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propaganda
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Introduction

Art can be defined as the deliberate arrangement of things in a manner that influences an individual's senses, emotions and intellect (Stokstad, 1995).

Art has long been used as a form of universal communication. In politics, art is mainly used to advance propaganda.

Political art may refer to human creations that create a visual or hearing experience with the intension of presenting a political view (Rhodes, 1996).

The term propaganda has no universally agreed meaning as it may be used to refer to a variety of persuasions. However, it can be generally described as the “ art of communicating with the aim of influencing the attitude of a community toward some cause or position in order to benefit oneself or one's group” (Rhodes, 1996, p. 45). Propaganda has long been used to advance political agenda, and this is responsible for its negative connotation.

Propaganda as its known today, relates to the techniques that were employed by Nazi during the Second World War. This paper seeks to establish the use of art in politics and especially its use to advance propaganda. The paper will mainly focus on how Nazi used art/propaganda during the Second World War.

Use of art in politics

Art has been used to advance political agenda since the advent of human civilization ad development of complex societies.

There are many instances where literature, films, songs and visual art are used to communicate political views. Depending on the political system,

artists can either be paid or ordered to create works that are used to advance political agenda. The success of political art is measured by how the message influences the intended audience.

Use of Art/propaganda by Nazi before and during the Second World War

Nazi officials formulated a propaganda strategy long before the Second World War. A ministry of public enlightenment and propaganda was created in 1937 with a mandate of using several themes to create external and internal enemies (Hitler, 1999).

The external enemies in this sense comprised countries that had played a part in getting Germany to sign the treaty of Versailles. The internal enemies mostly comprised Jews and other immigrant groups.

Media

The media was very much used to spread the Nazi Propaganda. Below is a description of the different types of media that were used and how.

Newspapers

The NSDAP has its official newspaper identified as the Volkischer Beobachter (People's ob) which was launched in 1920 (Lighthboy, 2004). It was mainly used to spread Nazi ideology by mainly writing scathing articles that were directed towards the weakness of parliamentary systems, Jewish evil behaviors and the national humiliation of the Versailles treaty among other topics (Rhodes, 1996). The newspaper's main role was attack opponents in the political arena and the Jewish community. The Volkischer Beobachter

was later merged with the Der Angriff, a daily Newspaper run by Joseph Goebbels (Rhodes, 1996).

The Der Angriff attacked political opponents and Jews through disgusting cartoons. The paper also glorified Nazi heroes such as Adolf Hitler. When Hitler assumed power in 1933, all media laterally came under complete Nazi control. Propaganda Newspapers were also established in the Nazi occupied states.

In Ukraine, all the existing newspapers were ordered to print articles sourced from German agencies. This was intended to spread an anti-American and anti-British ideology.

Speeches

Hitler and the Nazi party relied heavily on the spoken word to pass their ideology to the masses. In the *Mein Kampf*, Hitler alleged that he had discovered that speaking was a much more convenient way communicating to the people. People did not read things readily but would strive to hear speakers.

Speakers would get the appropriate feedback and adjust appropriately to keep in touch with the masses. Hitler was well known for his oratory and this played a major role in his ascent to power. Speakers were also vital for passing information that was intended specifically for the German population as this was not easily accessible in comparison to other forms of media. The speakers were under the ministry of propaganda and were provided with the specific information to say to different groups of people.

Posters

Posters were central to the Nazi propaganda ideology. They were not only used to gain popular support in Germany but also in the occupied territories.

Posters were advantageous in several ways. They could easily be manipulated to have a strong visual effect so as to attract attention easily. Unlike other forms of propaganda, posters could not be avoided by the targeted audience.

Imagery was used to show Nazi youth and the SS as heroes with illumination to produce opulence (Rhodes, 1996). Posters were placed in several strategic areas including schools. For instance, school posters would show an “institution for the feeble-minded on the other hand and houses on the other, to inform students that the annual cost of the institution would build 17 homes for healthier families” (Lightboy, 2004, p. 68).

Films

The Nazi party produced a lot of films to promote their agenda. The films featured several themes such as the virtue of the Nordic or Aryan, the strength of the military and the German industry, and the evils of those who were perceived to be enemies (Rhodes, 1996). Film was part of the strategies employed by the ministry of propaganda and was allocated a fully functional department. The department controlled filming activities including the issuance of licenses prior to film production.

In some instances, “the government would handpick actors for a film, provide financial support and offer tax breaks to the producers” (Rhodes, 1996, p. 87). Self censorship was encouraged among film producers through <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-control-propaganda-newspapers-were-also-established-in/>

schemes such as awards for films that were seen as valuable to the Nazi regime. Under Nazi rule, almost all filming activities were nationalized by controlling the filming agencies. Some agencies however managed to escape by providing a certain version to the director of film department and producing a completely different version (Lighthboy, 2004). Under the Nazi rule, most schools were installed with motion picture projectors to act as a propaganda tool. The films that were specifically produced to influence school going children were termed “ military education” (Hitler, 1999, p. 102).

Books

Nazi party and its supporters wrote many books. It's important to note that the beliefs and ideas of Nazi had existed in Germany as early as 19th century. Most of the “ beliefs that were to be associated with Nazi such as German nationalism, eugenics and anti-Semitism had existed in form of books since the 19th century” (Rhodes, 1996, p. 37). Nazi's own publications borrowed a lot from this existing works.

