed his victory over a much larger and more heavily armed French Army to divine intervention.¹⁰⁹ In 1588 the defeat of the Spanish Armada was credited in large part due to a sudden, strong “English Wind” that scattered the armada, but gave the smaller English ships greater maneuverability, making it possible for the smaller English Navy to pick off the ships of armada piecemeal. In the opening stages of the First World War the vastly outnumbered British Expeditionary Force held off the German advance at Mons. After the battle, some soldiers told stories of a ghost company of English longbow men that appeared and fought at their side, others said it was angels that appeared to fight, as proof that God was indeed behind the British.

Britain did not exclude God from the Second World War. During both the evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940 and the German victories in the Balkans in 1941, Britain held a national day of prayer. When Britain was at its lowest point in the war they appealed to God because they had nowhere else to turn, but their appeals to divine intervention seemed to work. The majority of the troops were safely evacuated from Dunkirk and the British Navy managed to hold control of the Mediterranean Sea and capture the towns of Harar and Cheren in Ethiopia to offset their losses on the continent. That the British seemed to have the ear of God did not go unnoticed by American journalists from *Time* who wrote several articles about the subject.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ See Juliet Barker, *Agincourt: Henry V and the Battle that made England* (New York: Little Brown & Co., 2006).

¹¹⁰ “Key Towns,” *Time*, 7 Apr 1941 and “Last Act in East Africa” 31 March 1941.

Among the posters proclaiming a national day of prayer is one of the simplest posters produced in the war. The poster contains no pictures and no color, the two most important features of a propaganda poster. In black text on white background is written,

National Day of Prayer
“Put your trust in god, as I do”
-His Majesty the King

Other religious posters urge the viewer to “Join the Crusade” or simply to “believe” (fig. A26). This study found only one example of British religious poster propaganda that had a definitely negative tone. The poster shows Hitler with an outstretched fist claiming that one can either be German or Christian, but not both (fig. A26). Other than this one exception, British propaganda used God as a positive, motivating force in the war effort.

After 1941, Britain no longer stood alone against Germany. Hitler’s spring invasion brought the Soviet Union into the war, and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought in the United States. From mid-1942 onward the overall attitudes and messages of posters became more aggressive and confident. In 1941 the King exhorted his people to put their trust in God, for there was nowhere else to turn. In 1942 posters appeared with captions such as “The Allies are Hitting Back.” The industrial capacities and manpower reserves of the United States and the Soviet Union provided a bright light at the end of a long tunnel. Although total victory was not assured until 1943, 1942 provided battlefield victories that boosted Allied morale and halted Axis expansion in every theatre of the war. The Russians stopped the German advance at Stalingrad, the

Americans neutralized most of the Japanese carriers at Midway, and the British put an end to the back-and-forth battles of North Africa with the victory at El Alamein. The appearance of positive posters emphasizing unity and cooperation is proof that the war was turning in the Allies favor, and that Britain, as it had done in 1940, was recognizing the efforts of others in the struggle. We see again the pattern of positive poster posters shifting after 1942.

It must be noted that although British posters pushing for unity and victory for the Allies were plentiful, every poster always put the Union Jack in the fore, at the top, or on the peak, closely followed by the Stars and Stripes in second, the Hammer and Sickle in third, with the flags of the rest of the world trailing. These “United Nations” posters tell a subtle yet important tale about internal relations among the Allies as the war progressed. The alliance between Britain, America and the Soviet Union was an uneasy one, born under the adage that “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.” Even while the war in Europe was still raging, Churchill and Roosevelt had to decide what to do after the war having replaced one dictator in Europe with another.¹¹¹

Early British unity posters are warm towards the Soviet Union. In fact, Britain even created a poster in honor of Red Army Day, the Soviet Holiday commemorating the creation of the Worker’s and Peasant’s Red Army during the Russian Civil War. British rationing campaigns often referred to the “Moscow Standard,” (comparing the plight of the besieged Russians to the British), and pointed that if the Soviet Union could fight in colder weather with less food and fuel, then Britain had nothing to complain

¹¹¹ William O’Neill, *A Democracy at War: America’s Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 162.

about.¹¹² This, of course, took place when the Soviet Union was the only nation fighting the Germans on the ground. Britain conducted bombing raids, but only the Soviet Union was face-to-face with the enemy.

When the war shifted in favor of the Allies, unity posters shifted too. Posters portrayed the coalition of nations united against the Axis. British, American, and even Soviet posters shared similar images of groups of soldier marching under their respective banners flying at relatively equal levels. The flag of the artist's nation, of course, flew a little higher or held the central position. As the end of the war neared, the major battles shifted from the towns and hedgerows of Europe to the political arena. Churchill and Roosevelt (and later Truman) wrestled with Stalin over postwar Europe. British unity posters began to phase out the Soviet Union and concentrate more on the American and British roles. In a 1944 poster the allied nation's flags formed a "V" for victory. At the top of the "V" were the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes, but immediately underneath those are the flags of two of Britain's dominions. The Soviet Union was relegated to the middle of the "V." By 1945 the Soviet Union had disappeared entirely from British unity posters. At the hour of victory, France, not The Soviet Union, became the third major member of the Allies (fig. A27), despite the fact that the French had been knocked out the war five years previous. The new political landscape of Europe, the basis of the Cold War, was in place before the war ended. This is reflected in late British war posters.

¹¹² Osley, *Persuading the People*, 78

After the successes of 1942, the Allies were on the road to final victory. The victory was another three years in coming, but the Axis momentum had hit a wall and was beginning to falter. In Britain the production of propaganda posters soared. Britain was no longer alone and the victory at El Alamein gave the people renewed courage and determination. One poster's caption said "Two years ago the British Empire stood alone. Today, four-fifths of the world is United against Axis tyranny." Prime Minister Churchill's famous quote best represents the British attitude, "Before El Alamein we never had a victory, after El Alamein we never had a defeat." Historically speaking, the statement was incorrect, in 1944 Field Marshal Montgomery's plan to end the war by Christmas failed, resulting in tens of thousands of casualties and captives. But the statement is important because it reflects the spirit of the masses at the time.

