

**Mobilizing the Home Front:  
Propaganda Posters & Films During the Second World War**

I. Comic Books and WWII

- a. Cheap, easily read/digested by people young and old, comic books were an exceedingly popular form of entertainment in the 1930s.
- b. As the U.S. moved towards WWII, comics became increasingly pre-occupied with the Axis threat. Some point to the danger as early as 1939 (well before the rest of the nation knew there was a threat!)
- c. Enter **Captain America!**
  - i. Designed by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, who were both 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Jews. Why did they design Captain America?



- d. Captain America and Isolationism
  - i. Capt. America voiced the belief that Simon and others had that if the U.S. continued to avoid the war, that... (what would happen?)
- e. An Opportunity: Hitler the Super-villain
  - i. What made Hitler the perfect bad guy?
- f. How did comics support the war effort?
- g. Not uncommon for a single monthly issue to sell in excess of 500,000 copies. Comics were also quite popular with the millions of young men entered in military service.
- h. What made Capt. America appealing to many? (Consider his backstory.)

- II. \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_ were just two of the famous artists to support the war effort.
- III. During the war, the U.S. Army hired Disney & Warner Bros. studios and had the staff create training and instructional films for the military and home-front morale-boosting short films.
- IV. The Office of War Information (OWI) was created in June 1942 to \_\_\_\_\_ the public about the war, to organize govt. information, and to coordinate all press, radio & motion pictures about the war.
- a. In effect, the purpose of the OWI was to do what?



- V. Paying for the war
- a. Wars cost money. What did the govt. do to finance the war? (LIST)

b. *Any Bonds Today (1:24 min.)*

- i. Identify the symbols behind Bugs Bunny at the start of this clip. What's the symbolism of this?
- ii. How does the background change by the end of the clip? Why?
- iii. What is the message to Americans?

c. *Seven Wise Dwarfs (3:51 min.)*

- i. Who is the intended audience of this clip?
- ii. What does the film promise Americans?

d. *Return of Hook (3:51 min.)*

- i. Who was the intended audience for this clip?
- ii. What does the film promise its audience?

e. *Three Little Pigs (9:51 min.)*

- i. What do the two pigs make fun of the 3<sup>rd</sup> pig for at the outset of the film? Why do they feel secure? (What reference is this making to history at the time?)
- ii. How do the 2 pigs learn their lesson?
- iii. What does American defense spending do to the Germans and Japanese? What is their fate?

VI. The “Four Freedoms”

- a. On January 6, 1941, FDR addressed Congress, delivering the historic **"Four Freedoms" speech**. He explained his dream of a world where other nations enjoyed some of the same freedoms that Americans had.
- b. The speech inspired Norman Rockwell to make a series of paintings about the Four Freedoms. These paintings later served as the centerpiece of a massive U.S. war bond drive and were put into service to help explain the war's aims to the American people.
- c. What were the 4 freedoms? (LIST)

VII. Emphasis on Racial Unity

- a. Segregation and racism were common in the military and American life.
- b. Govt. was aware of the negative effects racial prejudice had on black Americans.
- c. Govt. worried that racial division would negatively impact the war effort – WHY?
- d. Double-V Campaign
  - i. Despite racial discrimination at home and in the military, the majority of African-Americans participated in the war hoping it would \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ in American society
    1. They hoped that by fighting and demonstrating their patriotism in the war, that when the war was over, that Americans would no longer discriminate after the war - the **“Double – V” campaign.**
      - a. WHAT WERE THE 2 “V”s? Victory in \_\_\_\_\_ and victory \_\_\_\_\_

VIII. The Need for Efficiency in Work

IX. Rationing and Shortages

- a. The **Office of Price Administration (OPA)** was established in 1942 to prevent wartime inflation. DEFINE: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. It's job included:
  - i. Setting a \_\_\_\_\_ on most goods: eventually 90% of food prices were frozen...the OPA kept prices relatively stable during the war years.
  - ii. Rationing (DEFINE: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_) scarce consumer goods such as tires, silk, nylon, automobiles, sugar, gasoline, fuel, oil, butter, coffee, meats and processed foods.

X. Conservation

- a. Govt. publicity reminded people that shortages of these items occurred because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and that civilians should do their part to conserve.

XI. Concerns about National Security

- a. **Spies (3:33 min.)**
  - i. What's the secret the spy can't keep?
  - ii. What's the overall message of this short film to soldiers and civilians?

XII. Playing on Americans' Fears & Stereotypes

a. *Tokyo Woes (4:12 min.)*

- i. How are the Japanese—including the radio announcer “Tokyo Woes”—portrayed in this cartoon? (Provide 2 examples)
  
- ii. What is the main idea of this cartoon?

b. *Der Fuehrer's Face (7:54 min.)*

- i. According to the film, what is life like for those living under Nazi rule?
  
- ii. What does the film say about why Americans should fight?

c. How did the government play off of Americans' fears/stereotypes in order to mobilize support for the war?