

2024

Insinuating Fear and Hatred through Nazi Propaganda

Edgar Chavez Sosa
CSUSB

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/history-in-the-making>

Recommended Citation

Chavez Sosa, Edgar (2024) "Insinuating Fear and Hatred through Nazi Propaganda," *History in the Making*: Vol. 17, Article 8.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/history-in-the-making/vol17/iss1/8>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the History at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in History in the Making by an authorized editor of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.

Insinuating Fear and Hatred through Nazi Propaganda

By Edgar Chavez Sosa

Abstract: This article delves into the sheer impact that propaganda material had on the German people in the days of early Nazification through the end of World War II (1933-1945). This paper will not cover everything there is to know about the German premeditated murder of their undesirable populations. Although it will focus on how the German propaganda machine centered its resources towards the youth in attempt to influence and guide their mindsets before adulthood. In addition, this essay investigates how propaganda targeted women during wartime, and how their defiance of Nazi ideology cost them their life. The majority of this article's sources includes German propaganda posters which contains racist remarks towards the Jewish community, readers are to use cautionary discretion. Furthermore, derogatory remarks contained within the posters and their descriptions do not reflect the author's views. Sources shed light on how the cohorts born in the 1920s and 30s are considered to be an antisemitic German generation.

The Holocaust (1941-1945) is an event that still holds many questions for historians and the world. The Holocaust was Adolf Hitler's (1889-1945) idea of cleansing the world of the supposed "threat" that was the Jewish community, and any group of people deemed undesirable by Nazi ideology such as: Roma (Gypsies), Communists, and the disabled community. This mass premeditated murder took the lives of roughly "six million Jews, and five

million non-Jewish” people.¹ Which begs the question, how did Germany get to this point? To bloody its hands with the murder of millions. This paper will delve into the factors that led Germany to that point by focusing on the effect that anti-Semitic propaganda circulating at the time, as well as other forms of propaganda that helped press the Nazi sentiments and rhetoric in Germany. Which includes normalizing racial imagery, xenophobia against any and all non-Aryans, and normalizing and desensitizing the murder of millions across Europe.

What better way to begin imprinting this highly racialized and discriminatory ideology, than with those who do not know about the world around them. Children were not exempted from the grasp and beliefs of the Nazi Party, the mind of a child is considered pure; it reminds one of their former selves and of a time when the world seemed bigger, and the possibilities never-ending. But, when a child is forced to undergo racially propagandized lectures in classrooms it banishes their innocence, and breeds fear instead. This fear is transformed into hate, and then unleashed onto those deemed undesirable by the party. This indoctrination method paved a path for Nazi ideology to fester and grow amongst the future generation of Germans. By controlling the educational system, the party controlled what the upcoming generation of citizens and soldiers thought and believed.

¹ “Holocaust Misconceptions,” Illinois Holocaust Museum, June 1, 2023. <https://www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/holocaust-misconceptions/>.

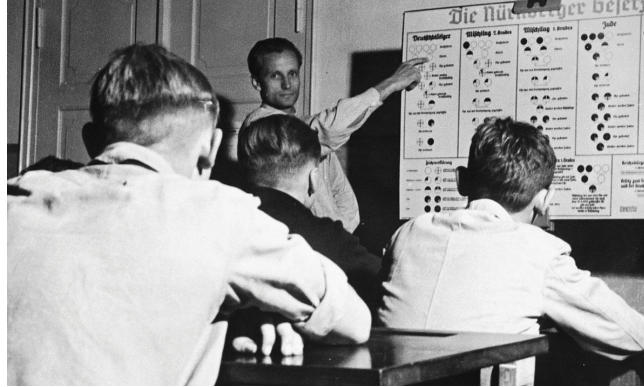


Figure 1: A Hitler Youth instructor teaching the definitions of “race” laid down by the Nuremberg Laws.²

At school, teachers, under the influence of the Nazi Party policies, taught the “dangers of racial mixing,” specifically that of the Germans and the Jewish communities. This subject insinuated the German Aryan superiority to the common Jewish individual, including blaming all socio-economic and political problems of the time on the Jews. In the words of Karl Bareth and Alfred Vogel authors of *Heredity and Racial Science for Elementary and Secondary Schools* “Racial mixing, and the resulting decline in racial quality, is the single cause for the death of ancient cultures.”³ How can a child’s mind process this? As children, they would have

² “For The Future: Indoctrinating Youth - State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,” <https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/propaganda/1933-1939-dictatorship/for-the-future-indoctrinating-youth>; Hohenelse, Germany, 1937. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* Photo/ Scherl, Munich, Germany. The Nuremberg Laws (1935) consisted of two racially charged policies: The Reich Citizenship Law, which promised only pure Germans were allowed citizenship, and the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor, which banned race-mixing and interracial marriages that they believed would taint their pure German bloodline.