The various themes and trends of the posters remained the same. The major themes of production, secrecy and unity were still the messages of the majority of posters. What is surprising, however, is the appearance of posters regarding the relocation of children from large cities to the countryside after London received its first major attacks. The decision to relocate children was made in 1940, yet posters promoting the program appeared in their greatest numbers starting in 1942, the year of the Allies greatest victories. In 1940, when the Empire was at its lowest point, the thought of giving up one's children was too unpleasant a prospect to put on posters. The end of the war was nowhere in sight and those who sent their children away had no idea if or when they would be reunited. In 1942 the story was different. London was not

subject to as many raids, Britain was no longer Germany's only enemy, and the end of the war, although distant, was in sight.

Other than evacuating children, there is only one other theme that appears between 1942 and the end of the war that deserves attention. Posters appealing to unity and acknowledging contributions from other members of the Empire were present to a small degree at the beginning of the war, but after 1942 their numbers increased. In fact, from the sample surveyed in this study, unity posters made up the largest single category of posters in 1943 and are among the largest categories in 1944 and 1945. As the war progressed and neared its close the British government had to brace itself for the possibility that the end of the war might also bring the end of the Empire.

Even before war broke out, Britain was having problems in several areas of the empire. The West Indies were suffering financially due to the falling price of sugar, Canada and Australia wanted to be treated as equal, independent nations rather than Dominions, and India simply wanted the British to leave.¹¹³ Britain responded by tightening its grip in the West Indies and India, arguing that the local native governments were unable to save the declining colonies from internal strife and economic disaster without help.

When Britain declared war on Germany in September 1939, it also spoke on behalf of its colonies. India, Africa, Canada, Australia and New Zealand were all expected to participate as willingly as they had done in the previous war although some

¹¹³ T.O. Lloyd, *The British Empire, 1558-1995* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 312-313.

colonies were hesitant to enter the war due to local political problems.¹¹⁴ India was promised Dominion status if they would contribute to the war effort, but the Indian Congress wanted Britain out and adopted a policy of “Quit India,” which meant mass civil disobedience if the British would not promise complete autonomy. Britain was able to maintain control through the use of force, but it was clear that they would probably have to leave India once the war ended.¹¹⁵ Tensions increased further following the Japanese offensive in December of 1941. Most of the British colonies in the Pacific were overrun in a matter of months. The most significant, and astonishing loss was the fall of Singapore in Malaysia, proving that Britain could no longer defend every corner of the Empire. The increased interference in colonial affairs mixed with the inability to defend the colonies seriously weakened British influence in the empire.

The final nail in the coffin was unwittingly hammered in by Churchill himself at a Conference with American President Franklin Roosevelt in August of 1941. At this conference, Britain and America signed the Atlantic Charter, which stated that all people have the right to choose the form of government under which they live. At the time, Churchill only had the nations conquered by the Nazis in mind when he signed the Charter.¹¹⁶ What he did not expect was for the Charter to be used as a tool to dismantle *all* empires, including Britain’s. Many British colonies appealed to the Charter as

¹¹⁴ Lloyd, *British Empire*, 314-319.

¹¹⁵ Lloyd, *British Empire*, 318.

¹¹⁶ Lloyd, *British Empire*, 316.

grounds for demanding British withdrawal. By the end of the war, even America and the Soviet Union favored the dismantling of the British Empire.¹¹⁷

It is with this in mind that the aforementioned poster campaign regarding colonial contributions to the war takes on a greater significance. The posters no doubt contributed to the morale of the British by assuring them that they were not alone and that they would not starve, but they also reminded the average Briton on the street that Britain was indeed an empire and that the British Isles were not the only places in the Empire threatened by the war.

Although the British hold a place of honor in winning the Second World War that place came with a price. By the end of the war the country was virtually bankrupt and its colonies stripped. Ever since the war in the West began in May 1940 the British had suffered tremendously. They were bombed, blockaded and suffered one humiliating military defeat after another, and all this before 1942.

What makes Britain unique in terms of this study is the way that British poster propaganda dealt with the dark times. Having sabotaged propaganda by improper usage in the First World War, the Ministry of Information embarked on a new course with two tactics. First, all home front propaganda, including posters, would be (loosely) based on fact. The facts may be skewed, spun, or withheld and released according to design, but nevertheless, facts were the foundation of propaganda. The MOI learned early in the war that the populace resented exhortations or condescending slogans. They preferred to be told the facts and left to act on their own initiative.

¹¹⁷ Lloyd, *British Empire*, 321.

The second tactic was to motivate through positive propaganda rather than negative. Even when Britain was at its lowest point, posters tended to focus on positive themes (for example, God and tradition) rather than negative ones (hate and revenge). Negative posters were not absent from British walls, but they were the minority and most were directed at things like preventing venereal disease and avoiding injury from tampering with munitions. Those posters that depicted the “other” were almost always directed toward the Japanese, even though Britain had been at war with Germany for over two years by the time the Japanese attacked British colonies in the Pacific. This same trend was also found in American posters. British and American posters portraying the “other” used the more easily distinguishable enemy, both in physical appearance and cultural characteristics. Posters that did have images of Germans often limited themselves only to Hitler. Anti-Japanese posters, on the other hand, included images and caricatures of Tojo and Yamamoto, but more often portrayed the “average” Japanese, complete with thick glasses, buck-teeth and a permanent squint. The reason behind this trend is simple; Britain, the United States and Germany shared a common ancestry as well as many aspects of their respective cultures. An “average” German is physically indistinguishable from an “average” American or Briton, hence British and American posters used Hitler’s face instead. It was easily identifiable and represented everything the Allies fought against.

