

## **Lesson On Propaganda : “Hitler’s Germany”**

**Time Period: 2 class periods (minimum)**

**Key Question: What key methods, techniques or strategies did Hitler visually use with the German people to win their loyalty to his leadership and his programs/agendas?**

**Other Questions For Students To Consider in the lesson.**

- 1. “How does one failed Austrian postcard painter and drifter rise to take the the most powerful leadership position in Germany and paint pictures of a new Germany full of economic strength while rebuilding the military heritage of great conquest?”**
- 2. How was Adolph Hitler able to lift Germans self-esteem into believing a higher role for themselves and world domination for Germany?**
- 3. Why did so many Germans come to believe in Hitler’s message and vision? (What strategies of propaganda did he use to ignite German of high emotion and loyalty?)**

**Strategies/Activities:**

- A. Show one or two popular pictures of Adolph Hitler on the overhead Or Elmo showing Hitler as a young and rising politician and Hitler As Chancellor or toward the end of World War II. (Brainstorm General Class Discussion Activity: Ask, “As you look at these pictures of Adolph Hitler 1) What kinds of character/personality “messages” do the photos portray? 2) What do you think Hitler wanted to project to the German people and others around the world from these photos? (Answers might include things like power, confidence, strength, etc. Then ask, “If you were a German and lived through the defeat of WWI and the Depression, how could these photos uplift or inspire you?)**
- B. Have students examine Hitler’s words from some of his major speeches An excellent example to use would be Hitler’s famous 4 hour/27 page speech made by him on January 30, 1937 in the German Reichstag. For this activity, you might take excerpts from the speech and assign a group of 3-4 to examine one excerpt, writing down their observations and reflecting on Hitler’s message to the German people. (“Class, as you read each of these excerpts, write down what Hitler’s feelings were to:  
a) Germany past and present, b)The German people themselves c)Enemies of Germany and d) Germany’s new leadership role/how it will be achieved.**

**Three excellent examples of excerpts from this speech that could be used in the lesson are:**

**1)“The main plank in the National Socialist programme is to abolish the liberalistic concept of the individual and the Marxist concept of humanity and to substitute therefore the folk community, rooted in the soil and bound together by the bond of common blood. A very simple statement; but it involves a principle that has tremendous consequences.”**

(What is Hitler really saying to the German people? Who are Germany's enemies? Why is it important for all Germans to think of themselves belonging to a giant national group with one identity vs. an individual identity? Who is Hitler referring to when he mentions the "folk community" and why is it important for German citizens to understand this concept? Who is the real enemy of the German nation and its people?)

2) "It would be entirely impossible to enumerate all the remarkable results that have been reached during a time which may be looked upon as probably the most astounding epoch in the life of our people. That task belongs rather to the press and propaganda." (What is Hitler saying about the press and propaganda? (Why does he give both such power, prestige, and importance in Germany's rise to world power and its historic future?) DBQ question: "How did Hitler's writings lift the German's "self-esteem into believing a higher role for themselves and world domination for Germany?"

3)"For the first time in our history, the German people have found the way to higher unity than they ever had before; and that is due to the compelling attraction of the inner feeling...Innumerable prejudices have been broken down...evil traditions have been wiped out..." (How is Hitler building up German self-esteem in this part of his speech?) Have students pay particular attention to "power words and phrases", any place in the speech that allowed Germans to feel strong emotion/be proud of their heritage. Have students cite examples of these in a discussion.

- C. How did Hitler and the Nazi Party use posters and postcards to build German loyalty and show the German political/military strength? (What features in the paintings do Nazi artists use "to capture" Germany's nostalgia of brilliance/strength of the past illuminating that the new Germany can be even stronger than the old? Give students in small groups 3-4 postcards/poster examples to observe and using a group "recorder", have each group list some of the major characteristics, messages, and themes of each piece of political artwork.) DBQ question: "How did Hitler use visual propaganda to connect strong cultural traditions of history with the present Population".

Note: Several of the following websites offer excellent examples of Nazi propaganda art work in the form of posters and postcards. Among some of the best are the National Archives Digital Classroom (<http://www.archives.gov/ammem/fsahtml/fadocamer.html>) and the Library of Congress-Documenting America (<http://memory.loc.gov/award/ichihav/v36v.jpg>) or simply go to Google.com or Inforsearch.com and print in Adolph Hitler or World War II as your research subject.

The National Archives and Records Administration (<http://www.nara.gov>)

- D. Present to students a final/most visual form of propaganda media Hitler and his Nazi Party use to sell the vision of the new Germany as the dominant world power was of course movie footage. Allow students to first

**view at least 2 examples of Hitler speaking to German crowds. One excellent example to use is Hitler's speech made to storm troopers exhorting them to be disciplined and loyal to his programs in 1937 just after the murder of Ernest Rohem. ABC News Program narrated by Peter Jennings entitled, "This Century" showcases the footage. A second excellent example to use is Hitler's speaking to a large German audience in Berlin just before President Paul VonHindenburg's Death. A source for this video can be found using "The World At War" (HBO Home Video Program) narrated by Sir Lawrence Oliver. (As a large or small group activity have students analyze, "What special techniques does Hitler incorporate into his speechmaking to ignite German citizens to emotion and loyalty that one would die for?")**

- E. Concluding Activity of this lesson. Have students on a half sheet of their paper answer the question, "What common strategies/characteristics/tools did Hitler and his Nazi Party use to make Germans proud of being German, make Hitler a overwhelmingly popular leader, and make German loyalty to Hitler/his programs the most important thing?"**

#### Stage Four: Ethics

Here the teacher has an abundance of questions to choose from. However, the teacher should include at least 2 questions to answer in the next four days. Each question is given 2 days to answer or discuss. Primary Sources, secondary sources, and visual aids can be obtained through History Alive or on the web. but the 2 questions we choose to answer were the following.

Objectives: Students will-

- evaluate primary and secondary sources in order to answer critical thinking questions.

1) Knowing the Rise of Nazism in Germany, read the accounts of the Jews during the Holocaust, and then, read the accounts of the Germans at the Nuremberg Trials.

Focus Question: Does the Nazi argument stand in your opinion using primary sources from the camps and the trials. Was it wrong for the Nazi's to follow orders?

The teacher can take these questions in any direction, but they are geared to promote thinking and to put the student into time an place. By using the primary documents, students will evaluate the evidence given in order to use the higher critical thinking skills of Bloom's taxonomy.

2) Using Secondary sources, students will view the primary sources and two very different interpretations. Students will evaluate traditional and revisionist views of the dropping of the bomb in order to better understand the evaluation process of historical data and evaluate and defend a position in doing so. Focus Question: Should the United

States dropped the bomb, or could the US have done an alternative in order not to kill so many innocent people?

Teachers can twist this question in many different ways. All materials for this can be found on the Web (see resource list) or in the History Alive curriculum.