



WORLD WAR II LESSON PLANS

Lesson 10—“The Krauts Are OUT!”: Propaganda and Morale in World War II

by Michael Hutchison

Overview/Description

By April 1945, most soldiers in the European Theater knew that the war was nearly over. American and British troops were pushing toward Berlin from the west, while Soviet troops were moving in from the East. By the end of April, both U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and German Dictator Adolf Hitler had died, Roosevelt of a cerebral hemorrhage, and Hitler by suicide. On May 2, the Red Army (the Soviets) captured Berlin, and on May 8, the German forces formally surrendered to the Allies.

Grade Level

High School

Learning/Instructional Objectives

Students will be able to:

- understand the concerns and fears of soldiers preparing for possible re-deployment to the Pacific Theater
- identify terms and phrases that are propaganda and designed to maintain morale
- appreciate the situation in Europe and the Pacific at the end of the war in Europe and near the end of the Pacific war

Academic Standards for the Social Studies

- Indiana Standards: USH 5.3, WH 8.4, WH 9.2, and Language Arts 11.3.7 (as of Oct. 1, 2008)
- National Standards (National Council for Social Studies): II Time, Continuity, and Change; IV Individuals, Groups, and Institutions; VIII Science, Technology, and Society; IX Global Connections.

Social Studies/Historical Concepts

World War II, V-E Day, Pacific Theater

Time Required

One or two class periods (50 to 55 minutes each)

Materials Required

Copies of the pamphlet titled “The Krauts Are OUT!” IHS Digital Library, Item ID: M0272_BOX2_FOLDER6_KRAUTS (accessed Aug. 8, 2011).

Background/Historical Context

Hundreds of thousands of American soldiers were exuberant. They had defeated the Germans, and now they were going home. Or were they? While Germany had surrendered, the Japanese were still fighting in the Pacific. Japanese soldiers fought fiercely in battle. In the recent Battle of Iwo Jima, more than 6,800 Allied troops,

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mainly U.S. Marines, died. The Japanese, however, lost nearly 21,000 men. Many Americans fighting in the Pacific knew how harsh the Japanese treated prisoners of war, and thought it better to fight to the death rather than surrender. Estimated U.S. casualties (killed and wounded) in the upcoming invasion of Japan were in the hundreds of thousands.

Many ETO (European Theater of Operations) soldiers knew that they may be re-deployed to the Pacific. Tired of war, they weren't looking forward to going. What could be done to keep those men focused and ready to fight another foe? In this lesson, students will look at and analyze a propaganda pamphlet designed to keep up morale and get soldiers ready for re-deployment to the Pacific.

Lesson Procedure

Before beginning the lesson, brainstorm with the class for definitions of morale and propaganda. Write both terms on the chalkboard or overhead, and write student responses to each term.

According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, *propaganda* is defined as: The systematic propagation of a doctrine or cause or of information reflecting the views and interests of those advocating such a doctrine or cause. Material disseminated by the advocates or opponents of a doctrine or cause: *wartime propaganda*. *Morale* is defined as emotional or mental condition with respect to cheerfulness, confidence, zeal, etc., especially in the face of opposition, hardship, etc.: *the morale of the troops*.

In addition, the teacher may wish to discuss with students the definition of a stereotype. Explain to the class that a stereotype tends to lump an entire group of people into simple, and sometimes unfair, characteristics, based on racial background, religion, age, etc.

After a few minutes of discussing each term, ask students to consider how they would think/feel if they were U.S. Army soldiers fighting in the

European Theater in May 1945. They would know the Germans were close to surrender (or had already surrendered), most of them would have fought in significant battles in Europe such as D-Day or the Battle of the Bulge, but the possibility existed that they would still be sent to fight in more battles against the Japanese. Would they be happy and excited to do that? Would they be willing to do that? Explain to the students that many soldiers fighting in Europe expected to be re-deployed to fight in the Pacific against Japan.