Though the trend of shifting between positive and negative posters is a little more difficult to see in British posters it is still present. Posters produced when victory was uncertain were passive. Negative posters never dominated any particular time period, as

they had done in Germany and the Soviet Union, but posters produced after 1942 were much more upbeat, encouraging and aggressive. The British experience with propaganda in the First World War ensured that the extreme posters printed in the Soviet Union and Germany never saw much light in Britain. Instead, Britain, like the United States, used positive images and slogans. Both Britain and the United States developed this tactic for different reasons, but nevertheless they shared it in common.

CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

*Propaganda is, or should be, easy for the winning side, and difficult for the losing side*¹¹⁸

-Sir Robert Bruce Lockheart
Head of the British Political
Warfare Executive

The propaganda posters of the Second World War served as a gauge, measuring the success of the war effort. Whether the poster directed its message toward recruiting, rationing, production, secrecy, or any other possible topic, the images and slogans used were designed to stir specific emotions in the viewer. What this study has shown is that the tendency of governments to favor positive or negative appeals is directly related to a country's position in the war at that time. When the war was going well the ratio of positive posters swelled. Patriotism, duty, honor and glory were the emotions to which governments primarily appealed. When the war went against a nation, negative posters took over the dominant position and fear, hate and guilt were employed as tools of motivation. Even in the United States and Great Britain, where positive posters were always more abundant, the quantity of negatively themed posters was higher in the early war years before 1942 and the battles of Midway, Stalingrad and El Alamein turned the tide. Lockhart's statement was not far from the truth because a nation with the upper hand has only to sustain the current levels of citizen participation. If the war is being won it can be rightly assumed that, in general, the current social, cultural, political,

¹¹⁸ Rhodes, *Propaganda*, 110.

economic and military policies are working and propaganda need only ensure that everyone is doing a good job. In short, “If it ‘aint broke, don’t fix it.”

Conversely, when a nation is losing the war something must be wrong with the status quo and changes need to be made. It is in these conditions that governments and propagandists appeal to the more extreme and negative human emotions in an effort to motivate the people. As we saw in the case of the Soviet Union, posters appealed to hatred and vengeance in order to replace fear. In the case of Nazi Germany, posters produced near the end of the war tried to portray Germany as the last line of defense against Bolshevism in an attempt to create fear in Western Europe and encourage collaboration. In the early war years German posters used more aggressive rhetoric. For example, early posters exclaimed “Germany, your colonies!” while late war posters said “Europe is united against Bolshevism.”

This trend leads to the conclusion that the attitude of home front propaganda betrays to the public what it is actually supposed to keep secret; the truth about the war. In Germany, propaganda told the German people that the army was winning the battle of Stalingrad right up until von Paulus surrendered, but posters of that same time period are much more negative than those printed in 1939 or 1940. The radio broadcasts said the battle was being won, posters hinted otherwise. If the war on the Eastern Front had been in Germany’s favor, posters at home would have been much more positive and uplifting. As the Allies steadily marched across Europe from both east and west, German posters such as “Liberators” (fig. A7, referring to the Americans and British) and “Bolshevism is

Murder” (fig. A6, referring to the Soviet Union) replaced posters that appealed to duty or national pride.

The Soviet Union provides an example of this same trend on the Allied side. Beginning with the German invasion in 1941, Soviet posters depicted the barbarous, bloodthirsty animals of the German army. After Stalingrad and Kursk, posters changed to highlight the heroic deeds of the Soviet people and references to the “bestial Germans” were replaced by references to the “glorious Red Army.” There is, however, an exception to the trend. As the Allied armies swept across the Third Reich and liberated the thousands of concentration and extermination camps established by the Nazis, Soviet propagandists created some of their most gruesome posters of the war (fig. A13).

The second general trend to emerge from this study is the difference between the propaganda posters of totalitarian and democratic governments. Totalitarian governments like those of the Soviet Union and Germany were much more likely to resort to negative propaganda and to use extreme images such as murdered children. Britain and the United States on the other hand tended to lean more toward positive propaganda to motivate the public. It must be noted that both the Soviet Union and Germany fought the majority of the war on their own soil and used the most negative posters when the battle was at their front door whereas Britain and the United States , although they suffered direct attacks, never had to combat an actual invasion of the homeland, only the threat of one. Perhaps this trend speaks more about the tactics of a cornered animal than the propaganda methods of a dictatorship.

Another feature of posters that draws a distinct line between totalitarian and democratic governments is the use of religion in posters. Both the United States and Britain used God and religion early in their poster campaigns. Not only did they appeal to religion, but they did so positively, at least initially. In fact, considering Britain was involved in the war and produced religious posters before Pearl Harbor, it is possible that the United States followed the British example of using religion in posters in a positive way. It must be noted, however, that both Britain and America also produced negatively themed religious posters.

Germany and the Soviet Union, on the other hand, avoided direct appeals to religion in their posters. Each state was fundamentally opposed to religion in any form. Germany used religion in late war posters only as a last resort to appeal to the occupied nations, and then it was only used in a negative context. The Soviet government temporarily befriended the Orthodox Church for propaganda purposes, but religion never made its way into Soviet posters. Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union relied on other ideologies in their poster campaigns.

The last, and most puzzling characteristic of this study is the presence/absence of humor and irony in posters. German posters are completely devoid of humor. Likewise the United States rarely used humorous caricatures or quips in their posters. Britain and the Soviet Union, however, did use humor in their poster propaganda, although Soviet posters tended to use darker humor than British. This trend is confusing because the border that separates users from non-users does not fall clearly between Axis v. Ally, Totalitarian v. Democratic, or invaded v. threatened. Possible reasoning for the British

use of humor has been discussed, but the Soviet tendency to appeal to humor is more confusing. It is an interesting trend and presents a topic worthy of further attention.