One of the most conspicuous books is the Mein Kampf, a book that was authored by Adolf Hitler about his own beliefs (Rhodes, 1996). The book gave a detailed account of ideas that would later spark the Second World War. Hitler's book borrowed a lot from “ The Crowd: A study of the Popular Mind” a book that was written by Gustave Le Bon in 1895 (Hitler, 1999, p. 33). The book must have been of interest to Hitler as it described how irrational crowds could be controlled using propaganda. Many other books such as Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes written by Hans Gunther and Rasse und Seele by Dr Ludwig Clauss, tried to show the superiority of the Nordic or <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-control-propaganda-newspapers-were-also-established-in/>

Aryan while identifying other communities as inferior (Rhodes, 1996). As a strategy to spread its propaganda, the Nazi regime ensured the use of such books as teaching texts in all schools.

Geopolitical atlases stressed the schemes advanced by the Nazi party; they showed Germany as an encircled country that was at risk of being overrun. The atlases showed the dangers posed by the Slav nations, depicted as being sympathetic to ideologies of enemy countries (Lighthboy, 2004). Germany was shown to have a dense population compared to the Eastern regions of Europe; they emphasized the need for Germany to expand to these regions.

Math text books had so many military applications and employed the use of military words in problem solving. Other subjects “ such as physics and chemistry also concentrated on military applications, and grammar lessons were heavily made of propaganda sentences” (Lighthboy, 2004, p. 150). In the occupied areas of France, German agencies ensured that German works were translated and made available. English books were banned, except for the classics (Lighthboy, 2004). Majority of works done by the Jewish were banned, except for important scientific works (Rhodes, 1996).

Comics

Comics were used to spread propaganda both in Germany and the Nazi occupied countries. One notable comic book was the Vica series that was produced during the Second World War.

The Vica was produced in the occupied territory France territory. The Vica series were primarily intended to act as a propaganda tool against the allied <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-control-propaganda-newspapers-were-also-established-in/>

forces (Rhodes, 1996). The series were published by Vincent Krassousky and they showed how the Nazi influenced and thought about the French society (Lighthtboy, 2004).

Magazines

In 1939 and the period after, a representatives of the Nazi regime provided guidelines on what topics magazines were to write on (Lighthtboy, 2004).

There were several other publications that were owned by Nazi and were used to propagandize the German society. Neues Volk was published by the office of racial policy and contained racial propaganda (Rhodes, 1996).

The magazine was mainly composed of articles criticizing the Jews and other races while praising Aryan types and portraying them as ideal. The Signal magazine was one of the main propaganda magazines published during the Second World War. The magazine was made available in all occupied and neutral countries. The magazine was in circulation from April 1940 to March 1945 (Rhodes, 1996). The magazine was published in up to twenty different languages and was the highest selling war time magazine. The magazine was well budgeted for by the ministry of propaganda. It was intended to create an illusion in the mind of the reader that Germany under the rule of Nazi as the greatest model of western civilization.

The paper talked of “ Germany and its allies as the humane liberators of occupied states” (Stokstad, 1995). The magazine would sometimes carry articles with pictures showing intense battle scenes. Unlike other magazines, Jews were hardly depicted in the Signal. The NS-Frauen-Warte was a

woman's magazine (Rhodes, 1996). The magazine had several topics that stipulated the roles that women were required to play by the Nazi regime.

The magazine carried articles that attacked intellectualism and encouraged women to have more children (Hitler, 1999). They discussed what Nazi had done or would do for women and urged them to play bigger roles in the war. Other ladies' magazines such as the *Das deutsche Madel* recommended masculine activities for the girl child. The *Das deutsche Madel*, propagandized German women to be more active and masculine (Rhodes, 1996).

Radio

Many scholars have argued that Nazi pioneered the use of radio as a genocide tool. Indeed it can be established that Nazi officials relied a lot on radio broadcasts to spread propaganda even before they came to power.

During the Second World War, Nazi radio broadcasts were mainly divided into internal and external broadcasts. Millions of cheap radios were manufactured under a program subsidized by the government and sold to the masses at affordable prices. By the beginning of the Second World War, "more than 70% of German households had radios", mainly the cheaper models that was limited in range so as to deny the citizens a chance of listening to foreign broadcast (Lightboy, 2004). Loudspeakers were employed to play radio broadcasts in public places and places of work (Rhodes, 1996). Different non propaganda elements were introduced by Nazi so as to ensure that citizens continually listened to the radio. Music, advices and tips were the main form of entertainment used by Nazi.

The Nazi regime employed the use of radio to send messages to “occupied territories and enemy countries” (Lighthboy, 2004, p. 45). The UK was one of the main countries targeted by Nazi broadcasts. William Joyce was one of the broadcasters used by the German government to air propaganda views in English. He went to Germany in 1939 where he initially read the News in English but later played a major role in broadcasting propaganda during the Second World War (Rhodes, 1996). He was captured after “the world war and executed in 1946 for treason charges” (Lighthboy, 2004, p. 167). Several other countries such as the US and France were victims of propaganda broadcasts.

Radio Paris and radio Vichy were the main tools of propaganda in France (Rhodes, 1996).

Fine arts

The Nazis used fine arts as symbols of creating ideals. Sculptures were used to basically represent Nazi racial theories where common nude male sculptures were used to portray the ideal Aryan race (Rhodes, 1996).

There were landscaping paintings that were mainly displayed in the art exhibitions that were carried even during the war. Explicitly political paintings and anti-Semitic paintings were rare.

Conclusion

This paper sought to define political art, identify how it's used in politics and give a detailed account of how it was used by Nazis during the Second World War. Indeed it has been established that art has been used in politics for a

very long time to spread propaganda. The paper has also established that Nazi used art intensively to influence people both in Germany and elsewhere. Nazi used different forms of art to spread their propaganda.

The most notable ones include Newspapers, speeches, radio, magazines, films, posters and fine arts.

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