

Liberty University

Popular Culture and World War II Propaganda

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Abstract

Popular culture in relation to World War II has been explored by various scholars over the years. They have deeply examined how radio, film, and other forms of media helped the war effort along and how Hollywood became engaged in the war effort, but there has been a lack of in-depth analysis of the major themes across the mediums. This thesis will examine how film, radio, cartoons, and comic books came together to become a powerful tool of propaganda and public information for the American home front and military. It is an in-depth examination of the major themes that were common in the American media, how they deeply reflected the culture of war time America, and how the government used them to promote national security objectives.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this thesis was to explore a more complete perspective of how important popular culture was to shaping World War II America and what it reflected about the culture. Popular culture is often viewed as shallow or unimportant, but this thesis strives to show what a powerful tool it can be during a time of war and how it can shape the narrative and direction of a culture. This thesis is to help understand not just one medium that was used, but how they all came together to create a unified narrative of the war for the government.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents. They have always encouraged my pursuit of knowledge and have been a constant support throughout the entirety of this thesis process. I cannot thank them enough for all that they have done.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to Popular Culture and Propaganda

Propaganda has been utilized for centuries to build support or hatred for movements. It is an important part of any political system. It is a powerful tool especially in times of war. Every industry in America was utilized for the war effort during World War II and that included popular culture. Hollywood became a juggernaut for the war effort. It was not just one form of media either. Film, radio, cartoons, and comic books were all used. According to Hadley Cantril in his article, “Public Opinion in Flux”, only one third of the population would vote to go to war with Germany by late 1941.¹ With the increasing tension as the conflict worsened, the American government needed to be sure the public would be behind them if they went to war. Popular culture, in all its forms, was utilized to build the support the American government needed for the country to engage in a war. Popular culture would assist in the war effort by doing things such as inspiring distrust of the enemy, helping to educate the military and civilians on various wartime issues, and assist in building home front support for the war effort.

This topic of World War II propaganda and popular culture examines how the government and popular media changed their course to build war support and how this action effected the American public and military. Popular culture deeply reflects the values and ideals of any era. It helps to showcase what Americans found important for the war effort and reflected the values of the time. Popular culture is a powerful selling tool and combining with propaganda was an impressive way to sell certain values and ideals to the American public. Propaganda has a very negative context in the modern world, but for the purpose of this work it is important to

¹ Hadley Cantril, “Public Opinion in Flux,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 220 (1942), 138.

define what propaganda meant for the time. The American Historical Association produced the pamphlet, the *GI Roundtable*, in 1944. In July of that year, Dr. Ralph D. Casey wrote “What is Propaganda?” He says,

To some speakers and writers, propaganda is an instrument of the devil. They look on the propagandist as a person who is deliberately trying to hoodwink us, who uses half-truths, who lies, who suppresses, conceals, and distorts the facts... The difficulty with such a view is that welfare groups and governments themselves secure benefits for a people through propaganda. Moreover, national propaganda in the throes of a war is aimed to bolster the security of the non-aggressor state and to assure the eventual well-being and safety of its citizens. No one would deny that this kind of propaganda, intelligently administered, benefits every man, woman, and child in the land.²

For the purpose of this thesis, the definition of propaganda will more closely align with Casey’s idea that it provides security and assurance of eventual well-being. Propaganda, in this sense, was more a dissemination of public information than anything else. The purpose of this thesis is to showcase how the American government used popular culture to distribute propaganda to its citizens and showcase the narrative that they wanted for wartime America.

The Office of War Information was formed on June 13, 1942, under executive order 9812. In this order, Roosevelt says it is being issued “In recognition of the right of the American people and of all the other peoples opposing the Axis aggressors to be truthfully informed about the common war effort....”³ By creating an agency that would handle the dissemination of wartime information, this would help to create a coherent vision of what is going out to the American public. While this order listed several duties, the most important one for this thesis is 4a. This goal outlines the purpose of the OWI. This was to “Formulate and carry out, through the

² Ralph D. Casey, “What is Propaganda?” *American Historical Association: GI Roundtable Series* (1944).

³ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Executive order 9812, “Establishing the Office of War Information”, June 13, 1942, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/executive-order-9182-establishing-the-office-war-information>

use of press, radio, motion picture, and other facilities information programs designed to facilitate the development of an informed and intelligent understanding, at home and abroad, of the status and progress of the war effort and of the war policies, activities, and aims of the Government.”⁴ The OWI quickly became heavily involved in Hollywood and the creation of wartime propaganda.

The OWI became involved in film more than other popular culture medium. The BMP or the Bureau of Motion Pictures established a liaison office in Hollywood to assist with the war effort in 1941.⁵ This agency was headed by Lowell Mellett. He had been an aide to Roosevelt since 1939 and headed up the Office of Government Reports.⁶ In June of 1942, this liaison office merged with the Office of War Information and became part of the domestic sector of the OWI. Movies were a powerful selling tool. They helped to shape culture and were a popular form of media for getting information across. Roosevelt believed that motion pictures would be one of the most effective ways to reach the American public.⁷ There was a massive increase in movie production as it was becoming a part of the war effort. They were creating and releasing almost five hundred pictures a year and drawing eighty million paid admissions a week.⁸ These movies were quickly becoming a source of wartime entertainment, but also a powerful tool for the propaganda that was being created during that time especially with the involvement of the OWI.

Much of the focus of the OWI was on the use of film, but radio did fall under its umbrella and Roosevelt understood how important it was to the war effort. Almost every American home

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, "What to Show the World: The Office of War Information and Hollywood, 1942-1945," *The Journal of American History* 64, no. 1 (1977): 89.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

had a radio and it was one of the best ways for disseminating information to the public. The most popular shows were bringing an average of 30 million listeners out of a population of 150 million and FDR's "fireside chats" were drawing in at least half the population.⁹ Shows like *The Jack Benny Show* and *Fibber McGee and Molly* were utilized to build up support early on in the war. These popular figures were essential in building war support.

Walt Disney and Warner Brothers cartoons are the perfect example of the private sector and the government mandated media coming together. For the first time in the history of Walt Disney, the cartoons would have a different purpose than just entertainment. They would be used for the explicit purpose of propaganda.¹⁰ These cartoons would become another tool of the war machine. While these cartoons were certainly entertaining, they were also important learning tools for the public. Warner Brothers was also creating cartoons, but they were not under government contract. This meant that they had more freedom in what they could create. Disney was under a strict government contract which meant they had to stick to specific themes, but Warner Brothers was able to address the grittier war time topics because they were not under government contract.¹¹ This meant that the Warner Brothers were able to address more real issues for the public than Disney would be able to.

Walt Disney did not want his company under the government in the early days of the war. Neal Gabler in his book, *Walt Disney: The Triumph of the American Imagination*, says Disney had always disdained anything that he deemed contrary to the company's essential purpose which was to entertain.¹² Even though Disney did not want to take government contracts

⁹ Gerd Horten, "Radio Days on America's Home Front," *History Today* 46 (September 1996): 1.

¹⁰ Tracey Louise Mollet, *Cartoons in Hard Times: The Animated Shorts of Disney and Warner Brothers in Depression War 1932-1945* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹² Neal Gabler, *Walt Disney: The Triumph of the American Imagination*, (New York: Random House, 2006), 382.

he understood that he would have to. The studio was having financial issues and taking government contracts would help to alleviate some of the financial burden.¹³ The first film Disney created was *Four Methods of Flush Riveting*, released in 1941. His first government contract was with John Grierson, the film commissioner of Canada, because of the *Four Methods* film.¹⁴ The contract stated that Disney would produce, "...a film on the fundamentals of flush riveting, an instructional film on an antitank rifle, and four shorts promoting the sale of Canadian war bonds."¹⁵ This initial contract would signal the change of Disney's mission. The mission of Disney was no longer entertainment, but instead education and persuasion.¹⁶ Disney would continue to create war time cartoons even though it was not what he envisioned or wanted for his company. His World War II era cartoons have gone on to be classics in the cartoon realm.

The Warner Brothers origins into the war was not the same as Disney's. While Disney entered the wartime sector for financial reasons, the Warner Brothers did it for much more personal reasons. Harry and Jack Warner were Polish-Jewish immigrants. They risked their money and reputation to produce many anti-fascist films from the mid-30s to the early 40s.¹⁷ These films included *Black Legion*, *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, *They Won't Forget*, *Juarez*, *Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet*, *The Life of Emile Zola*, and *Sargent York*.¹⁸ The Warner Brothers would not ignore the dangers they saw in Europe and actively strove to educate the public about the dangers even at the risk of their own reputation. For years,

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 383

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Tracey Louise Mollet, *Cartoons in Hard Times: The Animated Shorts of Disney and Warner Brothers in Depression War 1932-1945* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017),141.

¹⁷ Michael E. Birdwell, *Celluloid Soldiers: The Warner Bros. Campaign Against Nazism* (New York: NYU Press, 1999), 1.

¹⁸ Ibid.

the Warner Brothers were the only mogul in Hollywood standing against the Nazi regime.¹⁹ As Harry Warner pointed out in 1941 when he had to testify during a Senate investigation of propaganda in film. He told the committee that the Warner Brothers were the first to curtail their business with the Nazis unlike many other companies that continued to do business with the Nazis until the summer of 1940 even though it was going to greatly affect their profits.²⁰ Producing wartime material was a very personal venture for the Warner Brothers unlike Disney. As the war continued, the Warner Brothers would continue to make many various wartime cartoons and films. They would create educational characters like Private Snafu and address many gritty wartime topics.

Comic books were a relatively new medium by the time World War II had come around. Today many consider comic books as a child friendly medium especially with the popularity of the Marvel and DC movies within the recent years. However, in the 1930s and 1940s, comic books were considered extremely lowbrow, vulgar entertainment and they were almost completely uncensored.²¹ This lack of censorship meant the comics were a perfect avenue for propaganda material. Just like the Warner Brothers cartoons, they could address the grittier narratives, but at an even higher level than the cartoons. Despite the sour reputation, the government saw that these comic books could be utilized for the war effort. There were two main reasons for this. First, comic books offered a more clandestine avenue for getting propaganda out to a large audience due to the fact that they were massively popular with the troops and civilians.²² Secondly, due to their uncensored nature there could be higher levels of

¹⁹ Ibid., 2.

²⁰ Ibid., 168.

²¹ Dan Turello, "War and Superheroes: How the Writers War Board Used Comics to Spread Its Message in WWII," *War and Superheroes: How the Writers War Board Used Comics to Spread Its Message in WWII / Insights: Scholarly Work at the John W. Kluge Center*.

²² Ibid.

violence, sex and even racism and so the government could promote these more radical themes due to the covert nature of comics because the government had no direct link to the comics.²³ This meant that the government could still push forward the propaganda agenda, but not appear to be directly connected like film and radio. In reality, comic books were under the umbrella of the OWI, but it was hidden behind the Writers' War Board. The Writer's War Board was an independent organization that strove to create pro-American, anti-fascist propaganda and it was all funded by the OWI.²⁴ With being able to hide behind the WWB, the OWI could create this much more traditional definition of propaganda.

The OWI did attempt to use newspaper comics as well. Newspaper comics are often the forgotten area of the war effort as they are not as easily available. They typically have to be searched for in old newspapers. Plenty of comics about the war were being produced in newspapers by comic artists. One of the most famous would be Theodor Seuss Geisel, who would go on to be Dr. Seuss. He created a plethora of wartime comics in his very distinct Dr. Seuss style. However, the reason that these comics are probably forgotten about is that they were less successful than their other popular culture counterparts. The use of newspaper comics seemed like a brilliant idea. The newspaper comics were the most widely read non-advertising feature read by adults in the daily paper according to the Advertising Research Foundation in 1942.²⁵ This should have made a great addition to the OWI lineup of other propaganda methods. In the end, the OWI concluded that the authors of the comic strips were not displaying the war in the way they wanted. They failed to view the war in a global scope.²⁶ The newspaper comics did

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Steve M. Barkin, "Fighting the Cartoon War: Information Strategies in World War II." *Journal of American Culture* Spring/Summer (1984):114.

²⁶ Ibid., 115

not lend themselves to the same control or manipulation that the other mediums did.²⁷ This failure to utilize newspaper comics is ironic given how popular newspapers were for the spreading of information.

Propaganda itself is as old as time. Ever since the creation of society there have always been battles for the opinions and minds of others. The ancient Asiatic cultures did not have the methods to disseminate shared ideas and opinions, but with the rise of ancient Athens, the Greeks were able to be conscious of their interests and be aware of societal problems.²⁸ Propaganda is an important part of political society, and it is still used often today in ways that sometimes people are not even aware of. Propaganda is an interesting tool of psychological warfare that can either be used for the enemy or for ones' own people. During World War I, there was a distinct focus on making truthful propaganda. During World War I much of the propaganda that was being spread by the Allies had a distinct air of truth.²⁹ By including mostly true things within the propaganda it makes it harder to pinpoint exactly what is propaganda and what is not.³⁰ While this practice was still being used in World War II, there is a more of a shift to propaganda, at least on the home front, that is slightly more fantastical. The use of popular culture in American propaganda would not be in full swing until World War II, but film propaganda saw use during World War I in Britain.

Britain began to understand how important film can be for the war effort during World War I. They had been using the traditional methods of propaganda, but as film became more popular they came to see how important it was. The movie experience was a noisy one during

²⁷ Ibid., 117.

²⁸ Ralph D. Casey, "What is Propaganda?," *American Historical Association: GI Roundtable Series* (1944).

²⁹ Terence H. Qualter, *Propaganda and Psychological Warfare*, (Chicago: Burtyrki Books, 2020), 57.

³⁰ Ibid.

World War I with people in full participation with agreeing, disagreeing, shouting, etc.³¹ This showed how powerful film could be just on its own and now it could be used to help further the war effort. While many propaganda films have an almost fictional or in some cases completely fictional story to them, the British focused on keeping these films as real as possible.³² This helped it from becoming fantastical and gave some actual credence to the films. *The Battle of Somme* released in 1916 became one of the most popular films due to its realism about the front lines and what life was really like for the soldiers.³³

This film consists of footage of various areas of battlefields, troops in trenches, and the dead and wounded.³⁴ The only words in this film are the cards of text that occasionally pop up due to this being a silent film. These would help to provide some context for what was being depicted. For example, these cards would say, “Activity at Miden Post, while battle raged furiously” or “The battered German stronghold at Fricourt.”³⁵ These very real depictions helped to build home front support for the British without having to rely on fictional depictions of what the war was like. Many propaganda films fail to showcase realism and this film was popular because of this realism. Film would quickly become one of the most important avenues for propaganda during World War II.

Radio became an incredible resource for propaganda and war support during World War II. By World War II, radios were common most homes in America and in homes around the world. According to the 1940 census, twenty-eight million homes in America reported having a

³¹ British Library, “World War One Propaganda,” *The British Library*. The British Library, February 5, 2015, <https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/videos/world-war-one-propaganda>.

³² Nicholas Reeves, “Film Propaganda and Its Audience: The Example of Britain's Official Films during the First World War,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 18, no. 3 (1983): 465.

³³ British Library, “World War One Propaganda,” *The British Library*. The British Library, February 5, 2015, <https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/videos/world-war-one-propaganda>.

³⁴ *The Battle of Somme*, W. F. Fury, Film, 1916, British Topical Committee for War Films, 1916.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

radio.³⁶ Other countries were using this invention to their fullest as well. Germany and Japan would utilize radio as a propaganda weapon against the US forces during the war. They were able to use radio not only for propaganda on the home front, but to demoralize the Allied troops. There are two famous examples of this in Axis Sally and Tokyo Rose.

Axis Sally was actually a woman named Mildred Gillars. She was born in Portland, Maine on November 29, 1900. She attended Ohio Wesleyan University where she studied drama and English.³⁷ After traveling through Europe during various jobs, she settled in Berlin in 1934. When the war broke out, she was working as a duty announcer for broadcasts to Britain via Bremen I.³⁸ She chose to stay in Berlin during the war. In 1943, Gillars and Otto Koischwitz, an influential broadcaster on the North American service and former American professor, began going to Allied PoW camps to interview the prisoners.³⁹ These interviews were not what made her notorious, however.

Axis Sally rose to prominence in GI circles. Her program was called Midge at the Mike. This program would feature things like familiar music and the illusion of a warmth and intimacy from her tone.⁴⁰ However, throughout these programs there were taunting messages to the troops. Many of these taunting messages focused on the soldiers' wives and girlfriends. On a broadcast from November 26, 1943, Gillars taunted the soldiers in between songs with this message:

And what are your girls doing tonight, fellows? You really can't blame them for going out to have some, could you? It is all so empty back there

³⁶ Jason Gauthier, "U.S. Census Bureau History: Franklin D. Roosevelt's First Fireside Chat," United States Census Bureau, accessed January 2, 2022, https://www.census.gov/history/www/homepage_archive/2015/march_2015.html#:~:text=By%20the%201940%20Census%2C%20of%20households%20owning%20a%20radio.

³⁷ Horst J.P. Bergmeier and Rainer E. Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves: The Inside Story of Nazi Radio Broadcasting and Propaganda Swing*, (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1997), 125.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 126.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

now – better to go out for some drinks with that 4-F boyfriend than to sit and wait forever, doing nothing. You may dislike my repeating this to you, but it’s the truth, especially if you boys get all mutilated and do not return in one piece. I think then you’ll have a pretty tough time with your girl. Any girl likes to have a man in one piece, so I think in any case, you’ve got a pretty hard future ahead of you.⁴¹

These types of messages were utilized to break the morale of American troops and taunt them. Axis Sally would eventually be tried for treason by the US and sentenced to 30 years in prison. She was paroled after 12 years and quietly moved to Columbus, Ohio where she died in 1988.

Japan did something similar to Axis Sally in the form of Tokyo Rose. Tokyo Rose is the more well-known counterpart of Axis Sally. Several women played Tokyo Rose, but the woman usually tied to Tokyo Rose is Iva Toguri Aquino. She was born in Los Angeles on July 4, 1916. In 1941, she sailed to Japan to visit a sick relative and to study medicine.⁴² She traveled to Japan without a passport and while there the war broke out. She remained in Japan for the duration of the war. While there she was asked to host a program called Zero Hour. The set up to these programs was similar to those of Axis Sally. It would be music, news items from America, and then interspersing jabs about the troop’s girls or wives. Tokyo Rose actually had much less of an effect on the American troops morale, and it was possible it even raised it a bit.⁴³ Troops were able to hear popular music from home if they could ignore the small barbs thrown their way. Tokyo Rose was still considered propaganda even if it did not fulfill its intended mission. These are examples of how popular culture and popular media were utilized by other countries during wartime. It is evident that it was a useful wartime tool for all countries involved, but none used it

⁴¹ *Axis Sally*, “Midge at the Mike” Aired November 2, 1943.