War posters tended to be positive when the war was going well and negative when it was not. Whatever the literary content of the poster might have been, the images and overall messages of the majority of posters tended to betray the truth. Although posters are seldom used in wartime today, it is possible that this trend continues through other forms of propaganda. Such a study needs to be conducted. Governments may say that a war is being won, but as the posters of the Second World War demonstrate, what they say is not always as important as how they say it.

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APPENDIX



Figure A1- "Victory or Bolshevism." c1944. Source: Zeman, *Selling the War*, 100.



Figure A2 – “Flying Fortresses, Flying Coffins!” ca. 1944. Source: Miscellaneous Man Rare Original Posters and Vintage Graphics [on-line]; available from http://www.miscman.com/posters_graphics/index.asp; accessed 25 April 2005.

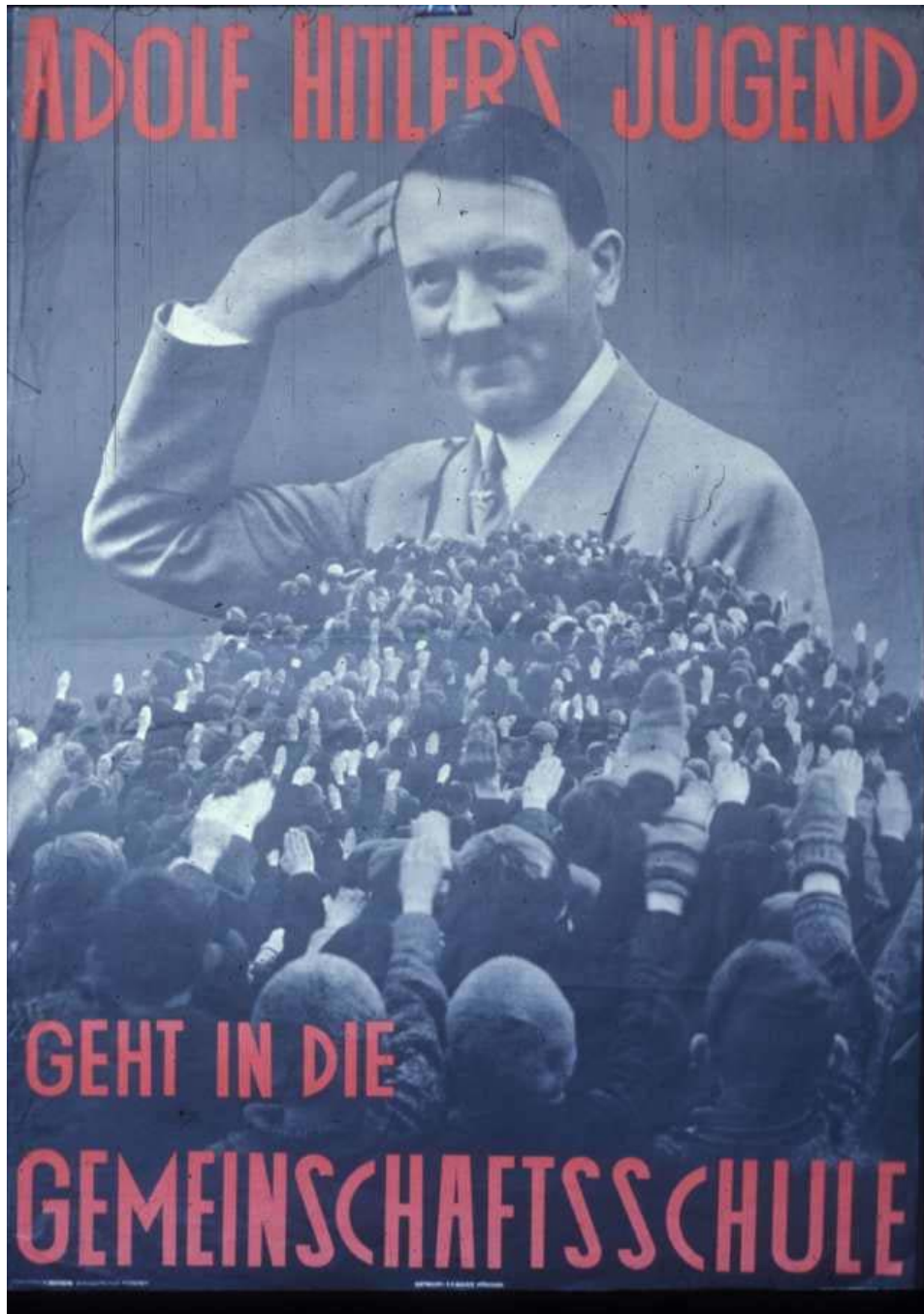


Figure A3 – Adolf Hitler’s youth attend community schools.” Mid 1930s. Source: Randall Bytwerk and Robert Brooks. 2005. *German Propaganda Archive* [on-line]. Grand Rapids, MI: Calvin College; available from <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/ww2era.htm>; accessed 25 April 2005.



Figure A4 – “Through military will to military strength.” Mid 1930s. Source: Bytwerk, *German Propaganda Archive*.



Figure A5 – “Our flag is going forward too.” c1944. Source: Zeman, *Selling the War*, 91.

