WWII
PROPAGANDA IN AMERICA

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What is Propaganda?

The dissemination of information to help or harm a government, political cause, or movement.

Differs from advertising in that it does not try to sell a product or service.

Tactics are used to persuade people's belief systems.

The Nazi government is evil because_____. Therefore, you should help the U.S. defeat them.

In order to defeat the enemy, you should _____ and _____ and _____.

Government's Role in Propaganda

Does the government have the right to "sell a war?"

Informing vs. Persuading

When can one believe propaganda?

When does propaganda go too far?

The greater good, the good of the country, the good of the people

Bureaus, Councils, and Offices

Office of War Information (OWI)

"This is a people's war, and to win it the people should know as much about it as they can. This office will do its best to tell the truth and nothing but the truth."

-Elmer Davis, Director

Bureau of Campaigns

A part of OWI, directed by former marketing head from NBC and advertising director for Colgate-Palmolive, Ken Dyke.

Bureau of Motion Pictures

Bureau of Graphics

Magazine Bureau

Radio Bureau

News Bureau

War Advertising Council (WAC)

Formed in 1941 to enlist advertisers, companies, and the government in order to get the issues of the war before the public.

"We have within our hands the greatest aggregate means of mass education and persuasion the world has ever seen."

-James Webb Young
Young and Rubicam, advertising agency

For waging psychological warfare, our informational weapons have not been as highly developed as the fighting machines of the armed forces;. . .There cannot be total war effort unless the informational weapons at hand are properly used;. . .we have brains, the experience, the coast-to-coast polling machines; we know the people, know how to make them read; know how to plan huge informational efforts;. . .and know how to coordinate every form of the media.

-Chester La Roche
War Advertising Council, chair

War Advertising Council

Encouraged women to enter the labor force and the armed services

"Women in the War" campaign
Asked advertisers to devote a portion of their ads to the theme of women war workers

Created booklets containing appropriate appeals

Provided the government with advertising agencies

The WAC supported the OWI in creating a large-scale campaign attracting women.

The Bureau of Campaigns contacted the News, Motion Picture, Graphics, Magazine, and Radio bureaus to adapt material for different audiences.

Ad agencies switched to propaganda because they faced a projected 80% loss due to the conversion of manufacturing plants to war purposes.

War Advertising Council

Government
War Agencies

Office of War
Information

"By the eve of Pearl Harbor,...advertising, the voice of free enterprise, [bore] the burden...of preserving the public's tolerance, confidence in, and enthusiasm for the American institution of capitalism."

-Frank Fox

Women & WWII Womanpower

PURPOSE: Draw as many women as possible into the work force, especially industries that normally relied on male workers.

Provided women with encouragement for entering the labor force, especially in male jobs.

Convinced the public that traditional prejudices against working women were inaccurate and destructive to the nation's welfare.

Magazine Bureau provided images and stories of women who entered nontraditional fields to alter the portrayal of women and to publicize occupations.

Women & WWII
Womanpower

Women were not portrayed as weak sisters, wives, and mothers, but as powerful, able, and intelligent workers.

Women & WWII
Womanpower

Guardians of the home front, seeing that society ran smoothly with the absence of men.

"OF COURSE I CAN!

I'm patriotic as can be—
And ration points won't worry me!"

Pitch in and Help!

JOIN THE WOMEN'S LAND ARMY
OF THE U.S. CROP CORPS

Women & WWII Shifting Perceptions

Pre-World War II

Married women were seen as selfish and destructive to their families if they desired to work.

During World War II

Propaganda showed women as heroines who could successfully balance family obligations with work responsibilities.

WWII propaganda portrays how quickly social perceptions can shift when media, government, and industry work together in aims of a common goal.

It is largest and most organized effort towards ending prejudice against women in the work force.

Women in advertisements maintained their beauty, showing that they can balance previous perceptions with new goals of work.

Lasting change?

This campaign successfully raised awareness towards women's right to work. However, many in the industry assumed women would return to their homes once the war ended.

African Americans & WWII Government Films

Invited blacks and whites into harmonious alliance against foreign enemies

Avoided any hint of eventual change in traditional patters of racial segregation.

Appeared progressive at first, but seemed to replace racism exactly where it was found before the war.

African Americans & WWII Hollywood Films

Matured from mere 'conscience-liberals' to genuine activists.

Films promised blacks an improved lot in life in exchange for their participation in the war.

These films were most useful to the African American community, but they passed quickly out of view after the war ended.

The combined operations of black activists, conscience-liberals in the OWI, and Hollywood liberals, helped nationalize racism as a political issue.

Disney & Cartoons
Homefront Propaganda

The U.S. government built strong relationships with Disney and other Hollywood companies in order to construct propaganda cartoons, films, and movies.

Disney created propaganda and educational films for the Navy, Army, Air Force, Department of Agriculture, and the Treasury Department.

Cartoons were used to encourage war efforts and to criticize enemies. They were used not only at home in the U.S. but also for deployed troops.

Disney & Cartoons
War Bonds

Disney & Cartoons
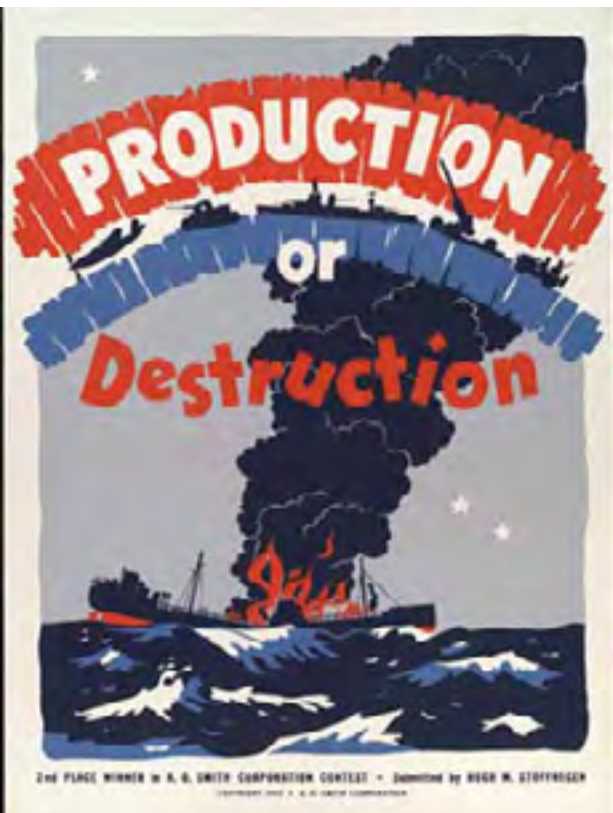# Conservation

Disney & Cartoons
Anti-Nazi

The Barbaric Enemy

Careless Talk

Home-Front Production

War Bonds

Power of Propaganda

Raise awareness for women's rights

Raise awareness for African American rights

Greatly alter the job market

Villanize an enemy

Instill fear and terror

Raise money

Conserve and collect goods

When does propaganda go too far?
Should the government be able to work with industries and advertising agencies?

Should the government only give pure facts?
The original goal of the Office of War Information

Propaganda allowed Hitler and other cruel leaders to gain a mass following. Should there be international laws against political propaganda?

As designers, should there be a clear distinction between work and personal beliefs?