Ask students what would be the best ways to maintain morale and a good fighting spirit for troops that would help them get ready for military action against the Japanese. Explain to the class that in May 1945, the atomic bomb had not been tested and therefore was not ready to use against Germany or Japan. Plans were going ahead with the full-scale invasion of the Japanese mainland later in 1945.

After a few minutes of discussion, distribute the study guide questions to the students as well as copies of the pamphlet, or direct the students to access the pamphlet online. Give the students sufficient time to look at the pamphlet and answer the questions.

Assessment

The teacher should develop a rubric to adequately gauge student achievement. This should include evaluation of historical accuracy, spelling, grammar, and ability to interpret information.

Enrichment Activity

Announce to the class that they are reporters for *Stars and Stripes* or some similar service-related publication, circa May 1945. Have them write editorials encouraging the troops to follow the advice and points made in "The Krauts Are OUT!" in order to prepare for the upcoming invasion of the Japanese mainland.

Study Guide Questions with Suggested Answers

Note: Many of the questions are “open ended” and may have multiple answers. In those instances, the teacher may wish to accept any reasonable answer as acceptable.

1. What kind/type of resource is “The Krauts Are OUT!”? Describe the images seen on the front and back covers of the resource.

Most students should be able to identify the resource as a pamphlet, although some may call it a booklet. The front cover shows what appears to be an American soldier kicking a German soldier out, although some students may note that the German soldier shows a strong resemblance to Italian dictator Benito Mussolini. Behind the American soldier there appears to be a Japanese soldier holding a dagger. On the back cover is a drawing of the same American soldier, this time with a quizzical look on his face.

2. Based on your knowledge about stereotypes, what stereotypes are visible on the front and back covers of the resource?

The German soldier depicted on the cover has been “knocked out” (the “x”ed eyes are symbolic of someone given a knockout punch). In addition, he has a coarse look to him, as if he is only half human. Propaganda posters tended to depict enemy soldiers in this manner as the “evil Hun,” and it is likely that the artist of the pamphlet may have been influenced in that way.

The American soldier’s facial expression appears to be confident, as one would expect soldiers who had won a war would be. In addition, the American soldier’s rank is that of a private, and the artist may have wanted to establish that it was the average GI that won the war.

The Japanese soldier has many of the stereotypical features of how Americans perceived their enemy during the war. The Japanese soldier has

“Coke bottle” eyeglasses and is wearing a baggy uniform. In addition, the shape of the character’s eyes and grin were typical American stereotypes of Japanese soldiers. Some students may also note that the Japanese soldier is hiding or lurking in the background behind the U.S. soldier as he kicks the German. They may also note that he is the only one holding a weapon (the dagger). They may conclude that the fact that the Japanese soldier has a weapon and is hiding may suggest that the Americans still must defeat the Japanese. It also may be an inference to the Japanese “sneak attack” against U.S. forces at Pearl Harbor in 1941.

The back cover shows the same American soldier, but with a more quizzical look on his face, as if he is asking “What do I do next?”

3. Explain at least four different ways that the author refers to or describes the Germans and/or Adolf Hitler in the resource. Why you think the author might have done this?

Throughout the pamphlet, the Germans are referred to as “krauts,” a derogatory term referring to sauerkraut. In addition, the pamphlet makes several references to “New World Order,” which was identified as “Hitler’s ideas about a future world.” The pamphlet also refers to the “master race.” As one might imagine, the pamphlet is not complementary of Hitler. In one instance, when the pamphlet describes the “New World Order,” it mentions that “Adolf was to be divine.” On page five, the pamphlet calls Hitler a “clever, double-crossing punk.” In another instance (page six), New World Order is mentioned again along with *Mein Kampf*, the book Hitler wrote that outlined his plans to dominate the world. “Fortress Europe” is also mentioned. In another instance (page 15), a reference is made to “no German or Austrian paperhanger.” A “paperhanger” frequently refers to someone who passes bad checks, something that is worthless. So, the pamphlet may be making reference to the belief that Hitler’s promises were like “bad checks” and had no value.