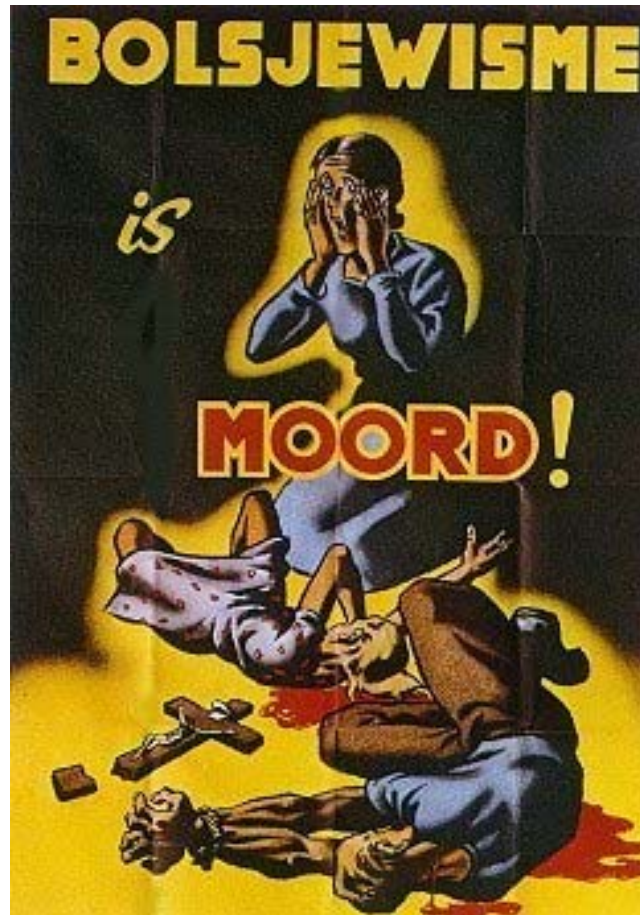


Figure A6 – “Bolshevism is Murder.” c1945. Anthony Rhodes, *Propaganda: The Art of persuasion in World War II* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1983), 200.



Figure A7 – “Liberators.” 1944. Source: Rhodes, *Propaganda: The Art of Persuasion in World War II*, 201.



Figure A8 - An example of a *lubok* at the turn of the century. Source: Alexander Boguslawski. 2005. *Russian Lubok* [on-line]. Winter Park, FL: Rollins College; available from http://www.rollins.edu/Foreign_Lang/Russian/Lubok/lubok.html; accessed 5 April 2006.



Figure A9 - An example of a *lubok*-style poster during the revolution. Source: Poster Collection [on-line]. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Archives; available from <http://www.hoover.org/hila/posters.htm>; accessed 5 April 2006.



Figure A10 – “Certificate for bestiality.” 1941. Source: Poster Collection [online]. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Archives; available from <http://www.hoover.org/hila/posters.htm>; accessed 5 April 2006.

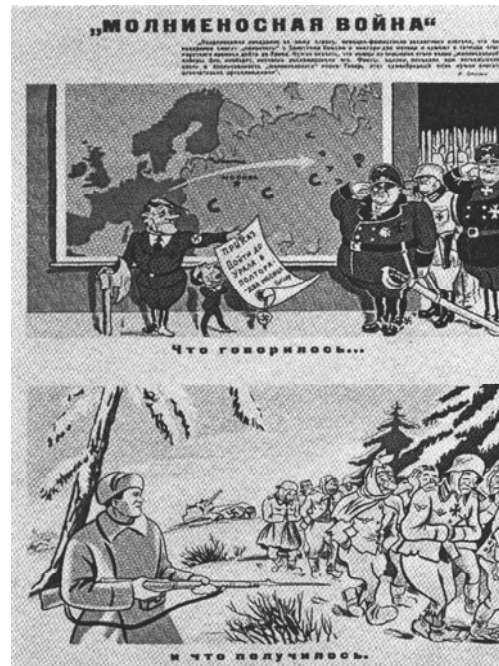
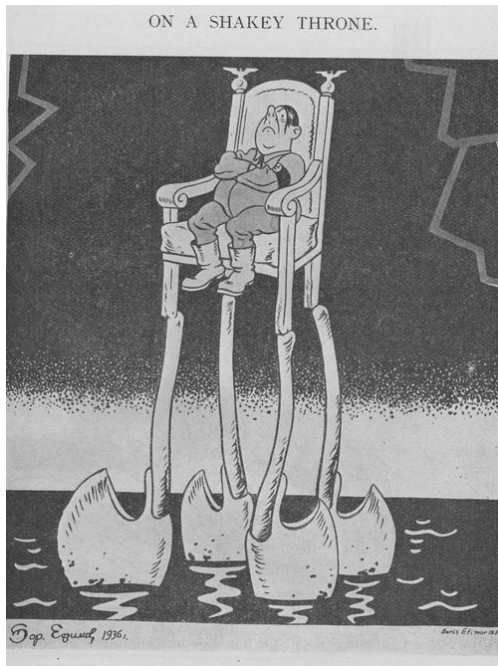


Figure A11 – Examples of the axe image in Soviet posters. Sources: Rhodes, *Propaganda*; Beaverbrook, *Spirit of the Soviet Union*; Stanford University, Hoover Institution Archives.



Figure A12 – “Maneater,” c1942. Source: Beaverbrook, *Spirit of the Soviet Union*, 24.



Figure A13 – “Philanthropic (Man-loving) Hitler.” c1944. Source: Denisovsky, *Okna TASS*.



Figure A14 – “How German shells get to where they are supposed to go.” 1941. Source: Denisovsky, *Okna TASS*. This is a good example of the Russian use of irony in posters. While the German artillery waits for supplies, Partisans ambush the ammunition convoy, steal the shells, and fire them on the waiting German artillery, thus the Russians are doing the German’s work for them in getting the shells where they are supposed to go.



Figure A15 - "Give 'em both Barrels." 1941. Source: Northwestern University, *World War II Poster Collection* (Evanston, IL). Available from <http://www.library.northwestern.edu/govpub/collections/wwii-posters/img/ww0207-50.jpg> [accessed 3 April 2006].



Figure A16 – “We can do it!” 1942. Ad Council, *Historical Campaigns*, “Women in War Jobs – Rosie the Riveter (1942-1945), [on-line], available at <http://www.adcouncil.org/default.aspx?id=128> [accessed 8 June 2006].



Figure A17 – “Avenge Dec. 7th” and “Remember Dec. 7th” 1942. Northwestern University, *World War II Poster Collection*.



Figure A18 – “Private Joe Louis Says-.” 1942. Miscellaneous Man, catalogue 48: Vintage Patriotic Posters, 1914-1946, 75.

