

Process Paper

I chose the topic of Nazi propaganda because I was interested in the psychology behind the Nazi's ability to persuade ordinary men to commit mass murder. I think this topic is important because the same tactics of manipulation are being used around the world today and the more awareness we bring, the better prepared we will be to prevent another tragedy like the Holocaust.

I began my research by finding broad sources that could give me an overview into Nazi Propaganda. As I developed a better understanding of the topic, I found more sources that studied a specific type of propaganda or historical character. I found caricature drawings and captions from the propaganda newspaper *Der Stürmer* (The Striker) that helped me better understand what German citizens were exposed to. I also found an interview with the secretary of Joseph Goebbels, head of the Ministry of Propaganda, and learned about the facade created around German leaders. The diary of Joseph Goebbels proved that he was incredibly passionate about the ideas he was expressing and was not just pushing a political agenda. I also researched more about the propaganda surrounding Hitler and found an autobiography, disguised as a book written by a war hero, that influenced people's perception of him. Through interviews with Holocaust survivors and SS guards, I was exposed to many different perspectives which I incorporated into my project. After learning about the short term outcome of Nazi propaganda and the horrors of the Holocaust, I focused my research on propaganda in the digital age. By following the use of propaganda in the past three presidential administrations the similarities between their techniques and the Nazi's became increasingly evident. The only difficulty I had in my research was finding sources offline because almost all of the documents on this topic have been digitized and their original copies are very difficult to obtain.

I chose to do a website for my project because I thought it would help organize my information and distinguish between different topics. I also enjoy working with technology and thought I could give the viewer the best information through a website.

Nazi Propaganda exemplifies the dangers present in the manipulation of communication and its ability to gain mass support for wrongful actions. Germany's defeat in WWI and the Versailles treaty made the country a prime candidate to be susceptible to propaganda. The German people's need to feel part of something bigger and their bitterness towards defeat allowed them to be persuaded by the media and Nazi leaders. With increased exposure to ideas that invoke an emotional response, masses of people were willing to abandon all previous morals, or passively accept others abandonment of such morals, and support mass murder. In the digital age, communication travels at an exponentially faster rate than it did in the 1940's. Due to this fact, society must be educated on how to rationalize the information they are exposed to through social media and not act on emotions.