4. Give at least three examples of how the author describes the European war on pages five and six. Why do you think the author uses those terms to describe the war? What propaganda message might the author be conveying? Explain.

The author notes that the war affected men in every corner of the world, and it is not an American victory alone, specifically mentioning the United Nations in regard to fighting and dying for “this particular day” (Victory in Europe).

The author also notes that the war was a war of secret battles, new and secret weapons, war of cities, war of underground, war of psychology, war in the air, war of supplies and supply lines, and a war of men. The author also notes that in Italy, it was also a war of mud and mountains.

Some students may note that the author is trying to convey that the war had many different facets, and many different groups had to help fight. The author may be suggesting that if the European war was so difficult to win, why should the Pacific war be any different?

5. On page seven of the resource, the author describes the makeup of the Fifth Army. How does the author describe this army? What “convincing proof” did this army give the world? What propaganda messages could be included in this paragraph of the reading?

The author notes that, “In its ranks [the Fifth Army] were men from every corner of America—of white, colored, and Japanese extraction. There were others who couldn’t speak English and had never heard of Texas—men from India, New Zealand, South Africa, Tunisia, Brazil, Great Britain, France, Algiers, and Morocco. The author notes that they “gave the world convincing proof that men of different nations, races, and religions could fight effectively together.”

The propaganda messages could include what the author included in his text, that people of different backgrounds could work together and fight together. Some students may also note that some of the groups the author mentions would not be members of Hitler’s “Master Race,” and would be, in the eyes of the Nazis, fit only as slaves of the Germans. Yet, these “inferiors” banded together and defeated the “New World Order.” The author may not have intended that interpretation of the paragraph, but it is possible that some students may read that conclusion into it.

6. On page ten of the resource, the author notes some differences in how the Allies fought the European war versus the Pacific war. What do you think the author meant when he noted that “At times the Pacific war has been run on a shoestring”? List at least three ways the Allies gathered momentum in the Pacific. How was the Pacific war tough?

The author noted that the Pacific war was run on a shoestring because the majority of the manpower and resources had to go to defeat Hitler first because the Nazis were a greater threat than the Japanese. In regard to how the Allies gathered momentum, “Our B-29’s learned to speak Japanese; MacArthur came back to Bataan, recaptured Manila, freed many of the prisoners who had been captured on Corregidor. Admiral Nimitz forged his way to Saipan, the Bonin Islands, and Iwo Jima. The 3,500 miles (of the Japanese Empire) had been reduced to 750.”

The author notes that the war was tough, stating that “Tarawa and Iwo Jima weren’t soft touches.” He notes that the Pacific had heat, flies, and malaria, as well as an amphibious landing once a month. He also notes the distance problem from location to location in the Pacific, as well as problems regarding shipping.

7. What is the author referring to when he mentions that the Pacific war is going to take priority over everything until “we have paid the Japs back for the dirtiest and most infamous trick any nation ever committed”? How do you think this statement might have boosted morale? (Look at the statements on page 11 and 13.)

The author is referring to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. The author may have been concerned that with the victory of the Allies in Europe, many U.S. soldiers might have been enthusiastic about going home and may have forgotten about the “day of infamy” on December 7, 1941. The use of the word “infamous” might have been a way to remind soldiers of what President Franklin D. Roosevelt said was “a date that will live in infamy.”

8. On page 13, the author notes that the U.S. military would have a continued presence in Europe after the end of the war. What were some of the duties that U.S. military personnel would have? How does the author infer that this duty would be essential?

The author notes that the United States, along with Great Britain, USSR, and France, would provide armies of occupation. The author notes that the army would be in charge of the “destruction of the Nazi Party, laws, and institutions, disarmament and breaking up of the German armed forces, disbandment of the German general staff, control or elimination of war production industry, punishment of war criminals, and reparation in kind.”

The author infers that this occupation would be as essential as fighting the war to ensure that no “German or Austrian paperhanger is going to have any illusion that the German army was not defeated. Every German, every Austrian, will see ample evidence of that defeat.”