⁴² “Iva Toguri D’Aquino and ‘Tokyo Rose.’” *Federal Bureau of Investigation* . FBI, May 18, 2016. Last modified May 18, 2016. Accessed July 1, 2021. <https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/iva-toguri-daquino-and-tokyo-rose>.

⁴³ *Ibid*.

quite like the United States. It was turned into a wartime machine just like every other element of society.

General ideas of how propaganda has been used has not truly changed over the years. There is a general consensus that propaganda is an important tool for any political faction and especially useful for wartime. As Ralph d. Casey said, there are many different kinds of propaganda that range from selfish, deceitful, and subversive to honest and aboveboard promotion of good things.⁴⁴ It helps to build support, shape understanding, and, in more sinister ways, to keep a population controlled. Many different disciplines have examined the psychology and usefulness of propaganda over the years, but the specific use of popular culture as propaganda even less so. To understand how the ideas concerning propaganda and popular culture has changed over the years, it is best to understand how the various forms of media have been viewed over the years. There is not much discourse concerning propaganda and popular culture, but instead different interpretations about its usefulness and what it meant to the war effort.

Film has always been a powerful tool for teaching. From its earliest iterations it has been used as a tool for teaching specific lessons and versions of events. One of the first major works on film and World War II was by Bernard F. Dick in his work *The Star-Spangled Screen*. He served as the professor of Communications and English at Fairleigh Dickinson University. *The Star-Spangled Screen* was awarded the outstanding scholarly book of the year award and he was awarded the distinguished scholarship award by Fairleigh Dickinson University in 1991. Other major works include *Anatomy of Film* (1978) and *Hellman in Hollywood* (1982). Dick strives to

⁴⁴ Ralph D. Casey, "What is Propaganda?" *American Historical Association: GI Roundtable Series* (1944).

showcase and argue that for Hollywood and film the war did not begin on September 1, 1939 or December 7, 1941, but instead had begun in the early 30s with veiled illusions and metaphors to the fascist aggression.⁴⁵ It showcases how important film was for teaching anti-fascist ideology even years before the war started and once it did it was able to do even more. He does this by examining various films throughout the years. This examination of film helps to build a foundation for the articles and books written in the later years. This work is well known for its in-depth archival work and that is crucial in later works on the topic.

The next work on film is *We Will Always Have the Movies* by Robert L. McLaughlin and Sally E. Parry. McLaughlin and Parry are both professors of English at Illinois State University. Another major work by them is *Broadway Goes to War* (2021) and they argue that the entirety of popular culture, film, radio, media, comics, etc., showcased the persistence of the themes, stories, and myths of World War II for years to come.⁴⁶ Films, however, were the most important. They were the most important in promoting the mythic narratives about the war due to the fact that they could offer completed narratives about the war and the fact that they were higher in popularity compared to other fictionalized media.⁴⁷ This work translates an important theme that shows up in most works on film, propaganda, and WWII. Film was a powerful narrative and helped to shape the understanding of World War II, not only then, but in the present.

Thomas B. Christie and Andrew M. Clark both serve as associate professors in the Communication department at the University of Texas. They are the authors of “Framing Two Enemies in Mass Media.” Christie is the author of “Terror From the Skies,” “Stereotypes of

⁴⁵ Bernard F. Dick, *The Star-Spangled Screen: The American World War II Film*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1985), vii

⁴⁶ Robert L. McLaughlin and Sally E. Parry, *We'll always have the Movies: American Cinema during World War II* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006), 6.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 6-8.

Americans and Hollywood Movie Viewing in China,” and “Cultivating Images of the Enemy in Media.” Clark is the author of “Cultivating Images of the Enemy in Media,” “The Battle of Airwaves,” and “Framing the Japanese Enemy in World War II.” The goal of this article was to understand how much the American government influenced the perception of Germany and Japan for American filmmakers.⁴⁸ The article concludes with a quote from Dorothy Jones, head of the OWI’s Hollywood office. She argues that Hollywood was unprepared for the war emergency, but this is opposite of Dick’s argument that Hollywood had been working up to the war films for years.⁴⁹ This article helps to show what an important tool of the government film was as it turned into a full-blown part of the war machine.

Radio was indeed a critical medium for communicating with the American public. It was how most Americans received their news and entertainment. It was the perfect medium to combine entertainment and propaganda. Many historians over the years have understood how important it has been. Gerd Horton serves as a professor of Humanities at Concordia University. He is the author of “Radio Days on America’s Home Front” (1996) and he is the author of *Radio Goes to War* (2003). According to Horton, radio played the crucial role of connecting entertainment and commercial radio and these two together combined to advertise products, show the patriotism of advertisers, and this fusion of propaganda and advertising was often delivered by popular radio personalities.⁵⁰ This article helps to lay the foundation for how important radio was for selling the war effort as many historians in the years following have come to believe.

⁴⁸ Thomas B. Christie, and Andrew M. Clark. “Framing Two Enemies in Mass Media: A Content Analysis of U.S. Government Influence in American Film during World War II.” *American Journalism* 25, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 56.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁵⁰ Gerd Horton, “Radio Days on America’s Home Front,” *History Today* 46 (September 1996): 5.

Michael J. Socolow served as an assistant professor at the University of Maine in the Communications and Journalism department. He is the author of “‘News is a Weapon’” (1996) and his other major work includes *Six Minutes in Berlin* (2016). Socolow argues that the American government and especially Roosevelt understood the importance of radio propaganda and they wanted to establish a government operated national radio network.⁵¹ This had never been attempted before. This shows how important radio was as a medium for sharing information and propaganda. The American government was looking to step in to be able to establish this connection and build a specific war time culture.

A more recent article on the use of radio in World War II is “Propaganda and Combat Motivation” (2019) by Benjamin Barber IV and Charles Miller. Barber is an assistant professor in the IE Business School in Madrid and has a Ph. D. in Political Science from Duke. His other works include “Indoctrination and Coercion in Agent Motivation: Evidence from Nazi Germany” (2018) and “Political Ideology and Firm Location” (2019). Charles Miller serves as a lecturer of international relations in the School of Politics and International Relations at Australian National University. This paper focuses on how German soldiers that were exposed to German propaganda were more likely to do well in battle and be decorated for valor.⁵² This is a different focus than most historians. Many focus on the use of radio in America, but by understanding the German side it helps to provide a more comprehensive view of how important radio was to the war effort and building propaganda.

⁵¹ Michael J. Socolow, “‘News Is a Weapon’: Domestic Radio Propaganda and Broadcast Journalism in America, 1939-1944,” *American Journalism* 24, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 18.

⁵² Benjamin Barber IV and Charles Miller, "Propaganda and Combat Motivation: Radio Broadcasts and German Soldiers' Performance in World War II," *World Politics* 71, no. 3 (2019): 457.

Cartoons were a short and entertaining way to educate the American public on many wartime issues. Cartoons can be interpreted a couple of ways. It can either be cartoons in print or Walt Disney and Warner Brothers cartoons. For this purpose of this paper, cartoons will refer to the Walt Disney and Warner Brothers cartoons. An important work is the 1999 title, *Celluloid Soldiers* by Michael E. Birdwell. Birdwell is a history professor at Tennessee Tech University, and he is also the author of *Rural Life and Culture in Upper Cumberland* (2004). The argument of this book is that the Warner Brothers took an extremely early stance on Nazism when most people were willing to ignore the growing conflict.⁵³ This idea reveals important points about the culture leading up to the war. This is an important building block for the arguments on the importance of these war time cartoons and how they were very focused on showing Hitler and Nazism in a negative light.

Another major work on the subject is “Capturing the Animated Soldier” (2018) by Meredith Fischer. Fischer serves as the librarian at Wilfrid Laurier University and teaches courses through the Department of English and Film. This article specifically focuses on Private Snafu cartoons and how they were both a time and cost-effective way to instruct the soldiers.⁵⁴ This article helps to understand why cartoons like Private Snafu were so important for educational purposes, just like the other mediums that are being used for propaganda.

Comic books have the smallest amount of literature written about them, but they are indeed an important element of popular culture, propaganda, and the war effort. Scholarship on the use of comic books has been relatively recent. In 2014, author Paul Hirsch wrote an article,

⁵³ Birdwell, Michael E. *Celluloid Soldiers: The Warner Bros. Campaign Against Nazism*, (New York: NYU Press, 1999),1.

⁵⁴ Meredith, Fischer, "Capturing the Animated Soldier: Private Snafu and the Docile Body Assemblage," *Studies in Popular Culture* 41, no. 1 (2018): 94.

“‘This is Our Enemy’.” This article was awarded the American Historical Association’s Jackson prize for the best first publication. His other major work is *Pulp Empire: The Secret History of Comic Book Imperialism* which was released in 2021. This article argues that comic books were used to disseminate race-based propaganda to the American public and to soldiers.⁵⁵ This is an important element of propaganda material and understanding the wartime culture.

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There were several different ways that these popular culture mediums were used and there were several reoccurring themes that were present throughout all the mediums. These typically took the form of home front support, which included war bonds, aluminum drives, factory work, etc., education for both the civilian and military population, and distrust for the enemy. Education and distrust for the enemy are the most prominent themes. Both of these ideas would show up in a variety of forms and would overlap with the other themes. The later chapters of this thesis are going to explore each area more in depth. The Allied powers had

⁵⁵ Paul Hirsch, “‘This Is Our Enemy’: The Writers’ War Board and Representations of Race in Comic Books, 1942–1945,” *Pacific Historical Review* 83, no. 3 (2014): 448.

⁵⁶ Mike Milford, “Veiled Intervention: Anti-Semitism, Allegory, And Captain America.” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 20, no. 4 (2017): 605.

superior resources and manpower and that would have been enough to win the war.⁵⁷ Having a unified home front and high morale made the war effort easier. If the home front is unstable, it is very hard to have a unified war effort. Film, radio, cartoons, and comic books all helped to increase the level of home front support.

Chapter two, “We Can Do It” will examine the different instances of home front support that were being created. This includes things like radio shows contribution to the home front. For instance, building support for aluminum drives, working through the gas shortage, etc. *Fibber McGee and Molly* aired an episode on December 15, 1942 where Fibber McGee and Molly take on the issue of gas shortages. In the episode, Fibber is frustrated by the gas shortages, and this was a reflection of many Americans at the time.⁵⁸ On October 18, 1942 in an episode of *The Jack Benny Show*, Jack decides to give up his beloved car Maxell for a scrap drive.⁵⁹ Issues like the gas shortage was common for many Americans at the time. Encouraging things like the scrap drive helped to build support for the home front. These stars were able to help average Americans to understand the importance of different aspects of the war effort.

“We Can Do It” will also examine how cartoons and comic books were either blatantly obvious or rather subtle in building support for the home front. Cartoons like *The Ducktators* and a Walt Disney cartoon done for the Canadian film board featuring the seven dwarves were blatant examples. These cartoons were both used to sell war bonds. Comic books were at times more subtle in selling war bonds. In *Captain America #10*, there is a small exchange between

⁵⁷ R.A.C. Parker, *The Second World War: A Short History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 131.

⁵⁸ *Fibber McGee and Molly*, “Misplaced Christmas Money”, Aired December 15, 1942.

⁵⁹ *The Jack Benny Show*, “Jack Gives Up Maxwell for Scrap,” Aired October 18, 1942.

Captain America and Bucky Barnes about attending a bond drive, but not much more than that.⁶⁰ Creating home front support was crucial for these popular culture mediums.

Chapter three “Loose Lips Might Sink Ships” focuses on the education of the American civilian population and the soldiers. Cartoons and film truly shine in this area with many being oriented towards educational purposes. The Warner Brothers created an entire character just to educate soldiers in an entertaining way in the form of Private Snafu. He would become an easy and entertaining way for many of the soldiers to be educated. For example, *Gas* or *Spies* were short educational lessons for the troops. *Gas* dwelt with gas mask safety and *Spies* dwelt with keeping military secrets.⁶¹ These short, but entertaining cartoons were helpful for maintaining the morale of the soldiers. They might seem like simple goofy shorts, but they taught important lessons that many of the troops needed to know.

Disney was very involved in the education of the home front. They helped to give lessons about a variety of topics that spanned from taxes to the dangers of Nazism. *The New Spirit* was used to educate Americans about tax laws that had recently changed.⁶² *Education for Death* is one of their most famous cartoons. It showcases the dangers of Nazism and how early indoctrination began.⁶³ These cartoons are important examples of what education looked like during wartime America.

⁶⁰ Joe Simon, Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, and Al Avison, *Captain America #10*, (New York: Marvel Comics, 1941), 13.

⁶¹ Warner Brothers (Leon Schlesinger), *Gas*, May 1944, Video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKYtiQ5WMSY>; Warner Brothers (Chuck Jones and Dr. Seuss), *Spies*, August 1943, Video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJV5wwK12NI>.

⁶² Walt Disney (Ben Sharpsteen and Wilfred Jackson), *The New Spirit*, January 23, 1942, Video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eMU-KGKK6q8>.

⁶³ Walt Disney (Clyde Geronimi and Gregor Ziemer), *Education for Death*, January 15, 1943, Video., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5XNLnbvqsxo>.

Finally, chapter four “Keep These Hands Off!” will examine how popular culture was used to build distrust for the enemy. This is where popular culture and propaganda truly shines. Distrust for ones’ enemy was an immensely important part of any war effort. The general public had to have a reason to be behind the war effort. Film, cartoon, and comic books have some of the best examples of how this distrust was built. Film had extremely blatant examples of propaganda film and then the more nuanced approaches. *Hitler- Beast of Berlin* and *Hitler- Dead or Alive* are obvious propaganda films. While films like *Hitler- Dead or Alive*, which is about bounty hunters tasked with finding Hitler, are seemingly ridiculous, they still reflect important feelings about Hitler and how the American public should view him⁶⁴. The enemy is made to look weak and ridiculous. This helps to build patriotism and support for the war effort. Cartoons were often over exaggerated caricatures of the enemy. The cartoons were a generally goofy depictions of the Axis powers, but they still showcased important issues. Many people view cartoons as strictly for children, but these cartoons were oriented to adults often depicting violence and sex. Comic books featured American victory on almost every page. They featured strong characters like Captain America and Wonder Woman who were fighting for America both overseas and on the home front. Not only were cartoons and comics dealing with foreign enemies, but the domestic ones as well.

Chapter four addresses the key role that race played in these depictions. While many of the depictions of the Axis powers are caricatures of themselves, there is an obvious racial element when it comes to Japanese depictions. While German depictions were obviously mocking, there was a lack of the racist element that was present with most depictions of the

⁶⁴ *Hitler-Dead or Alive*, Directed by Nick Grinde, Ben Judell Productions, 1942., Film, Charles House, 1942.

Japanese. “Keep These Hands Off!” will delve more in depth of why these depictions were present and how they differed from the German depictions in film, cartoons, and comic books. Germans and the Nazis were already being vilified before the Americans even joined the war, but after the attack on Pearl Harbor these depictions increased and along with them extremely racist depictions of the Japanese people. Examples of cartoons like *Tokio Jokio* featured nothing, but racist depictions of the Japanese people.⁶⁵ These depictions of race are extremely telling of specific wartime feelings towards the Japanese and reflect a distinct difference between the treatment of German and Japanese Americans.

Propaganda and wartime are always linked. Sometimes the use is subtle and other times it is a blatantly obvious propaganda program. Other countries and the United States understood that the popular culture mediums like radio and film were crucial, but the United States took it even further. Roosevelt initiated the creation of an entire agency just to inform the American public about wartime issues. While it was stated multiple times that the purpose of the OWI was not to spread propaganda, it was extremely obvious that it served that purpose. The OWI was directly involved in film, radio, cartoons, and secretly with the comic book industry. By using these mediums they were able to fulfil their intended purpose of developing an informed and intelligent understanding of the war for the home front and abroad.⁶⁶ They shifted the focus of the entertainment industry to be a tool for wartime America and created its own wartime culture. This examination of the uses of popular culture helps to better understand wartime America and how the country was brought together by popular media.

⁶⁵ Warner Brother (Normn McCabe), *Tokio Jokio*. May 15, 1943, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sy9rGAO-qfc>.

⁶⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Executive order 9812, “Establishing the Office of War Information”, June 13, 1942, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/executive-order-9182-establishing-the-office-war-information>

Chapter 2

“We Can Do It”

The “We Can Do It” propaganda poster from 1942 depicts the famous image of Rosie the Riveter. This poster was originally crafted for the Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Company, but soon became one of the most iconic World War II symbols.⁶⁷ While this poster was initially designed for promoting women to the wartime work force, the phrase “We Can Do It” can serve as a powerful description for the atmosphere of wartime culture in America. The entire country shifted to be part of the war effort. Factories were changing what they produced, people were giving up goods to the military, and the entertainment industry was becoming a key source of propaganda and morale.

R.A.C. Parker in his book, *The Second World War*, argues that America would have won World War II with superior resources alone.⁶⁸ While this is true, it was still important that the home front be unified. The government did not need to be distracted trying to control an unruly population on the home front while also engaging in a two-front war. The major themes in popular culture reflect the idea of building a unified home front. The narrative shows that by engaging in things like war bond sales, rationing, and salvage drives, the American public was sharing similar experiences that brought them together. They were all working towards a common goal. Just as other industries were turned toward the war effort so was Hollywood and popular culture. The home front was unified by popular culture urging Americans to join the war

⁶⁷ J. Howard Miller, *We Can Do It*, 1942, Poster, National Museum of American History, Accessed July 5, 2021, https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_538122.

⁶⁸ R.A.C. Parker, *The Second World War: A Short History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 131.

workforce especially women, purchase war bonds, participate in various salvage drives, and be willing to endure rationing for certain items for the war effort.

Hollywood quickly joined the war effort. The movie industry and its stars were being used to build wartime support both on the home front and the front lines. One of the most obvious ways that popular culture could be used was to build support on the home front. There was focus on war bonds, aluminum drives, victory gardens, rationing, troop recruitment, women working in the factories, etc. These main themes were crucial for making sure that the civilian population was unified in their effort to support the war. Hollywood stars could become the symbol of this united movement and help to sell these ideas. They could serve as powerful ambassadors for what the Office of War Information was trying to promote as evidenced by the OWI opening an office in Hollywood. The OWI saw Hollywood as a way to push forward the narrative they wanted for the American public. OWI director Elmer Davis argued that motion pictures could be the most powerful instrument for propaganda even if it did not mean to be.⁶⁹ It makes sense that the OWI would be eager to join Hollywood in creating media for the war. It seems that this idea expanded beyond motion pictures to include radio, cartoons, and comic books. As the war went on these forms of popular culture began to churn out wartime storylines and ideas to build wartime support and one the most important elements in the beginning was the labor shortage.