³ Karl Bareth and Alfred Vogel, *Erblehre und Rassenkunde für die Grund- und Hauptschule* [hereinafter “Heredity and Racial Science for Elementary and Secondary Schools”] 2nd edition (Bühl-Baden: Verlag Konkordia, 1937). <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/erblehre.htm>.

no choice but to listen to the misinformation of Nazi ideology. According to Bareth and Vogel, “German youth! You, too, must fight the battle and must therefore know the destroyer of all ethnic life: the Jew!”⁴ The Nazi ideology consisted of hate and fear rhetoric that was ingrained at a young age. But for what purpose? It became clear their agenda involved the displacement of the undesirable population, however, to achieve that they first needed an army of individuals whose sole purpose in life was the party.

Nazi ideology did not conclude when schooltime ended, but rather it followed them afterhours and later into their adolescence and adulthood. An example of this is the mandatory Hitler Youth program, a paramilitary organization, their equivalent of the Boy Scouts of America. The goal of this organization was to establish a basis for brainwashing. The National Holocaust Centre and Museum’s *The Hitler Youth* put forward “intended to ensure, through academic and physical education, that the future of Nazism was secure in the hands of an ideologically and racially aware youth.”⁵ The fragility of a child’s mind, undoubtedly proved to be beneficial for the party. Ensuring the indoctrination of the party’s rhetoric increases the Nazis ability to control them. Moreover, the party held a strict outcome if any parent failed to register children to the program. The *Hitler Youth* explains “Parents who did not enroll their children into the Hitler Youth were penalized in conjunction with the law. A fine of 150 marks, or confinement.”⁶

There was no hiding from the party, and the incitement of racial hatred that it marketed to “tune” the minds of the youth to do their bidding. The child’s mind is absorbent like a sponge, as it retains all information that is thrown in its direction. The party knew this, and took advantage, by allowing only Nazi propaganda to make its way to the eyes and ears of the German youth. The

⁴ “Heredity and Racial Science for Elementary and Secondary Schools.”

⁵ HolocaustCentUK. “The Hitler Youth.” The National Holocaust Centre and Museum. Accessed May 24, 2024. <https://www.holocaust.org.uk/the-hitler-youth>.

⁶ HolocaustCentUK. “The Hitler Youth.”

Hitler Youth made sure to grab the attention of young boys who yearned to belong in a society where honor, and racial purity are deemed most important.

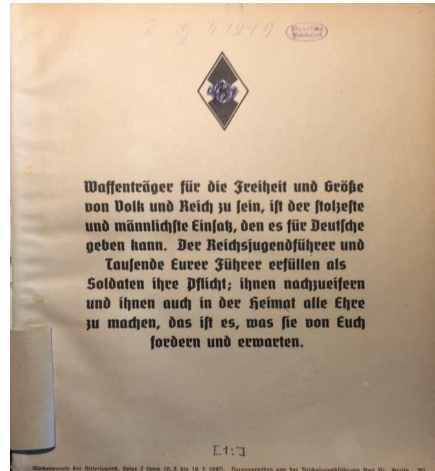


Figure 2: Hitler Youth Quotation Poster #2/1940: 10 - 18 March.⁷

According to the above *Hitler Youth Quotation Poster* which states: “The proudest and most manly thing a German can do is to bear weapons for the freedom and greatness of his people and Reich. The Reich Youth Leader and thousands of your leaders are doing their duty as soldiers.”⁸ This of course can lead some men to enlist in the armed forces. How does the same phenomena that persuades men to give up their lives affect the mind of a child? A child does not necessarily see the hidden message of these propagandized sentiments. Children stand unaware of the

⁷ *Hitler Youth Quotation Poster #2/1940: 10 - 18 March*,# on the German Propaganda Archive <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/hj-wochenparole.htm>; English translation “The proudest and most manly thing a German can do is to bear weapons for the freedom and greatness of his people and Reich. The Reich Youth Leader and thousands of your leaders are doing their duty as soldiers. We require and expect you to imitate them, and also here in the homeland to behave honorably.”

⁸ “Hitler Youth Quotation Poster #2/1940.”

mischievous and true intentions these orchestrated subliminal messages hold to capture their minds. Using propaganda posters similar to figure 1, the party is able to mold them into a servant of Germany, and Adolf Hitler. If the schools' curriculum is on the dangers of racial mixing and preserving racial inheritance then, what could the Aryans learn outside of school? Sacrifice.

The Hitler Youth paints a heroic picture of taking up arms for the Fatherland, and the constant sacrifice that is enacted in the frontlines. This idyllic picture is nothing but a ploy to turn young German boys into fighting men. Accordingly, the *Hitler Youth Quotation Poster #2/1940*, it explains "The Reich Youth Leader and thousands of your leaders are doing their duty as soldiers. We require and expect you to imitate them, and also here in the homeland to behave honorably."⁹ Dissecting this quotation, imitate them how? By liquidating the Jewish public? By banishing hundreds of thousands into communities not fully equipped to hold that many. Is this the imitation that the party called for? Is this method of brainwashing the nation's children into devoted Nazi's its future? To create children who do only what their country, and their precious Führer ask?¹⁰



⁹ "Hitler Youth Quotation Poster #2/1940."

¹⁰ Führer is a German word referring to a leader; Führer is strongly associated with Adolf Hitler, which is the intended purpose of the word throughout the paper.