9. How does the author describe how U.S. soldiers will be rotated stateside? What rationale does the author give to explain why soldiers in the European Theater should be willing to defeat the Japanese? (Check pages 16, 19, and the back page of the resource.)

The author notes that there will be SOME men and units that can be spared, and that these will be returned to the United States under an orderly plan, thoroughly impartial. Preference for discharge would be given on the basis of time in service, time overseas, time in combat, and dependent children. However, the author stresses that men who are “essential” will “never become surplus as long as the war with Japan continues.”

On the back page of the pamphlet, the author notes that “this whole business with Germany isn’t going to be worth a damn if we don’t settle the peace as decisively as we settled Hitler’s fate.” The author reminds the reader that he is an “American soldier”, but an “American citizen, too.” He adds, “What you say and do in these years immediately following Germany’s collapse are going to determine what kind of a world we and our children are going to live in.”

The author notes, “we still have two jobs to do overseas—occupy Germany and finish off Japan and after that, the job of making the right kind of peace.” He notes that “we are obligated to those men at Salerno, Cassino, and Anzio to see that those jobs are done right.” (The author is referring to soldiers who were killed in those campaigns.)

10. After reading the resource, how good of a job does the resource do in maintaining morale and keeping soldiers thinking about the task at hand? If you believe the resource is effective in these regards, give examples of how it is. If you believe it is not effective, explain what you would do to make it more convincing.

Students who believe the resource does a good job may look at various aspects of the work where it reminds soldiers of the difficulties they encountered in defeating the Germans. Why risk losing the war against the Japanese and negating all the positive effects of defeating the Germans by not putting out the same effort against the Japanese? In addition, they might also look at some of the ways the Germans were portrayed in the pamphlet and infer that the only way to make sure that those same things didn't reoccur would be to defeat the Japanese, and ensure the right kind of peace in both Europe and Asia.

Students who believe the resource did a poor job might suggest that the author should have been more explicit in regard to the atrocities committed by the Germans during the war. They might also suggest that the graphics on the cover pages and throughout the pamphlet tend to be a bit cartoony and would not convey a message that we need to keep our noses to the grindstone to defeat an enemy just as dangerous as the Nazis. Students may also note that more should have been mentioned about the inhumane way Japanese soldiers tended to treat American prisoners of war or non-combatants.

“The Krauts Are OUT!” Study Guide

Introduction

By April 1945, most soldiers in the European Theater knew that the war was nearly over. American and British troops were pushing toward Berlin from the west, while Soviet troops were moving in from the east. By the end of April, both U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and German Dictator Adolf Hitler had died, Roosevelt of a cerebral hemorrhage, and Hitler by suicide. On May 2, the Red Army (the Soviets) captured Berlin, and on May 8, the German forces formally surrendered to the Allies.

Hundreds of thousands of American soldiers were exuberant. They had defeated the Germans, and now they were going home. Or were they? While Germany had surrendered, the Japanese were still fighting in the Pacific. Japanese soldiers fought fiercely in battle. In the battle of Iwo Jima, more than 6,800 Allied troops, mainly U.S. Marines, died. The Japanese, however, lost nearly 21,000 men. Many Americans fighting in the Pacific knew how harsh the Japanese treated prisoners of war, and thought it better to fight to the death rather than surrender. Estimated U.S. casualties (killed and wounded) in the upcoming invasion of Japan were in the hundreds of thousands.

Many ETO (European Theater of Operations) soldiers knew that they would likely be re-deployed to the Pacific. Tired of war, they weren't looking forward to going. What could be done to keep those men focused and ready to fight another foe? We'll look at one way that the U.S. military tried to keep men focused on the fact that there was still another enemy to defeat.

Directions

Read the resource the teacher either will distribute to you or will ask you to access online. Then, answer the following questions.

1. What kind/type of resource is “The Krauts Are OUT!”? Describe the images seen on the front and back covers of the resource.

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