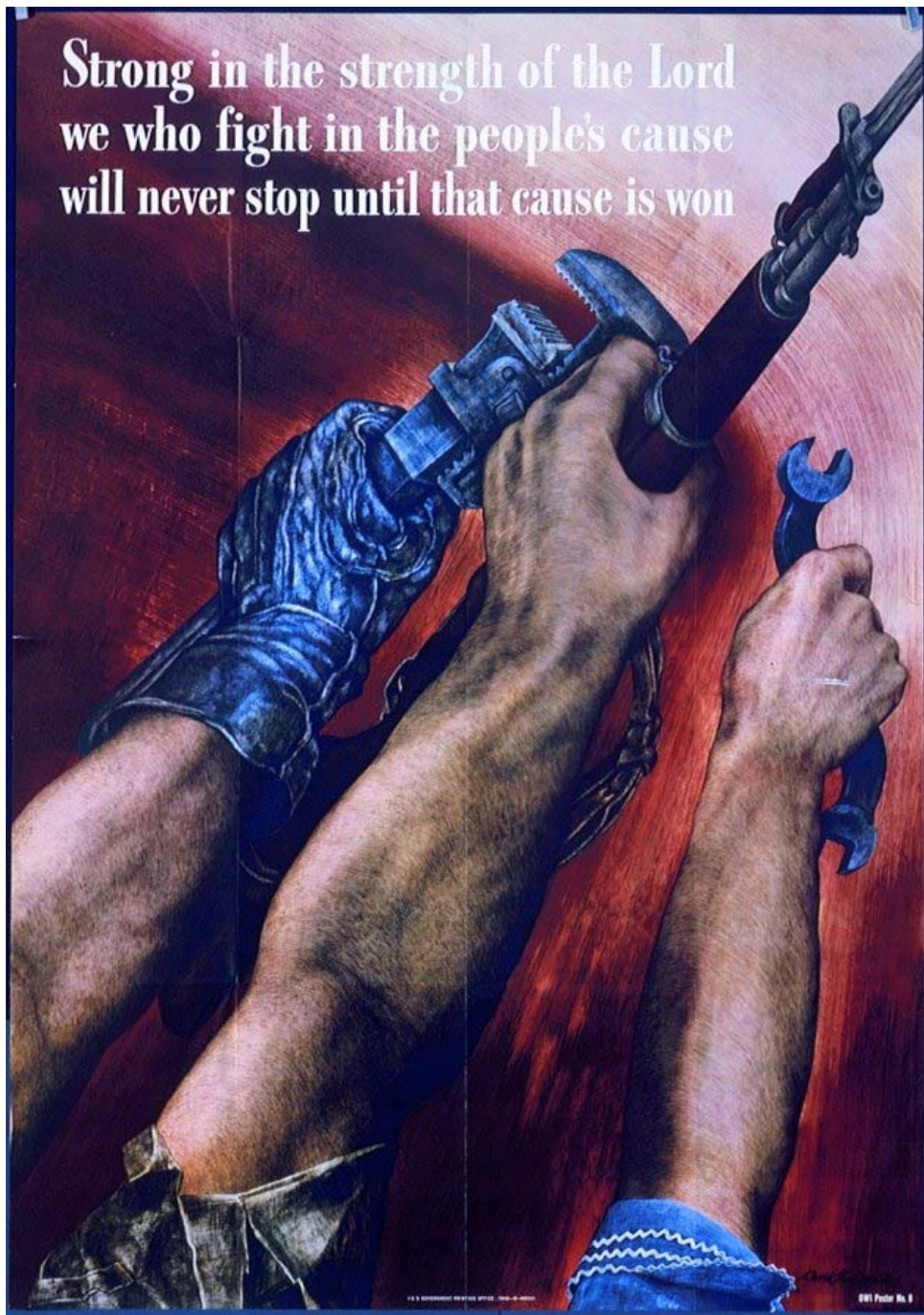


Figure A19 – “Strong in the Strength of the Lord.” 1942. Zeman, *Selling the War*, 70.



Figure A20 - "Who wants to know?" 1943. Source: Northwestern University, *World War II Poster Collection*.