As more and more men joined the military there was a shortage of workers for wartime production. It seemed like the logical choice to have women fill these roles. They were crucial in keeping the work force moving. While woman worked in these factory roles during World War I

⁶⁹ Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, "What to Show the World: The Office of War Information and Hollywood, 1942-1945." *The Journal of American History* 64, no. 1 (1977): 89.

it seems that many remember World War II when they think of woman working in wartime factories. Women comprised 15% of the labor force in 1939 and by 1943, 11% of steel workers, 34% of ammunition workers, 8% of railroad workers, 10% of shipping personal, and 40% of aircraft industry workers were women.⁷⁰ This was a drastic increase of women in the workforce and would help to fill the labor gaps left by men entering wartime service.

For many women, entering the workforce was something entirely new. Many of them had never worked outside the home, but the government and the OWI went to a lot of effort to show women how important it was for them to join in on the war effort if they were able to. The short film, *Manpower*, was produced by the OWI in 1943. The purpose of the film was to address the manpower shortage that many employers were facing. Men needed to be freed up to do certain wartime jobs or to join the armed forces and women were perfect for filling these positions so that men could be free to go where they were more needed. The film reiterates that women could work in almost every field and at times be even better than men at the jobs.⁷¹ A newspaper cartoon by Bob Barnes was released in 1943 for the OWI called, “And then in my spare time....”. This cartoon depicts a woman holding a baby in one hand and using the other hand to weld a ship while speaking to another woman.⁷² This showed the shift of women as they joined the work force and the military. These women were no longer housewives or stay at home mothers. They were now a crucial part of the workforce and were going to help America win the war.

⁷⁰ "Working Women during World War II," In *Pop Culture Universe: Icons, Idols, Ideas*, ABC-CLIO, 2021, Accessed October 7, 2021, <https://popculture2-abc-clio-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/Search/Display/2261513>.

⁷¹ *Manpower*, Office of War Information, Film, 1942, War Activities Committee of the Motion Picture Industry, 1942.

⁷² Bob Barnes, “And Then In My Spare Time.” Illustration, 1943, From the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress.

There was much more of a push during World War II for women to be more engaged in war than ever before. Along with woman filling crucial factory jobs that helped to free up men for the front lines, they were also able to join the armed forces. In the film, *It's Your War Too*, a member of the Women's Army Corp said that women had been sidelined in 1918, but not anymore.⁷³ The Women's Auxiliary Army Corps was created on May 15, 1942, under Public Law 554. The law reads,

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President is hereby authorized to establish and organize in such units as he may from time to time determine to be necessary a Women's Army Auxiliary Corps for noncombatant service with the Army of the United States for the purpose of making available to the national defense when needed the knowledge, skill, and special training of the women of this Nation.⁷⁴

This initial public law meant that women could now serve in an auxiliary role, but that would not be permanent. As the war continued on and it became obvious that more help was needed to complete major jobs, the Women's Auxiliary Army Corp was changed to the Women's Army Corp and by doing so was shifted to active duty status.

Women were now able to take on a much more active military role. By doing some of these jobs, women were once again freeing up men to be fighting on the front lines. By allowing woman to be part of the war it created a much more unified front. While they were not often on the front lines, they were still experiencing the life of a soldier. As General Marshall said in the film, *It's Your War Too*, the women serving in the WACs were soldiers in every sense of the

⁷³ *It's Your War Too*, U.S. War Department, Film, 1944, U.S. War Department.

⁷⁴ An Act To Establish a Women's Army Auxiliary Corps for Service with the Army of the United States, Public Law 77-554, U.S. Statutes at Large 56 (1942): 278, <https://govtrackus.s3.amazonaws.com/legislink/pdf/stat/56/STATUTE-56-Pg278.pdf>.

word and at times can even do jobs better than some men.⁷⁵ This was the same idea that was reiterated in *Manpower*.

Wonder Woman became a crucial symbol for woman entering roles in the new wartime culture. In the Wonder Woman comics, Wonder Woman's alter ego, Diana Prince, served as a nurse during the war. Given Wonder Woman was one of the only women focused superheroes of the time she was an incredibly powerful symbol for woman on the home front hoping to do more. The comics served as a push for woman to join the wartime nurses. It gave woman more options to participate in the war effort. Mia Sostaric in her article, "The American Wartime Propaganda During World War II," argues that Wonder Woman showed woman could embolden themselves by the use of the armed services and fulfill their public obligation to the war effort.⁷⁶ Wonder Woman represented a strong female character that many women could look up to. By being a wartime nurse, she showed woman how they could be part of the wartime effort in more ways than just growing a victory garden or buying war bonds.

Women in the workforce and military were the main focus of *Wonder Woman #5*. The premise of this comic is the villain, Doctor Psycho, hates women. His fiancée, Marva, left him for a handsomer man and framed Psycho for a crime he did not commit, so she could marry the other man. He gets out of jail and uses his hypnotic power to put Marva under his spell and forces her to marry him. He then ties her up and uses her to contact the spirit world, so he can have control of the spirits and transform his image to look like whomever he chooses. He sets up a show where he takes on the form of George Washington. He then addresses the crowd and tells them women will be the reason that America loses the war. Psycho as George Washington

⁷⁵ *It's Your War Too*, U.S. War Department, Film, 1944, U.S. War Department.

⁷⁶ Mia Sostaric, "The American Wartime Propaganda During World War II: How Comic Books Sold the War," *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 38, no. 1 (2019): 33.

claims, “They [women] must not be trusted with war secrets or serve in the armed forces. Women will betray their country through weakness if not treachery!”⁷⁷ This revelation startles the crowd and enrages Wonder Woman. He then says that a shell plant would explode the next day due to the incompetence of women which does happen, but because he arranged it not because of the women working there.

The comic concludes with the defeat of Doctor Psycho and Marva being saved. Marva is not sure what to do with her life now because Psycho’s domination has ruined her life and she is weak.⁷⁸ Wonder Woman tells her to, “Get strong! Earn your own living- join the WAACS [Women’s Auxiliary Army Corp] or WAVES [Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service] and fight for your country!”⁷⁹ While this comic’s storyline is somewhat ridiculous it shows what kind of symbol Wonder Woman was for women looking to enter the military or the work force. It was a way they could show that they were strong and did not need to let anything hold them back from participating in the war effort to the fullest. Women were crucial to home front and military in so many ways and it was important that they were unified for the war effort. For women, a way they could participate in the fullest was to purchase war bonds.

War bonds were one of the most important themes that spread throughout much of the media during the war. They were an important tool to fund the war and so they were made one of the main focuses of the media. The US government was funding the war in several different ways. FDR delivered a speech on April 28, 1942, titled “On Our National Economic Policy”, where he listed seven methods that would be used. These included heavier taxes, fixed ceilings on prices and rent, the stabilization of wages and farm prices, pouring billions into war bonds,

⁷⁷ William Moulton Marston and H.G Peter, *Wonder Woman #5* (New York: DC Publishing, 1943), 6a.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 16a.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

the rationing of essential commodities, the discouragement of installment buying and the encouragement paying off debts and mortgages.⁸⁰ War bonds would become one of the largest ways to pay for the war. Americans could do nothing about the rising taxes, rationing, and the stabilization of prices, but they could voluntarily contribute to the war effort by purchasing bonds. As FDR said they needed to put billions into the war bond program to pay for the war. They could not raise that amount of money through taxes alone. War bonds were a way that Americans could be involved directly in the war effort and to help make up this huge cost. It was crucial that the US government create a narrative that was pro-war bond and show Americans how important it was that they contribute to the war through the sale of war bonds.

The first US savings bond was issued on March 1, 1935, in an effort to help manage the debt of the Great Depression.⁸¹ This bond would become known as “the baby bond.” When the war broke out in Europe, the United States was still very unsure and very divided on the issue of direct military intervention, it still needed to begin defense preparations and be prepared to help its allies. With concern about growing public debt and fear of inflation, the Treasury Department decided that there needed to be an expansion of the bond program.⁸²

On April 30, 1941, FDR announced, via radio broadcast, the introduction of the new “Defense” Savings Bond. He describes these bonds as, “In a larger sense, this first defense bond and these first defense stamps sold to the President constitute tangible evidence of a partnership—a partnership between all of the people and their Government—entered into to safeguard and

⁸⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Our National Economic Policy”, (speech, Washington DC, April 28, 1942), Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/042842.html>.

⁸¹ U.S. Savings Bond Division, *A History of the United States Savings Bonds Program* (Washington DC: U.S. Savings Bond Division, 1991), 9.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 11-12.

perpetuate all of those precious freedoms which Government guarantees.”⁸³ These bonds could be purchased in several different price increments. These included \$25, \$50, \$100, \$500, and \$1000.⁸⁴ In addition to these, a special \$10 increment was added for those in the armed forces once the country was actually engaged in the war.⁸⁵ FDR also announced the introduction of defense stamps. These were a cheaper option to the savings bond and could be purchased at the local post office. Someone could buy these stamps for 10, 25, and 50 cents, \$1 or \$5.⁸⁶ The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor signaled the end of Defense Bonds and the beginning of War Bonds. War bonds would quickly become popular as support for the war began to soar after the attack. Many of the bond issuing agents even ran out of bond stock as bond popularity soared.⁸⁷ War bonds would be crucial for the war because it was how the government was going to be able to fund the war. It makes sense that it would become the main focus of many of these war time campaigns.

This idea of building a partnership that FDR mentioned in his speech was very in theme with what many of the war programs would later come to promote. It was crucial that the home front be completely united in the war effort if there was to be hope of winning the war. Even though America had the superior resources to win the war it was still important that the home front be unified. Defense bonds and later war bonds were a way that Americans could actually contribute to the war effort, but also make them feel like they are doing all they can to make sure the war can be won. By contributing, they could feel like they were being a true American and

⁸³ Franklin D. Roosevelt, “The Occasion of His Purchase of the First Defense Savings Bond and Stamps” (speech, Washington DC, April 30, 1941), National Archives, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/2184565>.

⁸⁴ U.S. Savings Bond Division, *A History of the United States Savings Bonds Program* (Washington DC: U.S. Savings Bond Division, 1991), 12.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

showing their love of the country. Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau Jr. said, “America asks you to save; to SAVE TO WIN THE WAR; to buy War Bonds and Stamps...Is Liberty worth it? Is Democracy worth it? Is America worth it? I think I know your answer.”⁸⁸ With the push to unify the country and the push to buy war bonds, it seems obvious that it would be reflected in popular culture.

Hollywood took the job of selling war bonds very seriously. They would become one of the key drives behind the success of war bonds sales. Major stars became involved in the selling of war bonds. These stars included Bob Hope, Cary Grant, Laurel and Hardy, Bing Crosby, Dorothy Lamour, Bette Davis, and many others. These stars would take part in war bond drives to help raise money for the cause and many of them went on tour to do so. Their efforts raised millions for the war effort. Dorothy Lamour would become known as “the bond bombshell” and is credited with selling around \$300 million in bonds herself.⁸⁹ Along with selling so many bonds, William H. Neal, director of the United States Savings Bond Division from 1960-1966, credited Lamour with being the first star to offer her help to sell war bonds.⁹⁰ These war bond tours helped to raise millions, but they were not the only way stars were contributing.

Along going on these war bond tours, many of these stars were acting in films, on radio programs, or singing songs to help promote war bond sales. Bette Davis starred in a short film released in 1943 called *A Present With a Future*. The small film is only a little over two minutes, but it gets the message across quickly. It opens with Bette Davis standing in the living room of

⁸⁸ “The Treasury Department,” *July 1942: United We Stand: The Treasury Department* (National Museum of American History, n.d.), accessed September 5, 2021, <https://amhistory.si.edu/1942/campaign/campaign22b.html>.

⁸⁹ Richard Severo, “Dorothy Lamour, 81, Sultry Star of Road Films, Dies,” *The New York Times* (The New York Times, September 24, 1996), last modified September 24, 1996, accessed September 13, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/09/24/movies/dorothy-lamour-81-sultry-star-of-road-films-dies.html>.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

her home which is heavily decorated for Christmas. Two children bound down the stairs eager to open their Christmas gifts, but to their shock and dismay their stockings are nowhere to be found. Bette Davis' character sits them down on the couch and explains that this year they have both gotten war bonds. Both children are upset being that the one wanted a bike and the other wanted a train set. Bette Davis tells them, "I feel that you are both old enough to realize that your country is at war and make sacrifices for it."⁹¹

The children are still unsure of their gift, but Davis expresses that war bonds are essential for helping to provide medicine for soldiers and that the children could have had the things they wanted, but the people that usually make those items now have the important job of working in the factories producing war goods.⁹² The picture concludes with a plea from Bette Davis to buy war bonds because many of the men are going to be away fighting that Christmas and buying a war bond means buying them a gift for the future.⁹³ These sorts of films were typical for the sale of war bonds. They were to show how important it was that the men had the supplies that come from the sale, but also reiterating the theme that many Americans might have to sacrifice the comforts and extras that they were accustomed to so that the war may be won.

The theme of victory through war bonds was continued by Bing Crosby in 1945. At the *All-Star Bond Rally*, Crosby sang "Buy Buy Bonds." With a repeating stanza of "Buy, buy, buy, buy a bond. And by and by, The bonds you buy will bring you victory," it seems very clear what the message of the song is.⁹⁴ Most of the messages surrounding bonds pushed that by buying war

⁹¹ *A Present for the Future*, Directed by Vincent Sherman, Warner Brothers, Film, 1943, Warner Brothers, 1943.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Don Quinn Fanchon, , James Van Trees, Emil Newman, Bob Hope, Betty Grable, Jim Jordan, et al, *The All-Star Bond Rally*, Directed by Audley, Michael, and Ection, United States: Distributed by the War Activities Committee-Motion Picture Industry, 1945, Video, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018601425/>.

bonds it meant victory. Not only was it the American thing to do, it also meant that America would be victorious in war and that the boys would get to come home safe and sound.

Not only were the Hollywood starlets taking part in the war bond effort, but cartoons and comic books as well. In 1942, American composer Irving Berlin wrote the song, “Any Bonds Today?” It was quickly turned into a cartoon by the Warner Brothers and the US Department Defense Savings Staff. Bugs Bunny sings the number on a stage with a depiction of Uncle Sam behind him playing a drum flanked by two soldiers playing another drum and what appears to be a small flute.⁹⁵ Along with an American flag that trails behind the three men. While not much of the song repeats itself what does repeat is the line, “Scrape up the most you can, Here comes the freedom man, Asking you to buy a share of freedom today.”⁹⁶ These lyrics would be in line with the overarching narrative of what buying bonds would mean for the country. They represented freedom and buying them meant that Americans were contributing directly to that freedom.

Many comic books characters were used for selling war bonds. Some more so than others. An interesting issue within DC, called All-Star Comics at the time, came up as the war began. Superman was simply too overpowered to be able to be used as a war time hero. Given his superpowers there did not seem like a legitimate reason that he would not be able to just stop the war from the very beginning. This would not be helpful in building support for the war, so he was quickly sidelined for wartime comics. Batman also presented a problem. He did not have any superpowers which simply made him another man that the enemy could shoot at. Wonder Woman quickly became the best choice to make wartime comics about. She was not too powerful like Superman, and she was able to be bulletproof up to a certain point unlike

⁹⁵ Warner Brothers (Bob Clampett), *Any Bonds Today*, April 2, 1942, Video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nh_oc5hQt-A.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

Batman.⁹⁷ This means that her comics would be centered around fighting the enemy and many of her wartime issues did just that. With Wonder Woman able to fill the role of front-line comic book action, this left Batman and Superman to build home front support and the major way they did that was promoting the sale of war bonds.

Many of the covers of Batman and Superman comic books feature war bonds. *Superman #18* featured the tagline, “War Savings Bonds and Stamps Do the Job on the *Japanazis*.”⁹⁸ On the cover next to this phrase is Superman riding on a bomb as it falls, and fighter planes are following behind him. On the cover of *Action Comics #58*, Superman is depicted as turning the handle for some sort of machine. Next to this image is the phrase, “Superman Says: You Can Slap A Jap With War Bonds And Stamps!”⁹⁹ *World’s Finest Comics #8* depicts Superman, Batman, and Robin running a booth to sell War Bonds and Stamps. Above the stand is a sign that says, “Sink the *Japanazis* with Bonds and Stamps.”¹⁰⁰ These are just a few examples of the many covers that depicted these small phrases about war bond sales. All of these phrases go along with the narrative that by buying War Bonds Americans were directly contributing to the war effort and the victory of the country.

Batman’s covers pictured war bond sales, but at times the comics themselves would focus on war bonds. *Batman #15* ends with Batman and Robin destroying enemy ships and planes alongside the American military. When they return home, Batman and Robin visit a stand that is selling war bonds where they buy as many war bonds as they can. Robin even says, “I’ve already got a lot of them, but this time I’m going the limit.”¹⁰¹ In *Detective Comics #73*, Batman and

⁹⁷ Roy Thomas, *Wonder Woman: The War Years 1941-1945*, (New York: Chartwell Books, 2015), 2.

⁹⁸ Fred Ray, *Superman #18* (New York: DC Publishing, 1942), 1.

⁹⁹ Jack Brunley, *Action Comics #58* (New York: DC Publishing, 1943), 1.

¹⁰⁰ Jack Burnley, *World’s Finest Comics #8* (New York: DC Publishing, 1942), 1.

¹⁰¹ Bill Finger, Jack and Ray Burnley, *Batman #15* (New York: DC Publishing, 1943), 13.

Robin face off against the Scarecrow. Batman and Robin are observing a wrestling match. The point of the wrestling match was to raise money for war bonds. While Batman and Robin were waiting for Scarecrow to show up Robin comments on how big the crowd was and Batman responds that when you combine sports and patriotism you get a popular mixture.¹⁰² Eventually, Scarecrow does show up and he proceeds to try and steal the war bond money. While the Scarecrow and his cronies got away, Batman and Robin manage to keep the money for war bonds from being stolen. The comic eventually ends with the Scarecrow being defeated. The war bonds were just a small part of the comic, but the importance of them comes across. Even though Batman and Robin lost the criminal they were able to recover the war bond money and that was the important part. These examples show that buying war bonds and stamps showed how patriotic someone was. It was your duty as an American to buy war bonds and to make sure you are doing all you can to help the war effort.

