

## Propaganda and Censorship in Nazi Germany

### Task

Complete this table using your worksheet from the "Undercover in Nazi Germany" simulation at [www.activehistory.co.uk](http://www.activehistory.co.uk):

▪ The minister of propaganda in Nazi Germany was...	
▪ The film he promoted which encouraged people to feel happy was called...	
▪ The most famous filmmaker in Nazi Germany was...	
▪ The film she promoted which encouraged people to love the Nazis was called...	
▪ The Führer (leader) of Nazi Germany was...	
▪ The film he promoted which encouraged people to hate the Jews was called ...	

### What is Propaganda? What is Censorship?

- Censorship is banning access to information.
- Propaganda is 'political advertising'. It is designed to change the way that people think.
- Hitler used propaganda to generate (a) support for the Nazis, and (b) hatred for their enemies.

### Who was Josef Goebbels?

**1914-18:** Goebbels was not allowed to fight in World War One because he had a deformed foot. He later claimed that it was a war wound!

**1925:** Goebbels joined the Nazi Party and became the party's expert on propaganda.

**1933:** Goebbels was appointed Minister of Propaganda and Popular Enlightenment when Hitler became Chancellor.

**1935 / 1938:** Goebbels hated Jews and helped to frame the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 and to organise Kristallnacht in 1938.

**1945:** He stayed with Hitler to the end, and witnessed Hitler's suicide in his bunker. He then poisoned his six children and then committed suicide with his wife.



**Key Quote:** "The essence of propaganda consists in winning people over to an idea so sincerely, so vitally, that in the end they succumb to it utterly and can never escape from it." Goebbels

## Examples

### 1. Film

**Method of Control:** The Nazis bought up shares in the four major film companies until by 1942 they were completely state controlled.

**Case Study:** *Triumph of the Will* (documentary of the 1935 Nuremberg Rally) generated positive support for the Nazis. *Der Ewige Jude* ("The Eternal Jew") tried to make adults hate the Jews. *Hitler Junge Quex* tried to make children hate the Jews.

### 2. Sport

**Case Study:** In 1936, (a) The Nazis hosted the Berlin Olympics, where the Germans won the most gold medals of any nation; (b) Turned boxer Max Schmelling into a national hero after he defeated the (black) World Champion Joe Louis.

**But:** (a) At the Olympics, the black US athlete Jesse Owens won a record 4 gold medals; (b) Max Schmelling was destroyed by Joe Louis in their 1938 rematch.

### 3. Radio

**Method of Control:** The Nazis produced cheap "People's Radios" which most Germans owned by 1939. These radios could only pick up Nazi broadcasts.

**Case Study:** Hitler himself made over 50 broadcasts in 1933 alone; Goebbels delivered a famous and inspiring speech encouraging Germans to embrace "Total War" in 1943. Each key member of the party had their own "signature tune" before they started to speak! During WW2 "Lord Haw-Haw" (William Joyce) delivered pro-Nazi propaganda broadcasts to England, in English (he was executed after the war).

### 4. Painting, Architecture, Literature

**Painting:** (a) Propaganda: Hitler opened the "House of German Art" in Munich to promote realistic paintings of scenes from German life (b) Censorship: Hitler banned "degenerate" (modern) art. Grosz fled to the USA.

**Architecture:** Albert Speer produced plans for a rebuilt Berlin (to be renamed 'Germania') on a grand style reflected by the new Nuremberg stadium.

**Literature:** Many students took part in a ceremonial 'burning of the books' in Berlin in May 1933 on the grounds that they were 'Un-German'. "The Poisonous Mushroom" (above) was designed to make children hate Jews. "Mein Kampf" was compulsory study in schools to generate support for Hitler and the Nazis.



### 5. Newspapers

**Method of Control:** Goebbels held daily press conferences and provided half the content of newspapers. Communist and Socialist papers were banned, and the party controlled around 2/3 of the German press by 1939.

**Case Study:** Cartoons portraying evil Jews were all regular entries in Nazi newspapers such as *Der Stürmer* and *Völkischer Beobachter*.

## Conclusion

### Evidence of success:

**When?:** In the short term, propaganda played an important role in getting Hitler into power and then advertising his main ideas.

**Who?:** For young people, propaganda had a lasting effect. Despite the loss of World War II, a poll by the USA in October 1945 showed that 42% of youths believed that German reconstruction would best be carried out by a 'strong new Führer'.

### Evidence of failure:

**When?:** In the longer term, great thinkers such as Thomas Mann and Albert Einstein emigrated to escape oppression and this was the Germany's loss.

**Who?:** Older and more educated people are generally less susceptible to propaganda, although it is ultimately impossible to read people's thoughts.

## Main Task

On a piece of A3 paper, produce a labelled picture of a "real life scene" designed to illustrate Nazi propaganda techniques. For example, you could have a burning pile of books in the background, someone reading a newspaper, posters on a nearby wall, and so on. Label each key feature and describe in more detail what the Nazis did.

## Depth Study: How Successful was Nazi Propaganda?

1. Complete this table by taking relevant points from the worksheet and summarising them here. The first row is done for you.
2. Follow the same format as the first row – main point in bold, then detail following.
3. When you have finished the table, add an image in the first column under the title to illustrate

	<b>Positive: Gaining support for Nazis</b>	<b>Negative: Generating Hatred towards others</b>
<b>1. Film</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Triumph of the Will</b> – Stresses <u>organisation</u> and <u>power</u> of the Nazis – a documentary about the <u>Nuremberg Rally</u> by Leni Riefenstahl</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>The Eternal Jew</b> – Stresses Nazi ideas about how <u>Jews</u> are money-sucking parasites that deserve no sympathy</li> </ul>
<b>2. Sport</b>		
<b>3. Radio</b>		
<b>4. Painting, Architecture, Literature</b>		
<b>5. Newspapers</b>		

### Discussion Points

1. Was propaganda used mainly to generate love for Hitler, or hatred of his enemies?
2. Was propaganda used mainly to highlight real achievements, or to mislead the people?
3. Can propaganda ever be justified in a civilised state?



**Exam-Style Question**

- a. Describe the use of propaganda by Hitler to control the German people [5]
- b. Why did Hitler seek to control all forms of media? [7]
- c. "Propaganda was more effective than the Police State as a method of controlling the German people" – Do you agree? [8]