Figure 3: Führer Adolf Hitler (center) with the Hitler Youth Group, 1935.¹¹

What opportunities do these children, growing up in a world of racially subjected hate, have? They can only fall in line like everyone else or be viewed as outsiders who cannot be trusted. Nazi ideology seeps into the deepest crevices of their minds and takes hold. But, what about the public, and the individuals who maintained skepticism even after the regime change? A trance-like state that has the capability to channel minds into a desired path. The Nazi party used every tool in their arsenal to enhance their image, especially for those who doubted the party's leadership, and ideology. One of the methods to promote their beliefs was film, and one of the most popular films of Nazi Germany is Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph des Willens* (*Triumph of the Will*). A film's grandeur can captivate an audience with great effectiveness. Although this film was marketed as a documentary, it was extremely propagandistic. It painted the Nazi Party as a friendly entity that brought all Germans and Germany together.

The film opens with Hitler's aircraft flying over the medieval city of Nuremberg. At the three minutes, and mark Riefenstahl showcases the city from above the sky.¹² This scene shows Hitler as the great, all judging messiah above, coming down from the heavens to unite the German people. As the film progresses, the audience is bombarded with a myriad of flags flapping against the wind in the medieval city riddled with the party swastika.¹³ During the fourteenth minute, the scene changes to images of the children, where viewers are presented with the boys of the Hitler youth organization, who are happily fed, clothed, and taking part in fun activities.¹⁴ This is an attempt to demonstrate

¹¹ Erin Blakemore, "How the Hitler Youth Turned a Generation of Kids into Nazis," HISTORY, June 29, 2023, <https://www.history.com/news/how-the-hitler-youth-turned-a-generation-of-kids-into-nazis>.

¹² Leni Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will*, (1935) Universum Film (UFA) 3min 30 sec.

¹³ Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will*.

¹⁴ Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will*, 14 min.

the great life that awaited those who chose the party. Reinforcing how their recruitment methods were aimed at children by showing the benefits that are associated with the program and all the fun that awaited them. The Nazi Party wanted Germans to believe they were safe, and protected from all evils foreign, and domestic due to the party and leadership. The film gave the illusion of that being the case, however, it provided no insight into how the party treated those it deemed inferior. Therefore, it failed to show how some Germans, mainly Jewish Germans, were not protected. But it did provide a nurturing image of togetherness within the German Aryan community.

The question then becomes, at what cost? By choosing the party, they were taking the side that sees the Aryans, and most importantly the architect of the party, Adolf Hitler, as the master of the world, and holding the belief that all who are deemed inferior are sworn enemies of Germany. The narrative of which the Nazis have used to shape the nation's hate towards others. Showcasing the love for their people, they gained followers, and these followers in return offered their service to the Fatherland. At the end of the film, a massive image of a swastika becomes transparent only to be followed by the scene of a marching German army.¹⁵

¹⁵ Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will*.



Figure 3: Scene from *Triumph of the Will* movie.¹⁶

This conveys to the audience that the party is Germany, and that Germany is the party, they are one in the same; to be German is to be a member of the party. As a result, a nationwide ideology was set into motion. One flag, one government, and one Führer, this was the message being relayed. In gaining the confidence of the people, through actions such as feeding them, and incorporating them into something bigger is how the party took total control of their actions and will. Yet even though this film was constructed to gain the favor of the German populace, in the same year it released propagandist materials that were in abundance pacifying the minds of the Aryan communities, assuring them that their fight against Jewry is justified, no matter the cost.

Propaganda had its use in time of war such as aiding the spread of misinformation, a concept that the National Socialist Party took great advantage of. They began publishing a monthly selection of propagandistic material for orators entitled “*Advice for Nazi Speakers*.”¹⁷ This allowed them to relay indoctrination to the

¹⁶ Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will*.

¹⁷ *Aufklärungs- und Redner-Informationsmaterial der Reichspropagandaleitung der NSDAP.*, [hereinafter *Advice for Nazi Speakers*] Lieferung 20, 21, 23, 24

people in public spaces where they could socialize and continue to spread the party's message. According to *Advice for Nazi Speakers*, "It is equally obvious that we need to wipe out the sympathy for this element, destructive to our people, that one still finds in some intellectually deficient brains."¹⁸ What message was the party trying to convey? How was being sympathetic to another human considered destructive? These messages were developed by the party to assign blame for Germany's problems such as the failure of the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) on the Jewish population. According to the *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, "This regime disabled Germany financially, increasing violence and created political turmoil and economic hardship."¹⁹ The Nazis shifted the blame of their problems towards the Jewish community building resentment in German communities. In turn, the people who were deemed special by the party due to their Aryan heritage shifted away from viewing the Jewish community as human beings and began to blame them for all German problems.

The Nazi propaganda machine tangled its followers' minds into believing that the real problem of Germany—the Jew—existed long before the rise of the National Socialist Party, though they failed to provide any evidence, only slanderous misinformation. The party acted as father and mother making sure the people, or its children, fell in line with the doctrine of their Führer. How does a nation convert its population to hate a religious group of people? How can they persecute a group of people, based not on their place of origin, but on the religion, they follow? The Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda (Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda) pushed forth the proposition of misinformation to the masses. A sample of this comes from the

(August, September, October, November, December 1935), pp. 1- 25 (Juden Allgemeines). <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/rim3.htm>.