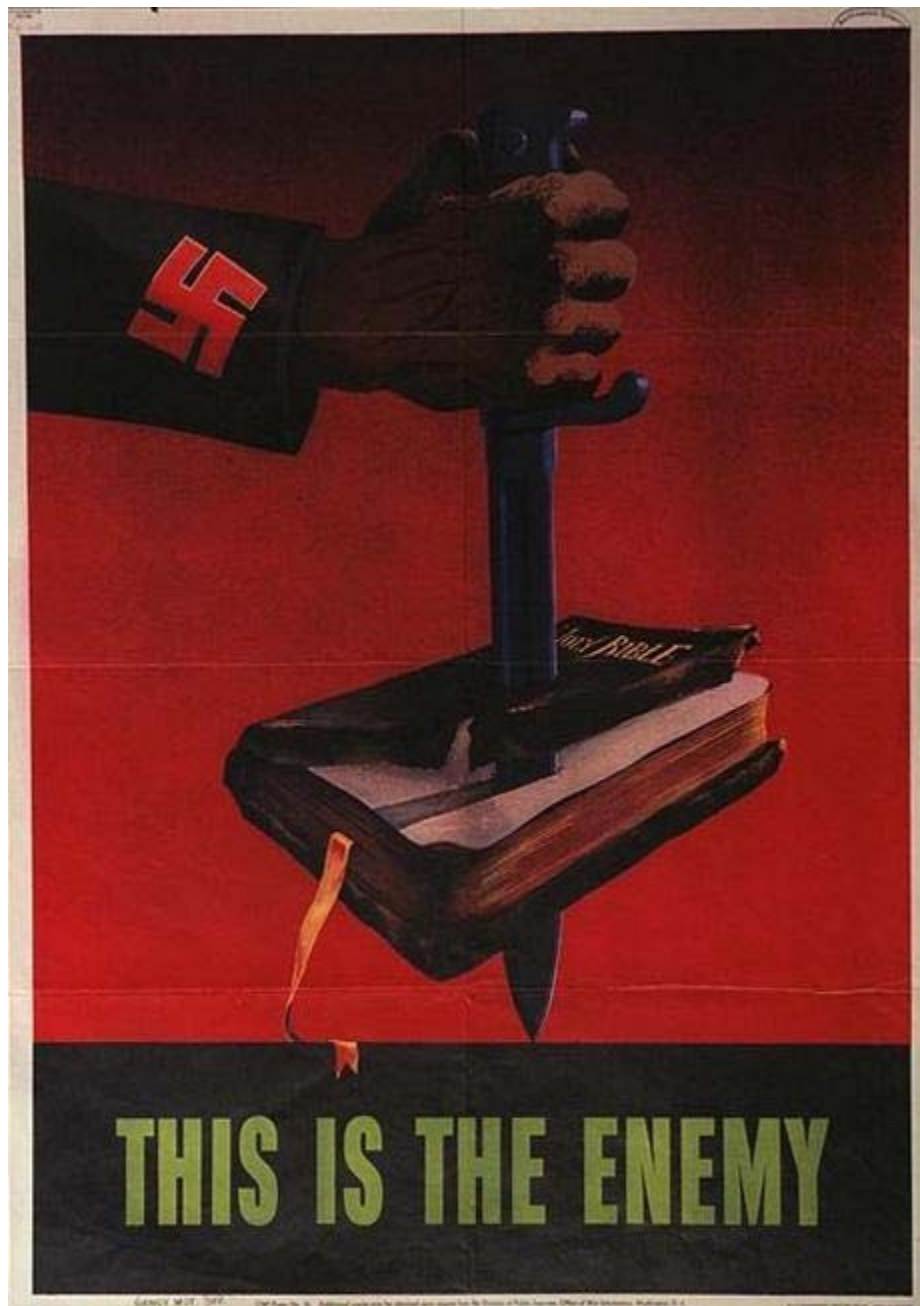


Figure A21 - "This is the enemy." 1943. Source: Northwestern University, *World War II Poster Collection*.



Figure A22 - "Arf a Mo Kaiser!" c1914 and "Arf a Mo" 1940. Sources: David Cohen Fine Art Gallery Website, London. 2004. Print reference 3131. [on-line]. Available at <http://www.dcf.a.com/Prints/slides/3131.shtml>, accessed 20 August 2006 and Zbynek Zeman, *Selling War* (New York: Exeter Books, 1982).



Figure A23 – “Your Courage” and “Let Us Go Forward Together” 1940.

Source: Paul Vsyny. 2001. *Weapons on the Wall* [on-line]. St. Andrews, Scotland: St. Andrews University; available from <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~pv/pv/courses/posters/posters3.html>; accessed 20 August 2006.

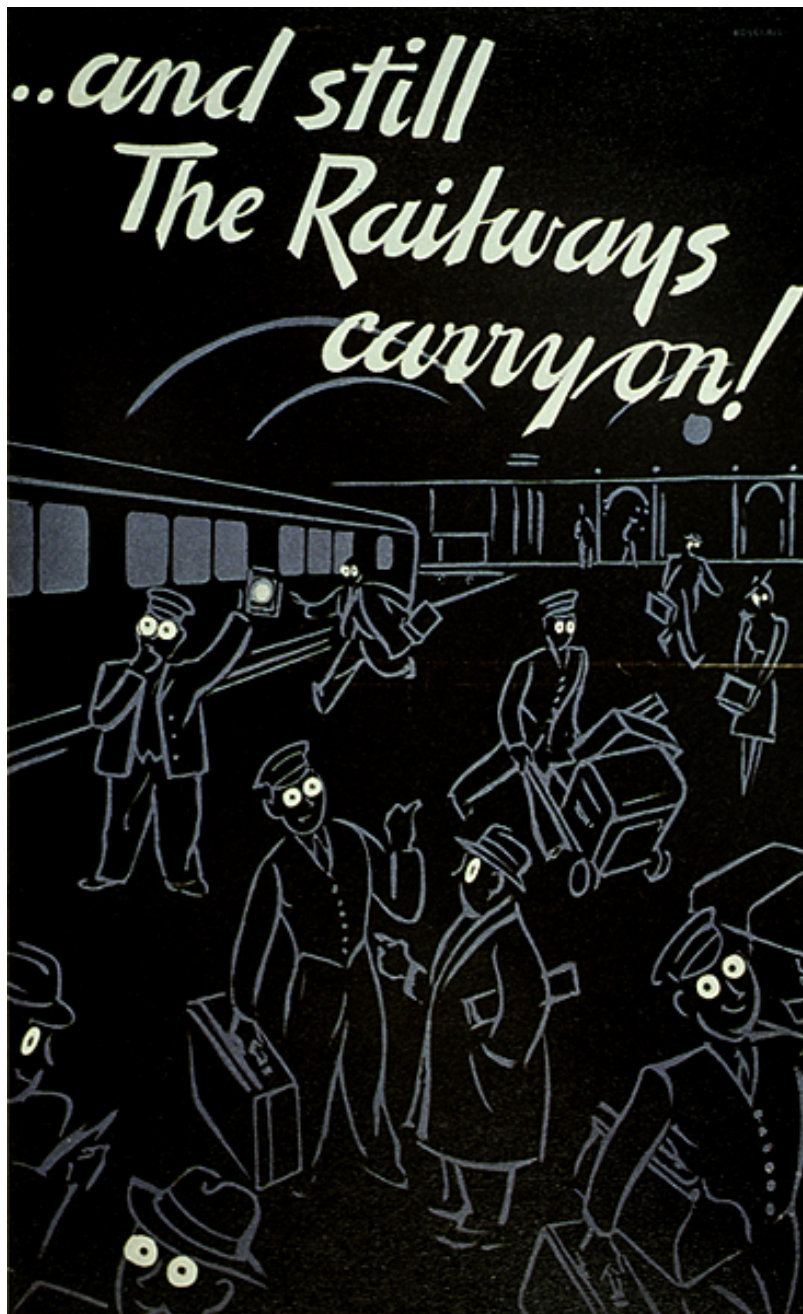


Figure A24 – “...and Still the Railways Carry On!” 1940. Source: Paul Vсны. 2001. *Weapons on the Wall*.

