

How successful was nazi propoganda essay sample



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For the Nazi party, uniformed acceptance of their aims and ideals was the most important aspect of Nazi life. In order to get people to accept and conform to these values the Nazi party became one of the most extreme propaganda machines of the 20th century. The Nazi Government extensively used Propaganda to influence the German nation and to promote the views of the Regime. It was utilised with the aim of coaxing the people to think and behave in a specific manner.

Goebbels was appointed Minister of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda and his job was to use all the resources available to him to indoctrinate and retain as much of the German people's attention as possible by forcing Nazi ideals and values into their everyday lives. However, it can be shown that Nazi propaganda was not always as successful as Goebbels wanted. The Nazis used different forms of media to promote propaganda, and it had a varied effect. Propaganda that was shown through entertainment invariably was far more effective than ideological propaganda.

The overtaking of all media was a great propaganda show for the Nazis, from then on. Radio was overtaken to create the " Reich radio company" and they even created a Radio which could not pick up foreign frequencies deliberately, this may be because nothing was wanted to be heard by the ears of the German nation outside of Germany. Radio was regarded as the most important medium for propaganda, reflecting the Nazis preference of the spoken word over the written word, " We make no bones about the fact that the radio belongs to us and no one else...

The radio must subordinate itself to the goals which the Government of the National Revolution has set itself... ” (Goebbels 1st March 1933) However, despite Goebbels’ claims that radio is “ the most modern and the most important instrument of mass influence that exists anywhere,” it was not always as successful as he believed it was. A cheap radio, the “ Volksempfänger” (“ People’s Receiver”) was produced and people were able to pay for them in instalments, on hire-purchase. This was to ensure that as many people as possible could afford to buy them.

However, the real value of these cheap radios came from making people believe that they were getting richer under the Nazis. Also, it is difficult to argue that the radio was a successful form of propaganda because the light entertainment programmes were always very popular with the German people but the same cannot be said about the speeches made by Hitler and the Nazi leaders. The German people were far more concerned with the entertainment value of radio programmes that the Nazi ideological message became lost on the apathetic German nation.

Goebbels, however, wasted no time in making his intentions clear. He needed to maintain control of the German press as well as the German radio. In 1933 there were some 4700 daily newspapers in Germany. By 1944 there were only 1000. Eber Verlag, the Nazi publishing house, controlled two-thirds of the press by 1939. The only news agency that was allowed was run by the Nazis, who therefore controlled information even before it got into the hands of the journalists. Newspapers were now a mouth piece for spreading the ideology of Hitler’s society.

However, although the numbers of opposing newspapers decreased the quality of the newspapers deteriorated. In terms of opposition, newspapers are finished but in term of editing, newspapers became very bland and subsequently readership fell sharply. This shows that newspapers were not always as successful as Goebbels wanted them to be. Despite his failure to train as an artist in Vienna, Hitler considered himself an expert on art and architecture and attempted to impose his views on the German people.

He loathed modern art and instead favoured traditional, realistic art, which contrasted sharply with the creative experiments of the Weimar republic. Hitler also saw art as a form of propaganda and with Goebbels help, set out to promote art which contained acceptable images of the Nazi state. These included expressions of anti-Semitism, nationalism, promotion of war, the cult of Hitler, motherhood, the supremacy of the Aryan race, “ Blood and Soil”, the power and legitimacy of the Nazi party, the glorification of the Greek and Roman empires and a rejection of Christian values.

Painting was “ dumbed down” so it could be easily understood by the common German. Heroic scenes, biological purity and athletic images that promoted the individual were used providing all sections of the community with an ideal. Artists had to have permission to paint and those that did not coincide with the Nazi ideals were prevented from painting or exiled. As a result art in Germany lost its individuality.

Degenerate art, was art that Hitler considered unacceptable, basically any art that had no connection with the Volksgemeinschaft and art that threatened to split society. “ As in all things, the people trust the judgement

of one man, the Fuhrer. He knows which way German art must go in order to fulfil its task as a projection of the German character. " Sculpture was used by the Nazis as it was strong and was a long lasting way to promote the Aryan race. All sculpture was changed so that it promoted Nazi ideology.

A series of massive sculptural muscle men paraded on or in front of Nazi buildings, reflecting the biologically pure, vigorous Aryan race. Considerable use was also made of photographs. Hitler had an official photographer, Heinrich Hoffmann. Key images were carefully stage-managed. Hitler practiced expressions and poses before the camera. A series of photographs was widely reproduced, some as postcards, others inside cigarette packets. Of all the traditional arts, architecture was viewed as the most artistic form of propaganda.

Hitler described it as the " word in stone". Buildings were experienced by large numbers of people, and could be constructed in materials that would last; they could thus represent the Thousand -Year Reich that the Nazis were building. However, the Reich the Nazis were building was never going to be successful. Hitler could not change people's opinion of " Degenerate" art. In 1936 Hitler appointed a purge tribunal of four Nazi artists to tour all the major galleries and museums of Germany for the purpose of removing all " decadent" art.

On 31st March 1936 these sequestered art works were exhibited in a special display of degenerate art in Munich. Huge crowds came to see the works rejected by Hitler. A concurrent exhibition nearby, the Greater German Art Exhibition, at which some 900 works approved by Hitler were shown drew

considerably less enthusiastic crowds. This shows, therefore, that Hitler's aims of indoctrinating the German people with the Nazi aims was not working because people were far more interested in the things that Hitler disliked rather than the things he did like.

Terror and fear played a vital role in the Nazi state, but it was not seen as desirable for the long term. Ultimately the aim was to achieve a racially pure state completely in tune with the Nazi principles in which concentration camps and spy networks became redundant. Goebbels was particularly of the view that this could be achieved through a concentrated propaganda campaign. Of course, propaganda was not new to the Nazi party, but in 1933 the Nazis had, for the first time, all the apparatus of the state at their disposal.