¹⁸ *Advice for Nazi Speakers*.

¹⁹ "Holocaust Encyclopedia." United States holocaust memorial museum. Accessed May 24, 2024. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-weimarrepublic#:~:text=The%20Weimar%20Republic%20is%20the,where%20the%20constitutional%20assembly%20met>.

article *Advice for Nazi Speakers on the Jews* which states, “The Jew belongs to a different race; that is what is decisive. That is hardly new knowledge. Jewry itself has proclaimed this in countless statements and has kept itself apart from other peoples over the millennia of its existence.”²⁰ By profiling the Jewish community as a race, and not as members of the same religion, the party provided an easier means to isolate, and persecute Jews. Though one must ask themselves, how did the Nazi Party encourage its followers to commit to their ideology with such veneration that they would go on to commit heinous acts against people who only practiced a different religion?

Along with the propaganda materials, the Nazi Party called on the masses to take an oath to Adolf Hitler, similar to Americans pledging their allegiance to the United States. How can one find purpose, and certainty in a reality of racial mixing, and Jewish deceit? Why, by swearing an oath of course, to the one man who had promised them liberation from the unworthy Jewish people, that threatened the livelihood of the “true” Aryan Germans. As Rudolf Hess (1894-1987), Hitler’s right-hand man, states in *The Oath to Adolf Hitler* “Through your oath you bind yourselves to a man who — that is our faith — was sent to us by higher powers.”²¹ A man who is your faith? Who was sent by higher powers? Any attempt to deify the man whose agenda is nothing short of barbarity on a scale never before witnessed by humankind.

The pledge to Hitler was seen as a pledge of salvation and deifying him enabled him to become the ultimate ruler. Those who believed his narratives felt that they were protected by something much greater than themselves. Having this power over his subjects, Hitler and the party were able to control the Aryan community, and thus allowed their ideology to flourish. Though deification was not enough to inspire people’s duty for the future of the Reich. According to *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, Hess was a “long standing personal aide to Adolf Hitler, and deputy party leader of the Nazi

²⁰ Advice for Nazi Speakers.

²¹ Rudolf Hess, *The Oath to Adolf Hitler* (1934)

<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/hess1.htm>.

Party until 1941.”²² Hess chose his words accordingly to persuade his audience to do what he wanted accomplished in the name of the party, and Hitler. How can words accomplish this? How can people take this to heart? According to *The Oath to Adolf Hitler* he states “Adolf Hitler is Germany and Germany is Adolf Hitler. He who takes an oath to Hitler takes an oath to Germany!”²³ Now that the union of both nation, and party leaders had been made public they would have a means to control the masses at their disposal, whose indoctrination began years ago. How? By taking violent action against the perceived “unfit” ones as their duty. This validation of violence pushed the Germans, who had pledged their loyalty to Hitler and Germany, to enact any means of cruelty towards the undesirables of Germany. By doing so enabled his followers to “protect” the interests of Hitler, and therefore Germany. However, the party’s grip on its citizens does not stop there.

As we have seen, no one was exempt from the grasp of the Nazi party, not even women, who in a patriarchal Germany were seen only as caregivers while men went off to fight. Why was there a need to target women? Well, how else could the party be sure that their edicts are being followed, especially those who were able to pass on the edicts to their families. Those seen as loyal to the party were targeted for further indoctrination. By focusing on a single group or community, the party had a greater chance of dictating the minds, feelings, and on occasion the actions of any group. One piece of propaganda, an instructional manual entitled *Anti-Semitic Instruction for Girls (1944)* states, “We say today, and forever more: The Jew is the parasite among the peoples! He can as a parasite attack individual, whole people, indeed, all of humanity.”²⁴

²² Holocaust Encyclopedia.

²³ Hess, *The Oath to Adolf Hitler*.

²⁴ *Führerinnendienst des Bundes Deutscher Mädel in der Hitler-Jugend*, [hereinafter *Anti-Semitic Instruction for Girls*] Gebiet Mainfranken 39, February 1944. German Propaganda Archive <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/mainfranken-1944.htm>.



Figure 4: The 'Anti-Semitic Instruction for Girls', an instructional manual for Hitler Youth girls which contains lectures on the Nuremburg Laws and the negative effects of racial mixing.²⁵

How were women supposed to rationalize this? The Nazis knew how to paint a picture of fear, and hatred amongst their followers. And, in doing so they explicitly controlled the fears, and aggressions of their designated audience which allowed them to choose an enemy. To be clear, not all German women fell for these ideologies. For example, Sophie Scholl (1921-1943), a member of the non-violent resistance group The White Rose movement defied Nazi ideology by distributing anti-Nazi pamphlets and in doing so,

²⁵ Führerinnendienst des Bundes Deutscher Mädel in der Hitler-Jugend roughly translates to "Leadership service of the League of German Girls in the Hitler Youth." Figure 4 is an image of the instructional manual distributed to young girls in the Hitler Youth program which taught them how to fight rumors, the evils of the Jews, and established the claim that only the best Germans can become Nazi Party members; *Führerinnendienst des Bundes Deutscher Mädel in der Hitler-Jugend*, [hereinafter Anti-Semitic Instruction for Girls] Gebiet Mainfranken 39, February 1944. German Propaganda Archive <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/mainfranken-1944.htm>.