There is an apparent difference between subtle and blatant advertising in many of these sources. While there was an obvious reason for the very blatant depictions of these themes, the examples that are subtle are just as intriguing. It seems that even though a certain theme was not the main focus of a comic or cartoon, they were still trying to promote certain ideas. Particular films that were produced were obvious examples. When these films were created, they were serving an obvious purpose as propaganda films. Due to the fact that these films were usually filmed by a specific US Department they needed to be obvious in their message. For example the US Department of Agriculture put out a film in 1942 called *The Tree in the Test Tube*. This short film featured comedians Laurel and Hardy. The purpose of this film was to show how important

¹⁰² Don Cameron, Bob Kane, Jerry Robinson and George Roussos, *Detective Comics #73* (New York: DC Publishing, 1943), 4.

wood was in daily life and by making products out of wood it was freeing up valuable resources like steel for the war effort.¹⁰³ There was no need for subtlety with films like these. They were there to get a message across whether that be women in the work force or help explain why there needed to be rationing. These films were for the blatant purpose of helping to raise support for certain issues or educate Americans. War bonds actually provide one of the best examples of this interesting advertising phenomenon that existed across the different forms of popular media.

There are multiple examples of blatant war bond advertising across media. As mentioned prior, many Hollywood stars were participating in war bond drives. In 1945, the War Activities Committee with 20th Century Fox released the *All-Star Bond Rally*. Bob Hope hosted the rally with stars like Frank Sinatra, Fibber McGee and Molly, Betty Grable, Bing Crosby, Harpo Marx, Linda Darnell, Jeanne Crain, Faye Marlowe, Vivian Blaine, June Haver, and Carmen Miranda.¹⁰⁴ It is very obvious that the point of this program was to raise support and money for war bonds. It was the explicit point of the program to sell war bonds so there is no point in subtly hiding that idea.

An interesting example of the blatant advertising of war bonds is the Warner Brother's cartoon, *The Ducktators*. It was released on August 1, 1942 and directed by Norman McCabe. For the majority of the cartoon, you would not even realize that the point of the cartoon was to sell war bonds. In this cartoon, Hitler, Mussolini, and Hirohito are depicted as birds. Hitler and Hirohito are depicted as ducks and Mussolini is a goose. It opens with Mr. and Mrs. Duck expecting a baby and when the egg hatches it turns out to be Hitler. Just like actual Hitler, duck

¹⁰³ *The Tree in a Test Tube*, Directed by Charles McDonald, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Film, 1942, U.S. Forest Service, 1942.

¹⁰⁴ Don Quinn Fanchon, , James Van Trees, Emil Newman, Bob Hope, Betty Grable, Jim Jordan, et al, *The All-Star Bond Rally*, Directed by Audley, Michael, and Ection, United States: Distributed by the War Activities Committee-Motion Picture Industry, 1945, Video, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018601425/>.

Hitler is portrayed as a failing artist, so he turns to other endeavors which is taking over the farmyard. Hitler and Mussolini join forces to continue to rule the farmyard much to the distress of the Dove of Peace. The Dove of Peace tries to hold a peace conference with Hitler and Mussolini, but Hitler immediately shoves the peace agreement in a shredder and beats up the Dove of Peace.¹⁰⁵

Following this event the duck version of Hirohito shows up. Again the Dove of Peace tries a peaceful method to end the Axis rule over the farmyard, but it fails. He finally decides that while he hates war and fighting, he cannot run.¹⁰⁶ He then beats up Hitler, Mussolini, and Hirohito. The scene then cuts to the Dove of Peace sitting in his living room with the mounted heads of bird Hitler, Mussolini, and Hirohito above his fireplace. The cartoon concludes with the tagline, “If you would like to make this true [meaning defeat of the Axis powers via the image of the heads mounted on the wall], this is all you have to do. Buy US Savings Stamps and Bonds.”¹⁰⁷ Until the end of the cartoon it seems that it is simply a cartoon about defeating the Axis powers, but instead its purpose is to sell war bonds.

While there the obvious films, cartoons, and comics based around certain ideas, there were also very subtle uses of certain themes, and a middle of the road between the two options. Comic books especially the Captain America comics showed the more middle of the road options. In *Captain America* #10, Captain America is invited to promote war bonds in Gotham City and his sidekick Bucky Barnes urges them to attend to raise support. Captain America is a little unsure of going, but Bucky says, “We’ll still be doing our job for America by helping to

¹⁰⁵ Warner Brothers (Norman McCabe and Leon Schlesinger), *The Ducktators*, August 1, 1942, video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdMIqq-vL5A>.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

sell defense bonds....”¹⁰⁸ While this was merely a plot device to move the story along and to lead Captain America and Bucky into a trap, the idea that it was important to raise defense bonds was still present and by helping to sell defense bonds Bucky and Steve (Captain America) were showing that they were true Americans.

Fifth Column Mouse is an excellent example of the sometimes-subtle nature of war bond sales. Distributed in 1943 by the Warner Brothers and produced by Fritz Freleng, this cartoon’s moral is certainly not to buy more war bonds. The premise of this story is that a small community of mice are living happily together. One day a cat moves into the home the mice are living in. It quickly becomes evident that the cat is a representation of Hitler. The cat uses one of the mice to be his spokesperson to the other mice. The mouse claims to the other mice that the cat is actually there to protect them and that the mice should hurry and sign a truce for their protection.¹⁰⁹ This truce essentially turns the mice into slaves for the cat. Eventually the mice get fed up with the cat and begin building a secret machine to defeat the cat. In the background of the scene where the mice are building this secret machine is a poster that says, “Buy Bonds and Stamps.”¹¹⁰ This is an extremely subtle advertisement for war bonds, but it still showcases how important war bonds were. Even in a cartoon that was not supposed to be the promotion of war bonds, it still does so in a subtle almost subconscious way for the viewer.

Many of the comic books had this subtle way of advertising war bonds. In many of them there would be tiny ads for war bonds either at the beginning or the end of the comic. In *Sensation Comics #2* featuring Wonder Woman there is a tiny ad for war bonds featured on the

¹⁰⁸ Joe Simon, Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, and Al Avison, *Captain America #10*, (New York: Marvel Comics, 1941),13.

¹⁰⁹ Warner Brothers (Fritz Freleng and Leon Schlesinger), *Fifth Column Mouse*, March 6, 1943, video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7wq--FB_1Y.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

last page of the issue.¹¹¹ The ad is no bigger than a quarter. *Captain America #13* began including the same war bond ad at the beginning of its comic books. It was again a small ad placed above the contents page. The small ad simply states, “For Defense Buy United States Savings Bonds and Stamps.”¹¹² This small ad would be a recurring feature in many of the comics over the next few years and these subtle nods to the war bond effort seem to show how important it was to the war effort. War bonds were an important method of supporting the war, but another major avenue for supporting the war was scrap drives.

Throughout the war years, there was an increasing number of different types of salvage drives. These drives were to help collect and conserve materials to help assist the war effort. These included things like aluminum, rubber, fat, tin cans, paper, and even silk stockings. These were all products that could be repurposed for a wartime good. For example, the amount of rubber from a single tire could make boots for twenty parachute troopers or twelve gas masks.¹¹³ This was something else that could make Americans feel like they were directly participating in the war effort like the purchase of war bonds. Conserving these resources was vital for the war effort and making sure the troops had enough supplies.

A film called *It's Everybody's War*, narrated by Henry Fonda and released by the OWI on November 6, 1942, showcases the importance of things like salvage drives. This film follows a typical American small town throughout the early days of the war. The main premise is the small town in the early days of the war is sad to see their boys go to war, but excited for them. The idea that nothing would happen to them because it is not their war, and the Germans and

¹¹¹ William Moulton Martson and H.G. Peter, *Sensation Comics #2*, (New York: DC Publishing, 1942), 1.

¹¹² Stan Lee, *Captain America #13*, (New York: Marvel Comics, 1941), 1.

¹¹³ “Salvaging Victory: Scrap Drives for the War Effort,” *State of Oregon: World War II - Salvaging Victory: Scrap Drives for the War Effort* (State of Oregon, n.d.), accessed September 15, 2021, <https://sos.oregon.gov/archives/exhibits/ww2/Pages/services-salvage.aspx>.

Japanese would be easily beaten was prevalent. A new way of life begins, but the war is still far away from. However, as more and more of the boys from the hometown die and eventually ninety-two out of the original one hundred and three are taken as prisoners of war by the Japanese, the war becomes very real.¹¹⁴ Now the war is not so far away, but instead brought right into town and into their homes.¹¹⁵ This spurred on the whole town to throw themselves into the war effort. Salvage drives took on a whole new meaning for the town. They had learned the pain of war the hard way and they were not going to hold anything back from the boys on the lines and give everything that they could.¹¹⁶

Some types of salvage drives were more popular than others in the media. Metal in various forms seemed to be one of the most popular. This did not mean that other types were not addressed. Wonder Woman promoted wastepaper salvage in *All-Star Comics #24*. She expresses how important it is for the soldiers to have paper because that means they could have rations packed in paper, have cartridges and shells wrapped in paper, be able to line their shoes, and other wartime essentials.¹¹⁷ However, scrap metal drives come up the most in advertisement and media.

Looney Tunes released a short in 1943 called *Scrap Happy Daffy*. The plot of this cartoon follows Daffy as he collects scrap for the war effort. Hitler is upset by a newspaper article talking about Daffy's effort in collecting large amounts of scrap. He then sends a missile to destroy Daffy's scrap pile. The missile actually houses a Nazi goat that is sent there to eat all the scrap. A tussle between the goat and Daffy ensues. Towards the end of the cartoon, depictions of Daffy

¹¹⁴ *It's Everybody's War*, Directed by Will Price, First Motion Picture Unit, Film, 1942, First Motion Picture Unit, 1942.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ H.G. Peter and Joye Murchison, *Wonder Woman #12*, (New York: All American Publications, 1945), 2.

dressed as various figures from American history appears and he turns into “Super American”.¹¹⁸ The cartoon concludes with it being all a dream, but the Nazis and the goat appear so it is a question if it was actually a dream.

Another example of support for scrap metal was an episode of *The Jack Benny Show*. The episode aired on October 18, 1942. The episode features a dramatic re-enactment of Jack donating his beloved car, Maxwell, for the scrap drive. The whole gang climbs in Jack’s rickety old automobile for once last ride together. Once it reaches the car graveyard there is an exchange between Jack and the man running the operation. They argue over the price briefly before Jack agrees. The man asks if he would like to be paid in war stamps or cash and Jack takes the war stamps. Jack is upset about the loss of his beloved car even though he acknowledges that it is for a good cause. Rochester, the gentleman who works for Jack, tells Jack to, “...look at it this way, before you know it the scrap from your car is gonna be part of battleship or a tank or an airplane...if everybody in the country turned in their old junky cars and the scrap they could, there would be a shortage of nothing, especially victory.”¹¹⁹ This line seems to sum up the what meaning of these scrap metal drives really was. If everyone was willing to make these sacrifices, it meant that the boys on the frontline would have access to even more goods to win the war and they would not need to worry about shortages. By contributing to salvage drives in all their forms the United States would be able to accomplish victory. These salvage drives meant that sacrifices might need to be made.

Making sacrifices was a common theme on the World War II home front. Rationing started to take effect in May of 1942. By the end of the war things being rationed include certain

¹¹⁸ Walt Disney (Frank Tashlin), *Scrap Happy Daffy*, August 21, 1943, video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8ZG2CSWypI>.

¹¹⁹ *The Jack Benny Show*, “Jack Gives Up Maxwell for Scrap”, Aired October 18, 1942.

household food staples, tires, gasoline, coal, nylon, silk, firewood, fuel oil, and automobiles. Rationing changed the lives of many Americans and the idea of making these sacrifices needed to be pushed. They needed to show how important it was to be willing to sacrifice these important things. Fibber McGee and Molly became some of the best advocates for these sacrifices. By the end of the war, they would become a darling of the OWI for their war work. On December 15, 1942, they put on Christmas episode called “Misplaced Christmas Money” that showcased this theme.

Like the title says, Fibber misplaced the Christmas money for Molly’s gift. While looking for the money, a man comes to the door demanding to know who owns the car out front. He wants to know if its driven for pleasure and if they had been buying war bonds and stamps. Fibber responds that they had licked so many war stamps everything tasted like glue.¹²⁰ The man then asks if they are complaining. Molly bursts out that yes, they are. She said everyone complains and it doesn’t mean a thing.¹²¹ The gentleman then explains that the government has put these restrictions in place to keep prices down and make sure the country is on good financial footing after the war is over. The man finally introduces himself as Mr. Toliver and he is their new neighbor. Fibber and Molly are thoroughly confused about why he burst in and said all this to them. They express the frustration that many Americans felt about all of these shortages, but despite the frustration they were feeling about rationing they were still participating and making the sacrifice.

A large part of the media surrounding rationing focused on food. Many films were made about the part that food played in the war. *Food and Magic* was produced by the War Activities

¹²⁰ *Fibber McGee and Molly*, “Misplaced Christmas Money”, Aired December 15, 1942.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

Committee Motion Picture Industry in 1943. This film is set at a carnival with a magician by the name of Mysto. He gives a magic show about the importance of not wasting food. He says that household waste could have made two million loaves of bread for the war and that while magic maybe able to grow food on stage it there was no magic in real life to stretch food.¹²² Mysto argues that by failing to use all the food that was wasted, the food supply had shrunken and the food waste from 1942 could have fed the entire military.¹²³ This short film concludes with Mysto reminding the crowd to remember four things. The four things include produce, conserve, share, and play square.¹²⁴ This film also ends with an idea that would show up in other food related films. The phrase/idea was “food fights for freedom.”¹²⁵

In an effort to assist with rationing and to make sure there was enough food to go around the government encouraged the public to plant Victory Gardens. These gardens were planted in private and public areas. The U.S. Department of Agriculture put out several guides to assist those planting Victory Gardens. These publications were to educate people on the good of planting Victory Gardens and how to maintain a Victory Garden. According to the Department of Agriculture, \$200,000,000 worth of vegetables were grown in farm home gardens in 1939 and this was not even including potatoes and sweet potatoes.¹²⁶ This shows that by growing vegetables at home, Americans could contribute a substantial amount of food by just planting gardens.

¹²² *Food and Magic*, U.S. Department of War, film, 1943, War Activities Committee Motion Picture Industry, 1943.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ “Small Agriculture: A National Agricultural Library Digital Exhibit,” *Omeka RSS* (US Department of Agriculture, n.d.), accessed September 20, 2021, <https://www.nal.usda.gov/exhibits/ipd/small/exhibits/show/victory-gardens/victory-garden-aids>.

The U.S. Office of Civil Defense along with *Better Homes and Garden* released *The Gardens of Victory*. The whole film was to raise support and to encourage people to plant Victory Gardens. The film argues that food was one of the most important weapons to winning the war because it kept the boys on the front strong, kept the workers making war products healthy, and kept the civilian population healthy so they could complete tasks to win the war.¹²⁷ By planting a Victory Garden, Americans were once again directly committing to the war effort. The film says that by planting a Victory Garden this is one of the many ways those who stayed home could contribute the war.¹²⁸ By planting these gardens, people were easing the strain on the market and helping the military have more of the food and goods that they needed to win the war. This film reiterates that food is especially important to winning the war and uses the phrase “food for freedom.”¹²⁹

Women in the workforce and military, war bonds, salvage drives, and rationing were just a few ways that the home front came together to support the war and create a unified home front. It was crucial that the American public be united in the war effort. If the home front was unified the government could focus their efforts on the war instead of an unruly public. While there were obvious frustrations with the sacrifices that were made, the American public came together in a united way that has probably not been seen since. These themes were used to create the idea that by participating in these activities, you were personally contributing to winning the war and, as the war became very real to many people, they were able to feel like they were doing all they could on the home front while their fathers, uncles, brothers, cousins, and sons were off fighting. Popular culture was simply a tool to help get these ideas across in a way that many Americans

¹²⁷ *The Gardens of Victory*, Directed by U.S. Office of Civil Defense and *Better Home and Gardens*, Film, 1943, U.S. Office of Civil Defense, 1943.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

could find entertainment in. Having your favorite celebrity or superhero encouraging you to buy war bonds or participate in a scrap drive is easier to hear than a bland government announcement. By using all forms of media to promote these ideas, it once again shows that no part of American life was untouched by World War II and truly every industry in America was turned towards winning World War II. As FDR said in his speech on April 28, 1942, “ But there is one front and one battle where everyone in the United States -- every man, woman, and child - - is in action, and will be privileged to remain in action throughout this war. That front is right here at home, in our daily lives, (and) in our daily tasks.”¹³⁰ Americans were reminded that if they just participated and came together that the familiar tagline of “We Can Do It” could actually come true.

¹³⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Our National Economic Policy”, (speech, Washington DC, April 28, 1942), Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/042842.html>.

Chapter 3

“Loose Lips Might Sink Ships”

The propaganda poster “Loose Lips Might Sink Ships” was published in 1941 by Seagram Distillers Corporation. It was meant to be displayed in bars to help promote the National Victory Effort.¹³¹ The image of a ship sinking is a powerful image to the American public about the possible consequences of speaking too freely. This poster serves as a small representation of the many slogans and ideas that were being promoted during World War II in America. This poster served as a reminder of the new education that many Americans were receiving concerning the war. The country needed to be turned towards the war effort. As discussed in previous chapters, the government was utilizing every industry for the war. That included things as simple as printing out posters for bars to remind Americans to be mindful of their words. This short phrase was one of the many new lessons that Americans needed to remember if they wanted to contribute fully to the war effort.

Education is an important part of any wartime culture. The civilian population has to be informed about the changes in their lives. This step was crucial for the security of the nation. By teaching the home front about how their lives were changing, it would help to generate and maintain a high level of support and moral for the war effort. They needed to be educated about government programs, important themes, and changes in the economy that will affect them. The government put out many pieces of information during the war and popular media was an easy way to do so. Film became the major vehicle for information during this time, but there are also many examples of cartoons serving this purpose as well. Radio and comic books helped to

¹³¹ Seymour R. Godd, *Loose Lips Might Sink Ships*, 1941, Nabb Research Center, accessed January 2, 2022, <https://libapps.salisbury.edu/nabb-online/exhibits/show/propaganda/slogans/loose-lips-might-sink-ships>.

educate to a certain extent but were not utilized as much for educational purposes unlike cartoons and film. Obviously, the soldier population needed to be educated. More than 16 million men and women served in the military during World War II.¹³² Most of these men and women had not served in a military capacity and especially not an active wartime capacity. They needed to be educated on wartime procedures and important lessons for maintaining themselves while in the service. The use of films and cartoons helps to disseminate information in a much more palatable way than the normal delivery of information.

