

WWII Propaganda

During WWII the US government found it necessary to mobilize America's support for the war. You are to first view the cartoon clips and movie posters. Upon viewing these, answer the "Government Propaganda Questions" at the bottom. After viewing these and answering the questions, you are to then view the business advertisements and answer the corresponding questions. Be sure to write down any interesting discussion points you have about each cartoon or image. At the conclusion of this activity, we will be holding a "hotseat" or "Socratic seminar" on each of the categories. Be sure to use information within the images as well as outside information that you have read about or seen.

Cartoons

These cartoons highlight the usage of popular cartoon characters of the time period to convince Americans to support the war effort in anyway they could. Although we cannot measure how effective or ineffective these cartoons were, we can at least see how traditional entertaining characters were now used in a completely different way in order drum up support for the war effort.

1. 'Bugs Bunny Nips the Nips' - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQauzUdF2co> – Bugs Bunny
2. Bugs Bunny and US Bonds - <http://youtube.com/watch?v=TUPUbvO0eU> – Bugs Bunny
3. German Education for Death - <http://youtube.com/watch?v=ASW3UCc17AI> – Random characters
4. 'Out of the Frying Pan...' <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e15hxlEk-KI> - Disney
5. 'Der Fuehrer's Face' - <http://youtube.com/watch?v=mZiRiIpZVF4> – Daffy Duck
6. Donald Duck - 'The Spirit of '43' <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQsOOfU59SM> – Donald Duck

Government Posters

These cartoons all use visuals to convey their message. The text is very limited and the belief of “a picture speaks a thousand words” is clearly the motto they were following. The posters were mostly motivated to get the public to do what it could to support the war effort; from rationing supplies, donating materials and enlisting to fight in the war, Americans could always find some way to help fight the war.

US Propaganda:

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/powers_of_persuasion/warning/images_html/fighting_to_prevent.html

Japanese and German Depictions:

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/powers_of_persuasion/warning/images_html/our_homes_in_danger.html

Riding with Hitler:

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/powers_of_persuasion/use_it_up/images_html/ride_with_hitler.html

Buy War Bonds:

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/powers_of_persuasion/warning/images_html/shadow.html

Business Advertisements

These advertisements show us how important it is as an American to always consume. Although during the war era advertisements for restricted goods was severely limited, businesses did not stop their campaigns and found a new way to motivate the consumer, using the war. Advertising combined the patriotic fervor of the era to consuming goods. If you weren't buying the product, you weren't being American. We see these connections everyday in America, most recently with the Olympics.

Perm for women:

<http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/adaccess.BH1362/pg.1/>

Ivory Soap:

<http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/adaccess.BH0907/pg.1/>

<http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/adaccess.BH0904/pg.1/>

Proctor and Gamble:

<http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/adaccess.BH0414/pg.1/>

RCA Radio:

<http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/adaccess.R0764/pg.1/>

Record Player:

<http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/adaccess.R0833/pg.1/>

Pepsodent Toothbrush:

<http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/adaccess.BH2219/pg.1/>

Camel Cigarettes:

<http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/adaccess.W0275/pg.1/>

Tampons:

<http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/adaccess.BH0084/pg.1/>

Socks:

<http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/adaccess.W0269/pg.1/>

Entertainment:

<http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/adaccess.W0267/pg.1/>

Burma Shave:

<http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/adaccess.BH0692/pg.1/>

Barbasol:

<http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/adaccess.BH0650/pg.1/>

Government Propaganda Questions

- 1) Where would Americans typically see these short films? Why at these locations and was this an effective place for them to be shown?
- 2) What was the goal of these films and posters? Do you feel that goal was met? Explain. How do you think these images successfully/unsuccessfully molded America's perspectives and support for the war?
- 3) What strategies are used in the images to swing the American public's attitudes to the war effort? Use examples from the films and posters as evidence.
- 4) Are these films and images the first of their kind? Connect these propaganda pieces to those used in previous wars. Also, do we see this kind of thing in today's world? How/Why or why not?
- 5) Are these images used to manipulate the American public unfairly?

Business Advertisement Questions

- 1) How do these advertisements use the war to get Americans to spend their money? Provide examples.
- 2) How do we see the use of women and men vary in these advertisements? Does the usage of a particular gender and how they use that gender gear the advertisement towards men or women? Justify your opinion.
- 3) Are these businesses being very savvy or are they manipulative of Americans' emotions and feelings? Justify.
- 4) Do we see this kind of propaganda today in our society? Provide examples. Do you feel Americans today are influenced by these images?
- 5) What is a better motivator in these advertisements, the war or sex appeal?

Paper

You are to write a one-page paper to summarize your reaction to this propaganda. Discuss what you learned and what interested you and what you want to know more about. Be sure to provide information that expresses both your overall feelings towards both the government and the business propaganda.