Sophie was “sentenced to death for treason.”²⁶ The women who fell for Nazi propaganda believed that the Jewish “parasite’s” goal was global domination, and that fear kept the Nazi doctrine firmly in their minds. To the National Socialist Party, women and girls were not just mothers, sisters, caregivers, or nurses, but an entity they needed to retain control over to control the future of the nation. As the war raged on around Germany, the deaths of many plagued the battlefields, and streets of the world.

By 1944, the Holocaust was well underway, and yet the radical misinformation still made their way into the public sphere. Though most of the Holocaust had passed, the Nazi Party wanted the public to continue fearing the Jewish communities to ensure their hate would later fill in the gaps of their fear. According to *Anti-Semitic Instruction for Girls*, “The single feeling that must fill each German is not pity for the Jew, but rather thanks for the Führer who saved us from this fate.”²⁷ Perhaps it was this sentiment that encouraged death upon a radical scale. With the location of the death camps having been in the general government it made it easy for most Germans to avoid learning the full truth about the Holocaust; there were hints that the party gave to better prepare its citizens for the sinister truth.

The Nazis believed that Germans should not feel sad for the cruelty shown against the Jews, instead that they should be thankful to Hitler for saving Germany from the Jews, and their evil ways. The women of Germany were not to think for themselves anymore, instead the glory of Germany, and more importantly its new architect Adolf Hitler. No one was to argue with this as they would be arguing against Hitler himself. And how could one argue against their self-imposed “liberator”? Women were not pushed to the frontlines in battle to bear arms against the enemy, but what of

²⁶ Tanja B. Spitzer, Sophie Scholl and the White Rose.” The National WWII Museum <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/sophie-scholl-and-white-rose>.

²⁷ *Anti-Semitic Instruction for Girls*.

the men that were? The propagandistic material that young boys were exposed to made sure that when they reached the appropriate fighting age they would enlist. The party invested time and effort to condition young men.

In order for Nazi doctrine to be credible, the party had to push it in all life stages of an individual. By the time young men were eligible to enlist, they believed that Jews, Roma, Sinti, and Bolsheviks were their sworn enemies. They readily believed this since they had been hearing it their entire lives. Ever since 1933, the party had been forcing these ideas into their lives and minds during school and in the Hitler Youth program. When the time came for them to enlist, they received specific indoctrination intended to cause fear, and hatred. This time the marketing did not come in the form of a pamphlet, nor a film but perhaps the oldest propaganda method, a poster.

Imagine an eighteen-year-old boy walking down the sidewalk in 1941 Berlin and spots a poster urging young men, such as himself, to help kick the Jewish Bolsheviks out of Russia. The boy, having seen the same sort of hate speech his entire life, now sees this as his duty for the party, for Germany, and for Hitler to rid the Jewish population. When Germany broke the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact of 1939, they needed people to fight in the war they caused. The party sought to include the Soviet Union with the long list of “enemies” of the German people. According to the poster, *Get the Jewish-Bolshevist warmongers out of Europe*, the blame had been shifted militarily to Jewry and Bolsheviks.²⁸ The call to fight against the Jews was applied to Russians.

²⁸ “Get the Jewish-Bolshevist warmongers out of Europe!,” (1941) German Propaganda Archive <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/posters3.htm>.



Figure 5: “Get the Jewish-Bolshevist warmongers out of Europe” poster.²⁹

Figure 5 showcases a cartoon version of Jewish men, with disproportionate noses in Soviet uniforms, who are running away from bayonets attached to rifles. It is as if this poster was aimed at, not only the men back home in Germany, but also against the people of the Soviet Union. This can be attributed to hoping that the blame would be shifted towards the government of the Soviet Union, and not Nazi Germany as the cause for their ongoing war. To further limit any opposition encountered from home during the invasion of the East, the Wehrmacht, (Heer (army), Luftwaffe (air force), and Kriegsmarine (navy)), and any other German fighting force had to be viewed as the liberating force, and not the conquering force that it was. Hitler knew that Eastern Europe was massive and had never been successfully invaded. Therefore, he used his successfully tested propaganda campaign which had worked with the German population and employed it to shift the minds of the Soviet Union residents.

²⁹ “Get the Jewish-Bolshevist Warmongers out of Europe!” *German Propaganda Archive*.