Military education was crucial if the United States was going to be successful. Many of the men and women had to be trained for the new roles that they were going to be filling. Film was an easy and useful method for training the soldiers in vital lessons. *Why We Fight* was a series of seven films that was produced by the US Department of War from 1942 to 1945. It was specifically produced by the US Army Signal Corp and directed by Frank Capra.¹³³ Capra was considered one of the most influential directors of the 1930s. Over the course of his career he won three Academy Awards and three Oscars. Capra is known for films such as *It Happened One Night*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, and *American Madness*. These films were all produced prior to the war. To a modern audience he would be most well-known for *It's A Wonderful Life* released in 1946.

Why We Fight was created in response to the growing army that was thrust into war. Many of these soldiers had been serving in peacetime army or not at all. They needed to be educated on what the war meant. Thomas W. Bohn in his article, "Why We Fight," points out that the series of lectures that are normally given to the soldiers are delivered to soldiers who

¹³² Larry Decuers, "Private Snafu Cartoon Series," The National World War II Museum (May 20, 2020), <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/private-snafu-cartoon-series>.

¹³³ Thomas W. Bohn, "Why We Fight," Library of Congress, (1977), 1.

were bone tired from basic training and the lectures were baffling, bewildering, and just boring.¹³⁴ They needed a new method for delivering this information that would be easy for the soldiers to digest. General George C. Marshall made the choice to replace the tired old lectures with something more interesting and ordered a series of film to be made.¹³⁵

The first film *Why We Fight: Prelude to War* begin with an opening message from General George C. Marshall addressing the purpose of the films. It says,

This film, the first of a series has been prepared by the War Department to acquaint members of the Army with factual information as to the causes, the events leading up to our entry into the war and the principles for which we are fighting. A knowledge of these facts is an indispensable part of military and merits the thoughtful consideration of every American soldier. We are determined that before the sun sets on this terrible struggle, our flag will be recognized throughout the world as a symbol of freedom on one hand, of overwhelming power on the other. No compromise is possible and the victory of the democracies can only be complete with utter defeat of the war machines of Germany and Japan.¹³⁶

This quote is very telling of the goals of the American military and what they hope to accomplish by the end of the war. It also sets up the premise for the series of films that were to follow. It would be a way of educating the soldiers, but still keeping them entertained unlike the boring lectures they were receiving prior to these films.

The first installment of the series asks the important question of why they have entered the war. The narrator asks, “Is it because of Pearl Harbor? Is it because of Britain? France? China? Czechoslovakia? Norway? Poland? Holland? Greece? Belgium? Albania? Yugoslavia or Russia?”¹³⁷ During the naming of various countries is cuts to different film footage of scenes

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Frank Capra, *Why We Fight: Prelude to War*, Twentieth Century Fox and War Activities Committee of the Motion Pictures Industry, May 27, 1942, Video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcAsIWfk_z4.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

from various countries and battlefields around the world. It shows destruction and chaos in these various areas of the world. To better understand why they are fighting the narrator asks them to examine two worlds. The first is the United States and the free world. The narrator then asks what made the US completely change their way of life overnight to enter the war.¹³⁸ He then launches into a brief history of America and what the great Founding Fathers and leaders of America had fought for. The answer to his prior question is freedom.¹³⁹ The scene then switches over to the other world. The other world is that of Germany, Italy and Japan specifically. The narrator says that men in this world believed that progress was killing freedom.¹⁴⁰

While the film is certainly told through the American perspective, it gives a very distinct and easy to understand lesson on the beginnings of the war and the Axis powers. It addresses how Italy, Germany, and Japan's leadership had brought them to the point of war. It would be an extremely helpful tool as men were entering the army and needed to better understand why they were fighting the war. *Why We Fight* is an outstanding example of how public information and education can overlap. While this piece is certainly educational there are definitely signs that it is a propaganda film. There is heavy emphasis on themes of freedom and democracy that were so important to the American people. Patriotism can go a long way in helping to motivate a group especially the military. This is evident in the use of Patrick Henry's famous "Give me liberty or give me death!" quote used in the early moments of the film.¹⁴¹ That quote has been used throughout the years to represent the freedom that the colonists were fighting for during the American Revolution and it has become a powerful symbol whenever discussing the American

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

perspective on freedom. It would be an easy thing to use to help motivate the soldiers while also retaining the very distinct patriotic nature of the film.

Another powerful motivator to show why America was fighting the war was an attack on Christianity. At the time this was held to be a key American value. The film addresses that the leaders of Germany, Italy, and Japan had to remove obstacles in their way to take power. This included killing those who opposed them or disposing of them in some way.¹⁴² The other obstacle according to the film was removing religion. This thought would have resonated with the American people. Christianity was ingrained in the very culture of America. Whether a person was religious or not there would still have been an understanding of Christianity within society. The narrator delivers the very dramatic line of, “The word of God and the word of fuhrers cannot be reconciled. Then God must go!”¹⁴³ This is followed by a powerful visual of a stained-glass window of two men praying beside a cross shattering to reveal a portrait of Hitler behind it.¹⁴⁴ It then shows churches that have been destroyed and articles on religious leaders that have been arrested.

The seven films of *Why We Fight* addressed a number of topics throughout the years it was being created. The first film laid the foundation for what caused the war and why it was important that America become involved in the conflict. The following five films would focus on different aspects of the war. These films are *Why We Fight: The Nazis Strike*; *Why We Fight: Divide and Conquer*; *Why We Fight: The Battle of Britain*; *Why We Fight: The Battle of Russia*; and *Why We Fight: The Battle of China*. These films included the rise of Nazi Germany, Germany’s invasion of Poland and France, Britain’s struggle to hang on during the early days of

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

the war, and many other topics concerning the Allies and the Axis powers. The last film of the seven is slightly different. While the middle five focus more on the other Allies and their fights, the last film, *Why We Fight: War Comes to America*, focuses more on American feelings prior to the war and how those have shifted over the years. *Why We Fight* tried to create additional home front support through a comprehensive overview of the war, and to provide a deeper understanding of the causes and concerns that led to the war. *Why We Fight* helps to provide an excellent overview of the war for many soldiers. While this provided a more general overview education to soldiers there also needed to be more specific training for some groups.

FDR issued a statement on July 11, 1941, appointing William J. Donovan as the Coordinator of Information (COI). This position was the very early beginnings of America's central intelligence agencies. The statement outlined what Donovan's position would be. The document stated, "In his capacity as Coordinator, Mr. Donovan will collect and assemble information and data bearing on national security from the various departments and agencies of the Government and will analyze and collate such materials for the use of the President and such other officials as the President may designate."¹⁴⁵ This was to be a civilian agency instead of a military one. Donovan was supposed to collect intelligence information, but he was not to interfere, supersede, duplicate or involve, "...the activities of the General Staff, the regular intelligence services, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or of other existing departments and agencies."¹⁴⁶ This was to be a separate entity that went about collecting intelligence information

¹⁴⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Statement on the Appointment of William J. Donovan as Coordinator of Information," July 11, 1941, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/statement-the-appointment-william-j-donovan-coordinator-information>.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

to be used for the safety of the country. The main goal of the agency was to help facilitate the obtaining of information for the government and national security.¹⁴⁷

Just slightly less than a year later on June 13, 1942, the COI would be dissolved and replaced with the Office of Strategic Services. Roosevelt released Executive Order 9182 on June 13. This Executive Order was responsible for the formation of the Office of War Information. This agency would be responsible for almost all the American wartime propaganda that was created during World War II. One of their main functions was to formulate and carry out informed and intelligent understanding of the war, its status and progress, and the activities and aims of the American government through the use of radio, press, motion picture, and other facilities.¹⁴⁸ Another important detail of this executive order was the transfer of the COI into the fold of the Office of War Information. The COI was now under the branch of the OWI, but the very same day would be dissolved.

The OSS was created through a Military Order on June 13, 1942. Roosevelt says in this Military Order that the COI has been transferred to the Office of War Information and from then on will be called the Office of Strategic Services and will be under the jurisdiction of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff.¹⁴⁹ The Office of Strategic Services was meant to serve two main purposes. First, they were to, “Collect and analyze such strategic information as may be required by the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff.”¹⁵⁰ Secondly, they were supposed to, “Plan and

¹⁴⁷ “Office of the Coordinator of Information. 7/11/1941-6/13/1942. Organization Authority Record,” National Archives and Records Administration (National Archives and Records Administration), accessed January 15, 2022, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/10448162>.

¹⁴⁸ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Executive order 9812, “Establishing the Office of War Information”, June 13, 1942, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/executive-order-9182-establishing-the-office-war-information>.

¹⁴⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Military Order, “Office of Strategic Services”, June 13, 1942, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/Presidential_order_on_the_OSS_13_Jun_1942.pdf.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

operate such special services as may be directed by the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff.”¹⁵¹

William J. Donovan was kept as director of the agency. The Office of Strategic services was now actively working to coordinate espionage from behind enemy lines and began bringing in more sensitive information for the President and the Office of War Information.

However, before you can begin running a successful espionage program, your spies have to be trained and the OSS did just that. Like many of the other government agencies they turned to film to help train those in their agency. The OSS had two main training sites. They were located in the Chopawamsic Recreational Demonstration Area and the Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area. These sites have been renamed Prince William Forest Park and Catoctin Mountain Park, respectively. While in training at these facilities the men would be shown films about the basics of OSS information and service. In 1943, the Office of Strategic Services released the film *O.S.S. Basic Military Training*. This film was produced by the Field Photographic Branch and outlines the very basics of what the OSS training was. The film begins by showing the men what will happen when they first arrive at the camp. They are met by an officer who will tell them where they will go, but during this process they will also be given a new name.

The narrator tells the audience that for reasons of security the men’s identity will be forgotten when they get to the camp and they will be given a new student name for their time there.¹⁵² As well as forgetting their names, they forget ranks, put the stuff they brought with them in a designated area, and are given new nondescript clothing.¹⁵³ Everything is geared towards

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Office of Strategic Services, *O.S.S. Basic Military Training*, 1943, Video, <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x7b5e72>.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

forgetting their identity outside the training camp. They are allowed to receive mail, but they cannot tell anyone where they are and their letters will be censored anyways.¹⁵⁴ The early introduction of camp life outlines one very focused on keeping identity and lives outside of the program the utmost secret.

This film is also used to show what a typical day looks like for the men training as spies for the OSS. Like other branches of the military they are awoken by a bugle call.¹⁵⁵ They then send the men off for their morning exercise and breakfast. Most of the day is spent in training. The narrator says that the soldiers are still conscious of themselves as an individual and therefore need to be trained as a team.¹⁵⁶ This is why the training is so vigorous. These soldiers needed to train like this so that they could serve in any of the units of the armed forces that they are placed in when training is complete.¹⁵⁷ Along with the physical training they also have classroom training. The training program covered four weeks and taught the men all they needed to know in a very short amount of time. They covered firearms, medical training, and training to make the soldiers one fighting unit. This use of film by the Office of Strategic Services showcases the influence of the popular medium. It was so popular that even the organization training soldiers for espionage chose to use it. Film was not the only popular medium for training soldiers.

On June 28, 1943, Warner Brothers along with producer Leon Schlesinger and writer Theodor Geisel (Dr. Seuss) released the character Private Snafu. The cartoon ran from 1943 to 1946. Private Snafu depicted a bumbling private as he navigated through a variety of situations depicting different lessons that soldiers needed to know such as the use of gas masks, keeping

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

military secrets, etc. Snafu would be an entertaining and easy way to help educate the military population on these topics. Meredith Fischer in her article, "Capturing the Animated Soldier," describes Snafu as, "...a time effective and cost-effective tool for delivering information to non-career soldiers in a palatable way."¹⁵⁸ This idea is fairly obvious while watching any of the Snafu cartoons. Just like *Why We Fight*, Private Snafu was a more palatable way of reinforcing what the soldiers were being taught.

It also becomes very obvious that these cartoons were meant for grown men. Most people think of cartoons as being for children or a generally younger audience, but that was not the case for Snafu. Many of the Snafu cartoons depicted women in risqué clothes or lack thereof. Snafu was often distracted by women in his cartoons even telling them military secrets during one encounter. Snafu's name even indicates that these cartoons were not meant for a younger audience. In the first episode, *Coming*, the narrator introduces Snafu. According to the narrator, Snafu stands for, "Situation Normal All Fouled Up."¹⁵⁹ Fouled is not the word that was used by the military for this acronym, but instead it stood for "Situation Normal: All F----- Up." It seems like Snafu's rather adult themes and even name were out of step with the usual 1940s entertainment style and they were. This was due to the fact that these cartoons were the property of the US War Department and therefore not subjected to the same Motion Picture Production Code.¹⁶⁰ In 1930, the Motion Picture Production Code or the Hays Code was introduced. The code was created due to the fact there was a moral panic surrounded the film industry and it was

¹⁵⁸ Meredith, Fischer, "Capturing the Animated Soldier: Private Snafu and the Docile Body Assemblage," *Studies in Popular Culture* 41, no. 1 (2018): 94.

¹⁵⁹ Warner Brothers (Chuck Jones), *Coming! Snafu*, 1943, Video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8azTOMw5Ak>.

¹⁶⁰ Larry Decuers, "Private Snafu Cartoon Series," The National World War II Museum (May 20, 2020), <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/private-snafu-cartoon-series>.

to serve as a moral guiding document for Hollywood productions.¹⁶¹ Snafu certainly did not follow these guidelines but proved to be a slightly risqué and entertaining character for the men to watch.

In their book, *Funny Pictures: Animation and Comedy in Studio-Era Hollywood*, Daniel Goldmark and Charlie Keil explain that the Snafu cartoons had a very basic structure to them. Each film followed a basic three step format. The first step was Snafu would complain or neglect his duties.¹⁶² The second part was Snafu facing horrible consequences for failing to fulfill his duties and these consequences were often a loss for the Allies or Snafu's death.¹⁶³ In the third part, Snafu would learn from the error of his ways, but that only happened if he managed to survive the length of the cartoon.¹⁶⁴ The purpose of these cartoons was to show how important the lessons that the military had taught them were. While most of them were humorous they still taught why it was vital that the soldiers learned these lessons. Many of Snafu's films were supposed to reinforce what the men had learned in basic training.¹⁶⁵

Snafu covered a variety of themes, but some themes were more common than others. These included things like not sharing military secrets, the difficulty of the service and the soldiers having to pull their weight, and the basics of military training. Keeping military secrets was big theme of the Snafu films. This theme was a common idea for a reason. There was a concern that secure information would get back to the Axis powers and jeopardize military missions. In the film, *Spies*, Snafu has learned an important military secret. In the first scene of

¹⁶¹ Kristin Hunt, "The End of American Film Censorship", Jstor Daily (2018), <https://daily.jstor.org/end-american-film-censorship/>.

¹⁶² Daniel Goldmark, and Charlie Keil, eds., *Funny Pictures: Animation and Comedy in Studio-Era Hollywood*, (University of California Press, 2011), 246.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Meredith, Fischer, "Capturing the Animated Soldier: Private Snafu and the Docile Body Assemblage," *Studies in Popular Culture* 41, no. 1 (2018): , 96.

the cartoon, Snafu is happily strolling into town. He says, “I just learned a secret. It’s a honey. It’s a pip. But the enemy is listening, so I’ll never let it slip.”¹⁶⁶ Despite this rhyming jingle, Snafu does in fact let the secret slip. Early in the film, the image of Snafu’s brain is shown with a padlock wrapped around it to show that his brain is protected from giving away important information.¹⁶⁷

As he walks through the town, he is just speaking freely about the fact that he is going on a trip and that he will be leaving by ship.¹⁶⁸ All around him are Japanese spies and they hear that he is going on a trip by boat. He eventually ends up at a bar and gets horribly drunk. The alcohol then melts the padlock on his brain.¹⁶⁹ He then proceeds to tell a woman he met at the bar everything. This included the important information that the Allies were going to Africa and the woman sends off the information to Adolph Hitler.¹⁷⁰ Going along with Snafu’s risqué nature, he and the woman had obviously been kissing and it is then revealed that the woman’s chest was actually two Nazi microphones broadcasting all the information Snafu was sharing.¹⁷¹ The cartoon concludes with Nazi submarines showing up and blowing up the Allied ship that Snafu was on, killing him and sending him to hell. While sitting in a pot over a fire in hell, Snafu bursts out with the question of who let the secret out, followed by Hitler, dressed as the devil, showing up and holding up a mirror to show Snafu that he was the one who let his secret out.¹⁷²

Going Home had a very similar theme. Snafu arrives home on leave and proceeds to tell everyone stories of his time away and just generally giving away secrets. He tells important

¹⁶⁶ Warner Brothers (Chuck Jones and Dr. Seuss), *Spies*, August 1943, video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJV5wwK12NI>.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

secrets about strategies, casualties, secret weapons, routes, equipment, and installations.¹⁷³ It is announced over the radio that due to recent leaks, the 999th division has been completely eliminated.¹⁷⁴ This was the unit that Snafu was serving in. The cartoon concludes with Snafu saying that whoever blabbed should be run over by a streetcar and then a streetcar runs him over. The premise and lesson of both of the cartoons seem rather obvious. The enemy is listening everywhere and if you decide to talk about secrets you are putting everyone at risk. You could be responsible for the death of your fellow soldiers if you give away military secrets even if it is just to your family back home. It was an important lesson that the men needed to know. There was a fear of spies being around and military secrets getting out. Now the consequences of Snafu's action are obviously exaggerated for the sake of the cartoon, but going back to the formula of Snafu's cartoons, these lessons on keeping secrets show that there could be extreme consequences for not keeping important military details and secrets private.

The idea that the military was difficult was also a common theme. There is usually a lot of romanticism in the early days of war. Men are imagining the glory of the war but seeming to pass over how difficult it is. Snafu addresses this idea in *Infantry Blues*. Snafu is complaining that all the other branches receive the glory, but the dogface only get mud behind their ears.¹⁷⁵ Dogface was name for U.S. Army foot soldier during World War II. The Technical Fairy shows up and grants his wish. Snafu then makes his way through various branches of the military. He joins the Tank Corp. He then gets rattled and thrown around and quickly decides he hates it.¹⁷⁶ He then moves to the Fleet (Navy). He gets seasick and thrown into the water.¹⁷⁷ He finally ends

¹⁷³ Warner Brothers (Chuck Jones), *Going Home*, 1944, Video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EvdJ4r96QJ8>.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Warner Brothers (Chuck Jones), *Infantry Blues*, 1943, Video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWxOwQQAbZs>.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

up in the Airforce where he eventually passes out from the force of flying the plane.¹⁷⁸ It becomes apparent to Snafu that no branch of the military is better than another and each has its own challenges. This idea would be important to keeping the various branches inline. If some of the soldiers believed that they were not doing important work or that other branches were better, it could sew discontent among the men.