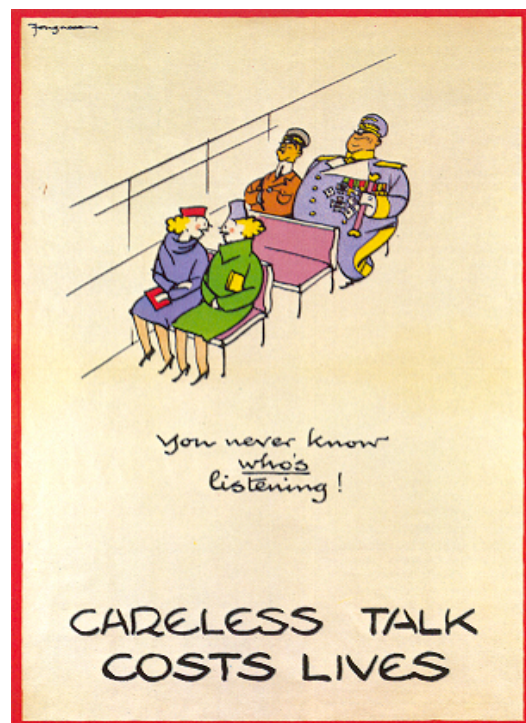
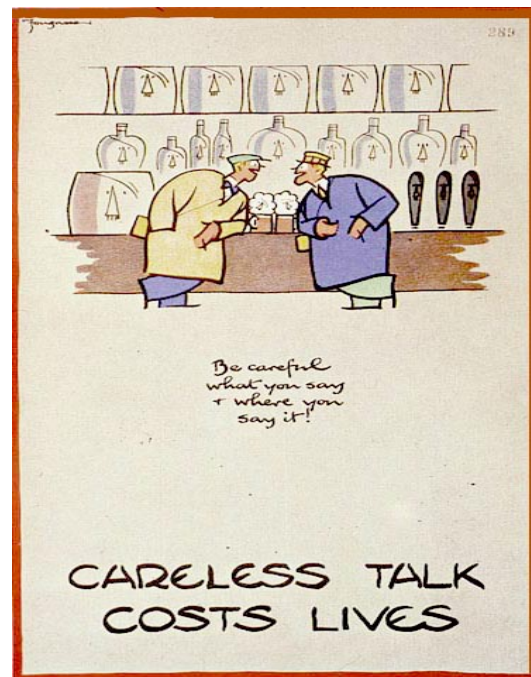
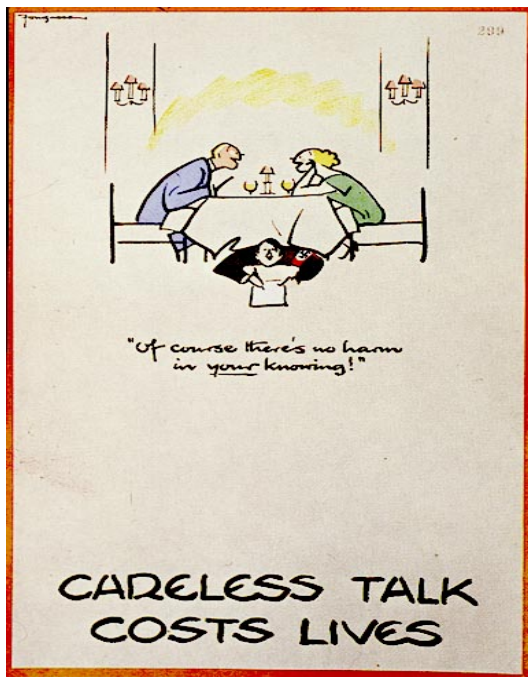


Figure A25 – Samples of Fougasse’s use of humor in posters. Source: Paul Vsyny. 2001. *Weapons on the Wall*.

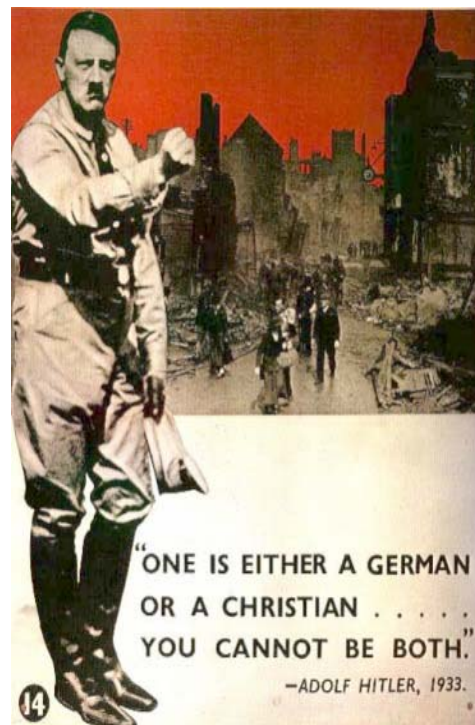


Figure A26 – Examples of British use of religion in posters. Source: Miscellaneous Man, catalogue 48 and Paul Vsyny. 2001. *Weapons on the Wall*.



Figure A27 – “The Victory of the United Nations is Assured” c1945. Source: *Miscellaneous Man*, catalogue 48, 232. Although this particular poster was printed for France, the original poster design was in English. More important than the language, however, is the imagery and the lack of acknowledgement to the Soviet Union.

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