According to Anti-Semitic Instruction for Girls, “We see in Bolshevism Jewry’s attempt in the 20th century to gain world domination.”³⁰ Even though Communism predates Nazism. Hitler, and the Nazis eagerly portrayed themselves as liberators and when foreign, and domestic entities arose to challenge them, they were quickly seen as competitors, as seen in figure 6. The massive propaganda machine of the Reich made it possible to defend their own interests while at the same time slandering the opposition. This ensured that German citizens were fed with misinformation on the events transpiring during the Holocaust by the party. Therefore, Hitler, Germany and the party were able to continue battling the enemy with no concern of morality or uprising at home. As the war carried on, losses were at an all-time high and existed on all fronts. Hitler and his Nazis began to lose the grip they had over Europe. Yet, they continued their system of blaming others (mainly the Jews) for causing the war. Even with all the anti-Bolshevism/Semitism being pushed into the very existence of these young fighting men, what was the effect that it had on the Germans on the Eastern front?

Nazi Germany propaganda gambled its way into Eastern Europe. The men on the Eastern Front went through some of the harshest weather conditions such as the Russian wet season, and bitter cold winters. Slandorous propaganda that further vilified the enemy was indeed beneficial for these men as it had allowed for justification that what they were experiencing was righteous; therefore, they believed in the fallacies of Germany as the victim, rather than the aggressor. For instance, the article *Domestic Propaganda in Wartime* shows how the propagandists “portrayed Germany as a victim that was fighting to defend itself from foreign threats.”³¹

³⁰ Anti-Semitic Instruction for Girls.

³¹ Unknown artist, 1942. *Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, Germany*.; “Domestic Propaganda in Wartime.” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. <https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/propaganda/1939-1945-war/reactions-to-nazi-antisemitism>.



Figure 6: Nazi propaganda poster, translated “Germany’s Victory, Europe’s Freedom”³²

The importance of using propaganda against the enemy is that it built fear and hatred amongst the German ranks. The depiction of the enemy is usually of a bestial nature. This brings fear that the enemy was in fact a beastly creature. One that can only be stopped by Germans. So how did the Wehrmacht, and other Nazi fighting forces take in the propagandistic sources? According to Omer Bartov’s *Hitler’s Army*, in Donald L. Niewyk’s book *The Holocaust: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* “Many soldiers’ letters revealed the impact of years of anti-Semitic indoctrination and deeply rooted prejudices.”³³ These men who grew up as boys under Hitler’s regime had been calibrated to

³² “Domestic Propaganda in Wartime.” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. A German soldier vanquishes the red dragon symbolizing bolshevism, or communism. Using lightning bolts in a V shape that represented victory, German propagandists hoped to diminish the power of the Allied “V for victory” sign by using it themselves.

³³ Omer Bartov’s “Hitlers Army” in Donald L. Niewyk, *The Holocaust: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, (Boston : Houghton Mifflin Company 2003) , 79.

believe in the malicious lies of his party. Children in the eyes of Hitler and the party were seen as nothing more than tools to fight and property to be used as they wished. Property that one day would grow up to do their bidding. Hitler's army was an experiment; an experiment to further develop new ideas of maintaining obedience. And, yet what did the men who underwent every inch of party indoctrination, have to say about their situation?

The men of the Wehrmacht, and any other German fighting forces through the years have soaked up an abundance of party lies, and schemes used to mobilize the nation for their fight against the "world-dominating Jew." Foolish to us, but to those growing up under Hitler's Reich? These images were a matter of life, or death. Thus, what did the men, who entered the military duty phase of their life, have to say regarding their experience? Bartov informs us what Lance-Corporal Paul Lenz had to say on the matter "Only a Jew can be a Bolshevik, for this bloodsucker there can be nothing nicer than to be a Bolshevik."³⁴ It appears Lance-Corporal Lenz, has taken the fight against global Jewry personally, and the distinction between Jew and communism became non-existent. In other words, they are one, and the same. This fueled the hatred needed to disassociate with morality, dismember people, and build a governing force. The hatred imposed by the party has greatly benefited them, controlling the emotions and fears of their populace allowed for their Nazi doctrine to develop further. The party continued its attempts to enable this hatred with those who were eager to play their part in National Socialism.

As time went by, entering the mid to final stages of the war in 1943-1944, many young men were thankful for all the aid the party supplied, and were willing to fight for their National Socialist ways. What they did not know was that they were hurtling towards destruction. Perhaps unaware of this reality, posters insisting that the Jew is the cause of the war and was the driving cause behind the conflict's longevity remained. The poster is one that has been

³⁴ Bertov and Niewyk, "Hitlers Army", 79.

shown tirelessly across the nation, an image of a Jewish man with a disproportionate nose who looks angry. As a remark to the Germans, that the Jew is unfriendly and angry therefore a threat to the Reich. That he is the enemy who desires nothing more than the downfall of Germany. The image provided a double entendre.



Figure 8: “The Jew: The inciter of war, the prolonger of war” released c.1943³⁵

The poster “*The Jew: The inciter of war, the prolonger of war.*” by Hans Schweitzer, shown above, showcases the Jew as the culprit who lingers behind closed curtains to control the downfall of the German Reich.³⁶ The unseen enemy, who will stop at nothing to bring the Fatherland to its knees, or so many Germans were told. Despite all the atrocities, the proclaimed dictator did inevitably employ a genius tactic that allowed him and his party to tiptoe and strategically play on the emotions of the public. By establishing an invisible force, who worked primarily in the shadows to destroy everything that their enemies held dear, striking paranoia and fear into the minds of all who looked up to the party. Creating an invisible monster lurking in the shadows,

³⁵ Hans Schweitzer, The Jew: The inciter of war (1943 or 1944)
<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/posters3.htm>.