Doing your part as a soldier was another major theme of Snafu's cartoons. Snafu's character was often depicted as lazy and doing anything to avoid his work. The idea of each soldier pulling their weight would be very important to having a well-organized and functioning army. Snafu was often described as lazy, bumbling, and a moron. He was constantly trying to get out of work, so that he could goof off. In the film, *Gripes*, Snafu was made to clean pans, peel potatoes, and clean the camp.¹⁷⁹ He hated doing these tasks and he would change everything if he was put in charge. While he is in bed with a fever, the Technical Fairy showed up to grant his wish. Snafu would change it so the soldiers would have more relaxation, more money, and two women for each man.¹⁸⁰ Along with this there would be no more drills, salutes, and no more discipline.¹⁸¹

Following the usual formula of a Snafu cartoon, it was an utter disaster. The Germans attack and because there was no training or morale, the Allies were unprepared for the attack.¹⁸² It turns out it was all a bad dream. Snafu then understands that he needs to work hard. The Technical Fairy ends the cartoon with the phrase, "The moral, Snafu, is the harder you work, the

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Warner Brother (Friz Freleng), *Gripes*, July 1943, Video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Au9Ns3H9pDc>.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

sooner we are gonna beat Hitler, that jerk.”¹⁸³ The main theme of this cartoon is that the hard repetitive work might not seem important, but if the men want to be successful they need to do these menial tasks.

The final major theme of Snafu was basic military training. This ties back into the idea that these cartoons were meant to reinforce basic training.¹⁸⁴ Men needed to be reminded of the important lessons that they learned. Again most of these men had never served in a military setting and needed to be trained in these new ideas. Snafu was an entertaining way for the men to be reminded of these basic training concepts. These included things like the importance of the gas masks, camouflage, and watching for various diseases. These were all basic ideas that every soldier needed to know.

Gas masks were something that every soldier needed to know how to use. The use of gas was so prevalent in World War I, the idea that they would need to be trained in the use of the gas mask during World War II is understandable. Snafu’s film, *Gas*, shows the importance of keeping your gas mask handy. Snafu cannot find his gas mask and when he does it is full of moths.¹⁸⁵ Snafu is then put through rigorous gas drills which he hates. He throws away his gas mask. Enemy planes then drop gas which is depicted as a man on the base. Snafu is unprepared because he threw out his gas mask. He eventually gets a hold of his gas mask and uses it to suck up the enemy into a bag labeled United States on it.¹⁸⁶ The imagery of the United States beating

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Meredith, Fischer, "Capturing the Animated Soldier: Private Snafu and the Docile Body Assemblage," *Studies in Popular Culture* 41, no. 1 (2018): 96.

¹⁸⁵ Warner Brothers (Leon Schlesinger), *Gas*, May 1944, Video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKYtiQ5WMSY>.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

the enemy is rather blatant. The cartoon concludes with Snafu in his bunk clutching the gas mask.

Camouflage was also another example of the basic training lessons that were being shown in the Snafu films. *A Lecture on Camouflage* is a rather straight forward title. The Technical Fairy appears once again to teach this lesson. He tells the men that the modern version of camouflage is a form of art and a science that needs to be used intelligently.¹⁸⁷ He gives examples of covering your vehicle tracks so the enemy cannot find your location. They are also taught the lesson that the enemy is also wearing camouflage, so it is important to be aware of your surroundings.¹⁸⁸ The cartoon concludes with the reminder to use camouflage successfully, the soldiers needed to make themselves part of the surroundings.¹⁸⁹ This is a very basic training idea that the men would need to know and Snafu was a great way of reminding them of this rudimentary lesson.

Diseases were something that the men needed to be aware of. They were traveling the world and encountering new illnesses. The military needed to train men to understand how to deal with these diseases, especially malaria. The Army struggled with a malaria issue during World War II. Malaria proved to be an increasing danger in the South Pacific. According to Mary Ellen Condon-Rall in her article, “Allied Cooperation in Malaria Prevention and Control”, “During the first stage of the New Guinea campaign, the disease inflicted four times as many casualties on the allies as Japanese weapons. There were 600 malaria cases for every 1,000

¹⁸⁷ Warner Brother (Chuck Jones), *A Lecture on Camouflage*, April 1944, Video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CsC_gytvD0.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

American servicemen by 1 December 1942.”¹⁹⁰ The American military needed to train their soldiers how to be cautious of malaria with it being such a high risk to them.

Snafu was again a perfect character to deliver the malaria lesson in an easy to swallow format. *Private Snafu VS Malaria Mike* was a lesson in malaria repellent. The cartoon features Snafu and Mike the mosquito. The film begins with Mike looking at what appears to be a wanted poster of himself. He spots Snafu who is bathing in the river. He attempts to jab Snafu, but Snafu ducks under the water, saving himself.¹⁹¹ Mike decides to try again while Snafu is getting dressed. The mosquito then drinks out a bottled labeled, “Old Malaria, 999 Proof.”¹⁹² Mike misses again and hits a tree. The tree then gets malaria, gets a fever, the chills, and then dies.¹⁹³ That night Snafu readies for bed. Just as he is about to go to sleep, he finds a bottle of “G.I. Repellent”, but he decides to not take it.¹⁹⁴ Mike is stopped once again when he tries to stab Snafu by mosquito netting.

Mike finally succeeds when Snafu stands up on his cot to kiss the picture of the women next to it.¹⁹⁵ Snafu’s behind is exposed and Mike the mosquito jabs him. It then cuts to Mike speaking to his child with the head of Snafu mounted over their fireplace.¹⁹⁶ To end the cartoon it cuts to Snafu. He finishes with the phrase, “This program has come to you through the courtesy of my sponsors the United States Army, distributors of G.I. Repellent, mosquito nets, Atabrine tablets, and good ole-fashioned horse sense.”¹⁹⁷ It was incredibly important that the servicemen

¹⁹⁰ Mary Ellen Condon-Rall, “Allied Cooperation in Malaria Prevention and Control: The World War II Southwest Pacific Experience.” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 46, no. 4 (1991): 493.

¹⁹¹ Warner Brothers (Chuck Jones), *Private Snafu vs Malaria Mike*, March 1944, Video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9mLM1K3U2s>.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

serving in the South Pacific remember how to prevent Malaria with the threat of it being so high. By January 30, 1943 there would be 4,000 cases per 1,000 men per year.¹⁹⁸

While troop education was absolutely imperative, so was educating the home front. While they were not in active combat, their lives were still changing, and new lessons had to be taught. Walt Disney produced possibly one of the most well-known educational cartoons during the World War II period. This was short cartoon called *Education for Death: The Making of the Nazi*. The purpose of this cartoon was meant to show the danger of Nazism and how it begins with the training of the children. It was an incredibly powerful cartoon that people still recognize to this day. It was released on January 15, 1943. The cartoon was based on a book of the same title by Gregor Ziemer which was released in 1941. The cartoon is a confusing mix of Disney animation and, by the end of the cartoon, a terrifying and depressing reality. The powerful imagery of the cartoon weaves a sad and terrifying tale of the children growing up in Germany under the rule of Adolph Hitler. *Education for Death* follows the story of a young German boy named Hans. The cartoon begins with the question of, “What makes a Nazi?”¹⁹⁹

The answer is that it starts with control at birth.²⁰⁰ A young German couple meets with an official to register the birth of their son. They are only allowed to choose a name off a specific list of approved names. The couple has to provide birth certificates that go back to their great grandparents to prove that they are pure Arians.²⁰¹ The mother wants to name her child Hans. The official then points to a list of forbidden names. Some of these names include Samuel,

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Walt Disney (Clyde Geronimi and Gregor Ziemer), *Education for Death*, January 15, 1943, Video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5XNLnbvqsxo>.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

Jacob, Isaac, Rebecca, Noah, and many others.²⁰² There is a disproportionate number of Jewish names compared to others on the list like Winston and Ivan.²⁰³ The name Hans is approved, and they are handed their hereditary passport with space for twelve children. As the narrator says, "...a subtle hint. Germany needs soldiers."²⁰⁴ Along with the papers they are also handed a copy of Mein Kampf. Hans will become the main character of this piece as the rest of the film follows him through his life and the making of a Nazi.

The narrator tells the audience that in kindergarten Hans is taught fairytales, but with a slight twist to them. He is told the story of Sleeping Beauty. In this version of the fairytale, the wicked witch is democracy.²⁰⁵ Like in the usual version of the story, the prince shows up and defeats the wicked witch, saving the princess. The princess is Germany who is depicted as a rather large woman with long blond hair wearing a stereotypical Viking helmet and the prince is Hitler.²⁰⁶ As the narrator points out the moral of this fairytale is to show that Hitler got Germany on her feet again.²⁰⁷ Along with this reason, the story is also to help paint Hitler as the hero and mold young Nazi minds to that interpretation.²⁰⁸ By doing so Hitler becomes Hans' idol. This portion of the cartoon is still the very typical Disney animation. It is somewhat lighthearted and poking a little fun at Hitler and Germany.

The rest of the cartoon begins to take a slightly darker turn as Hans begins to get older. Hans attends school where he is taught to pledge his loyalty to Hitler. Along with this, he is taught that the world belongs to the strong and the brutal.²⁰⁹ Hans is asked a question concerning

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

this using the illustration of a fox and the rabbit. He answers the question wrong, and he is punished. After his punishment he is asked the question again. He bursts out that he hates the rabbit and that there is no room for the weak.²¹⁰ The narrator tells us that Hans has come around quick to the proper Nazi way of thinking.²¹¹ The narrator ends this scene that this idea is the basis of Nazi ideology. The Nazis believe that they are the master race and that they will conquer the world.²¹²

At this point in the piece the animation shifts from the usual Disney style to something much darker. Hans is now ready for the higher education according to the narrator.²¹³ It depicts soldiers marching, burning books, artwork, and other important works. There is the very vivid imagery of the Bible being changed into Mein Kampf and a cross with Jesus hanging on it being turned into a sword adorned with the swastika on the handle.²¹⁴ A brick is thrown through a stained-glass window depicting Mary and Jesus.²¹⁵ The closing shot of the cartoon is of Hans as a child marching and hailing Hitler that shifts into an adult version of Hans. The narrator closes with the line, "...no hope, no tolerance, and no mercy...now he is good Nazi who tramples on the rights of others. For now his education is complete, his education for death."²¹⁶ This cartoon is a stunning example of the mix of popular culture and propaganda. It took the beloved Disney style to tell the story of what Nazi indoctrination looked like. While it was obviously a propaganda piece, it did an excellent job of being able to showcase to the American public the Nazi method of indoctrination of children and what it meant for the future of those children.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

In the last chapter, the use of creating support on the home front was addressed. At times there seems to be overlap between educational media and media specifically used for raising support for the war. For example, there were many films created on war bonds. While at times it did explain what a war bond was, the main point of the piece was usually to sell the war bonds more than anything else. Women in factories was another excellent example of overlap. Many films, cartoons, comic books, and radio programs were trying to help bring women into the workforce and into military roles. After the women were put into these jobs, they needed to be educated about the jobs they had taken on. Not only did they need to be educated, but the men in positions above them needed to be educated as well. According to the Social Security Administration, 24% of women were in the work force by 1940 or 12.8 million out 52.8 million.²¹⁷ The Social Security Administration estimated that by the end of 1942 more than 4.5 million women would be specifically engaged in wartime work.²¹⁸ The actual number ended up being over 6 million women being engaged in wartime work.

The National Youth Administration released the film, *Training Women for War Production*, in 1942 and it was narrated by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Mrs. Roosevelt said that it was paramount that the women in the country receive the proper training at this time, so they can do their part to help.²¹⁹ This video specifically addresses how the National Youth Administration can help these young women receive their training and be able to enter the workforce. While this film more closely aligns with the overlap of drumming up support for the

²¹⁷ Social Security Administration, "Employment of Women in War Production," Social Security Administration (1942), 5.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

²¹⁹ The National Youth Administration, *Training Women for War Production*, 1942, video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1QjQ0y9d0g>.

home front, it also shows how important it is for women to enter the workforce and educating them on how they can receive the training that they need.

In 1944, the United States Office of Education released a film specifically about how to supervise women workers within the factory setting. In the opening credits, two men are talking. Mr. Brooks is congratulating Joe on his handling of the factory and being able to keep the men and the line moving.²²⁰ They peek out the window and see the ladies leaving for the day. Mr. Brooks says there are men like Joe all over the country facing the same problems when it comes to supervising women.²²¹ Joe admits he is scared of women in the factory and his boss tells him that he believes the women are too. As Mr. Brooks points out, many of these women are in their first industrial job and unfamiliar with it.²²² They are not familiar with all the language and everything that goes into the machines, so they need to be trained well. His boss tells him that if the women are trained properly, they can be wonderful producers.²²³

Mr. Brooks advises Joe to teach the women in plain language instead of trade terms and to do their best to show them how to properly use the tools.²²⁴ These women had usually been homemakers before entering wartime work, so they needed to be trained how to properly do the job. These were all new things to them, and the film makes the important point that while this is the usual job for the men, the women had never done these things before.²²⁵ It seems almost silly now to think that films like this were needed, but women in factory work was a completely new

²²⁰ US Office of Education, *Supervising Women Workers*, 1944, video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=locREMGJg4Q>.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

shift in culture and there needed to be a learning curve for everyone involved. Short films like that helped to teach these lessons as everyone adjusted to the new wartime culture.

Education for the soldiers and for the home front was another important way for the United States government to unite the country. Society was changing as a whole and many new lessons needed to be taught. Film and cartoons became one of the most important teaching tools for that venture. It made lessons entertaining and easy to sit through. Men and women needed to learn new lessons about their changing worlds. Media proved to be a powerful tool for that purpose. In his January 11, 1944, State of the Union message, FDR said,

I have often said that there are no two fronts for America in this war. There is only one front. There is one line of unity that (which) extends from the hearts of (the) people at home to the men of our attacking forces in our farthest outposts. When we speak of our total effort, we speak of the factory and the field and the mine as well as (of) the battlefield (ground) -- we speak of the soldier and the civilian, the citizen and his Government.²²⁶

The education aspect of the war effort was crucial for maintaining the unified front that FDR was addressing. By educating the soldiers and the home front it was creating a more well-oiled machine that would help them be able to succeed in the war.

²²⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "State of the Union Message to Congress," (speech, Washington DC, January 11, 1944), Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/011144.html>.

Chapter 4

“Keep These Hands Off!”

“Keep These Hands Off!” was a powerful fear motivator for the general public. This poster depicted a young woman holding her baby while two clawed hands reach towards her and the phrase “Keep These Hands Off! Buy the new Victory Bonds.”²²⁷ One hand shows the swastika for Germany and the other is the rising sun for Japan. This poster was produced between 1941 and 1942 by the Canadian National War Finance Committee to sell Victory Bonds.²²⁸ While this was a Canadian poster, it also reflected the feelings of the American public during the time. Ideas and themes like these were reflected in most of the propaganda material during World War II. There needed to be a buildup of distrust for the enemy and a common enemy for the American people to rally around.

Popular culture and propaganda truly shine when it comes to building distrust and, to a certain extent, fear for the enemy during World War II. It was crucial to national security the government have a unified home front and a unified army if they wanted to succeed during the war. FDR in an address to the White House Correspondents’ Association on March 15, 1941, told them, “From the bureaus of propaganda of the Axis powers came the confident prophecy that the conquest of our country would be “an inside job”—a job accomplished not by overpowering invasion from without, but by disrupting confusion and disunion and moral disintegration from within.”²²⁹ The American government needed to make sure the home front

²²⁷ “Keep These Hands Off,” Omeka RSS, accessed February 8, 2022, <https://libapps.salisbury.edu/nabb-online/exhibits/show/propaganda/fear/keep-these-hands-off>.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Address at the Annual Dinner of the White House Correspondents’ Association,” (Speech, Washington DC, March 15, 1941), The American Presidency Project, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-annual-dinner-white-house-correspondents-association>.

was completely unified and give them a common enemy to focus on. One of the ways of doing that was inspiring distrust in the enemy. This was done all across the popular mediums of the time. Film, radio, cartoons, and comic books all did this in various degrees throughout the course of the war.

There were several general themes that ran across most of the media concerning the enemy. These were usually general incompetence by the Germans or Japanese soldiers and their leadership, stereotypes of the leaders and their people, and several other themes usually appeared within these mediums. Sometimes these were silly things like Hitler chewing on a carpet because he was throwing a tantrum.²³⁰ Other times, it was the serious dangers that Nazi ideology posed to the American way of life. Along with the views of the enemy, there were many examples of warning for the American public. This usually dwelt with the fear of enemy spies or opposing ideology. This is again where the educational aspect overlaps with the other major themes. The use of popular culture and propaganda was never more evident than its depiction of America's enemies.

Der Fuehrer's Face was released in 1943 by Walt Disney and directed by Jack Kinney. The cartoon was originally called *Donald Duck in Nutsy Land* but was changed after the song "Der Fuehrer's Face" was done by Spike Jones and it became an instant success.²³¹ The cartoon would go on to win an Oscar for Best Animated Short Film in 1943. Donald Duck is the main character of the cartoon. The premise follows Donald as he wakes up in Nazi Germany where he is a cog in Hitler's machine. Donald's alarm clock goes off which he sleeps through, and a

²³⁰ Walt Disney (Frank Tashlin), *Scrap Happy Daffy*, August 21, 1943, video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8ZG2CSWypI>.

²³¹ Walt Disney (Jack Kinney), *Der Fuehrer's Face*, January 1, 1943, video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bn20oXFrxxg>.

bayonet comes through the window to poke him in the behind.²³² This gets him quickly out of bed. The first thing he does is salute to the portraits of Hitler, Mussolini, and Hirohito hanging on the wall.²³³ He then begins his morning routine. This consists of getting dressed in his uniform and making breakfast. He keeps a canister of coffee in a safe which really just turns out to be a single bean tied to a string that he can dip into his cup.²³⁴ This is then followed up by him spraying the aroma of bacon and eggs into his mouth from a perfume container and eating a piece of bread that looks like it was made out of wood.²³⁵ Before he can finish breakfast, another Nazi's weapon comes in from the side of the frame. Stuck to the end of the bayonet is a copy of *Mien Kampf* and he tells Donald to, "Hier! Improve the Mind! Hail Hitler."²³⁶ Donald is then swept off to his factory job.