³⁶ Schweitzer, The Jew: The inciter of war.

every child's nightmare. The image visually explains the destruction that laid ahead awaiting those who did not rise up. The poster insinuates that only those who become aware have the opportunity to rise against this domestic foe.³⁷ With more, and more ploys to incite people into paranoia; fear only strengthened the party's position. Thus, allowing them to feed the public doctrines, that would result in the party holding an ever more grip. This poster shows us that even when close to the bitter end, the Nazi ideology stayed firm in the beliefs it presented to the public.³⁸ As many different iterations of the inviable monster behind the scenes poster were published, further highlighting how this was a main point in German propaganda.



Figure 7: Nazi propaganda poster used to show how the Jewish population was the driving force behind their enemies. Highlighting how Germany was pulling the curtain back to reveal the true enemy.³⁹

³⁷ Schweitzer, The Jew: The inciter of war.

³⁸ Schweitzer, The Jew: The inciter of war.

³⁹ English translation: Behind the Enemy Powers: The Jew; "Domestic Propaganda in Wartime." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. <https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/propaganda/1939-1945-war/reactions-to-nazi->

Hitler and the Nazis would have known by now that victory was uncertain, and yet they continued to push the idea that the Jews were to blame for the onslaught that had begun to cripple the Reich. They continued using these propaganda methods to further distance themselves from the possibility of being blamed for the destruction done throughout Germany, despite its direct result of Hitler's attempt to expand Germany's borders. After five and a half years of war, Nazis never missed their chance to misinform their public on a grand scale.

In molding their ideology, Hitler, and the Nazi propaganda machine used the elements of fear, and hatred. What were the long-term effects on those subjected to the Nazi ideology? It is easy to say that those who were raised during Nazi occupied Germany grew to hate the Jewish community, and to resent those who were not Aryan. Children who had been subjected to pure hate, had repeatedly been told that it was their patriotic duty to hate the Jew, and anyone else who did not qualify as "pure" German blood. After the war ended, did these children grow up to overcome this narrow mindedness, or did they continue to believe what they were taught in the schools of the Third Reich?

According to Nico Voigtländer and Hans-Joachim Voth's article, *Nazi indoctrination and anti-Semitic beliefs in Germany*, "Cohorts born in the 1920s were also exposed to Nazi indoctrination."⁴⁰ These Nazi generations such as those born in the 20s and 30s held equally higher sentiments of antisemitism than any other German generation. "Individuals in the cohort 1930–1939 have significantly more pronounced anti-Semitic attitudes, even after controlling for personal characteristics such as education or the perception of the economic situation."⁴¹ They grew up with

antisemitism. Figure 7 depicts Jews as the driving inviable force behind the Allied powers of Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union.

⁴⁰ Nico Voigtländer, and Hans-Joachim Voth. "Nazi Indoctrination and Anti-Semitic Beliefs in Germany." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 112, no. 26 (2015): 7931–36. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26463612>.

⁴¹ Voigtländer and Voth, "Nazi Indoctrination."

party slogans, laws, and most importantly indoctrination, therefore it made logical sense that they clung more tightly to antisemitism. By not allowing any breathing room, they took away any chance of rebellion from Nazism upholding its way of life with racism, being at the center. In addition, regional behaviors played a variation of the phenomena. Location played a major role in shaping the outcome of an individual's belief system. The variation of cities, accumulated into different outcomes in results, for example lower Bavaria was five times higher in antisemitism sentiment than that of Hamburg.⁴²

What are the long-lasting impressions that Hitler, and his ideals left on Germany? Those who were subjected to Nazi propaganda, did they remember their teachings, or simply chose to forget the intolerance of the party? In fact, there still exists antisemitic sentiments within Germany. Voigtländer and Voth express how "One quarter of the German population holds mildly or strongly negative views of Jews."⁴³ This means that a quarter of the population has accepted, to some extent, the idea that Jews are a menace. Though their anti-Semitism doesn't compare to the public hatred once imposed by the Nazis, it still exists.

That fear has lingered intact for years and needs only a new Hitler to mold into hate and action. Voigtländer and Voth express that "Areas in which respondents do not want a Jewish neighbor are more likely to deny them equal rights, too, and they believe that Jews have too much influence in the world."⁴⁴ The effect of Nazi doctrine against undesirable communities still holds its grip as it did since the thirties. The same belief system still resides in many German minds. Hitler, and his party dramatically changed a nation in under a decade, changing the way people thought, expressed themselves, and most importantly changed the way they viewed the world.

⁴² Voigtländer and Voth, "Nazi Indoctrination."

⁴³ Voigtländer and Voth, "Nazi Indoctrination."

⁴⁴ Voigtländer and Voth, "Nazi Indoctrination."

In conclusion, the National Socialist Party used various methods of propaganda to mold their indoctrination of the German populace. Beginning with children who were yet to fully comprehend what was happening, the party enforced its agenda into their minds and schooling. In films, they showcased their “nurturing” side to convince people that the party was for the people, and simply wanted to unify Germany under Hitler. The propagandist method which the party used made sure to incorporate all who were “racially desirable,” and sought to make them fall in line under the Nazi beliefs, including non-combatants, such as women. They used antisemitic propaganda to help stir the hearts of men into enlisting for the battlefield playing on their fears of the hidden Jewish foe. Hitler and the Nazis used fear, and hatred to establish the basis for their Thousand-Year Reich, and to keep the German people subservient to the regime. The grip that antisemitism has had on the German public still exists today. Although this grip is not as strong as it once was, it leaves us with a reminder that prejudice no matter how old lingers like skeletons in the closet.

Bibliography

- Aufklärungs- und Redner-Informationsmaterial der Reichspropagandaleitung der NSDAP.*, [hereinafter Advice for Nazi Speakers] Lieferung 20, 21 23, 24 (August, September, October, November, December 1935), pp. 1- 25 (Juden Allgemeines).
<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/ri3.htm>.
- Bareth, Karl, and Alfred Vogel. "Heredity and Racial Science for Elementary and Secondary Schools." German Propaganda Archive. Accessed April 21, 2021.
<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/erblehre.htm>.
- Bytwerk, Randall. Rudolf Hess Speech (25 February 1934). Accessed April 07, 2021.
<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/hes1.htm>.
- "Domestic Propaganda in Wartime." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Accessed May 5, 2024.
<https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/propaganda/1939-1945-war/propaganda-in-the-face-of-defeat>.
- "Domestic Propaganda in Wartime." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
<https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/propaganda/1939-1945-war/eactions-to-nazi-antisemitis>.
- "For The Future: Indoctrinating Youth - State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda" United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,"
<https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/propaganda/1933-1939-dictatorship/for-the-future-indoctrinating-youth>.
- Führerinnendienst des Bundes Deutscher Mädel in der Hitler-Jugend*, [hereinafter Anti-Semitic Instruction for Girls] Gebiet Mainfranken 39, February 1944. German Propaganda Archive.
<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/ma>

[nfranken-1944.htm](#)

“Get the Jewish-Bolshevist Warmongers out of Europe!” German Propaganda Archive. Accessed April 12, 2021.

<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/posters/chasing.jpg>.

Gorillas, Film. “Triumph of the Will (1935) - (Documentary, History, War, Foreign) – Video Dailymotion.”

Dailymotion. September 27, 2018. Accessed April 07, 2021. <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x6uajey>.

“Hitler Youth Quotation Poster #2/1940: 10 - 18 March.” German Propaganda Archive.

<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/images/hj/2-10-3-40.jpg>.

Hohenelse, Germany, 1937. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* Photo/ Scherl, Munich, Germany.

HolocaustCentUK. “The Hitler Youth.” The National Holocaust Centre and Museum. Accessed May 24, 2024.

<https://www.holocaust.org.uk/the-hitler-youth>.

“Holocaust Encyclopedia.” United States holocaust memorial museum. Accessed May 24, 2024.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-weimar-republic#:~:text=The%20Weimar%20Republic%20is%20the,where%20the%20constitutional%20assembly%20mt>.

“Holocaust Misconceptions.” Illinois Holocaust Museum, June 1, 2023.

<https://www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/holocaust-misconceptions/>.

Niewyk, Donald L., and Omer Bartov. “Hitler’s Army.” In *The Holocaust: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, 76-83. 4th ed. Boston, MA: Wadsworth.

Schweitzer, Hans. “The Jew: The Inciter of War, the Prolonger of War.” German Propaganda Archive. Accessed April 12, 2021.

<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/posters/derjude.jpg>.

Spitzer, Tanja J., “Sophie Scholl and the White Rose: The National WWII Museum: New Orleans.” The National WWII Museum New Orleans, February 21, 2020.

<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/sophie-scholl-and-white-rose>.

Voigtländer, Nico, and Hans-Joachim Voth. “Nazi Indoctrination and Anti-Semitic Beliefs in Germany.” PNAS. June 30, 2015. Accessed April 20, 2021.

<https://www.pnas.org/content/112/26/7931>.

Author Bio

Edgar Chavez Sosa is a current graduate student working on his master of arts degree in history, at California State University, San Bernardino, where he is expected to graduate in May of 2025. Edgar's points of interest revolve around the military, and Chicano history. He hopes to utilize his degree as part of a collections team in a museum, while teaching part time in a college setting. After graduation, he plans on applying for a PhD program for the following Fall semester. Edgar comes from a proud Mexican background and his parents, Francisco and Rosa have encouraged him to keep pursuing his academic dreams. Equality is at the core of Edgar's belief system. Naturally as a historian he questions and views the world with a unique set of lenses. He would like to thank his mentor Dr. Thomas Long who helped him so graciously since his days as an undergraduate. In part he dedicates this article to his family who have never doubted him, and to Dr. Long for believing in him.