Donald works in a munitions factory making shells. A voiceover from the man running the factory tells the workers, "Welcome workers of Nutsy Land. What a glorious privilege is yours to be a Nutsy. To work 48 hours a day for the Fuehrer."²³⁷ Donald is marched into his workplace with bayonets at his back. He begins his work on the assembly line. As he is doing so pictures of Hitler periodically go by and Donald has to stop and say, "Hail Hitler!" every time that they pass.²³⁸ He becomes more and more frustrated as time goes on. The voiceover appears again, and this time says, "Is this not wonderful? Is not the Fuehrer glorious?"²³⁹ Donald grumbles out a response and then is promptly threatened for doing so. Donald is then told that out of the kindness of the Fuehrer he gets to go on vacation with pay, but that just turns out to be

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid.

a large picture of the Alps that they unfurl behind him.²⁴⁰ He also was chosen by special decree to work overtime which eventually ends up driving him absolutely mad.²⁴¹

The cartoon concludes with Donald waking up and realizing that it was all one big nightmare, and he is home in the United States. He springs out of bed wearing American flag pajamas and hugs his Statue of Liberty figurine. He says, “Boy, am I glad to be a citizen of the United States of America.”²⁴² While this cartoon is fun and silly, at the core it is breaking down tenets of Nazi Germany and playing off the problems. The obvious lesson is that the American people should be thankful for the freedom they have and share the patriotism that Donald feels at the end of the cartoon. The other lesson is to make American’s aware of the grim life they would live under the Nazi’s. They show a regimented lifestyle where Donald is told what to do and he has no freedom of choice. There are food shortages, endless work, no vacations, and no ability to make your own choices. It would be very off putting to the American public. While again this was a funny cartoon, it still showcased an anti-Nazi propaganda that most of the media was trying to put forward.

In a pervious chapter, the cartoon the *Ducktators* was addressed as way of selling war bonds, but this cartoon was also an important caricature of the Axis powers. Again, the premise of the cartoon was Hitler, Mussolini, and Hirohito were all portrayed as different birds. In this cartoon, Hitler was born as a bad egg.²⁴³ He was a failed artist and so he turned to other endeavors which was taking over the barnyard. The only animals that listen to him were some gullible ducks and one goose who was Mussolini. Mussolini is then shown giving a speech to

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Warner Brothers (Norman McCabe and Leon Schlesinger), *The Ducktators*, August 1, 1942, video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdMlqq-vL5A>.

one duck who had been chained up to keep him there.²⁴⁴ Hirohito then appears. The narrator tells the audience, “Then from out of the west came another partner to make a silly Axis of himself.”²⁴⁵ All of these leaders throughout the cartoon are made out to be incompetent and ridiculous. The cartoon concludes with the Dove of Peace defeating all of them and the other animals of the barnyard helping to join in and help to defeat them.

This cartoon depicts the very obvious caricatures of the Axis leadership. Hitler is pictured as a failed artist who decided to turn to something else and got some gullible people to follow him. Mussolini is shown as completely incompetent and following Hitler’s every word. In addition, the only way he can give speeches and lead is to have people forced to be there. Hirohito is one Japanese stereotype after another. He is depicted with heavily squinted eyes, buck teeth, and a heavy stereotypical Japanese accent.²⁴⁶ Hirohito’s description in this cartoon reflected most of the depictions of the Japanese people during the war.

While all the Axis powers were depicted as caricatures, there is a distinct difference in the handling of the Japanese and the Germans in the propaganda. While there were many stereotypes about the German people, there seemed to be more animosity towards the Japanese. This would make sense given the Japanese attacking Pearl Harbor. There were much more personal feelings towards the Japanese than there were towards the Germans. While Americans were wary of the Germans on their own soil, they were much more wary of the Japanese Americans. This can be seen in Executive Order 9066. Franklin D. Roosevelt issued this order on February 19, 1942, and this order would result in the relocation of the Japanese on American soil. While this order does not word for word say that this was to be the result it was what came out of the

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

order. The purpose of this order was to provide, "...every possible protection against espionage and against sabotage to national-defense material, national-defense premises, and national-defense utilities...."²⁴⁷ This meant that certain groups would need to be monitored and removed.

FDR handed the power of this choice over to the Secretary of War saying,

Now, therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, and Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, I hereby authorize and direct the Secretary of War, and the Military Commanders whom he may from time to time designate, whenever he or any designated Commander deems such action necessary or desirable, to prescribe military areas in such places and of such extent as he or the appropriate Military Commander may determine, from which any or all persons may be excluded, and with respect to which, the right of any person to enter, remain in, or leave shall be subject to whatever restrictions the Secretary of War or the appropriate Military Commander may impose in his discretion. The Secretary of War is hereby authorized to provide for residents of any such area who are excluded therefrom, such transportation, food, shelter, and other accommodations as may be necessary, in the judgment of the Secretary of War or the said Military Commander, and until other arrangements are made, to accomplish the purpose of this order.

This order turned the west coast into a military zone and meant that those of Japanese descent would soon be relocated to internment camps.

On March 2, 1942, Lieutenant General J. L. DeWitt issued Public Proclamation 1. This proclamation established numbered military zones. Along with this this order required every Japanese, German, and Italian alien along with anyone of Japanese ancestry to submit a "Change of Residence" notice if they changed their habitual residence.²⁴⁸ This way they could keep track of anyone they viewed as a threat to them. By March 27, the restrictions were even more strict for those of Japanese descent. In Public Proclamation 4, DeWitt ordered that starting at midnight

²⁴⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Executive Order 9066, "Resulting in the Relocation of Japanese," February 19, 1942, <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=74>.

²⁴⁸ J. L. Dewitt, "Western Defense Command Public Proclamation No. 1," March 2, 1942, <https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/pioneerlife/id/15298>, 2.

on March 29, all alien Japanese and persons of Japanese ancestry in the limits of Military Area No. 1 were no longer allowed to leave the area for no reason.²⁴⁹

This began the action of moving the Japanese to the internment camps. Along with these Public Proclamation, Congress passed Public Law 77-503 which made disobeying Executive Order 9066 punishable by a \$5,000 fine or prison time.²⁵⁰ By August of 1942, 112,000 people were sent to “assembly centers” before they were transported to relocation camps or internment camps.²⁵¹ Almost 70,000 of these people were American citizens.²⁵² Given the feelings and actions towards those of Japanese descent in America, the extreme and harsh caricature of them in media is not surprising.

The stereotypes ranged from personality traits to physical traits. They were portrayed as sneaky cowards and generally incompetent. In *Commando Duck*, Donald Duck is dropped behind enemy lines to destroy a Japanese factory. While he is making his way down the river, two Japanese soldiers are hiding, one disguised as a rock and the other is disguised as a tree.²⁵³ The one dressed as a rock causes the one dressed as tree to shoot himself. This causes the one dressed as a rock to apologize and say, “Oh, I beg my pardon. I bow my stomach at you very reverent,” and the other replies, “That’s all right. Happy cherry blossoms to you.”²⁵⁴ They then

²⁴⁹ J. L. DeWitt, “Western Defense Command Public Proclamation No. 4,” March 27, 1942, <https://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16855coll4/id/12194>, 1.

²⁵⁰ “Japanese-American Incarceration during World War II,” National Archives and Records Administration (National Archives and Records Administration), accessed February 1, 2022, <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/japanese-relocation#background>; An Act to Provide a Penalty for Violation of Restrictions or Orders with Respect to Persons Entering, Remaining in, Leaving, or Committing Any Act in Military Areas or Zones, Act of March 21, 1942, Public Law 77-503, 56 STAT 173, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/5730387>.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Walt Disney (Jack King), *Commando Duck*, June 2, 1944, video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWaf3dQxAfQ>.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

proceed to keep bowing to one another. More troops line up to shoot Donald, but one of the troops stops the other before he can shoot. He tells the audience that the man cannot shoot yet because, "...Japanese custom say always shooting a man in the back please."²⁵⁵ These sort ideas and themes were common throughout media in their depiction of the Japanese. They were a military that would use underhanded tactics and shoot a man in the back instead of facing the enemy head on.

The physical mockery was always present as well. They were usually pictured with bucked teeth, overly exaggerated squinted eyes, yellow skin, and in some depictions wearing glasses that resembled Hirohito's. Comic books were especially notorious for using these features. In *Captain America #13* Captain America and Bucky face off a group of villains called the League of Unicorns. All of the villains were pictured with extremely slanted eyes and even fanged teeth. Captain America and Bucky save a man that was being attacked by the group. He says the group has been paid to disrupt friendship between China and the United States.²⁵⁶ The League of Unicorns then steals a luxury train with many passengers on board. Captain America and Bucky rush to the train and confront the villains. During the fight, Bucky kicks one of the men in the face saying, "You should get a kick out of this, slant eyes!"²⁵⁷ The comic book ends with Captain America defeating the League of Unicorns, but this work showcases the exaggerated features that were often used when depicting those of Asian descent.

One of the most obvious depictions of these ideas concerning Japanese people was in an anti-Japanese propaganda cartoon, *Tokio Jokio*. It released by the Warner Brothers in 1943 and directed by Norman McCabe. The narrator tells the audience that this film had just been released

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Stan Lee, *Captain America #13* (New York: Timely Comics, 1942), 2.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 5.

to the public after being captured from the enemy and was a vicious example of *Japanazi* propaganda.²⁵⁸ A title card is shown saying “Civilian Defense.”²⁵⁹ The narrator, who is now someone speaking in a cliched Japanese accent, tells the audience they will now see Japan’s state of the art air raid siren. This turns out to just be two men with one of them stabbing the other in the back side with a pin and the man yells into a microphone.²⁶⁰ It then shows several more examples of the civilian defense. For example, the aircraft spotters’ detail is just someone painting polka dots onto an airplane, or the fire prevention headquarters that burned down.²⁶¹

The cartoon continues on through several other examples of the Japanese generally being a disaster. They do “Kitchen Hints” where it shows Tojo making a Japanese club which is just three sheets of ration paper and then he hits himself in the head with a club.²⁶² They also do a section labeled “Headline Personalities.” This featured figures like Admiral Yamamoto and General Homma. Yamamoto is pictured saying he is going to dictate peace from the White House while walking on stilts.²⁶³ An editor’s note then cuts in showing Yamamoto’s room at the White House which essentially consist of a cell with an electric chair in it.²⁶⁴ General Homma is pictured running and trying hide from an air raid while the narrator is telling the audience that he is displaying the calmness and coolness of a Japanese officer.²⁶⁵

The end of the cartoon pokes fun at the Japanese military. They show a submarine that was launched three weeks ahead of schedule, but there are still men working on it as it moves

²⁵⁸ Warner Brother (Normn McCabe), *Tokio Jokio*. May 15, 1943, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sy9rGAO-qfc>.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

under water.²⁶⁶ It then shows a human torpedo which is shown as a small submarine piloted by one man. The narrator tells the audience that the man is very happy to be doing this, but when asked if he has anything to say the man exclaims that they let him out of the torpedo making it very apparent that he is trapped in it.²⁶⁷ The cartoon concludes with several more examples of the Japanese being behind such as the planes being launched by sling shots. The messages of these cartoons and comic books seem clear. The Japanese were incompetent, behind in technology, and some of the worst villains that America would face. Germany dwelt with many of the same criticisms from American propaganda, but there is a distinct racial element that sets aside Japanese and German propaganda in the American media.

There was suspicion surrounding anyone of Italian, German, or Japanese descent, but much more surrounding the Japanese. This is made obvious by the act of moving them to internment camps during the war. The Germans and Italians did not experience that same sort of prejudice. There had been some argument that Germans and Italians had seen the same level of internment, but there is not much evidence to support this theory. Jeffery L. Sammons in his article, "Review: Were German-Americans Interned during World War II?," several historians have tried to reach a number of how many German and Italian Americans had been interred, but the evidence given as been lacking and the quality of work surrounding the subject has been unacceptable given that the figures people have been using seemingly come out of thin air.²⁶⁸ Evidence seems to dictate that while German and Italian Americans saw suspicion and distrust,

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Jeffrey L. Sammons, "Review of *Were German-Americans Interned during World War II?*", *The German Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (1998), 76.

they did not experience the same level as those of Japanese descent did in America and that is reflected in their depiction in popular media.

Most work dwelt with the enemy on foreign soil. They were set in the context of their own country or out somewhere beyond the borders of the United States. However, the fear of the enemy within their own midst was strong not only with the common people, but with the government as well which is evidenced by the Japanese relocation camps. There were many works that dwelt with the enemy at home and the stress and fear that could cause. *Fibber McGee and Molly* aired an episode on May 5, 1942, and was called “Fibber is Being Followed by a Spy.” Fibber is convinced there is a spy. He claims that someone has been following him places like the Elks Club, down by the bridge, near the railroad station, the powerhouse, and everywhere else he has been all the while taking pictures of him.²⁶⁹ Molly is not convinced that those mean the gentlemen was a spy. Fibber says his first clue was that whenever he looked at the man, the man would turn away and Molly says that just because someone did not want to look at Fibber for hours means they are foreign spy.²⁷⁰ McGee calls the mayor who comes over to the house to discuss his suspicions. Fibber tells the mayor about everything and while Molly agrees it might not be anything it might be a good idea to pick the gentlemen up, but the mayor tells them if he is wrong, he can get in trouble for wrongful arrest.²⁷¹

Molly and Fibber decide to go out to see if the man will follow them which he does. They run into several people they know and tell them that a foreign spy is taking pictures of them.²⁷²

McGee decided to stop in the cigar store and call the FBI. An agent is sent down from the FBI

²⁶⁹ *Fibber McGee and Molly*, “Fibber is Being Followed By a Spy,” Aired May 12, 1942.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

²⁷² *Ibid.*

and the agents surrounded the man. The FBI agent tells Fibber that the man is a photographer for a national magazine, and he was working on an assignment about how a small town busy body spends his time.²⁷³ It almost seems that there was not a lesson to be learned from this episode. It was comedic and the payoff was the joke, but it still seems to reflect ideas that American public were concerned about. When Fibber calls the FBI in the episode, they tell him that they had been receiving a lot of fake tips lately, but they could not risk ignoring any of them.²⁷⁴ It was the idea that even though someone might not be the enemy it was still important to be cautious and not let your guard down. The idea that there were foreign spies around and possibly causing trouble seemed to be a common theme. *Fibber McGee and Molly* even did another episode on the topic two years after.

Fibber McGee and Molly released an episode on April 18, 1944, called “Fibber Thinks His Neighbor is a German Spy.” The premise of this episode focuses on Fibber as he watches his neighbor through the front window of their house. Fibber’s first line of the episode is, “Look at him, the dirty Nazi. I bet he blows up the post office before the week is out!”²⁷⁵ His neighbor Mr. Schmaltz seems to not be doing anything suspicious while Fibber is watching him, but he is convinced that he is a spy. Molly says that Fibber thinks that because Mr. Schmaltz did not let Fibber use his lawn mower which Fibber denies.²⁷⁶

As the episode continues it seems that there is more evidence against Mr. Schmaltz, but everyone just thinks Fibber is ridiculous and there are explanations for Mr. Schmaltz behavior. Alice visits Fibber and Molly and tells them that Mr. Schmaltz likes to spend time down at the

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ *Fibber McGee and Molly*, “Fibber Thinks His Neighbor is a German Spy,” aired April 18, 1944.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

airplane plant and take photos with a Leica camera.²⁷⁷ This sent Fibber into a tizzy. Alice says that he was not taking pictures of the factory, but the girls that are usually down in the area. Molly sees it as explanation, but Fibber is not convinced. Alice then reveals that the girls were posing in front of the planes located at the plant and again sends Fibber into a tizzy.²⁷⁸ Fibber exclaims that Mr. Schmaltz is a German spy and it should be obvious by his German accent, his German haircut, and his German camera (Leica camera).²⁷⁹

The listener also learns that Mr. Schmaltz keeps carrier pigeons that have small messages attached to them. Their friend, Mr. Wilcox, arrives and just like the others said Fibber was being ridiculous. Fibber tells us that he was speaking to the postman and say that there were letters addresses to Franklin Delano Schmaltz.²⁸⁰ Molly and Mr. Wilcox say that kids have been named after presidents for years but given Mr. Schmaltz age that was a little strange. However, they still shrug off Fibber. Mr. Wilcox says that he just saw Mr. Schmaltz do something that made him a typical American. He had seen Mr. Schmaltz, "...leave his engine running outside the gas ration board while he went in and yelled for forty minutes about how they were making it so tough for him."²⁸¹ In Mr. Wilcox eyes this made Mr. Schmaltz a typical American.

The episode concludes with the cops showing up to arrest Mr. Schmaltz for being a German spy and Fibber exclaiming that he knew it and caught a German spy.²⁸² While the cartoon begins off seeming a little ridiculous, as the listener thinks the only reason Fibber thinks his neighbor is a spy is because he will not let him borrow the lawn mower, the evidence seems

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

to build and build even though no one else will see it.²⁸³ The lesson for the American public seems to be that you should not ignore all the signs when they are there. All the signs that Mr. Schmaltz might be a German spy were there, but Molly and their friends tried to explain everything away. The theme of their being spies around were rather common and that the American people needed to be on the lookout. They needed to be careful with what they said, and they did because you never knew who was listening.

There were several propaganda posters that would help build the fear of enemy spies listening in. As discussed in the last chapter, Snafu helped to remind the soldiers of the dangers of speaking freely because you never knew who was listening. On the home front, propaganda posters were made to help instill that sense of warning and even fear in the American public. “He’s Watching You” was a propaganda poster created in 1942 by the Office of Emergency Management under the Division of Information. The image is a stylized cartoon drawing of a German soldier where all that is visible of the top of the helmet and the eyes with the tagline of “He’s Watching You” at the top.²⁸⁴ It was a very powerful image reinforcing the idea that you might not know when a spy or the enemy in general was watching you.

To some the focus on spies or the enemy infiltrating your life might seem ridiculous and unfounded, but the American government had good reason for putting these themes forward. A Nazi spy ring was discovered before America had even entered the war. The Duquesne Spy Ring consisted of thirty-three men that were arrested in 1941 by the FBI. A man by the name of William Sebold would be the key to the operation. Sebold was a naturalized U.S. citizen who worked in industrial and aircraft plants. He had returned to Germany in 1939 on business and

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Glenn Ernest Grohe, *He’s Watching You*, 1942, Poster, National Archives Catalog, accessed January 28, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.hclib.org/digital/collection/p17208coll3/id/1467>.

while there was “pressured” by the German Secret Service to be a spy for them in America.²⁸⁵ Sebold made the choice to go to the American consulate in Cologne and tell them about the incident. He then cooperated with the FBI and became a double agent for the FBI.

Sebold and the FBI set out to capture the spies that the German government told him he would be in contact with. The Nazis had told him to take on the persona of “Harry Sawyer”, a diesel engineer consultant.²⁸⁶ Between Sebold and the FBI, they began to lay a trap for the Nazi spies. First, the FBI labs built secret shortwave radios that would be able to transfer back messages to the Nazis in Germany.²⁸⁷ Agents then pretended to be Sebold and communicated with the Nazis for months. They sent over three hundred messages and received two hundred from the Nazis.²⁸⁸ Secondly, the FBI set up a fake office for Sebold. This was created with hidden microphones and two-way mirrors so the FBI could watch the various spies and Nazis that visited Sebold.

Throughout this operation, the FBI and Sebold learned that one of the spies had been building a bomb and Fredrick Duquesne, who be revealed as the leader, showed Sebold plans he had stolen from an industrial plant in Delaware in an effort to be able to start fires at industrial plants.²⁸⁹ As soon as the FBI had enough information, they set out to arrest those they had found thanks to Sebold. They arrested thirty-three spies at the end of the operation. Nineteen of them pled guilty relatively quickly and the others were pronounced guilty at a trial that took place days after Pearl Harbor. Given these circumstances it is understandable that the American government was concerned and would be making the American public aware of the possibility of spies. They

²⁸⁵ FBI, “Duquesne Spy Ring,” (FBI, May 18, 2016), <https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/duquesne-spy-ring>.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

needed to be on the lookout for those who could be spies and alert the authorities of the possibility. Not only were Americans made aware of the possibility of spies watching them, but they also needed to be aware of those that might not adhere to the tenants of what it meant to be an American.

During a time of war, it was crucial that the people be united for morale and national security's sake. If there were dissenting ideas or those not behind the war it could begin to cause issues. This means that there was a push to make sure that everyone was on the same page and not to spread ideas that would contradict the mission of the American public during a time of war. Captain America provided some of the best examples for this. Jarrett Lovell in his chapter, "Step Aside, Superman...This Is a Job For [Captain] America!" says, "...Captain America's sole purpose was to both literally and iconographically represent the United States and only the United States, while garnering support for America's military efforts abroad and often-questionable domestic policies at home."²⁹⁰ This meant that not only was Captain America fighting foreign enemies, he was also fighting them at home.

In *Captain America #15*, Steve (Captain America) and Bucky are enjoying a ride on the ferry so they can see the Statue of Liberty. During this time, the Fifth Column was making plans. The leader of the Fifth Column tells his followers, "Dressed as city employees you are to instill fear an' doubt into the minds of the people of New York...."²⁹¹ Steve and Bucky then begin running into these members throughout their day in New York. One man tells them that it is useless to resist the Axis powers and just accept the wave that is coming.²⁹² Steve then puts the

²⁹⁰ Steven M . Chermak., Frankie Y. Bailey, Jarret Lovell, and Michelle Brown, *Media Representations of September 11*, (Westport: Praeger, 2003) ,169

²⁹¹ Stan Lee, *Captain America #15* (New York: Timely Comics, 1942), 2.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 3.

man in a headlock and throws him off the platform that he is standing on and says, “Here’s the way to handle the barbarian wave of the present.”²⁹³ They run into several other men that deliver the same message. They question was Steve joined the Army when he could make more money picking up trash, others tell him they need to see the sights before the Nazis blitz them, and another asks for money because he cannot make a living wage in America and hopes that Hitler wins.²⁹⁴ There continues to be growing discontent and panic as several disasters happen.

First, there is smoke released, and someone begins yelling that there was a gas bomb, but Captain America thinks that something fishy is going on when it becomes clear that the gas is fake.²⁹⁵ However, this did not stop the crowd from becoming hysterical. Secondly, workers were in a mine getting ready to begin building a new tunnel under the river. As the dynamite goes off, creatures, which are just men dressed in costumes, come out from the whole and terrify the workers in the mine.²⁹⁶ Captain America is then captured by the men in the costumes and taken to the Nazi headquarters where the head of the Nazis reveals his evil plan. He wants to cause hysteria and build up chaos and then there will be so much fear that New York will be evacuated, and they can take over the city.²⁹⁷

As per usual, Captain America saves the day and defeats the Nazis. Captain America leaves the reader with this last message, “Now that we’ve licked the Nazi Fifth Column plot, folks, you can see how important it is to not believe planted rumors, fake reports and terror propaganda! If London can take it...we can! So keep calm... Do your duty... And America will

²⁹³ Ibid., 4.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 7.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 13.

triumph!”²⁹⁸ This theme of not letting hysteria or false rumors taking hold was crucial for keeping the American public behind the war. This is reflected in FDR’s Fireside Chat on October 12, 1942, where he tells Americans,

One of the principal weapons of our enemies in the past has been their use of what is called "The War of Nerves." They have spread falsehood and terror; they have started Fifth Columns everywhere; they have duped the innocent; they have fomented suspicion and hate between neighbors; they have aided and abetted those people in other nations -- (even) including our own -- whose words and deeds are advertised from Berlin and from Tokyo as proof of our disunity.²⁹⁹

If the home front is in complete chaos, then the government cannot conduct a successful war.

They needed the home front to be unified. If there were massive amounts of hysteria, then there would be a less unified effort to win the war. The American government did want the public to be wary of the enemy. There were constant pushes to build distrust and dislike for the enemy, but it needed to be done in such a way that it did not cause panic in the general public. There needed to be a balance between distrust for the enemy and crippling fear that would keep the public from being able to function.

Captain America #18 dove more into the theme of enemies at home being a possibility. Steve, Bucky, and other troops in the unit are out for an evening of bowling before they are going to be sent overseas. The villain, Gigo, makes his appearance rather quickly. He tells his cronies to get ready to do something to stop the troops from being able to go overseas.³⁰⁰ The something they set up caused a bowling pin to come firing out of the bowling lane, hitting, and killing the man who was bowling. Everyone is confused about how the bowling pin killed the

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 20.

²⁹⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Fireside Chat 23: On the Home Front,” (Speech, Washington DC, October 12, 1942), University of Virginia Archives, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/october-12-1942-fireside-chat-23-home-front>.

³⁰⁰ Al Avison and Stan Lee, *Captain America #18* (New York: Timely Comics, 1942), 3.

man. Steve looks over the body and finds that there was a hole in his head from a .22 caliber bullet.³⁰¹ They are not able to find any clues about what happened, but Steve tells Bucky to get a job as a pin-boy so they can see if there is anything fishy going on.

Bucky finds several traps within the bowling alley like spring clamps in the bowling ball holes and a plug under one of the pins so it can fire the pin out.³⁰² Officers are still trying to use the lanes, but Steve interferes and gets arrested. He knocks the guard out and then burst back into the bowling alley as Captain America. There is a huge brawl, and he is captured by the villains. While Steve and Bucky are trapped in the bowling lane with the villains rolling bowling balls at their heads, Gigo begins his villainous monologue. Gigo tells Captain America, “Of course you, realize, Captain, that my main purpose in doing away with you is to give my fuehrer a better chance to invade your homeland!”³⁰³ Captain America and Bucky are eventually saved by the MPs, but the villains get away for the moment.

Captain America defeats Gigo and his minions at the end of the comic. With this defeat, Gigo reveals the tragedy that led him to become a villain. His real name is Peter G. Higorovitch and he hates democracy because the people of Russia took away power from the Czar and nobility, so he works for the fuehrer now to defeat America.³⁰⁴ This comic reflected the theme that not only foreign enemies were a danger, but the ones at home who were preventing America and democracy from winning. Captain America was a symbol of the American goal to protect democracy at all costs and that is how many viewed the war. It was meant to fight for the ideals that were crucial to the American way of life. The threat that the enemy presented to that way of

³⁰¹ Ibid., 4.

³⁰² Ibid., 4-5.

³⁰³ Ibid., 9.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 15.

life was the theme of many pieces of media, but a wonderful example of this theme is a film called *Hitler-Dead or Alive*.

Hitler-Dead or Alive was a propaganda film released in November of 1942 and directed by Nick Grinde. The basic premise of the film is three ex-convicts are promised a million dollars if they can capture Adolf Hitler. The film begins with two journalists wanting to speak with a Mr. Thornton. Mr. Thornton has just funded one million dollars to the government for new bombers.³⁰⁵ They wanted to know the story behind this because recently Mr. Thornton had offered the same amount of money if someone could capture Hitler. Mr. Thornton decides to tell them the whole story.

He had placed the ad for someone to find Hitler, dead or alive and three ex-convicts answer the ad.³⁰⁶ Mr. Thornton has them sign a contract and then sends them on their way. The convicts, Steve, Dutch, and Joe, make their way to Canada where they enlist in the paratroopers so they can make their way to Germany.³⁰⁷ This is where Johnny Stevens, ace pilot, is introduced. The three convicts take control of the plan Johnny is flying and forces him to take them to Germany.³⁰⁸ They run into some Germans, but easily talk their way out of it because the German soldiers were easily fooled. They simply tell the man in charge of the German headquarters that they have a message for Hitler and then they can only tell him.³⁰⁹ Colonel Hecht decides to throw them into jail because he does not entirely trust them.

As the film progresses, the audience learns that Colonel Hecht's girlfriend, Elsa, actually belongs to an underground organization fighting against the Nazis. She helps Steve, Joe, and

³⁰⁵ *Hitler-Dead or Alive*, Directed by Nick Grinde, Ben Judell Productions, 1942., Film, Charles House, 1942.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

Dutch escape from prison. During the chaos, Dutch is shot and killed. Elsa then hides Steve and Joe in a secret room under her stairs. She demands that they tell her what the message for Hitler is because if it is anything to help him, she will kill them on the spot.³¹⁰ Steve confesses that their plan is to kill Hitler. She scoffs and tells him it is impossible because the officers will just continue on. At the same time, Hecht had found papers on Dutch's body that gave away their plan to kill Hitler. Due to this, the Americans either need to be found and executed or the Nazis will punish the local village specifically the women and children.³¹¹

Steve and Elsa find out the news about the villagers being killed. This sets something off in Steve. He cannot stand the thought of innocent women and children dying for something they know nothing about, and he is now determined to kill Hitler to save them.³¹² Elsa tells him it is useless because that will do nothing but bring more death.³¹³ This does not matter to Steve. He comes up with a plan to get to Hitler. Elsa is supposed to perform at a party for Hitler and high-ranking Nazis. Steve and the others decide to disguise themselves as her musicians, so they can sneak into the party. The plan quickly goes sour, but they manage to capture Hitler rather quickly. During this mission Joe is killed, as well. Now that they are back at the hideout with Hitler, they needed to make sure it was him and not a double. Earlier in the film, Mr. Thornton had told them that they needed to capture the real Hitler and not a double. The way they check for that was by shaving his mustache. Meyer, who was part of the underground group with Elsa, told them that he had saved Hitler in Bavaria years before. He said they would be able to tell it

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid.

was Hitler because there would be a scar left on his face from where he sewed him up and Hitler grew the mustache to cover it.³¹⁴

They then forcibly hold down Hitler and shave off his mustache.³¹⁵ The scar is there so they know that they have found the real Hitler. Unfortunately, the Gestapo burst in shortly after and drag everyone outside. Steve had sent Johnny and Elsa to England earlier, so it was Steve, Meyer, Elsa's friend Greta, and Hitler sans mustache. Hitler is trying to tell them who he is, but Hecht does not believe him and almost immediately shoots him and kills him.³¹⁶ While the film has been somewhat comical it takes a sharp turn when Colonel Hecht lines up the children from the local village and has them shot.³¹⁷ Steve comes to the realization that Hitler was not the main power. Even with him gone the Nazi ideology still lives on. Steve tells the Nazis that even though he did not get them that eventually someone is going to.³¹⁸ He is then killed by the Nazis.

The film ends back in Mr. Thornton's office. He reveals that the million dollars' worth of planes was the beginning of a monument to Steve and the others.³¹⁹ The lesson he shares is that Hitler was merely a figurehead. The real danger is the Nazi ideology. There can be no rest until the Nazi warlords and everything they stand for is wiped off the earth.³²⁰ Mr. Thornton understands now that killing Hitler would not end the war because his followers would still carry on his teachings and use it to wreak havoc on peaceful people. While the premise of this movie is far-fetched it taught an important lesson. The leaders were often the main focus of propaganda pieces, but there were many more people behind them. The American people needed to be

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid.

watchful for the ideas that these leaders promoted. Even if these leaders were taken out of power, they would still have followers. Films like this were once again trying to remind the American public the dangers these sort of ideologies brought and why the American perspective was so much better.

Creating distrust and dislike for the enemy was crucial for making sure the home front was unified. They needed a common enemy to band together against. By creating caricatures and mocking images of the enemy it helped to make them appear incompetent and weak. While most of these works were comical, the mediums did address serious issues like the enemy ideology. Without a common enemy, it can be difficult for people to behind a major war effort. The American public was made aware of not only their foreign enemies but the enemies at home. While the government did not want full blown hysteria, there was a sense of moderate fear. As FDR said in his Fireside Chat on October 12, 1942, the United States was trying to fight against a “War of Nerves.”³²¹ They were able to calm these ever-increasing fears, but still build an awareness of enemies within the country and beyond. By creating distrust and hatred for the enemy it helped to build a more unified home front. They needed to keep the home front unified and by creating a common enemy and keeping hysterics from breaking out the American government was able to use popular media and propaganda to create a unified narrative, home front, and military.

³²¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Fireside Chat 23: On the Home Front,” (Speech, Washington DC, October 12, 1942), University of Virginia Archives, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/october-12-1942-fireside-chat-23-home-front>.

Conclusion

The year 1945 brought the end of World War II. The world would be forever changed by the conflict, and popular culture would never be the same. The Office of War Information was dissolved on September 15, 1945, under Executive Order 9608. President Harry Truman ordered, “2. Effective as of the close of business September 15, 1945: (a) There are abolished the functions of the Office of War Information then remaining. (b) The Director of the Office of War Information shall, pending the abolition of the Office of War Information under paragraph 3(b) of this order, proceed to wind up the affairs of the Office relating to such abolished functions.”³²² While the closing of the Office of War Information signaled the end of popular culture as a wartime tool, it left a lasting mark on popular culture as a whole.

As the war concluded, popular mediums began going back to their usual programming. There were no longer constant ads about war bonds or programs encouraging you to donate to the scrap drive or to head down to your local recruitment office, but that did not mean the landscape of popular culture was not reshaped just like everything else. For example, Captain America was now part of the popular culture landscape. His character was created because of the war. By the end of the 1940s, Captain America had served his purpose and was no longer needed, but he would be brought back from time to time as conflicts arose.³²³ Despite no longer needing him, Captain America was now forever present in the cultural landscape of America.

³²² Harry S. Truman, Executive Order 9608, “Providing for the Termination of the Office of War Information, and for the Disposition of Its Functions and of Certain Functions of the Office of Inter-American Affairs,” August 31, 1945, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/executive-order-9608-providing-for-the-termination-the-office-war-information-and-for-the#:~:text=States%3A%201945%20%E2%80%90%201953-.Executive%20Order%209608%E2%80%94Providing%20for%20the%20Termination%20of%20the%20Office,Office%20of%20Inter%2DAmerican%20Affairs>.

³²³ Steven M. Chermak., Frankie Y. Bailey, Jarret Lovell, and Michelle Brown, *Media Representations of September 11*, (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 170.

The war forever changed the climate of popular culture and showed what an incredible tool it could be in the hands of the American government.

Popular culture was no longer just about entertainment. World War II changed the way popular mediums like radio, movies, cartoons, and comic books were utilized. While there was some of this in World War I, it was not nearly the same level as World War II. It was now understood how powerful it could be as a government tool and one that would be used for years to come not only by the government, but for private projects as well. Captain America would make reappearances as the Cold War began and as the US entered Korea and Vietnam. Warner Brothers and the United States Army created a cartoon to promote joining the army in 1957 called, *Drafty, Isn't It?* The premise of this cartoon was to promote young men to join the army before they are drafted into the military because if they joined on their own, they could choose the job and military branch that they wanted to be a part of.³²⁴ TV and film would be used over and over to promote feelings whether positive or negative about American conflicts in the private sector. For example, the TV show, *Mash*, took place during the Korean War. However, it was to discuss the negative feelings towards the Vietnam War. World War II was truly the first time that all of popular culture was able to be viewed as more than entertainment and show how it could be used as a powerful propaganda tool for years to come.

The propaganda or public information of World War II shows a lot about what was important culturally at the time. That was one of the purposes of this thesis. It was meant to showcase what the popular themes were of the era and how that affected and reflected the culture of the time period. The obvious themes were staunch patriotism and doing what was best for

³²⁴ Warner Brothers and the United States Army, *Drafty, Isn't It?*. December 31, 1957, Video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpUWnzoWwwE>.

your country during the time of war, but the deeper meaning behind these themes was the government's need to promote national security objectives. They needed to have a unified home front if they wanted to succeed. The United States was large enough and had enough resources to be able to win the war without it, but the government did not need the added pressure of a country not behind them.³²⁵ FDR understood that he needed a unified front line as well as a unified home front. Without it the country would certainly fail.

This is perfectly summed up in his April 18th speech in 1942. He says, "But there is one front and one battle where everyone in the United States -- every man, woman, and child -- is in action, and will be privileged to remain in action throughout this war. That front is right here at home, in our daily lives, (and) in our daily tasks."³²⁶ They unified the country through the use of popular culture. They promoted war bonds sales, troop recruitment, scrap drives, women in the work force, etc. All of it was calculated to help promote the war effort in a way that was favorable to American citizens. These ideas were much easier for people to hear from their favorite actors, radio personalities, superheroes, and cartoon characters. These mediums told the story of nation that needed to stand behind their government and sacrifice whatever they needed to win the war.

The lasting legacy of popular culture being used as propaganda during the war is that it brought the country together in a way that had not been seen before or since. It provided common ideals and objectives that the entire country could rally around. While they were still entertaining, they were teaching incredibly important ideas about the war to the American people and the troops. The American government realized movies, radio, comic books, and cartoons

³²⁵ R.A.C. Parker, *The Second World War: A Short History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 131.

³²⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Our National Economic Policy", (speech, Washington DC, April 28, 1942), Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/042842.html>.

could be more than just shallow entertainment. Instead they saw that it could become the face of the war machine that America would become during World War II and help them to secure the nation to their cause.

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